Olivares Vivos
Towards adaptation and certification of olive groves reconciled with life
www.olivaresvivos.com

in Action

ADVANCE OF RESULTS
(DECEMBER 2018)
Olive Alive in action

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(DECEMBER 2018)
1 The objectives of Olive Alive and the actions to meet them

Demonstration olive groves

Between 2015 and 2020, 38 actions will be implemented, focusing on defining and certifying a production model that is scientifically endorsed, and positioning it by using a guarantee brand that is an added and profitable value in the oil market:

1) Actions aimed at creating a brand that identifies olive oils produced in a way that contributes to halting biodiversity loss. A value-added brand will be created (A3), which will be promoted following a communication plan (A3, E1).

2) Actions aimed at acquiring a scientific basis to assess and certify olive farming models directed towards and contributing to halting biodiversity loss. They will provide scientific support to conservation actions (C1-C9), endorse the brand and establish the indicators, criteria and thresholds necessary to certify biodiversity services in olive groves (D1 and C8).

3) Actions aimed at designing action plans to restore biodiversity in demonstration olive groves. Demonstration olive groves will be selected (A2) and their restoration and conversion to Olive Alive will be designed (A4 y A5).
4) Actions aiming at restoring biodiversity and promoting other externalities in the pilot olive groves. Restoration plans will be implanted in the pilot olive groves (C1-C9) and their environmental and cultural externalities will be promoted (E4 and E8).

5) Actions aiming at designing a marketing strategy that ensures the profitability of the brand. An action plan and marketing-supporting actions (C7) will guarantee profitability after conversion to Olive Alive. Profitability indicators (D2), indicators monitoring the impact of the brand (D3 and D4) and lessons learned will define the best marketing strategy to ensure and boost profitability and to guarantee the brand's significant contribution to biodiversity conservation and development of the olive farming sector.

6) Actions aimed at disseminating the objectives, results and the demonstration value of the project. Targeting the olive farming sector (E3), consumers and the general public (E1, E11 and E13). Participatory tools will be designed for both the project stakeholders and other groups, organisations and institutions that might share the objectives of the project (E7, F5 and F6).

7) Transferring the project after implementation in order to ensure sustainability. Benefiting from its innovative and demonstration value, the project partners will take over the promotion, management and certification of the Olive Alive/Olivares Vivos brand, with the necessary support, thus further contributing to halting biodiversity.
# List of actions of the Olive Alive LIFE project

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This brochure briefly sums up the main actions and outcomes of the LIFE Project as of June 2018. For more in-depth information about the current development of each action of the project, visit our website [www.olivaresvivos.com](http://www.olivaresvivos.com). Furthermore, to obtain more detailed information, you can read or sign up to receive our monthly newsletter ([http://olivaresvivos.com/es/olivares-vivos-mes-a-mes/](http://olivaresvivos.com/es/olivares-vivos-mes-a-mes/)).

Starting point: How much life can be found in olive groves?
Initial diagnosis on the biodiversity of olive groves

A series of works has been carried out at Olive Alive LIFE project, producing a detailed 'picture' on the initial biodiversity of demonstrative olive groves. These works will be repeated in 2019-2020 and will allow the comparison of the state of biodiversity before and after the interventions, providing us with the possibility of learning how biodiversity evolved in each one of the demonstrative olive groves and what actions were the most effective. In addition, they will provide us with a scientific basis to evaluate and certify olive farming models that are effective to halt biodiversity loss. The scientific endorsement of conservation actions provided by these works will in turn endorse the “Olive Alive/Olivares Vivos” guarantee brand, and support the establishment of the indicators, criteria and
It is worth mentioning the huge sampling effort that has been made: over 10,000 surveys, where almost 300,000 field records were collected and analysed. Drawing from that information, more than 686 plant species (17% of the vascular flora of Andalusia), 165 birds species (which accounts for a quarter of the species recorded in Spain), and 58 ant species (one fifth of the total number in the Iberian Peninsula and the Balearic Islands) were identified in the whole set of olive groves of the project, some of them being described for the first time at regional level. Such a great effort is reflected in the description of a plant species new to science, *Linaria quartobensis*, found in one of the demonstration olive groves of the project.

These findings demonstrate the importance of olive groves for nature conservation in Europe, as well as their great potential to halt biodiversity loss.

In April 2016, biodiversity monitoring started, both in the 20 demonstrative olive groves and in their control olive groves: a total of 40. During a whole year, an exhaustive monitoring of their biodiversity was carried out, making an inventory of and monitoring the species of birds and arthropods (ants and spiders), as well as of woody and herbaceous flora.

Moreover, pest populations, pollinating insects and seed dispersal were measured, in order to evaluate the ecosystem services of olive groves.

In May 2017, the first stage of these monitoring works (previous to restoration actions) was completed, obtaining indexes of taxonomic diversity (sorted by groups and combined), functional diversity, heterogeneity and landscape connectivity, as well as their conservation value.
A biodiversity recovery plan

In order to increase biodiversity, a series of specific Action Plans was designed for each one of the demonstrative olive groves. The main actions proposed by Olive Alive were focused on soil and herbaceous cover management, along with restoration and revegetation of non-productive areas (field boundaries, road edges, streams, gullies...). Similarly, other actions involved habitat improvement through the construction of shelters, the installation of nest boxes, pollinating insect hotels, water troughs, stone walls and ponds for amphibians. In recent months, an addition to these works has been the construction of biodiversity islands, fenced spaces where different botanical species are distributed.

Each one of the 20 demonstrative olive groves has a tailored restoration plan to increase as much biodiversity

However, olive groves also show how the state of biodiversity varies considerably according to farm management practices and landscape complexity. Preliminary findings show that the absence of herbaceous cover, either in itself or associated to another agricultural management practice, has a negative and consistent impact on biodiversity, while its presence boosts the number of bird and insect species on different geographical scales. One of the conclusions reached in this regard, which could visibly shape biodiversity restoration works, is that biodiversity recovery might be feasible also in small olive groves. This is very important, given the limited surface area of most Andalusian, Spanish and European olive groves.

In September 2018, all this information was presented to the media, farmers, the scientific community and the general public at the Royal Botanic Gardens of Madrid.

They have been carried out 8,936 census and made 292,676 records of flora and fauna species. We have identified 686 species of plants, 165 of birds and 58 of ants. Probably, this has been the most detailed study that has ever been made about the European olive groves biodiversity.
Everything's ready to work for biodiversity, any volunteers?

Olive Alive is a participative project. Besides conservationists, scientists, institutions and olive growers, any person can participate. For that purpose, an ambitious volunteering programme was established to work on the restoration of the demonstrative olive groves. This entailed a remarkable challenge, since the current general rule is that environmental volunteering be conducted in natural areas, public spaces and usually in protected areas. Nevertheless, the objectives of Olive Alive have achieved great popularity among environmental volunteers.

as possible. To this end, previous field work was needed, as well as conducting literature reviews and using thematic cartography. Finally, each action plan integrates the information obtained from the biodiversity studies. The action proposals have been agreed with each landowner and the suitability of the planned works and their design have been jointly assessed to adapt them to the agricultural management of each olive grove. Thereby, 20 viable and suitable action plans have been established, adapted for each olive grove. These plans are included in the Land Stewardship Agreements, which reflect the commitments voluntarily established between SEO/BirdLife and the owner of each demonstrative olive grove. The involvement and participation of land managers in the development of the action plans is proving very satisfactory, demonstrating day after day their complicity with the goals of Olive Alive. In total, there are 20 olive groves and 3,604 ha of land under land stewardship.
The success of the Olive Alive volunteer programme proves that, for people committed to nature conservation, working in an agricultural environment is worthwhile. There have been over 500 applications in response to the four calls for volunteering launched so far, which proves that the need to invest a fair amount of the efforts in the conservation of agrosystems has transcended from scientific consensus to citizens. Until June 2018, 20 volunteer camps and 8 ad hoc volunteer activities have been organised, which gathered around 250 people arrived from nearly all Spanish regions, as well as from 10 more countries.

For their part, olive farmers have also continued to adapt soil management to the model proposed in the action plans, and they cooperate as required in the maintenance of plantations, ponds and water troughs. Thus, in the summer months a great amount of support irrigation has been carried out for the maintenance of plantations and, in certain cases, the required infrastructure to facilitate such irrigations has been generated.

The success of Olive Alive volunteering campaign has a great demonstration value, and it is a replicable example that could be applied in other agricultural environments. This is important especially when considering that it’s precisely in the countryside where biodiversity loss is increasing at the fastest pace in Europe.

Working in the olive groves: planting, sowing and “furnishing” the olive grove to make it more habitable

In addition to the works related to soil and grass cover management, the revegetation of spaces such as side slopes, streams, gullies, road edges and field boundaries is essential for the implementation of the Restoration Plans in the demonstrative olive groves. The construction of ponds, installation of water troughs, sowing wild herbaceous plants, as well as installing nest boxes, insect hotels and nesting poles or adapting ponds and building stone walls are also necessary measures. In short, “furnishing” the olive groves to make them more habitable.

In October 2016, restoration works started. A significant share of them involved the planting of native woody species in the areas that had been specified in the action plans. Since then and until December 2018, more than 23,991 seedlings of woody plants have been planted and almost 54,000 square meters have been sowed with wild herbaceous plant seeds. Also, 10 ponds for amphibians and 450 metres of stone walls have been built, while 27 water troughs, 112 nest boxes, 17 perches for birds of prey, 37 bat boxes and 186 insect hotels have been installed. In recent months, 11 biodiversity islands have been planted in five demonstration olive groves. The works will continue during 2019.

In 2018, restoration works in our dissemination olive grove in Geolit were finished, completing the planting of hedges in the field boundaries and the planting of herbaceous covers. Similarly, poles and nest boxes were installed and a pond for amphibians was built, so that, ultimately, the main restoration actions carried out in the demonstrative olive groves of the project can be seen in the Geolit olive grove. So far, a large number of farmers, trainers and schoolchildren have been able to complete the training and dissemination actions implemented in the LIFE project in a practical way.

In addition to this, a project was started by mid-2018 to reinforce the population of barn owls (Tyto alba) in a

More than 200 volunteers have worked in the Project’s demonstrative olive groves. Thanks to them, now there are more plants and there will be more fauna, more life in the olive groves.
A commercialization strategy so the market will recognize the added value of the EVOO Olivares Vivos.

Transforming biodiversity into profitability. Consumers have their say

In order to Olive Alive to be profitable, such an olive farming model must be positioned as a recognised, beneficial added value in the oil market. Therefore, it is essential that the guarantee brand “Olive Alive” clearly identifies the model’s contribution to biodiversity conservation. Additionally, to achieve such profitability and beyond, it is necessary to design the best marketing strategy and to carry out the most effective promotional activities possible, so that consumers get familiar with the brand, the scientific endorsement behind it and the contribution of Olive Alive extra virgin olive oils to nature conservation.

These works began in mid-2016, with a scientific literature review that showed that works carried out up to that moment on the relationship between biodiversity and consumption were scarce. However, some of them have been quite useful to lay the foundations of the study on consumers’ behaviour and Olive Alive oil marketing. To achieve such a goal, a workshop on biodiversity and consumption was held in 2017 for experts, researchers and entrepreneurs in the agri-food business interested in differentiating their product with strategies based on environmental externalities. The resulting exchange of ideas and experiences provided a knowledge base about the possibility of benefiting from biodiversity from an economic and commercial point of view.
In addition, a design competition was launched in 2017 in order to produce distinctive signs for the Olive Alive brand. It was a participatory process where contestants were asked to perform a creative exercise to capture the values of Olive Alive. Subsequently, the winning proposal and some others were tested together, so that the most appropriate proposal was selected, measuring their impact on consumers (memory, identification, evoked quality, etc...).

During June 2017, two discussion groups with olive oil consumers were organised. The objective of these focus groups was to analyse the concept of biodiversity in depth, exploring its meaning, values and beliefs. In this way, the attributes or dimensions associated by potential consumers with the term biodiversity were identified.

But, without a doubt, one of the greatest achievements of this action has been the study carried out in Spain, Denmark, Germany and the United Kingdom, which aimed at recognising the key aspects that identify potential consumers of Olive Alive extra virgin olive oil. It is essential that such an analysis be made in order to design the best marketing strategy and to inform promotional actions that target those consumers. This study was based on a multi-country survey targeted at regular extra virgin olive oil consumers who were environmentally conscious. A total of 3,200 questionnaires were completed (800 in each country).

Also, the questionnaire included in a multi-country survey targeted at extra virgin olive oil consumers was closed in June. A total of 3,200 environmentally conscious consumers from Spain, UK, Denmark and Germany (800 in each country) were surveyed. They were segmented according to their age, sex and level of studies, and their responses showed the level of trust that the Olive Alive brand inspires, the quality it evokes or the overprice they would be willing to pay for it. This will serve as a basis for the future introduction of the brand and its promotion.

As a result of this analysis, it has been shown that olive oil consumers in all four countries attach considerable importance to values linked to nature conservation, and they appreciate that it is natural and when it is healthy and helps to protect biodiversity. However, there are significant differences between segments and between countries, which must be taken into account when the time comes to define the marketing strategy of future Olive Alive certified extra virgin olive oils.

All these issues are analysed in the report “Key aspects of the potential Olive Alive olive oil consumer”.

A consumer oriented promotion strategy. They will know about the Olivares Vivos label, its scientific guarantee and its contribution to the nature conservation. Consumers will have the last word.
And what do olive farmers have to say?

If consumers will ultimately be crucial for the success of Olive Alive, olive farmers are crucial now. Twenty of them have believed in the proposal and have "opened their homes" to this project: they have not only allowed us to conduct our experiments there, but they have also been actively involved in it by contributing ideas, solutions, meeting our requests on soil management and taking care of our plantations. Their enthusiasm and support is the best reward for our work. Moreover, there are many more farmers interested in Olive Alive, who have discovered a more pleasant way to work the land and an opportunity to differentiate and give added value to their production. But, what does the sector think, beyond those who are already convinced?

During the first months of 2017, a sectoral survey was conducted that aimed at finding out what the olive farmers’ perceptions were regarding the economic and environmental status of olive farming in Andalusia and the proposals made by Olive Alive. There were 640 respondents from 88 municipalities in the provinces of Jaén, Cordoba, Granada, Almería, Seville and Malaga. The preliminary analysis of the results revealed that the vast majority was fully aware of the environmental crisis that olive farming is in and the need to address the problem.

The vast majority thought that olive farms that host more life are not necessarily less productive, and they would be willing to adopt measures to improve them from an ecological point of view, including the management of the grass cover. However, data also show that many of the farmers don’t know how to move in that direction.

This is why contact with olive farmers is essential, so that they can learn not only about the work we are doing in Olive Alive, but also how biodiversity can be beneficial for them when it comes to increasing farm profitability. To this end, we have organised many sessions, seminars and talks at a variety of fairs, cooperatives or courses. In this regard, it is worth mentioning our collaboration with the Andalusian Institute of Agricultural and Fisheries Research and Training (IFAPA) to complete the training programme offered to young farmers, by introducing training sessions focused on the ecosystem services provided by biodiversity in olive groves and the Olive Alive olive farming model. Additionally, we are collaborating with the Regional Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development regarding the agroecology training programme, as well as with other public and private vocational training centres in the field of agriculture.

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In addition to this, information sessions are being organised through the Olive Alive Municipalities Network (REMOV). The REMOV has channelled many requests made by cooperatives to inform their members about this project.

All this work has encouraged many olive farmers to get in touch with the project, in order to carry out actions that foster the recovery of biodiversity in their olive groves. To date, more than a hundred of them have asked for advice and many of them are already working on their own, with the help of the project officers.

Olive Alive is also culture. Environmental and cultural heritage go in tandem

Olive groves have decisively shaped the landscape and culture of the Mediterranean Basin. In Olive Alive, the integration of cultural and environmental values is essential to foster their multifunctionality and strengthen their added value. Hence, the recovery and dissemination of the olive growing culture is also an objective of this LIFE Project. To this end, we are working in villages of four olive farming regions in Andalusia, all of them hosting demonstrative olive groves, to search for sources of knowledge of the olive growing traditional culture and implementing a school campaign (which started in December 2017) for children to learn about olive growing in the past, present and future. All this work aims at conveying that these groves do not only produce olives, but also firewood, charcoal, wood or straw to make baskets and other tools, meat, wild vegetables, medicines... and stories, knowledge and feelings.

In fact, this landscape has been used intensely until recently. It is a humanised forest with a cultural background that deserves to be known and recognised. But these values must also be integrated into future olive farming models, which will generate added value and opportunities for differentiation. This will undoubtedly contribute to rural development in these areas. Olive Alive are those olive groves where natural and cultural heritage is preserved, where landscape is found, because they do not only produce olives, but also emotions.

The work to select four olive growing landscapes/areas where these actions would be implemented started in mid-2016. The areas were Sierra de Segura, Campiña de Jaén, Campiña de Córdoba and Sierra de Grazalemá. People or associations who could share knowledge about the olive growing culture were found there, and the information provided has been collected in the guide "Sources of knowledge of the olive growing traditional culture", the first version of which is already available on our website.

Additionally, the school campaign "Stories of the Olive Grove" has been launched. It is supported by a teaching booklet entitled "Olive Alive, a very close adventure", developed by Olive Alive and presented in June 2018. The booklet is available for downloading on the "resources" section of our website. The training programme "Women and men of the olive grove" has also been launched. During 2017-2018 and so far in 2018-2019 school years, more than 1,400 children from 39 different schools have increased their knowledge on the crop that surrounds them. These are important figures, which add to the 43,000 children informed about the olive oil by the Regional Government of Jaén during the “3rd School
The Olive Alive Municipalities Network (REMOV) will enable local authorities to participate and get involved in the project values. Local councils can play an essential role in the dissemination of results and, especially, in the promotion of cultural and environmental values. The Regional Government of Jaen is coordinating the efforts to invite every local council of the province to join this Network which, once established in Jaen, will be expanded to other provinces. The “Manifesto of Accession to the REMOV” includes the obligation to commit to biodiversity conservation through municipal policy. Local councils will work to promote and disseminate the Olive Alive model and to inform olive farmers about the importance of biodiversity conservation and their own essential role in the environmental future of their towns and villages.

Works to establish the definitive content of the “Manifesto of Accession to the REMOV” began in June 2016. Once a consensus was reached, the Regional Government of Jaen sent the manifesto to every municipality in the province, so that it could be discussed in a plenary session. On 17 January 2017, the Regional Government of Jaen held a ceremony at the Trade Fair Institution of Jaen to award the murals, videos, scaled models and other works that were part of the “Manifesto of Accession to the REMOV”.

In addition to this, a scavenger hunt was designed to be played at the dissemination olive grove in Geolit. Dozens of schoolchildren have already tried it, and by completing a series of tasks they have learned what the olive growing ecosystem and its biodiversity are like, the traditional use of the plants that have usually been found along with olive trees and the need to keep the water points that appear in olive groves.

Finally, it should be noted that we are working on the first oleotourism experiences, with activities such as “The oil of the stars”; we have also designed a variety of interactive routes in some of the demonstrative olive groves. These routes will help visitors to better understand the natural and cultural value of olive groves in Andalusia, and they are available on our website.

Olive Alive in olive growing municipalities. The Olive Alive Municipalities Network

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Government organised an open day during which 45 local councils joined the REMOV after the mayors publicly signed the manifesto of accession. Since then, other municipalities have joined the Network and there currently are 60 members. Since the network started its activity, several events have been organised to disseminate the LIFE Project objectives and results. In addition, Olive Alive has been the subject of many environmental events at local level.

In the spring of 2018, the REMOV organised the first drawing contest “Draw you living olive grove”, and hundreds of schoolchildren from throughout the province of Jaen drew their idea of a “living olive grove”. The contest concluded when prizes were awarded at the auditorium of the Terra Oleum Museum in Geolit and all schools with awarded drawings were present at the ceremony. Given its success, it is expected that the second edition will be launched during the first months of 2019.

Finally, an event to commemorate the creation of the Network has been planned for 2019. The municipalities that belong to the REMOV will participate in it and their representatives will receive a plaque and will have the chance to plant a tree in the project’s dissemination olive grove in Geolit, as a symbol of their commitment to the project objectives.

**Communicating and disseminating the values of Olive Alive**

In order to make Olive Alive a participative project, to disseminate its demonstration value and to ensure its replicability, it is essential to transmit its objectives, actions and results. To do this, communication is crucial. With this goal in mind, Olive Alive has been present in the media, at scientific fora, working groups, institutional events or sectoral fairs. Moreover, a series of specific informative actions are planned targeting olive farmers, scientists, conservationists and the general public.

After the official presentation of the LIFE project in April 2006, a communication plan was established. Since then, many press releases have been generated, with a significant impact on media such as Radio Televisión Española, Canal Sur, Diario Jaén, Agencia EFE, 20 minutos, La Vanguardia, Mercacei, Olimerca and Oleoxauen, as well as other radio stations and press media, both general and specialised in the oil sector. Among the news and reports made for television, Agrosfera of the second channel of
the national public television (TVE) is worth mentioning, as well as numerous news reports broadcasted on the regional public television (Canal Sur Televisión) and our presence in the programme “Campechanos” of the same channel. With regard to radio, news reports on the national and regional public radio stations (Radio 5 and Canal Sur Radio) and on other stations such as SER, Onda Cero and Onda Local Andalucía.

The project has also been disseminated through the partners’ own channels. For example, the project has been the focus of an article in “Aves y Naturaleza” magazine, which is handed out by SEO/BirdLife to all of its 12,000 members and to many renowned stakeholders of the environmental sphere. Furthermore, several news reports have been published in the organisation’s website (with over a million visitors annually) and in periodic newsletters. Similarly, pieces of information have been published through other partners’ own channels (University of Jaen, Spanish National Research Council and Regional Government of Jaen).

To date, we have participated in 33 events, including seminars, fairs, conferences and technical workshops, such as the Terra Madre fair – Salone del Gusto, organised by Slow Food in Turin (Italy), or the 1st Iberian Meeting on Agroecological Research that took place in Evora (Portugal). In addition, we attend other events for the general public, where we’ve had the opportunity to disseminate the nature of the objectives pursued by the project, such as the 1st International Iberian Lynx Fair (Filynx) in Andújar (Jaen) or the 14th Scientific Marathon of the Experimental Station of Arid Zones of the Spanish National Research Council in Almería. Finally, we have celebrated several international days, such as the European Natura 2000 Day or the Bird Day, when we carry out different activities at some of the demonstration olive groves of the project.

Olive Alive is also present on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube) and an electronic newsletter has been published every month since the beginning of 2017. The Olive Alive LIFE Project has been selected by EASME as a model project on its professional LinkedIn network. Similarly, it has been selected to appear in the social media channel of the European Commission.

Finally, it should be noted that the Project has been presented and discussed in the meeting held by communication managers of the BirdLife Europe federation, with partner organisations of SEO/BirdLife in every member
This work started with a search for projects related to the objectives of Olive Alive LIFE project. The work was aimed at identifying both project results and lessons learnt that could help to optimise the project’s actions, as well as establishing synergies to increase its demonstrative value and replicability. Several LIFE projects were identified, both already finished and ongoing, and contact was made with them to that end. Similarly, several Horizon 2020 projects were identified. Results and lessons learnt, as well as their methodological approaches, are a reference to compare results, improve the demonstration value and optimise the approach and implementation of the preparatory and conservation actions.

Regarding LIFE programme, the database of funded projects was examined, with particular attention to those

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Networked Olive Alive

Networking is crucial to disseminate the Project results and the demonstration value of the good practices carried out. Furthermore, networking is an excellent way to encourage participation. Exchanging ideas and experiences is a priority in order to achieve the objectives of Olive Alive. This is why we make efforts to meet and establish relationships with professionals and institutions that are researching and working on issues related to olive farming, biodiversity, oil consumption, ecosystem restoration, environmental problems in olive farming, etc.
projects focused on the protection of biodiversity in agrosystems. Some of the projects, which worked on the enhancement of biodiversity in olive groves and implemented some restoration measures, were selected. The study of these projects (some of them had already been reviewed during the preparation stage of the proposal) shows that, although the approach to biodiversity measurement in Olive Alive LIFE project is original, differentiated and addressed towards the achievement of very specific objectives, results obtained and lessons learnt, as well as the methodological approaches, were useful as a reference to compare results, to improve the demonstration value of the project and to optimise the outline and development of the preparatory and conservation actions.

On the other hand, the presence of the project in fora such as the “Olives” Civil Dialogue Group of the Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development (CDG Olives), has been a good opportunity to disseminate information on the project and to establish interesting contacts with people and institutions throughout the EU.

At local level, the Olive Alive Municipalities Network has also been a very effective working tool to approach the public administration, associations and enterprises locally.

Scientific work is equally essential for the exchange of information. In this context, we are currently in contact and exchange information with several projects, such as “CUVRo olivar” and “Diverfarming” and foundations, and have organised several workshops on biodiversity, consumption and ecosystem services.
In September 2017, a trip to Crete was made, having the opportunity to participate in the "Climate Changing Agriculture" International Conference held in Chania and to visit two projects with which previous contact had been established. We met the project managers and we visited some of the working plots to learn more about the initiatives developed. A commitment was made to share information and advice in the future. Another trip took place in September 2018, when we visited different LIFE projects in Italy, such as the LIFE Granatha and the LIFE Vitisom. We also made contact with some olive growing projects such as “Frantoio del Parco”, which is recovering old abandoned olive groves and working with local communities.

All these activities have significantly contributed to strengthen networking and to highlight that the Olive Alive LIFE project objectives represent a great added value to the LIFE programme due to their originality, their demonstration potential and replicability. In addition, it draws attention to the fact that linking biodiversity and profitability is a novel approach that is generating many expectations in the agrifood sector.
3 Olive Alive
in figures

- 20 demonstrative olive groves (3,604 ha in land stewardship), selected following experimental criteria that ensure their representativeness and therefore the project’s replicability and demonstration value.
- 8,936 surveys conducted, 262,676 entries of flora and fauna and 686 flora species, 165 bird species and 58 ant species identified in the olive groves of the project. It is probably the most detailed and largest study on the biodiversity of the olive grove in Europe. It has provided scientific data on the status of pre-operational biodiversity which, on the one hand, has made it possible to design appropriate Action Plans, to obtain precise data to assess the effectiveness of conservation actions and to have a scientific basis on which to design the certification process. On the other hand, it has confirmed a premise of the project: olive groves are still rich in biodiversity, they have a great potential for its recovery and they are a key agrosystem to halt biodiversity loss in the EU.
- 512 volunteer applications, 19 volunteer camps plus a corporate volunteer camp with a duration of 7 days each and 250 volunteers from 10 countries. An average score of 9.1 out of 10 in the participants’ assessments. The volunteering programme can be considered a success; it has gone beyond initial expectations and proves that volunteering in agrosystems is a good conservation tool which can be replicated in other crops.
• 18,000 woody plants, 2,600 m² of native grasses and 17,000 m² of barley have been planted. 8 ponds for amphibians, 20 water troughs, 111 nest boxes, 18 perches for birds of prey, 16 bat boxes, 95 insect hotels and 88 metres of stone walls have been created. The specific restoration actions, mostly implemented by volunteers, are progressing as scheduled and are having a great demonstration effect on other projects outside the LIFE project.
• 3,200 surveys conducted among extra virgin olive oil consumers committed to biodiversity conservation from Spain, United Kingdom, Germany and Denmark. The results will reveal key aspects of the potential Olive Alive olive oil consumer and will make it possible to design the best marketing strategy to ensure the brand’s profitability.
• 68 items of news produced by the project, 143 media appearances, 16 electronic newsletters, an average of 52,200 Twitter impressions per month during the last six months (81,100 in June 2018) and a potential audience of over 6 million people.
• 640 olive growers interviewed in 88 Andalusian municipalities. Most of them are aware of the environmental crisis in their olive groves and believe that the Olive Alive LIFE project may entail a significant improvement for their olive groves.
• 60 municipalities in the REMOV (Olive Alive Municipalities Network); more than 550 people, mainly farmers, have taken part so far in events organised by the Olive Alive project within the network.
• Around 1,500 schoolchildren have participated in the Olive Alive school campaign during the school year 2017/18, while other 45,000 schoolchildren learned about the project and received specific training on the biodiversity of the olive grove within teaching programmes outside the LIFE project.
• 16 lectures in scientific and technical conferences, 5 information days, 5 articles in science magazines for the general public and 2 seminars organised by the Olive Alive LIFE project.
• Networking with 30 organisations and bodies.
• 47 olive farmers showed their interest in enhancing biodiversity in their olive groves.