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LIFE-RELICT

An example of challenges and opportunities of the LIFE Projects in Portugal

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The LIFE Program is a financial instrument of the European Union, that aims to contribute to the implementation and development of European Environment Policies and Strategies. Since 1992, the year in which it started, it has already financed 4600 projects in Europe. Within the LIFE program, there are a number of priority areas for funding. We highlight the ones included in "Nature and Biodiversity", which have dominated the projects financed in Portugal, and the ones related to climate action. The first group have more than 70 applications approved to date in Portugal, contrasting with the two applications related to climate change. The "Nature and Biodiversity" projects focus at Natura 2000 Network with the main objective of execute management actions that contribute to the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives. Although not designed to do so, these projects are often intimately linked to scientific research, with important results in terms of both ecological knowledge and biodiversity management.

Approved in 2016, the LIFE-RELICT project is an example of a project in the field of "Nature and Biodiversity". This conference will present the general features of this Project, the main challenges faced in the application process and the developments in terms of acquired knowledge. In this sense, we will present: 1. the main results obtained in the study of *Prunus lusitanica* corology, with the increase of the area known for this species; 2. The results obtained in the study of the natural regeneration of *Rhododendron ponticum* in the south of Portugal, which allowed to recognize the great limitations in germination and installation of new plants.