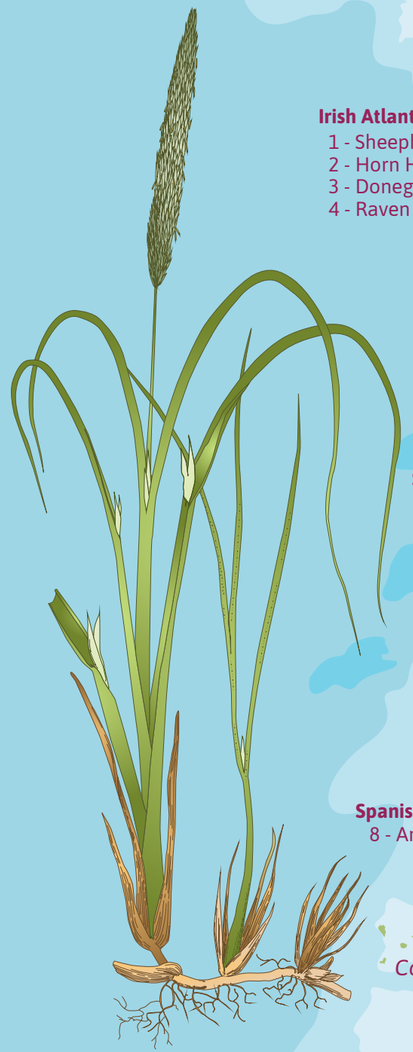
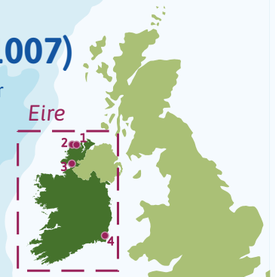
LIFE INSULAR (LIFE20 NAT/ES/001007)

Integrated strategy for sustainable management of insular habitats in Natura 2000 islands of the Atlantic Ocean





Irish Atlantic region:

1 - Sheephaven SAC
2 - Horn Head and Rinclevan SAC
3 - Donegal Bay (Murvagh) SAC
4 - Raven Point Nature Reserve SAC

Spanish Atlantic region:

5 - Complexo húmido de Corrubedo SAC
6 - Complexo Ons - O Grove SAC
7 - Illas Cies SAC

Spanish Macaronesian region:

8 - Archipiélago Chinijo SAC

www.lifeinsular.eu

USC IBADER Instituto de Biodiversidade Agraria e e Desenvolvemento Rural

XUNTA DE GALICIA | DIRECCIÓN XERAL DE PATRIMONIO NATURAL

An Roinn Tithíochta, Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

MINISTERIO PARA LA TRANSICIÓN ECOLÓGICA Y EL RETO DEMOGRÁFICO | ORGANISMO AUTÓNOMO PARQUES NACIONALES

Tragsa Grupo Tragsa

COILLTE

LIFE Insular develops an integrated transnational strategy between Ireland and Spain for the restoration of insular habitats in Natura 2000 islands of the Atlantic Ocean, spread across the Atlantic and Macaronesian Regions

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Islands of the Atlantic Ocean

The islands of the Atlantic Ocean are one of the areas with the greatest biodiversity in the EU, motivated by the combination of climatic conditions, edaphic and coastal dynamics, factors that determine that these areas host a very high diversity of habitat types and species included in the Directives 92/43/EEC and 2009/147/EC, many of which are considered of priority conservation. The insular ecosystems generally present shared environmental problems, being extremely threatened and, consequently, also the habitats present in them, which make up complex mosaics that present joint patterns of fragmentation and vulnerability, nowadays aggravated by global change.

LIFE INSULAR project

LIFE INSULAR is a project that aims to implement an integrated transnational strategy between Spain and Ireland for the restoration of insular habitats (2130*, 4030) on the islands of the Atlantic Ocean spread over the Atlantic and Macaronesian biogeographical regions, promoting their favourable conservation status and increasing their resilience as the main measure of adaptation to current global changes. For this purpose, LIFE INSULAR has chosen 8 Spanish and Irish Natura 2000 SACs located on 5 different islands from both member states.

Threats over island habitats

It has been recognized that the most endangered habitats of the Atlantic Ocean islands are the dune ecosystems (2130*) and their contact habitats (4030), on which 4 main threats causes them an unfavourable-bad conservation status in most of the LIFE INSULAR's involved territories.

T1 Senescent forest plantations made from the 1930s to the 1970s caused a significant reduction of former areas covered by insular habitats, and nowadays are functioning as a source of encroaching trees on adjacent habitats

T2 Plant IAS are seriously affecting the composition and structure of every targeted Spanish island habitat, so the situation is critical and urgent measures are necessary

T3 Recreational/tourist activities cause some negative effects because of uncontrolled traffic of visitors on the structure, functionality, and future prospects of insular habitats

T4 Climate change impact is expected to be high, as island habitats are under greater risk than other continental ecosystems, increasing the effects of all the aforementioned threats and therefore affecting the future prospects of all island habitats

LIFE INSULAR objectives

In these insular territories, the project will aim to a favourable conservation status of island habitats in 276.6 ha: 165.6 ha corresponding to 2130* habitat (23.5%) and another 117.0 ha to 4030 habitat (42.5%). These results will be achieved through best practices of proven effectiveness that will be applied on insular habitats to address common conservation problems and threats from a transnational approach:

1. Increasing the area covered by insular habitats, through elimination of old forest plantations and cultivation of characteristic plant species of insular habitats for their subsequent restoration.
2. Improving the structure and functions of insular habitats through elimination of old forest plantations, encroached trees, and the control of competition against plant IAS, without using herbicides.
3. Improving the future prospects of insular habitats through the improvement of habitat knowledge and protection measures against anthropogenic pressures.
4. Informing and raising public awareness to the general public about the relevance, natural values and ecosystem services provided by insular ecosystems.
5. Transferring the measures developed in the project for their replicability at EU level through specific replication and networking strategies.

The project will have great demonstrative and pilot characters, allowing a high replicability and transferability to other European island territories, or even worldwide, as it is considered that the selected insular territories will be representative from 2 biogeographical regions where European Natura 2000 islands of the Atlantic Ocean are located.

Duration: 01/09/2021 – 31/12/2026 - **Total budget:** 5.274.922 € - **EU contribution (75%):** 3.956.056 €