

Editor's note

Beginning and End

The ECOSAL ATLANTIS project comes to an end on the 31st of August this year. This is just an administrative end. Afterwards, the project partners, along with all the other organizations that have been associated with the project all this time will continue to promote the traditional Atlantic salt works along the Route "Traditional Saltmaking: the Atlantic Route".

Over the three and half years of the project we have debated common strategies intensely, we have overcome many obstacles, arrived at agreements after occasional disagreements, we established synergies and promoted the salt works and saltpans of the Atlantic in many different forums, we worked hard to research, appraise and create inventories of these unique salt sites. We conducted joint training activities, organized work sessions, conferences and workshops on the world of salt, we thought about what guidelines should be followed to manage the natural and cultural heritage of these sites and examined their tourism potential. In all, we enhanced the value of the traditional salt works of the Atlantic and promoted their conservation and understanding.

As a result of this project, co-financed by European Union funds, we achieved many tangible results, some are very prominent such as the web portal with information on Atlantic salt works heritage (which includes both geographic data and cultural heritage associated with traditional saltpans) or the complete monograph on the Atlantic salt works or even the guidelines for eco-tourism, based on extensive studies and field work ... and also the Route.

From now on it will not be just us who started the ECOSAL ATLANTIS project, but also other organizations that have come to know the work of the partners and the results of the project. Together we will endeavour to develop the tourism potential of these unique Atlantic sites, whose heritage we have shared for centuries.

We must inevitably name the partner organizations that made this project possible: Ecomusee du Marais Salant (Ilha de Ré, France), Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (DR17) – Geolitomer - Universidade de Nantes (France), Communauté de communes Océan – Marais de Monts (Le Daviaud, L'Ecomusée du Marais Vendéen, France), Communauté de communes de l'île d'Oléron (França), Cap Atlantique - Musée Intercommunal des Marais Salant (France), ACASI (Spain), ANDANATURA (Spain), Bournemouth University (UK), Universidade de Aveiro (Portugal), Câmara Municipal de Aveiro – Museu da Cidade (Portugal), Câmara Municipal de Rio Maior (Portugal), Câmara Municipal de Figueira da Foz (Portugal) e Diputación Foral de Alava (leader of the project).

August will mark the end of one cycle and the beginning of another period for the common strategy of promoting and enhancing the traditional salt pans of the Atlantic. The END of a period and the BEGINNING of another.

BELEN ESCOBAR SOCA
General Coordinator of the project ECOSAL ATLANTIS

Points of interest:

- ECOSAL ATLANTIS project results
- The opinions of partners

Inside this issue:

Editor's note	1
ECOSAL ATLANTIS project results	2
Partners opinions	6

ECOSAL ATLANTIS project results

The *ECOSAL ATLANTIS* project "Ecotourism in the Atlantic saltpans: a strategy for integral and sustainable development" was created with the aim of cooperatively attaining integral and sustainable tourism development, based on the natural and cultural heritage of the Atlantic salt-works. After three and a half years of the project which is drawing to a close, we obtained many concrete results which are listed here in detail:



- The **Web portal** that brings together **inventory** information of the geographic data and the cultural heritage of the saltpans of the Atlantic.

This website <http://ecosal-atlantis.univ-nantes.fr>, which was developed by the University of Nantes, in close collaboration with LETG Géolittomer Nantes-CNRS, brings together both the inventory of geographic data, as well as the inventory of cultural heritage associated with the practice of salt production in the Atlantic regions. The records of the United Kingdom, where evidence of former salt production was found, are also included.

The information collected on this site will facilitate the work with plans for the utilization of salt-enclaves and determine guidelines for the protection of patrimony.



- **Evaluation of the biodiversity** of the Atlantic salt-works based on a methodology devised jointly, that associates scientific bibliography, space and areal remote sensing and field work

Geolittomer - CNRS, as head of the action but also the Bournemouth University and the other project partners were the architects of this comprehensive biodiversity assessment task, which enabled us to create a database on the composition of plant and bird populations and on their abundance and spatial distribution, linking all this to the management of salt-producing sites.

- The establishment of **guidelines** for the development of **eco-tourism** and to propose appropriate means for observing nature in salt-producing sites.

Taking the study of the assessment of the biodiversity of Atlantic salt-producing sites a starting point, we established some guidelines (collected in a manual that will be published by Geolittomer - CNRS) on the management of salt-producing sites that favour the development of eco-tourism.



- **Book on the salt-producing sites of the Atlantic regions**

This whole monograph, in four languages (EN, ES, PT, FR) on salt-producing sites of the Atlantic regions brings together the most relevant information on the salt-producing areas of the Atlantic for which there is evidence. The book has four parts, the first is dedicated to the production of salt, the second to the cultural aspects and to the heritage of salt, the third to the biodiversity of saltpans and the fourth is a route of the sites that make up “Traditional Saltmaking: the Atlantic Route”.

This publication will include, among others, unpublished documents, some from private collections, as well as a map of the salt-producing regions of the Atlantic. The action was led by Geolittomer - CNRS.

- Creation of the **Route “Traditional Saltmaking: the Atlantic Route”** to which numerous organizations, who were not originally part of the project, have now joined from Spain, France, Portugal and the United Kingdom.

The Route is registered in the four languages of the project at the Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market of the European Union (OHIM), with the following designations: “Sal Tradicional, Ruta del Atlántico”, “Sel Traditionnel Route de l’Atlantique”, “Traditional Saltmaking: the Atlantic Route” “Sal Tradicional Rota do Atlântico”.

The Route will be managed in the future by an association responsible for managing and promoting the cultural route “Traditional Saltmaking: the Atlantic Route”, for developing studies that have the salt-producing sites of the Atlantic as their reference, to be a source of proposals and discussion with reference to these spaces with stakeholders and agents and to promote the Route to the public and socio-economic operators. It features an interactive brochure (accessible through the [project website](#)) with the partners of the project that will be adapted to include new additions to the Route.

- **Knowledge and appreciation**, by the public and the people responsible, of the Atlantic salt-producing heritage, both in the present and in the future.

We carried out the important work of making the project known throughout its progression, so that the heritage of Atlantic salt-production of the may be appreciated. To this end, we used several instruments:

- Web page of the project (developed by the University of Aveiro) <http://ecosal-atlantis.ua.pt/>
- Newsletters and press package in 4 languages (available on the





ECOSAL ATLANTIS web page)

- Participation in tourism fairs, symposia and conferences.
- Organization of an international conference in Álava, on the results of the project.
- Articles in the press and specialized journals on the project and its results.
- Seminars and exhibitions organized by the partners, on the project and its results.
- Workshops relating to the world of salt regarding "food, health and nutrition", "special needs of the public with disabilities" and "clays, health and well-being", organized by the University of Aveiro.



• Educational kit of the salt pans of the Atlantic

This is a tool of active mediation and is targeted towards children between the ages of 6 and 14 years, which will allow them to interpret an actual salt-producing site as well as the Atlantic salt-producing sites that are part of the Route. It was developed by Le Daviaud.

- **Creation of means of interpreting** salt-producing sites belonging to the Route (rehabilitation and conservation of buildings and other elements linked to salt, as well as improving access and the development of itineraries).

Many of the project's salt-producing sites rehabilitated their salt-producing heritage, in order to adapt their natural sites to guided tours offered within the Route "Traditional Saltmaking: the Atlantic Route".

- Improvement and **conservation** of the wealth and **biodiversity** of salt-producing sites.

In order to preserve the natural ecosystems of these environment we carried out actions that will allow the implementation of eco-tourism within the Route.

- Identification of **best practices in the production geared to tourism** and the interpretation of **traditional Atlantic salt-producing sites**.

The implementation of the workshop on good interpretation practices, organized by Diputación Foral de Alava allowed for the exchange of experiences on guided visits to the natural environment and the establishment of a manual of good interpretation practices. Moreover, the common training program and practical pilot experience, implemented by the Municipality of Aveiro, outlined best practices to establish salt



production with tourism in mind.

- Creation of **synergies with other salt-works**.

As a consequence of the development of the project's activities, synergies were generated with other salt works that enriched the actions of the project (monographs on the saltpans, inventories of geographic data, biodiversity assessment of the salt-works, etc..), allowed for the dissemination of the project in many forums (we highlight the seminar in Morocco) and new partners were integrated into the Route.

- The establishment of some **guidelines for heritage management** of salt-producing sites, which will allow for the preservation salt-heritage and the development of these enclaves.
- Design of a series of **indicators** that allow for the **analysis of the tourism potential** of salt-working sites and the enhancement of the region.

In addition to these short-term results that were achieved under the project, there are other expected outcomes in the future, such as the recognition of the Route "Traditional Saltmaking: the Atlantic Route" by the Committee of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, or the use of the instruments created under the project that can be applied to other geographical contexts, to give just a few examples.

DIPUTACION FORAL DE ALAVA
Project Leader



The partners opinion



Over these three years, transnational exchanges have been rich and frequent. This allowed us to exchange good practices and build new instruments to optimize the management of our sites. Better knowledge of other sites enables us to enrich the content of our visits for our visitors. The cultural itinerary "Traditional Saltmaking: the Atlantic Route", created during the ECOSAL ATLANTIS project, will allow us to keep up these exchanges and actions. Many new sites have already adopted this concept; this is the birth of a strong, meaningful and dynamic network!

Benoit Poitevin

Director

Ecomusée du marais salant



The Eco-museum du Marais vendéen, le Daviaud focuses on the history of the Vendée marshes (Brittany) and on its inhabitants and their activities, as a regional museum that explains the relationship between man and the environment. The production of salt and the whole heritage associated with it are part of this story. To this end, the ECOSAL ATLANTIS project allowed for a better understanding of this wealth, especially with regard to biodiversity, and gave it prominence through a large exhibition called "Quand le Marais is dévoilé" (When the marsh is revealed), held in 2012, and the publication of the work "Regard sur le Marais breton naturaliste vendéen" (A naturalist look on the marshes of the Vendée). In addition to this knowledge, it was also important to create tools to enhance their worth and disseminate their value to the public. With this in mind, the *salorge*, where salt is stored traditionally, is in the process of being renovated, and in implementing this work, we are contributing to the heritage inventory. This project is primarily a means of sharing and discovery of other places and other cultures that bring new perspectives on this subject and on methods of enhancing it.

Annie Josse (Head of the heritage sites)

Ecomusée de Marais Vendéen - Le Daviaud



ECOSAL ATLANTIS, as a transnational cooperation program, was a unique opportunity to discover French and European salt works sites, previously known only through articles or information leaflets. Taking into account the diversity of these sites and the disparity both in the manner and extent to which they are explored and how they are used in tourism, it was possible to observe the common approaches or characteristics of each partner and the way in which each of them enhances this heritage and how these sensitive salt-producing areas are appreciated.

Through involvement in the ECOSAL ATLANTIS project, the Museum des Marais Salants benefited from the necessary resources and time for the construction of projects of common interest such as the creation of the pedagogical kit, the research into the iconography and creation of tables in the reference work on the salt works of the Atlantic. It facilitated the field work of the French partners in activity 6 (Biodiversity). The different forms of enhancing the resources of the salt works, which were put into action within the renovation project of the Museum des Marais Salants, also benefited from the ECOSAL ATLANTIS program: the development of historical cartography of the salt works of Guerande, the restoration of an artefact of salt transport from the beginning of the twentieth century and the creation

of interpretation instruments for a salt washing implement, which is an impressive element integrated in the route of the new museum.

Gildas Buron
Musée de Marais Salants



The ECOSAL ATLANTIS project is, above all, a great multicultural exchange that allowed geographically distant locations to get to know each other better, and to share a common theme: the traditional harvesting and culture of salt. Although each site has its own characteristics, the various collaborations proved especially that each individual wished to be part of a common goal: the appreciation of this ancient eco-tourism heritage of the salt pans of the Atlantic. In Port des Salines, on the island of Oléron, there has been great progress, thanks to this European cooperation project: the exhibition "Sel à vie", the rehabilitation of the interpretation route, the inventory of resources associated with salt, etc...

Emilie Drouyer
CDC Ile d'Oléron
Marie Duverger
Ecomusée de Port des Salines



The Associação dos Amigos das Salinas de Interior had great satisfaction in actively participating in a project that seemed to definitely put the European Atlantic coast salt marshes on the touristic and patrimonial map. We managed to find and value a common identity within the various salt pans while maintaining the individuality of each, emphasizing the diversity of its natural and cultural values within the universality of salt. This enhanced the authenticity, while adapting at the same time to the demands of today's market for eco-tourism and artisanal saltmaking.

Jesús Carrasco & Katia Hueso
Asociación de Amigos de las Salinas de Interior



The Fundación Espacios Naturales de Andalucía (Andanatura) acquired, through its participation in the ECOSAL ATLANTIS project, a vast knowledge of the salt pans that comprise the Andalusian Atlantic area and who participated in the project: Salinas Romanas de Iptuci, Salinas San Vicente, Salinas Santa María de Jesús (Cádiz) e Salina Biomaris (Huelva), all located in areas of a special tradition in saltmaking. Under the project, Andanatura addressed the issue of salt industry, studying and defining the successful business model of traditional saltmaking and the need to incorporate eco-tourism as a mechanism to improve profitability in order to ensure the survival of this ancient traditional industry. In this sense, Andanatura hopes to continue working on several projects that are at this point in a resolution phase.

Dolores Alcon Mestre
Fundación Espacios Naturales de Andalucía - Andanatura



In the UK, we created a heritage database of almost 700 sites where salt-working was once conducted. We examined some of the biodiversity issues and contributed to the sustainability guidelines. The Atlantic Traditional Salt-making Route was established based on five regions with two in England, and one each in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. To ensure a legacy for the project, a new association is being formed to develop and maintain the Route. The process of salt production is very often different in the UK from our partner countries, as it relied on boiling rather than solar evaporation. Nevertheless, it has been a great success to work on this topic within a multinational context.

Professor Mark Brisbane
Bournemouth University



The project allowed for an integrated approach with regard to the saltpans, by analysing these areas as places with a natural, cultural and historical heritage and it assisted in the exploration of a set of resources and activities that promote sustainable territorial development. Being part of European territorial cooperation projects has afforded the University of Aveiro the possibility to develop a network that promotes the sharing of expertise and knowledge of other cultures and realities associated with salt production. The project organised workshops on the resources of the saltpans, on the development of inclusive tourism activities and the implementation of infrastructures to support visits that are accessible to all.

University of Aveiro



The ECOSAL ATLANTIS project led to the creation of a set of analytical instruments and actions that allowed for a better understanding and appreciation of the salt-work sites, based on the cultural and natural heritage of each site while enhancing their potential for tourism and local development.

The main results therefore include inventories and the definition of management guidelines that will allow for the establishment of directional and action strategies that depend on sustaining diversity and supporting the establishment of the Atlantic Salt Route as an integrator and transmitter of a common identity.

Municipality of Aveiro - Aveiro City Museum



The ECOSAL ATLANTIS project had a very positive impact on the Rio Maior saltpans. It allowed for sustainable development and increased local dynamics, with new products and foreseeable success in tourism. The visiting conditions improved and the number of visitors grew from around 8,000 per year before the project to about 20,000 in 2012. The placement of tourism signs (funded project) was decisive as well as the placement of interpretive panels. This also allowed for the enhancement of Ecomuseu Salinas de Rio Maior, which was awarded the Geoconservation Prize in 2012 by PROGEO and has been included in the Route of Mines and Points of Mining and Geological Interest in Portugal.

Municipality of Rio Maior

The salt works in Figueira da Foz have been a reference in the economic policies and the economy of our country throughout its history as a nation. In the past, the exploitation of salt in the Mondego estuary had a great significance in the local economy. In fact, the salt pans provided livelihoods for 3,000 families, which corresponded to approximately 10,000 people who were directly dependent on income from this activity. However, the 350,000 tonnes of salt produced in the 1950s went down to 80,000 tonnes in 1997, a sign of the slump that has affected Portuguese salt production. The various European Community projects that the City Council of Figueira da Foz has participated in, over these last 13 years, have allowed the activity of producing salt to continue, and has fostered studies to reform the traditional management of the salt pans. ECOSAL ATLANTIS has allowed us the possibility of looking at these territories as interconnected spaces where nature, culture and tourism are starting points for a unique moment of observation, taste, fun and passion.



Municipality of Figueira da Foz - Salt Museum

