

Editor's Note

Points of interest:

- Editor's note
- Project profile and deadline
- Partner organizations involved
- Implementation of the structuring axis of the project: "Sal Tradicional Ruta del Atlántico" (Traditional Salt Route of the Atlantic)

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Starting!

In any language starting is always a beautiful word, because this word is also generally associated with ideas of hope, innovation, improvement and future.

Starting a project is initiating a dream, in this case a collective dream of people and institutions united by the goal of creating a salt route of the Atlantic, as it is envisaged in the INTERREG IVB Atlantic Area. The central idea of this route is based on the appreciation of the natural and cultural heritage of salt-producing sites as vectors of regional development.

This is an ambitious goal that only makes sense if along the next three years, starting now, we are able to create the means and instruments that will serve and attract other sites of our geographic area, giving substance to a real route, with a well defined identity and a common programme created on the basis of participatory cooperation.

Although this is not a new idea it is an idea that has never been implemented in a consistent manner. This is why we have special responsibilities, but also because we know that salt is a very strong economic and cultural heritage, that has linked sites and activities of the Atlantic and that, still today, is a habitat that constitutes support for species and communities in this geographical area. For these reasons, salt and the Atlantic salt pans constitute a product that, perhaps more than any other, deserves to be connected as a route from Britain to Andalusia, including the United Kingdom, across dominions of common history, culture, landscape and biodiversity of the Atlantic area.

Let's start then!

Renato Neves

National coordinator of ECOSAL ATLANTIS in Portugal

ECOSAL ATLANTIS project

The "ECOSAL ATLANTIS project - Ecotourism in the Atlantic salt-marshes: a strategy for integral and sustainable development" is a transnational cooperation project under the European Programme INTERREG IV B Atlantic Area 2007 - 2013, selected by the Monitoring Committee of the Programme (November 2009), which will receive a co-financing (ERDF) of 65% of the total cost of the project, amounting to € 3,059,754.

*“ECOSAL
ATLANTIS: a
strategy for integral
and sustainable
development”*

In this project, which will take place over 3 years (2010 to 2012), there are 13 partner organizations from 4 countries (Spain, France, Portugal and the United Kingdom) involved: 1 - **Diputación Foral de Alava** (project leader), 2 - Ecomusée du Marais Salant, 3 - Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (DR 17), the 4 - Communauté de comunes Océan - Marais de Monts, 5 - Communauté de comunes de l'île d'Oléron, 6 - Cap Atlantique, 7 - Asociación Cultural Amigos de las Salinas de Interior, 8 - Fundación Espacios Naturales Protegidos de Andalucía (Andanatura), 9 - Bournemouth University, 10 - University of Aveiro, 11 - the Aveiro Municipality, 12 - the Rio Maior Municipality and 13 - the Municipality of Figueira da Foz.

The main objective of ECOSAL ATLANTIS is to arrive at a joint, integral and sustainable **development in tourism**, based on the cultural and natural **heritage** of traditional **salt-producing areas** of the Atlantic.

The project revolves around three key activities that involve the touristic development of the salt-pans of the Atlantic: Heritage, Territorial Development and Biodiversity and Eco-Tourism. These activities correspond to the four **specific objectives** of the project:

- To establish *guidelines for the management of the cultural and natural heritage* of the salt-producing areas, taking as its starting point a joint data-base of heritage information.

- To assess, appreciate and promote the traditional salt-producing areas of the Atlantic, bringing into contact the various actors through joint, transversal actions.

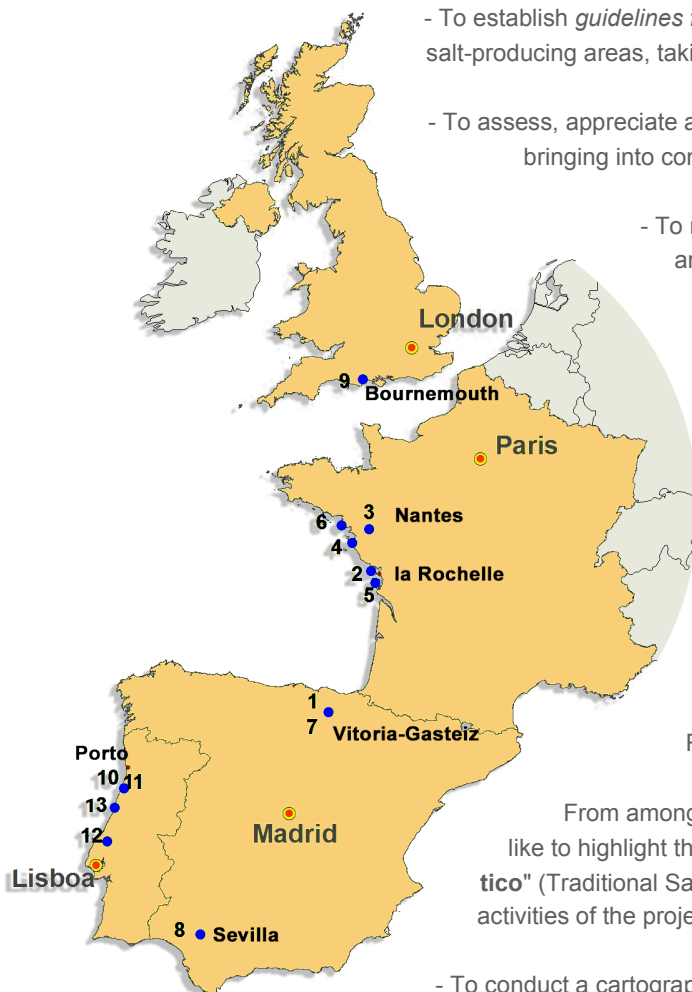
- To maintain or restore the particular habitats of the salt-producing areas in the context of eco-tourism.

- To promote the conservation and understanding of the Atlantic salt-producing areas, through the dissemination of information and the creation of transnational synergies.

Both the general objective and the specific aims of the ECOSAL ATLANTIS project fit into the objective of European territorial cooperation, to conserve and promote all Atlantic heritage of transnational interest. Based on a shared **heritage** (Atlantic salt-marshes), which played an important role in the maritime history of the Atlantic side of Europe, the sustainable and joint development of the Atlantic salt-pans will be strengthened through the implementation of a Route.

From among the various actions to be carried out in the project, we would like to highlight the implementation of the **Route "Sal Tradicional Ruta del Atlántico"** (Traditional Salt Route of the Atlantic), which is the true structuring axis of the activities of the project. Other measures of the project will be:

- To conduct a cartographic inventory, as well as a heritage inventory, and their subsequent integration in a common database.

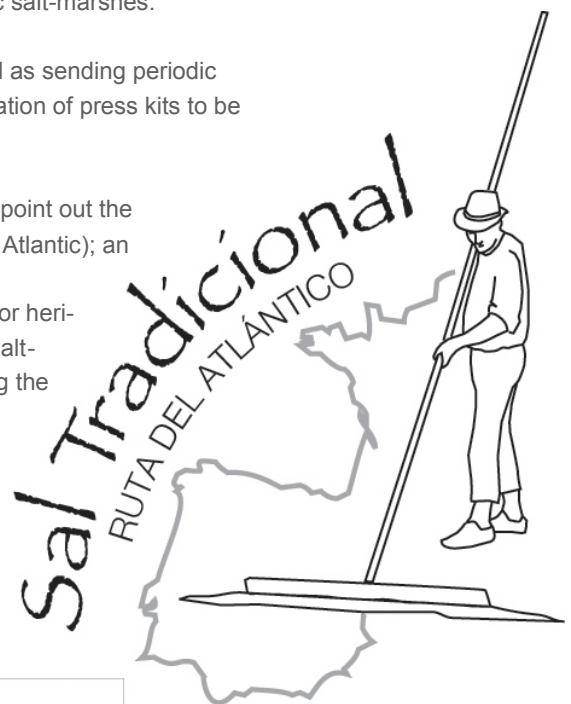


- To establish a common training programme in good production practices that are geared to tourism.
- To organize technical seminars and workshops on heritage (food and health, special needs of the public with disabilities and on the use of clays).
- To conduct a workshop on good interpretation practices.
- To explore measures to promote the Route, both commercially and institutionally: to prepare a Route brochure and to participate in various tourism fairs and activities to propound the recognition of the Route by the Council of Europe.
- To organize the International Conference on Salt, in Alava, in 2012.
- To produce a monograph on the Atlantic salt-pans.
- To create a tool for measurement and interpretation that will allow the public to appreciate the Route (study kits).
- To make the Route known in Morocco.
- To evaluate the biodiversity of the salt-producing areas.
- To establish guidelines for the development of eco-tourism in the Atlantic salt-marshes.
- To create a Web page of the project, targeting the general public, as well as sending periodic newsletters with information on the progress of the project and the preparation of press kits to be sent to the media.

Finally, with regard to the expected results of the project, we would like to point out the **Route "Sal Tradicional Ruta del Atlántico"**(Traditional Salt Route of the Atlantic); an instrument that will encourage integration and regard for the Atlantic salt-producing areas. Additionally, we also intend to generate joint guidelines for heritage management, a valid tool for the analysis of the tourism potential of salt-producing areas, the establishment of integrated guidelines for maintaining the biodiversity of salt-producing areas and facilitate the exchange of experiences and knowledge that will allow for the identification of good practices in various areas of the project.

Ultimately, our intention with the ECOSAL ATLANTIS project is to increase the knowledge and appreciation of the public with regard to the present and the future of the salt-producing heritage of the Atlantic; a symbol of our common transnational heritage.

Belen Escobar Soca
Diputación Foral de Alava

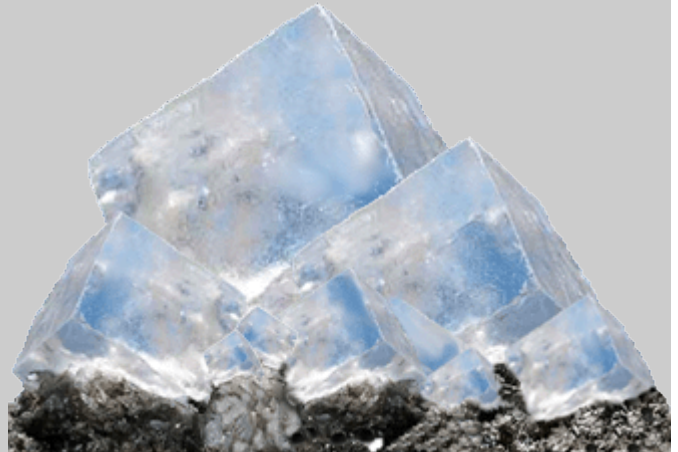


Character

NaCl

One atom of sodium and one atom of chlorine the combination of which form cubic crystalline structures. This is the chemical definition of salt. Having said this and knowing that it is a very abundant element in nature and consequently inexpensive in supermarkets, salt seems to be a banal product. However, the most exciting thing about salt is knowing that beneath the surface of banality, there is a product that was a real motor for the development and generation of wealth in very diverse historical and geographical contexts. It is a product which in terms of significance and economic impact is on a par with gold, coal and oil.

Salt was currency and a magical element present in religions and myths, it was a resource for countries and regions, and it was a monopoly. It served to bless and to curse, was extracted from the earth, obtained by evaporation - by boiling, in the northern latitudes; in the south, by solar evaporation. It created landscapes of salt, some thousands of acres wide, others of only a few square meters. It shaped paths by land and sea. It produced technologies. It accompanies us always because it is essential to our metabolism, but is also present in thousands of industrial processes and compounds. It comes from a past that is so remote we barely know it and will have applications in the future that we cannot even guess at.



Renato Neves

Coordenador nacional do ECOSAL ATLANTIS em Portugal

Calendar activities

Past activities:

- January 25, 2010
Press Conference to present the project (C. M. Aveiro)
- February 3, 2010
Press Conference to present the project (D. F. Alava)
- February 24 - 25, 2010
Project first meeting in Vitória-Gasteiz
- April 14, 2010
Portugal's national coordination meeting in Figueira da Foz

Future activities:

- May 26 - 28, 2010
Biodiversity activities - Meeting in Nantes
- June/July, 2010
Participation in fairs (Sal de Aveiro)
- November, 2010
Partners' assembly meeting (France)



Translation - Universidade de Aveiro