



Networking Synthesis Report

Covering the networking activities from 01/08/2017¹ to 31/07/2024

Reporting Date²

20 to 22 November 2023

PROJECT NAME or Acronym

Zaragoza Aquarium - Europe's Largest River Aquarium

- Networking action with the participation of the Municipality of Águeda and Fluviário de Mora / Municipality of Mora

data of visited project

Project location:	Avenida José Atarés s/n (Recinto EXPO), 50018 Zaragoza
Project start date:	2008
Project end date:	N/A

data of beneficiary

Name Beneficiary:	Acuario de Zaragoza
Contact person:	Carlos Vicente (Conservador)
Postal address:	Avenida José Atarés s/n (Recinto EXPO), 50018 Zaragoza
Telephone:	+34 976 076 606
E-mail:	cvicente@grupoparqueatracciones.com
Project Website:	https://www.acuariodezaragoza.com/

¹ Project start date

² Include the reporting date as foreseen in part C2 of Annex II of the Grant Agreement

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (1 to 2 pages)

As part of the LIFE Águeda project, a delegation from the Municipality of Águeda and Fluviário de Mora / Municipality of Mora attended a networking event and technical visit to the Acuario de Zaragoza from 20 to 22 November. The Acuario, which is the largest river freshwater aquarium in Europe, was inaugurated in 2008 and has more than 70 tanks (2.8 million litres of water) representing the River Nile (Africa), Mekong (Asia), Amazon (America), Murray-Darling (Oceania) and Ebro (Europe). With the main aim of publicising the biodiversity associated with rivers and raising awareness of the threats to river ecosystems, it is possible to see more than 300 species of fish (mostly freshwater), amphibians, reptiles and mammals throughout the exhibition.

The Zaragoza Aquarium is a member of the Iberian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AIZA), the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), also participating in various European programmes (such as the LIFE Invasaqua project) and with technical support to the Government of Aragon in various projects on invasive species and rehabilitation, river conservation, among others. Currently involved in various conservation and nature protection projects, such as the "Project for the conservation of the Pyrenean frog (*Rana pyrenaica*) together with the Government of Aragon", "Project for the reinforcement of populations of the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*) in the Galacho de Juslibol, together with the City Council of Zaragoza", "Project for the Conservation of the Giant Naiad *Margaritifera auricularia* through the reinforcement of the populations of the fritillary fish (*Salaria fluviatilis*) and infection of glochidia in host fish (sturgeon) together with the Government of Aragon" or "Project for the conservation of the madrilla (*Parachondrostoma toxostoma*): study of growth, feeding" together with the Government of Aragon.

Environmental education and awareness-raising among different audiences (schools, associations, or the general public) is also a focus, making it possible to raise awareness of the importance of conserving freshwater ecosystems worldwide. Various workshops are organised for schools, from pre-school to university level: "Exotic species", "Get to know reptiles" and "Discovering sharks". Training sessions for teachers are also organised for this purpose. Throughout the exhibition, visitors are also made aware of the effects of pollution and the problems associated with the presence of invasive alien species. Various environmental enrichment activities are also organised in this space, the most emblematic of which is the diving experience in the central tank (also with the inclusive diving modality).

The Fundación Acuario de Zaragoza por la Biodiversidad (formally presented in 2022) also plays a crucial role in strengthening education and training actions, conservation, research

and awareness-raising and dissemination and interconnection with the Sustainable Development Goals. <https://fundacionacuariodezaragoza.org/>

The training and interconnections with the LIFE project:

Throughout the different training days, the group had the opportunity to take part in various daily routine tasks, such as feeding, cleaning, equipment maintenance, quarantine, laboratory and parameter control as well as getting to know some tasks in terms of the environmental education activities carried out at the centre and the management necessary for the smooth running of this space.

In the case of the Municipality of Águeda, and as part of the project, the River Knowledge Centre (C-Life) will be set up in downtown Águeda. This space will be a vehicle for disseminating the project as well as raising awareness among the community and visitors about the importance of conserving river ecosystems. C-Life will feature three aquariums with species of local ichthyofauna. In this sense, this networking activity, which complemented what was learned in the training held with the Fluviário de Mora (April 2023), was very important for learning new methodologies for the daily management of the aquariums (exhibition and quarantine), equipment and fish (feeding, behaviour) - action D3. However, knowledge was also acquired with regard to environmental education and awareness-raising, and the weight of this component was quite significant within the scope of the LIFE Águeda project - action D2.

The inclusion of the Fluviário de Mora in the project, not only because of the Fluviário's main activity, promoting and disseminating river-related issues to the public, but also because of the focus of the new aquarium dedicated to Amazon species, a biodiversity hotspot, in order to alert visitors, through public awareness, to the importance of biodiversity conservation at global (Amazon), regional (Iberian Peninsula) and local (Vouga basin) level. The networking activity at the Acuario de Zaragoza, an aquarium with the same theme as the Fluviário de Mora, both of which promote the dissemination of biodiversity and the conservation of aquatic ecosystems, was important for sharing knowledge and experience in terms of management, tank maintenance, animal care and environmental education, among others. This is a valuable practice that can result in significant benefits for both institutions.

2. NETWORKING PROGRAM (maximum 2 pages)

The Municipality of Águeda was represented by Marina Ascensão and Beatriz de Carvalho Mendes, while the Fluviário de Mora / Municipality of Mora was represented by Luísa Sousa, Catarina Milhinhos and João Santos. The group was divided up over the three days of training so that the experience could run smoothly, promoting the formation of mixed groups with participants from the two visiting organisations present at the event.

Tabela 1 - Networking visit program

20 November	<p>Joint visit to the facilities with Carlos Vicente (Conservator of the Zaragoza Aquarium), namely the filtration system, pumps and various pieces of equipment, quarantine room, laboratory, kitchen and aquarium backstage;</p> <p>Meeting with Javier González Sanz (Technical Director of the Zaragoza Aquarium) and guided tour of the filtration system;</p> <p>Meeting with Mayte Pozo (Technical Director in charge of the Education department) and visit to the education room / classroom;</p> <p>Group 1 - Quarantine Group 2 - Feeding</p>
21 November	<p>Visiting the auditorium and welcoming a group of schoolchildren for a guided tour; Participating in a guided tour (school groups);</p> <p>Monitoring the feeding routine in the central aquarium;</p> <p>Maintaining, cleaning and renewing the decoration of an aquarium;</p> <p>Group 1 - Aquarium cleaning and maintenance routine Group 2 - Quarantine</p>
22 November	<p>Participation in the Workshop "Reproduction and Transport of Peces and Large Aquariums";</p> <p>Visualisation of the cleaning routine in the central aquarium;</p> <p>Group 1 - Feeding Group 2 - Laboratory and Aquarium cleaning and maintenance routine</p>

3. NETWORKING OUTPUTS

3.1. CONTACTS

People Contacted (as anticipated at the start of the project)

- Javier Gonzalez Sanz: Technical Director of the Acuario de Zaragoza, he is responsible for coordinating the various organisations that manage the activities carried out at the Acuario, and the overall management of the institution;
- Carlos Vicente: Curator of the Acuario de Zaragoza and liaison point for networking; preparation of the schedule of work and activities to be carried out;
- Mayte Pozo Hernández: Head of Education and Communication at the Zaragoza Aquarium, overseeing environmental education during the networking event.

ENTITY	CONTACT NAME	EMAIL	TEL
Acuario de Zaragoza	Javier Gonzalez Sanz	jgonzalez@grupoparqueatracciones.com	+34 976076606
	Carlos Vicente	cvicente@grupoparqueatracciones.com	+34 976076606
	Mayte Pozo	mpozo@grupoparqueatracciones.com	+34 976076606

3.2. REPLICATION/TRANSFER

The visit of the Fluviário de Mora (Mora Municipality) and Águeda Municipality, beneficiary partners of the LIFE Águeda project, to the Acuario de Zaragoza, aims to share knowledge and opportunities in the various areas of activity of the technicians, in a zoological park with multiple aspects and offers for the visiting public. The Acuario de Zaragoza stands out among zoological parks as the largest river aquarium on the European continent. It is privately managed to boost the aquarium's existing activities, which cover areas as diverse as education for the environment, sustainability and science (aimed at children and young people at school or in family groups, as well as the general public or groups belonging to specific niches such as university students from related areas or technicians and professionals from disciplines related to the themes explored by the centre), conservation, animal welfare and communication / dissemination of the actions and activities carried out.

Networking allowed colleagues to exchange knowledge, experiences, best practices and personal development, resulting in valuable learning for all participants in the action.

The links established will lead to the development of shared challenges, new projects and future collaborations. The transfer of knowledge between the three aquariums will be maintained, establishing a network of collaboration (e.g., online forums or workshops), which could result, among other things, in the structuring of staff exchange programmes for constant improvement. In this way, and because of their specific characteristics, each of the organisations involved will be able to contribute unique perspectives and approaches, which will enrich the network thus formed and which, over time, may informally bring together other institutions with compatible characteristics and interested in the themes being worked on. It should be noted that smaller zoological parks, which are not part of networks geared towards more complex and larger establishments, may find themselves alienated or find it difficult to create synergies with their peers. This type of contact is therefore valuable in meeting these needs.

ANNEX - PHOTOS

	
<p>Team from the Fluviário de Mora, Agueda Municipality and Acuario de Zaragoza 22.11.23</p>	<p>General tour of the Acuario de Zaragoza with the Acuario's curator 20.11.23</p>



General aquarium maintenance, filtration systems and thermal balance with the Technical Director of the Zaragoza Aquarium
20.11.23



Training with the environmental education and communication coordinators at Acuario de Zaragoza
20.11.23



Guided tour of the Zaragoza Aquarium
20.11.23



Feeding preparation
21.11.23



Work experience laboratory and quarantine
22.11.23



Monitoring the daily feeding routine in the aquarium
21.11.23

	
<p>Monitoring the work of cleaning a small aquarium 21.11.23</p>	<p>Aquarium maintenance and decoration 21.11.23</p>
	
<p>Attendance at the training workshop "Reproduction and Transport of fish and large acuaries" 22.11.23</p>	<p>Laboratory control routine for the environmental quality values and parameters of aquarium water</p>

ANNEX - COMMUNICATION

Publications on the Internet:

- <https://www.facebook.com/LIFE.AGUEDA>
- <https://www.fluvariomora.pt/noticias/page/2/>
- <https://www.fluvariomora.pt/equipa-do-fluvario-de-mora-realizou-uma-visita-formativa-ao-acuario-de-zaragoza/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/share/AAqBC4Y3akeynL5X/mibextid=WC7FNe>
- <https://www.picuki.com/profile/fluvariomora>