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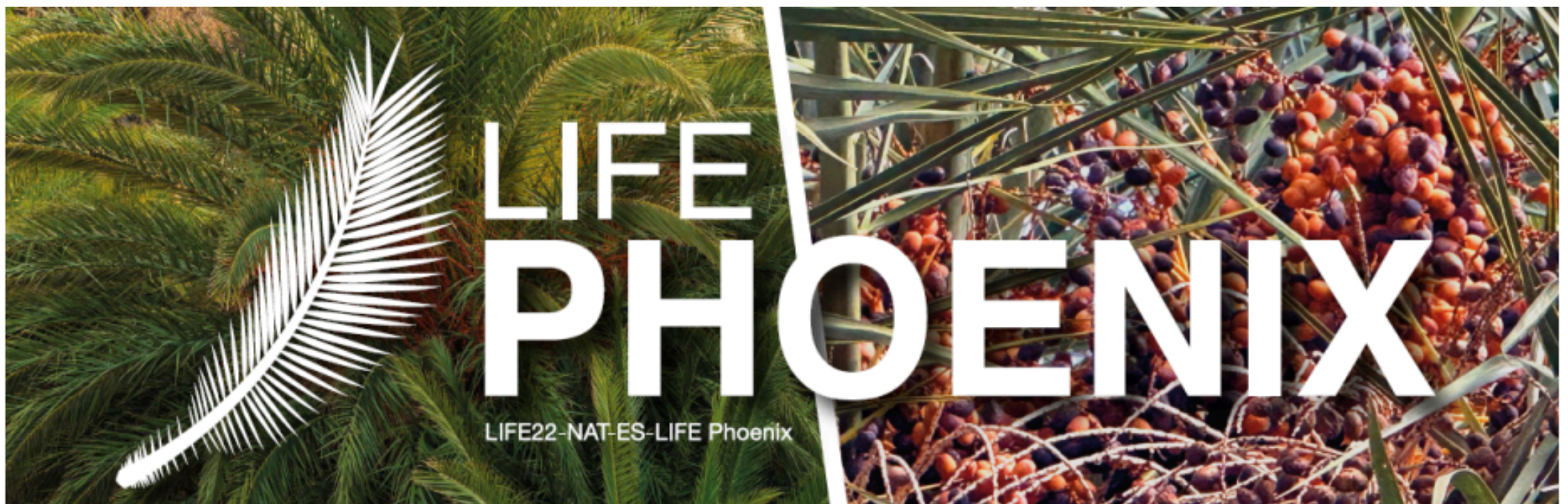
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ISSUE 1



# NEWSLETTER

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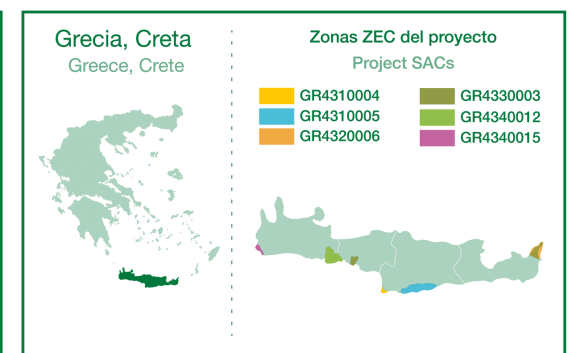
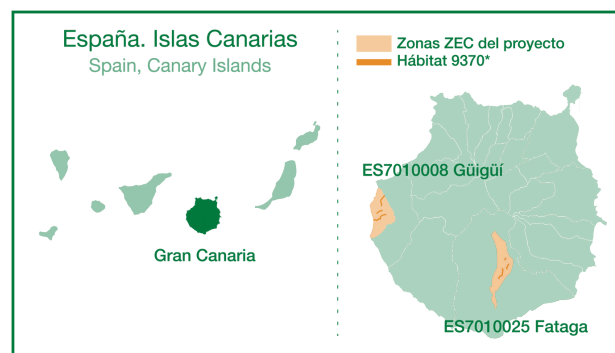
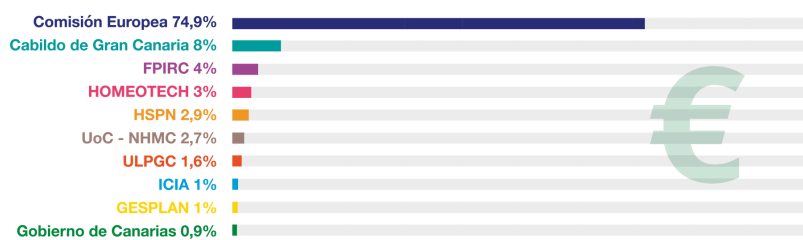


## LIFE Phoenix at a glance

Enlaces / Links



Presupuesto Budget  
3.901.577,38 €



The LIFE Phoenix project brings together different public and private entities, scientific institutions and non-governmental organisations from Spain and Greece with the aim of advancing knowledge, methodologies and procedures aimed at improving the conservation status of the endemic palm groves of Europe, formed by the Canarian palm tree (*Phoenix canariensis*) in the Canary Islands and the Cretan palm tree (*Phoenix theophrasti*) in Greece. These plant formations are included among the priority habitats to be conserved by the European Union, under the habitat designation 9370\* "Palm groves of *Phoenix*". The main shared threats in both regions are related to climate change effects, allochthonous pests and invasive plant species. Other important issues are more directly linked to human activities: in Gran Canaria, hybridisation with *P. dactylifera* due to past bad practices; in Crete, overgrazing and visitor pressure. This LIFE project aims to become an opportunity to implement different methodologies to minimise these threats in natural palm groves and ensure their good conservation status.

### OBJETIVOS OBJECTIVES



**Mejora del hábitat: mitigación del cambio climático, reducción del riesgo de hibridación y reforestación.**

Habitat improvement: climate change mitigation, reduction of hybridisation risk and reforestation.



**Estrategia para combatir plagas y especies exóticas invasoras (EEI).**

Strategy to combat pests and invasive alien species (IAS).



**Estrategia de conservación ex-situ: banco de germoplasma y producción de palmeras de calidad genética.**

Ex-situ conservation strategy: germplasm bank and production of genetic-quality palm trees.



**Reducción de impactos antrópicos directos: sobrepastoreo y presión de visitantes.**

Reduction of direct anthropic impacts: overgrazing and visitor pressure.




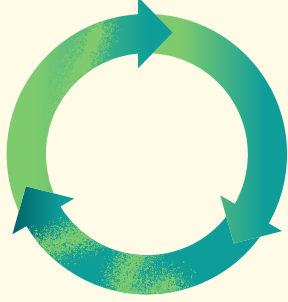
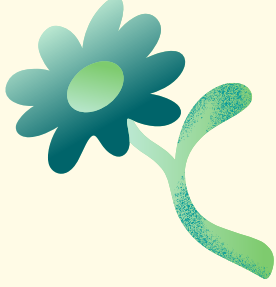
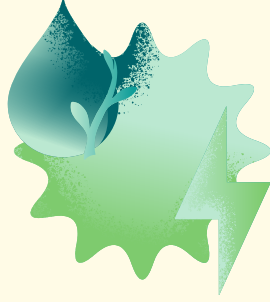

**Gobernanza ambiental, sensibilización y comunicación.**

Environmental governance, awareness raising and communication.

# 1st Monitoring Meeting

The LIFE Phoenix project held its first Monitoring Meeting between the 9th and 11th of April 2024 in Gran Canaria. The event was attended by the monitor appointed by the LIFE Programme of the European Commission, representatives of the island authorities and staff belonging to all the project partners, including a delegation of 6 representatives from Greece.

The technical meeting organised on 9th April in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria by the Council of Gran Canaria allowed reviewing all the technical, administrative and financial aspects developed since the start of the project in July 2023. Subsequently, during the following two days (10th and 11th April), two field visits were made to the intervention areas, in which the palm groves selected for the project in Gran Canaria were visited, within the Natura 2000 Network sites of Fataga and Güigüí, as well as other places of interest.

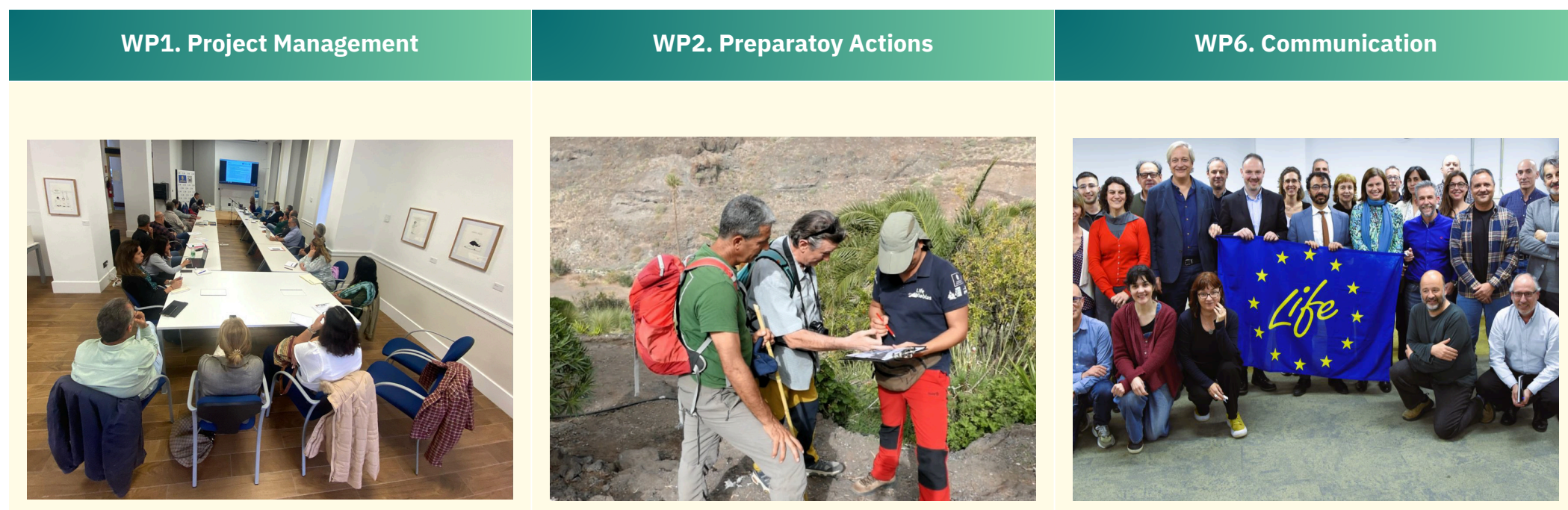
Presentations by all partners	Project Management	Field visits and networking	Technical training	EU monitoring and next steps
				

As a complement to the official meeting, two extra days were organised: Friday 12th April was devoted entirely to a technical training on pests and phytosanitary treatments in natural palm groves, held at the facilities of Vidrieras Canarias and run by partners GOBCAN (DG Agriculture) and ICIA, in collaboration with the public company GMR. Finally, on Saturday 13th, a last technical visit to different areas of interest in Tafira and Santa Brígida took place, guided by staff from the Council of Gran Canaria, ULPGC and external experts collaborating with the project.



# Project performance

LIFE Phoenix is now approaching its first year of development, since its beginning in July 2023. Throughout this first period, the work packages that have achieved the most progress to date are Project Management and Coordination (WP1), Preparatory Actions (WP2), and Communication and Dissemination (WP6). In addition, the first steps have been taken with regard to Monitoring and Evaluation (WP4), as well as Sustainability, Replication and Exploitation of project results (WP5).



A set of field studies are ongoing in both regions (Crete and Gran Canaria) as part of the preparatory actions, in order to establish an updated and more accurate baseline of the project context within the intervention areas. These include the following aspects to be considered for the target palm groves: genetic assessment of the level of hybridisation; studies on pest infestation (*Diocalandra frumenti* and *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*); studies on diversity and abundance of pollinators; assessment of the presence and impact of invasive vegetation; soils and hydrology studies within the project areas in Gran Canaria; anthropogenic impacts (overgrazing and visitor pressure) within the project areas in Crete.

## Highlights

<p><b>Project Management</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Kick off meetings (4th, 10th, 24th Oct 2023).</li> <li>● Partnership Agreement (PA) and Scientific Advisory Board (SAB).</li> <li>● 1st Steering Committee meeting (6th, 8th Nov 2023).</li> <li>● 1st Technical Visit in Crete (Jan 2024).</li> <li>● 1st Technical Activity Report (Jan 2024).</li> <li>● 1st Monitoring Meeting in Gran Canaria (Apr 2024).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Preparatory Actions</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Procurement of authorisations.</li> <li>● Update of baseline information: soils and hydrology, hybridisation, pest infestation, invasive vegetation, anthropogenic impacts, diversity and abundance of pollinators.</li> <li>● Collaboration agreements with public/private entities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communication</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Networking presentations: Kick off (Oct 2023), Madrid (Mar 2024).</li> <li>● LIFE Phoenix logo and website.</li> <li>● Mainstream Media: News in press and website; radio interviews.</li> <li>● Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube (since Oct 2023).</li> <li>● Communication &amp; Dissemination Plan (May 2024).</li> <li>● Products: Project roll-up, first video-pills.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Technical training</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Protocol exchange on <i>Phoenix</i> genetic sampling and analyses.</li> <li>● First technical training on pest detection and control/eradication (<i>Diocalandra frumenti</i> and <i>Rhynchophorus ferrugineus</i>).</li> </ul>

# Fieldwork in Crete

## Genetic sampling

In the framework of the preparatory action regarding research on hybridisation and genetic analysis, 96 samples from leaves were collected from the six palm sites on Crete in order to be sent for analysis in France. In parallel with the same type of work developed in Gran Canaria, generated data will be included in the upcoming Palm Grove Management Plan that is one of the project's deliverables.

1.- Collection of samples in Vai forest



2.- Palm leaf sample from Agios Nikitas



## Hand pollination

It has been noticed lately that fruits developed from the female population in the Western part of Crete are seedless and, according to a study carried out in 2008-2009, 68 out of the 71 palm trees in Aspri Limni (one of the project areas) are male. In order to secure the genetic material for the existing nurseries, personnel from Chania Forest Directorate and the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania, along with a local Moroccan field worker, visited this area on the 3rd of April to carry out hand pollination of the 3 recorded female palm trees. The procedure included the deposit of pollen inside the female inflorescences, which were then tied with palm tree leaves. During a replication visit on the 27th of April, a couple of other female trees were recorded, rising their total number to five. The area is scheduled to be visited again in seed developing period, in order to check if the procedure has been successful and collect the seeds produced.

3.- Pollen deposit for hand pollination



4.- Inflorescence after hand pollination



# Visit the LIFE Phoenix Website

The project's website (<https://lifephoenix.gesplan.es>) was published at the end of December 2023 and it has been updated since then with new contents, namely news, documents and audiovisual material. You can also access our social networks directly from the website's banner.

Stay tuned for our last news and don't miss any of our videos!



HOME THE PROJECT MEET OUR TEAM ACTIONS NEWS DOCUMENTS MULTIMEDIA CONTACT



- Updated news
- New picture galleries
- Links to our social networks
- New documents: LIFE Phoenix roll-up
- Videos: 1st "video-pill" featuring partner ULPGC



# Contact

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For feedback, partnerships, or further information, please feel free to contact us at: [lifephoenix@gesplan.es](mailto:lifephoenix@gesplan.es)



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