MERLIN

Bringing Europe's freshwaters back to life.

Fact sheet #13

June, 2026

Case study #13: Sorraia floodplain

Case study cluster: small streams and basins

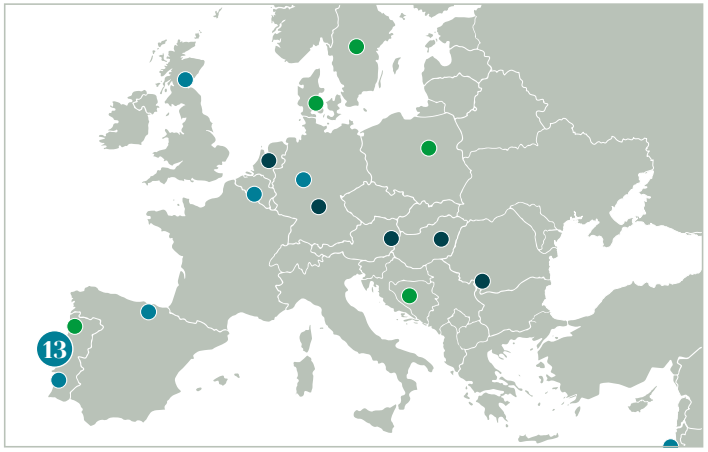
Country: Portugal

Scientific partner: Instituto Superior de Agronomia, Universidade de Lisboa

Implementation partner: National Irrigation Authority (coordinator); Farmer's Association

Twinning case study: Ervidel Lowlands: similar approaches on riparian restoration; EDIA – Alentejo Irrigation Company; www.edia.pt/pt

Website: www.arbvs.pt



Demonstration

- → **Type of restoration:** Sorraia
- → **Size:** floodplain 20,000 km²; catchment scale (12,759.36 km²)
- → **Location(s):** Sorraia Valley
- → **Value of the case:** riparian rehabilitation (clearing of sedges and woody debris, bank stabilisation and removal of exotic woody vegetation); removal of exotic invasive plants (water hyacinth, Brazilian milfoil) in river and canals; creation and maintenance of ecological set-aside areas; fish passes in weirs and river crossings
- → **Stakeholders involved:** farmers of the irrigation valley
- → **Sectors involved:** agriculture: farmers and land owners
- → **Innovations being applied:** –

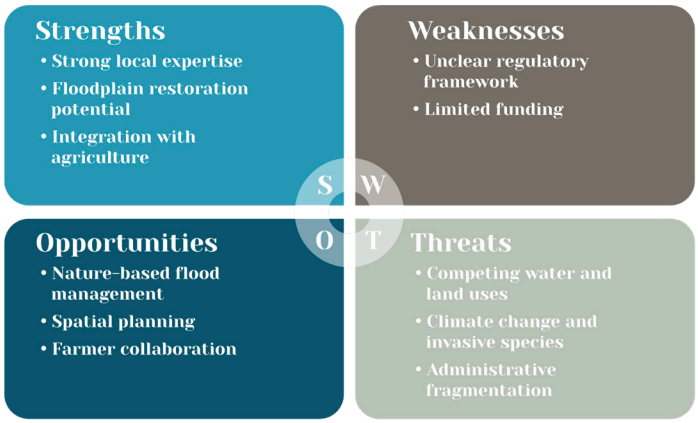
Implemented within MERLIN

- → **Restoration measures**: Riparian restoration through invasive species removal, habitat enhancement and improved fish connectivity.
- → **Size**: 13.07 ha restored land, 2.34 km restored river length
- → **Scope**: local to regional
- → **Vicinity**: rural
- → **Stakeholders involved**: agricultural sector (farmers and landowners)

Estimated costs: 550,000€ (including planning and construction costs) + 29,000€ annual maintenance and monitoring costs

Lessons learnt

- ↘ Building cross-sector relationships takes time and is essential for successful restoration.



The MERLIN project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101036337.