

Goals for MONTIS 2023 / 2024 / 2025

The goals for the mandate in a minute:

1. To signalise A DECADE of MONTIS as an opportunity to reflect and to prepare for the future.
2. To reach 550 MEMBERS by the end of the mandate.
3. To reinforce the MANAGEMENT OF the existing PROPERTIES, including the small donated properties , without excluding the possibility of new protocols, evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
4. To promote a diverse set of ACTIVITIES that contribute to involving existing members, attracting new members and, above all, giving visibility to MONTIS.
5. To ensure FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY through a group of financial and pro bono supports that will enable MONTIS to complement the funding obtained from applications, and to ensure a technical framework (internal and external) to support property management and the various activities (communication, volunteering, etc.).
6. To broaden the basis and the scope of VOLUNTEERING by intensifying or recovering existing and or former volunteer programs.
7. To develop a COMMUNICATION plan, ideally with the support of a communication and marketing specialist, that allows to keep the members, and other stakeholders, informed about the activities of MONTIS, increasing the visibility of the association, attracting new members and increasing the number of participants in the activities organised by MONTIS.
8. To consolidate and to strengthen the NETWORK OF PARTNERS, in particular to build knowledge related to the properties' management, to strengthen voluntary actions and also to support the management of MONTIS.
9. To include landowners, schools and other associations, particularly those of a social nature, in awareness-raising and ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION actions.
10. To ensure a clear GOVERNANCE with greater involvement of the members of the governing bodies and advisory board in the (major) decisions of MONTIS.

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Framework

MONTIS's **Vision** is:

- “To manage properties increasing biodiversity value”.

and the **Mission** is:

- “To produce biodiversity through a management of natural heritage, that is sustainable, engaging and open to all.”

Taking into account the Vision and Mission, which were established at the time of MONTIS foundation, this team presents some ideas for the future of MONTIS to be achieved during this new mandate.

A decade of MONTIS

In 2024, MONTIS will complete 10 years of activity. This event will create an opportunity to reflect on the first 10 years of MONTIS, to mark the anniversary, and to prepare for the future.

Goal

- **To signalize a decade of MONTIS as an opportunity to reflect and to prepare for the future:**
 - organising an International Congress, bringing national and international speakers (including partners) related to land management, particularly marginal land, with conservation objectives;
 - including the theme of the 10th anniversary in the various activities to be carried out throughout 2024;
 - preparing, in collaboration with the members who wish to get involved, the MONTIS Strategic Plan for the next 10 years, including the evaluation of MONTIS’s activity and an action plan for the future;

Members

An association is made by its members. The number of MONTIS members stabilised, since 2016, at around 400. However, we believe that it will be possible, during this mandate, to surpass the barrier of 500 members, possibly 550 (it must be noted that the number of members’ quotas that will allow MONTIS to pay for a technical support is 750, this being the primary objective to attain).

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Goal

- **To reach 550 members by the end of the mandate:**
 - accounting for the recent evolution, in particular the fact that some of the members left the association due to “distraction” (according to MONTIS’s statutes, the members that haven’t paid more than one year of quotas will be removed as members), it seems possible to recover some of these members, as well as others who left due to lack of interest; to convince those who have overdue quotas to remain, namely through direct contact; and to make an effort to attract new members in 2023 (and the following years), in order to end this year with between 450 and 500 members, continuing to grow in the others;
 - searching for ways to make the payment of fees easier, namely through direct debit which, even if it has costs, will reduce the payment effort;
 - reinforcing external communication (see “Communication”) and promoting activities (see “Activities”) for attracting new members.

Properties management

Currently, MONTIS manages 28 properties corresponding to an area of 187.4 ha in Central Portugal and the Lisbon area. Of these properties, 18, corresponding to 17 ha, are owned by MONTIS: two, 5.5 ha, in Vouzela, acquired through crowdfunding in 2014, six in Pampilhosa da Serra, 11.3 ha, acquired through crowdfunding in 2019, and also ten micro-properties donated to MONTIS, in 2019, totalling 0.51 ha, located in Pampilhosa da Serra (six), Santa Comba Dão (two), Nelas and Oliveira do Hospital.

Goal

- **To reinforce the management of the existing properties, including the small donated properties , without excluding the possibility of new protocols, evaluated on a case-by-case basis:**
 - updating the information on the properties and their management reports/action plans, enabling MONTIS to show the results obtained and supporting the consolidation of management;
 - in the context of MONTIS's 10-year evaluation, showing the impact of MONTIS's action on the properties it manages, by comparison to the evolution of the properties around, and capturing the interest of surrounding landowners and populations; showing this added value is important, as a statement of the cause and as an instrument for attracting new members and partners;
 - reinforcing the economic and social benefits of products potentially resulting from the management of properties, for example honey (MONTIS has only one protocol in Pampilhosa da Serra), arbutus berries, “carqueja”, etc.; these products, even on a small scale, would include the name of MONTIS and would, in some cases, generate social value beyond volunteering, involving local people and recovering traditional production techniques;

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- o giving more focus to creating habitats, combining the use of natural regeneration with the planting of trees and shrub species, increasing the diversity of native species present and contributing to implement the project for “edible” forests in MONTIS properties where it may be applicable, namely in baldio de Carvalhais and Pampilhosa da Serra;
- o hastening, in Pampilhosa da Serra, the process of “de-eucaliptalisation” (“contracted” in the last crowdfunding), so that it is possible to move towards the creation of habitats;
- o determining the exact location of the small donated properties (only the locations of those on Pampilhosa da Serra are known) and look at management possibilities;
- o identifying and analysing the possibility of new management protocols that may provide opportunities for communication and/or can serve as an example, namely in the vicinity of the properties under management and, eventually, in places closer to large urban centres and the coast; ways of managing these protocols must be ensured: support from owners, namely in goods or services, for example accommodation, meals, machineries; financial compensation, funding applications, and involvement with other local associations (local volunteers, scouts, firefighters, etc.).

Activities

MONTIS has ensured a set of regular activities (with some interruptions due to the pandemic) that include one walking tour and at least one volunteer action per month (sometimes two when it involves academic volunteering), two colloquiums a year and also the yearly “Night and Day on the Oak Forest”, that focuses on the properties of Vermilhas, as well as an international work camp. These activities aim to give visibility to MONTIS. They are not only a communication tool, but they can take the members to the very heart of our work.

Goal

- **To promote a diverse set of activities that contribute to involving existing members, attracting new members and, above all, giving visibility to MONTIS:**
 - o seeking a wider geographical distribution of the monthly walking tours in order to enhance the promotion of MONTIS, distributing them evenly: tours on the properties managed by MONTIS, tours in the municipalities where the properties are located (not including or only partially including the properties), tours closer to large urban centres and the coast and even tours in partnership with other associations/entities of interest;
 - o expanding the range of topics of the walking tours to improve their attractiveness: biodiversity, water, fire, weeds, habitat management, geology, etc.;

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- o ensuring that the walking tours are guided by specialists; trying to involve members in the organisation of regular activities, based on the topics they prefer and in the places that are closest to them, as a way of ensuring geographical and thematic diversity and of increasing the capacity of MONTIS to expand organically and territorially;
- o holding two annual colloquiums, with themes that are of interest to MONTIS, but that also contribute to promote MONTIS; ideally this would be in partnership with other other associations, higher education institutions and even private companies;
- o organizing the international volunteer work camps, seeking to adjust the scheduling to other countries' holidays and to niceweather conditions;
- o connecting the walking tours and other events with local activities, for example festivities, other conferences, exhibitions and fairs of local products, etc.;
- o evaluating the "results" of activities – donations obtained, new members recruiting, number of participants (members/non-members) – allowing to adjust the programming with a view to increasing the visibility of MONTIS and the number of members.

Financial Sustainability

Financial sustainability has been a constant concern of the various MONTIS directions. Finding financial stability has been particularly demanding in recent years due to the effects of the pandemic, which made it difficult to organise regular activities and to carry out the projects in which MONTIS was involved. The last management team sought to reinforce some of the financial support, namely by reinforcing its annual stability, but some aspects could still be reinforced/improved.

Goal

- **To ensure financial sustainability through a group of financial and *pro bono* supports that will enable MONTIS to complement the funding obtained from applications, and to ensure a technical framework (internal and external) to support property management and the various activities (communication, volunteering, etc.):**
 - o seeking to achieve an annual funding of 50 thousand euros, through long-term support from five or six companies, among those with sustainability responsibilities (environmental or social) and/or concerns in terms of their ecological footprint (windfarms, dams, infrastructure, etc.) and are looking for ways to compensate for their activity;
 - o searching non-financial support (direct support, *pro bono*, such as the ones MONTIS already can rely upon for legal matters, and for some applications), particularly in the areas of communication and marketing (see Communication), accounting and financial management;
 - o releasing the status of public utility, obtained in October 2021, to raise donations of 0.5% of IRS/VAT, which can be of significant help;

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- o looking for specific support (financial or in actions on the ground) that complement the previous ones in more specific matters: land management (controlled fire, paths' opening, equipment, cutting of eucalyptus, control of weeds, planting, etc.); knowledge acquisition (inventory, bioblitz); appreciation of ecosystem services (pastoring, "local" products (arbutus berries, essential oils, honey, "carqueja"), food (cooking workshops)) and environmental awareness (visitation, "school in the nature");
- o continuing to identify possibilities for funding applications: LIFE programmes, ERASMUS, Climate Action and Sustainability, PEPAC, Environmental Fund, IPDJ, etc.;
- o finding possibilities for applications for prizes, given that these applications contribute to the visibility of MONTIS;
- o searching ways to quickly ensure the payment of members' quotas, for example by direct debit, and to reinforce other means of receiving donations, namely those associated with walking tours;
- o identifying new topics for future crowdfunding campaigns as they are a way of giving visibility to MONTIS, in addition to the financial contribution, and allowing an increase in the number of members;
- o involving members in the search for financial support: the base of MONTIS members is quite vast and involves people with some capacity for influence and mobilisation; therefore, the dissemination of a list of "needs" and an action plan could improve the possibilities of getting support;
- o finding ways to charge, in whole or in part, for thematic walking tours, for example charging for snacks, namely if they are associated with the use of local products and/or the involvement of local cafes and communities in the preparation of meals for the activities, valuing the local cuisine, or organise activities in collaboration with tourist entertainment companies.

Volunteering

MONTIS involves various types of volunteers: individual volunteers (in land management and other support), academic volunteering, youth volunteering, corporate volunteering and even long-term volunteering programmes, usually international. The volunteer program must be useful from the point of view of land management, but its main objective is the involvement of members (and non-members).

Goal

- **To broaden the basis and the scope of volunteering by intensifying or recovering existing and or former volunteer programs:**
 - o continuing to invest in individual volunteering for land management, on a permanent basis (monthly), and also identifying volunteers who can coordinate these actions and/or contribute with scientific or habitat management experience;

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- o promoting the creation of a local volunteers' bank and/or training an individual/collective responsible person who, through a plan and with technical guidance, can intervene in the properties, perfecting the model in force on the Malveira property, thus decreasing the demands related to the geographical dispersion of the properties managed by MONTIS;
- o taking better advantage of individual volunteering related to other activities such as preparing proposals, searching for funding, communication, translations, etc., taking advantage of the existing database (it results from a survey of members that could be deepened and could bring interesting results);
- o (re)energising the academic volunteering (existing partnerships with the Universities of Porto - VO.U, and Coimbra - NEBAAC), also involving the University of Aveiro and even the University of Lisbon and other universities, technical institutes and research centres; given that the logistical costs are making academic volunteering days or weekends more difficult, longer sessions could be analysed, such as internship/work camps for students of degrees (national and international) related to conservation and land and habitats management;
- o identifying other sources of support and international volunteering partnerships, namely for long-term volunteering, either by making use of environmental and/or social funding programs, or through other programs, for example Erasmus (complementing the previous point), the IPDJ (volunteering for the forests) and recovering the Quality Seal of the European Volunteer Corps.

Communication

Communication is an area where MONTIS is clearly behind. Several attempts to improve it, namely through social networks, have had little results. However, both social networks, the blog and even the activities could be part of the way to increase MONTIS's visibility.

Goal

- **To develop a communication plan, ideally with the support of a communication and marketing specialist, that allows to keep the members, and other stakeholders, informed about the activities of MONTIS, increasing the visibility of the association, attracting new members and increasing the number of participants in the activities organised by MONTIS:**
 - o finding support in marketing and communication, namely identifying a company in the area of communication that can ensure this *pro bono* component, even if it is in terms of structuring a good communication plan;
 - o developing a communication plan aimed, among others, at the following audiences: members, volunteers, financiers, neighbours, farmers, local businesses (to make them feel included in the projects, to keep them informed, and to motivate them to increase their participation); public entities (to keep them informed);

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- landowners (to inform them about the type of MONTIS work, to create goodwill); potential partners (raising interest for them to become partners); potential financiers (raising interest so that they consider the possibility of financing MONTIS);
- o making the monthly letter more attractive and easier to read (for example, only one page for each language and with a graphic image, for example of boxes that make it easier to identify each topic);
 - o preparing a newsletter with technical content, relying on external collaboration on matters of interest to MONTIS, namely in habitat management, initially on a biannual basis, but seeking to increase its frequency;
 - o improving the communication of results and activities: updating property reports, promoting some of the most relevant aspects in magazines or sites, highlighting the volunteers work;
 - o betting on a first-person and “from people to people” story telling: asking interns, volunteers, participants in activities to write posts and small stories when they are in the field and, later, more elaborate articles with their point of view, that would be published on the MONTIS blog and social networks;
 - o taking advantage of MONTIS' activities, particularly future crowdfunding campaigns, not only as a way of raising funds (see Financial Sustainability) but also as a way of communication;
 - o involving the media: several newspapers and television stations are investing in matters related to sustainability and the environment (within the scope of the last crowdfunding, it was possible to obtain some support);
 - o finding ways to promote MONTIS's activities and management work at universities and technical schools, as well as possibilities for thesis and internships.

Networking

MONTIS has a vast network of partners with similar or complementary objectives: other nature conservation and environment associations, universities and research centres. MONTIS has collaborated with these partners on several occasions, namely in applications, academic and long-term volunteering, actions in the field, conferences, bioblitz, etc. Also noteworthy are partnerships with private companies that have supported MONTIS in legal matters, management reports and also with institutions of a local/social scope. These cooperations are very important not only for acquiring relevant habitat management knowledge for MONTIS and its partners, but also for giving visibility to MONTIS and contributing to attracting partners.

Goal

- **To consolidate and to strengthen the network of partners, in particular for the acquisition of knowledge related to the properties' management, for strengthening voluntary actions and also to support the management of MONTIS:**

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- o reinforcing the partnerships with nature conservation and environment associations for the exchange of experiences on the field or in dissemination actions and joint applications, namely for funding and volunteering programmes;
- o ensuring/strengthening partnerships with the management entities of the territory where MONTIS operates, including Parish Councils, Municipalities, Intermunicipal Communities (CIM), and even the Regional Coordination and Development Commissions (CCDR) and the Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests (ICNF);
- o increasing the involvement of universities, technical schools and research centres in actions to disseminate and acquire knowledge, in academic volunteering programs and internship/work fields (see Volunteering and Environmental Education), in field visits and also in individual internships and theses;
- o promoting the involvement of schools and local associations of a social scope, in didactic actions and awareness raising for conservation.

Environmental awareness and education

MONTIS, indirectly or occasionally, already promotes some environmental awareness and education activities, but it is a subject that could be expanded and structured. MONTIS has also produced brochures and informative manuals (for example the manual for fuel-vegetation management lanes and circuit with explanatory panels produced for E-Redes; and a brochure on the relationship between food and landscape management) that can be adapted and disseminated in other areas.

Goal

- **To include landowners, schools and other associations, particularly those of a social nature, in awareness-raising and environmental education actions:**
 - o making protocols with schools to organise walking tours and seeking to attract benefactor members;
 - o retrieving the “School on Nature” project (identifying a potential funder) that brings students from the 8th and 11th/12th grades, vocational education and colleges, as well as teachers (and scouts) to learn about habitat management on the properties managed by MONTIS;
 - o promoting the dissemination of didactic information through a better communication attitude that includes the dissemination of MONTIS conservation projects, best practice guides, and public interventions.

Governance / Internal structure

Administration meetings and major MONTIS decisions, such as applications, action plans, crowdfunding, etc., must be shared with all governing bodies so that they can

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contribute. The advisory board (foreseen in the Statutes of MONTIS) must also be stimulated.

Goal

- **To ensure a clear governance with greater involvement of the members of the governing bodies and advisory board in the (major) decisions of MONTIS:**
 - recovering the comprehensive sharing of information and ensuring a greater contribution from the various governing bodies, namely taking into account that the technical staff of MONTIS is currently reduced;
 - revitalising the Advisory Board by inviting former presidents of the administration of MONTIS and other people who have been collaborating with MONTIS to join it, particularly those who can make technical contributions to the management of both the association and the properties; the Advisory Board will be submitted to the approval of the partners at the General Meeting of March 2023;
 - considering the possibility of creating thematic working groups, taking into account the volunteers that are already included in the database and seeking to broaden their intervention, namely in the various activities.

Brief Description of the Team

Francisco de Almeida Garrett

Agronomist (ISA), with several years of experience in the management of agroforestry companies; with a great concern for natural values and biodiversity, always with an innovative spirit. The companies he manages have already received an award for biodiversity and all have group forest certification from FSC and PEFC. He was associations leader, coordinated LIFE projects and received the Vida Rural award "Agricultor que Marca" (farmer who counts), in 2019.

Henrique Pereira dos Santos

Henrique Pereira dos Santos, married and father of four. He has been working in protected areas and nature conservation for almost forty years, including in the planning and management of protected areas and the Natura 2000 Network. He has studied the evolution of the rural landscape of Portugal mainland in the 20th century and its relationship with the dynamics of biodiversity. He was the first president of MONTIS and is the author of the books "Do tempo e da paisagem", "O gosto de Sicó", "Portugal: paisagem rural" and "Das pedras, pão" (the latter with Duarte Belo), hoping that this experience can be useful for the development of MONTIS.

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João Cosme

João Cosme is from Vouzela. Professional photographer, with publications in several national and international magazines, including books and guides on the natural world of Portugal. Collaborates and directs film projects about natural heritage, both nationally and internationally. He was one of the founding members of MONTIS, being an expert in MONTIS's places of action, being able to accompany and help in its environmental promotion.

João Ruano

Born in Trás-os-Montes, João is a landscape architect and also holds a postgraduate degree in economics and environmental management from the Faculty of Economics of the University of Porto. He began his professional career in the field of nature conservation, working at ATN (Faia Brava) and MONTIS. He worked as a nature tourism consultant at A2Z and currently combines his activity as a sustainability consultant at NBI with his own landscaping and sustainable construction project company, Nature-based Living.

Júlio de Jesus

Júlio de Jesus. Environment Engineer (UNL). Specialist on the National Service of Parks, Reserves and Nature Conservation, current ICNF, between 1984 and 1989. Vice-President and President of the Environmental Promotion Institute, an organization integrated in the current Portuguese Agency for the Environment (APA), between 1996 and 1999. Consultant, university lecturer, trainer and author of publications in the field of Environmental Impact Assessment. Member of the Board of IAIA - International Association for Impact Assessment between 2007 and 2011. Founder (1995) and President of APAI - Portuguese Association for Impact Assessment (1995-96, 2003-04, 2018-19).

Luís Lopes

Luís Lopes, born in Beira region, Geographer (IGOT - ULisboa) and current doctoral student in Forestry and Natural Resources Engineering (ISA - ULisboa). Author of scientific publications related to ecological restoration and vegetation response to disturbances, currently focusing on the efficiency of public policies in the recovery of burned areas. He was part of the MONTIS technical team from 2016 to 2018. Enthusiastic about the rural world, he hopes to help MONTIS in its goals of conserving and promoting biodiversity in a sustainable way.

Margarida Silva

Margarida Silva, graduated in Conservation and Biodiversity at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom. She was part of the technical team at MONTIS from 2018 to 2022, having held various roles within it, including coordinating LIFE VOLUNTEER ESCAPES. She is currently continuing her path in the conservation of native forests in Portugal,

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in another NGO. She hopes that her participation in the direction of MONTIS can contribute to giving continuity to the good development and work of the association.

Sofia Spormann

Sofia Spormann, Master in Functional Biology and Plant Biotechnology from the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Porto, is currently developing her PhD project in Biology at the same institution. She was part of the VO.U. for Nature by VO.U. – University Volunteer Association, between 2017 and 2020, having been responsible for managing volunteers and organizing field activities in partnership with MONTIS. Sofia is currently developing a research project in the area of plant physiology, aimed at developing more sustainable strategies to increase the resilience of plant crops to climate change and soil degradation factors. She hopes that her deep interest in sustainability and environmental awareness, combined with her knowledge in the areas of biology and biotechnology, will translate into a relevant participation in the management of MONTIS, contributing to the good functioning of this association.

Teresa Maria Gamito

Teresa Maria Gamito has been with MONTIS since day one, either as a member of the governing bodies or contributing to several management actions and activities. With a degree in Civil Engineering (Hydraulics), she has a PhD in Interdisciplinary Landscape Management, where she addresses the dynamics of innovation in rural areas, and several specialisation courses, namely a postgraduate degree in Spatial Planning and Environmental Planning, an MBA and a specialization in Economic Valuation of the Environment. She was Vice-President of the Institute for Nature Conservation (in 2002–2003), but essentially works as a consultant in strategic territorial planning and sustainable development, planning and strategic enhancement of the sea, protected areas and the Natura Network. She is also a professor of Conservation Policies and Governance in the Master's Degree in Conservation Biology (BioEducação consortium, Mozambique) and was a trainer, at Agronomy Institute (ISA), in the Specialization Course in Planning and Management of the Natura Network. With her experience, she hopes to be able to contribute to the Goals described above and to the Vision and Mission of MONTIS.

Vítor Lima Vieira

Vítor Lima Vieira, Tax and Customs Inspector, Master in Services Engineering and Management, enthusiastic about the various natural spaces and who seeks, in this way, to repay the much he receives from nature. The practice of mountaineering led to his involvement in nature conservation actions throughout the country, as a volunteer. Founding partner of Academia do Bosque – Survival and Activities in Nature.

Wouter De Broeck

Wouter De Broeck, born in Belgium, but connected to Portugal for over 30 years, is a corporate communication and professional. Wouter worked as a journalist in the field

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of economics and the environment for over 15 years. He graduated in economics and environmental management at the Faculty of Economics in Porto. Is currently responsible for the sustainability of the Alsico Group, one of the world's largest producers of protective and work wear. Wouter considers that being part of the team that can give direction to MONTIS would be an opportunity to contribute to an intelligent action to recover the biodiversity of his beloved country of adoption.

Advisory Board

As mentioned above, the Advisory Board will only be formalised at the General Meeting of March 2023. However, we want to highlight those who accepted our invitation to join it, giving us the honor of their collaboration:

- o Carlos Aguiar
- o Isabel Pereira dos Santos
- o Jorge Cancela
- o Nuno Neves
- o Paulo Pereira
- o Pedro Braz Teixeira