



ORISTANO COASTAL WETLANDS CONTRACT



SITE: Coastal municipalities
of the Gulf of Oristano
**PROTECTED AREAS INCLUDED IN
THE CONTRACT:**

- 6 Ramsar Sites
- 9 SAC (Special Area of Conservation)
- 6 SPA (Special Protection Area)

However, these ecosystems are under threat from human pressures, climate change, and pollution, which have negative impacts on biodiversity and local socio-economic balances. The lack of adequate governance coordination hinders the effective and lasting resolution of these issues. Furthermore, the main local economic activities (fishing, agriculture and tourism) struggle to find a balance with environmental protection needs, partly due to limited available resources and the increasing frequency of extreme weather events.

In 2018, a process was launched to draft and sign the Contract, involving public institutions and key local stakeholders. This path led, on February 5th, 2021, to the signing of the Contract by 11 municipalities (Arborea, Arbus, Cabras, Guspini, Nurachi, Oristano, Palmas Arborea, Riola Sardo, San Vero Milis, Santa Giusta, and Terralba) along with the Province of Oristano, the Oristano Reclamation Consortium, and the Department of Environmental Protection of the Autonomous Region of Sardinia (RAS).

PROJECT DATA

➤ Signatory parties:

14 entities (Municipalities of Arborea, Arbus, Cabras, Guspini, Oristano, Palmas Arborea, Riola Sardo, San Vero Milis, Santa Giusta, Terralba, the Regional Environmental Agency, the Province of Oristano, the Land Reclamation Consortium)

➤ Contract drafting phase:

~28 months (Oct 2018 – Feb 2021)

➤ Implementation phase:

Since Feb 2021 – ongoing

➤ Funding sources:

Maristanis Project (private funds)
and EU H2020 TransformAr
Project

The Coastal-Marine Wetlands Contract of the Oristano Area is a voluntary participatory governance tool created to promote the integrated management of the wetlands of the Gulf of Oristano, an area in western Sardinia that hosts an ecologically rich system of extraordinary environmental and cultural importance.

Legislative context

Contracts have become central tools of multilevel environmental governance, thanks to a gradual regulatory evolution that has increasingly recognized their strategic value.

The **National Charter of River Contracts (2010)** defined their founding principles and values, later formalized in **Article 68-bis of Legislative Decree 152/2006**, which identifies them as voluntary instruments for integrated and participatory management of river basins, extendable to lakes, coasts, transitional waters, and aquifers. Their importance has been reaffirmed in the **National Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation (2015)**, the **National Strategy for Sustainable Development**, and through the establishment of the **National Observatory of River Contracts**.

At the supranational level, references include the **EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)**, the **ICZM Protocol** (ratified by Italy in 2011), and **Agenda 21**. More recently, the **European Water Resilience Strategy (2025)** has renewed the urgency of integrated plans to address drought and flooding, highlighting the key role of River Contracts within the **European Green Deal** and in funding programs such as the **Recovery Fund**, supported by instruments like the **CINEA Agency**.

Contract management bodies

- **COORDINATION GROUP**
Composed of representatives of the contract’s signatory entities, holds political decision-making functions
- **TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT**
Supports the Coordination Group in the various implementation phases
- **STEERING COMMITTEE**
Ensures extended public participation; includes representatives from society, labor, economic sectors, the environment, and collective interests
- **TECHNICAL-SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**
Includes university and research institution members, promoting collaboration between public administrations and scientific research on contract-related themes

Action Plan (AP) of the Contract

7 STRATEGIC PILLARS:

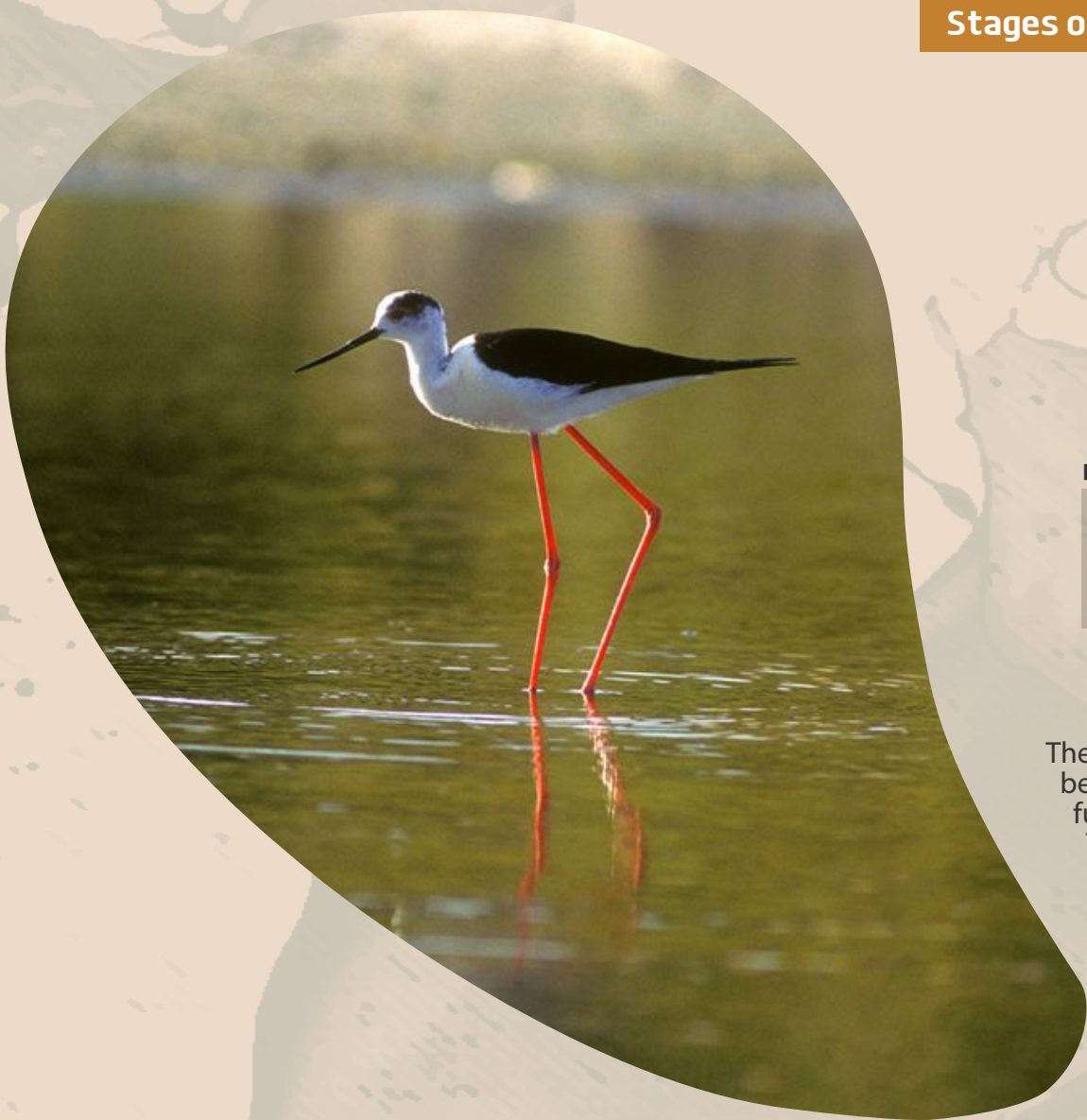
- Participatory territorial governance
- Improvement of the ecological status of water systems
- Protection of biodiversity and natural capital
- Landscape enhancement and cultural heritage promotion
- Green economy – towards a sustainable and responsible development model
- Strengthening climate change resilience
- Environmental communication and awareness

The 2021 Action Program included around 50 interventions, divided into priority and supplementary actions.

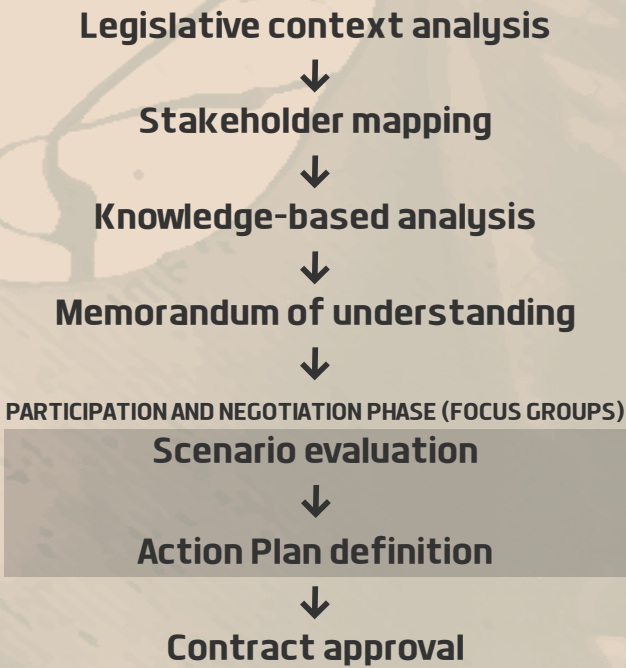
50 actions

Number of the actions defined in the AP. Some are system-wide, others site-specific

17.159.000€
Total Budget of the AP
of which
6.234.000€
Planned or spent by June 2025



Stages of Contract development



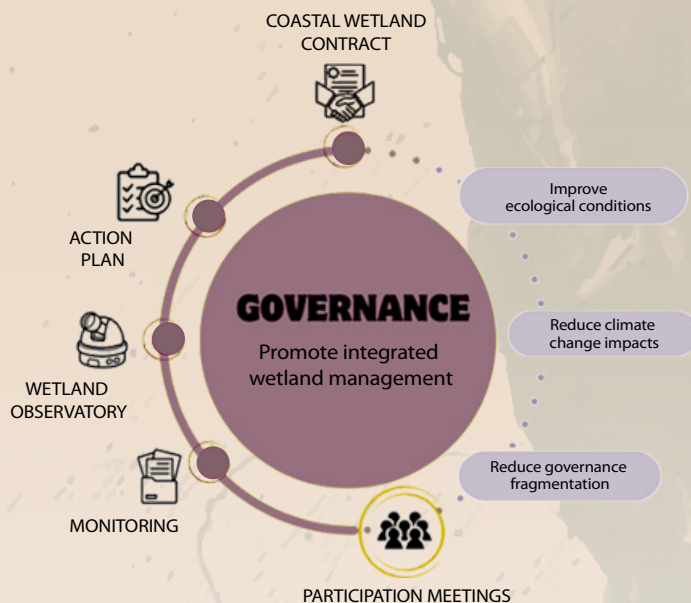
The participatory process, launched from the very beginning of the Contract, represents a fundamental pillar of the entire initiative. To date, nearly fifty meetings have been held, actively involving various public and private stakeholders with different interests and responsibilities.

Currently, the monitoring of the implementation status of the planned actions is underway, along with the update of the Action Plan, in response to the evolving needs of the territory and potential future scenarios.



LESSONS LEARNED:

- Continuous stakeholder engagement and sustained political commitment are essential to keep the Contract's governance structure active and effective.
- The Coordinator of the Coordination Group plays a key role in motivating members and ensuring that commitments are upheld, particularly regarding the implementation of system-level actions.
- Promoting awareness and understanding of the Contract across the territory is crucial to encourage the participation of new stakeholders – including private actors – and to ensure broad and diverse representation.
 - The implementation of planned actions requires funding from multiple sources in order to ensure the economic sustainability of the program.



PROJECT COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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COLLABORATIONS

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For more info visit:
www.transformar.eu

The Wetland Observatory supports the conservation and sustainable management of wetlands in Sardinia. It collects and analyzes environmental data to monitor ecosystems, threats, and conservation strategies. Through webGIS and technical reports, it disseminates information on ecological status, biodiversity, and ecosystem services, raising awareness of the importance of wetlands in tackling climate change.

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The project received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement number 101036683