



ACTION E3.3 – Certificate manual: indicators and procedure

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MODEL OF CERTIFICATE REQUEST "LIFE IN SALT"¹

Mr/Ms. _____ as _____,
representing the company _____ with
fiscal ID nr _____ and registered in _____

REQUESTS

The certification for the following brands:

¹ This model only covers the most important aspects. A more complete document will be prepared under legal supervision once the pilot audits have been carried out.



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1. What is the certificate “Life in Salt”

1.1 Goal of the certificate (and what isn't)

This certificate aims to give visibility to a salt....:

- ...with uniform and predictable physical and organoleptic characteristics, as indicated by the producer in its advertising
- ...whose production respects the objectives of nature conservation in the area in which it is produced
- ...which contributes to local socio-economic development in a fair and balanced way, recognizing the cultural, natural, and human values of the salt making site and its environment.

This certificate does not intend to replace other existing certificates, but to complement them.

1.2 What makes it different to other similar certificates

This is the only certificate that evaluates salt from the three points of view: product, process and landscape. Consumers can thus make an informed decision as to whether they are purchasing a salt that contributes to the conservation of nature and local socio-economic development, without losing quality in the final product. The choice of the product should be based precisely on the fact that it should be of above-average quality, so that the purchasing argument is long-lasting, sound, and sustainable. It should not respond to an impulse decision after an occasional visit or to the acquisition of a souvenir that has little more than anecdotal value. The certificate has the vocation, above all, to offer a salt for culinary use, so that the landscape and culture are part of the final touch of the dish.

1.3 Who can request this certificate

Entities eligible to apply for the certificate are:

- Solar evaporation salinas, of any size, scale of production and location.
- They must have some degree of natural, cultural and/or landscape protection.
- They must produce food-grade salt, whether for trade, educational or demonstration purposes.

Note that it is the salt that is certified, not the saltworks, although the certification system affects the operation of the facilities. The certification of more than one salt requires more time and effort than a single one, hence it is significantly more efficient to carry out the process simultaneously for several salts. However, this certificate cannot be applied for by



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intermediaries or distributors, as its purpose is to recognise the salinas as a whole in all three areas of the certificate (product-process-landscape).

There is the possibility of validating some aspects of the certification, if other certificates already exist for the salts to be examined. To do this, it will be necessary to provide the certifying entity with evidence that demonstrates compliance with the relevant aspects in the different certificates in sufficient detail to exempt these aspects from examination.

1.4 How does it benefit adhered entities

With this certificate, companies will be able to show their customers (both intermediaries and end users) their commitment to nature conservation, local socio-economic development, and sustainability. Customers in turn will be able to make informed and reasoned purchasing decisions, safe in the knowledge that they are contributing to these values with this gesture.

2. Who is who in the certifying process

The main stakeholders in the certification process are listed below:

Table 1: Stakeholders involved in the certification process

Stakeholder	Function
Applicant	Company or entrepreneur interested in certifying the salt it produces. It must prove that it is responsible for the production of the salt and the conservation of the salt making area. If these two tasks are carried out by different stakeholders, there must be a collaboration agreement between them.
Certifying entity	<i>Mae d'Água & IPAISAL</i> . The permanent secretariat issues the certificate and acts as a mediator in case of doubts or difficulties with the auditor.
Auditor	Designated staff by the certifying entity.
Permanent secretariat	<i>Mae d'Água & IPAISAL</i> . Coordinates all tasks related to certification, certifying tool improvements, training and designation of auditors, etc.
Technical advisor(s)	<i>Universidad de Murcia & Universidad Pontificia Comillas</i> . They review the certification tool and advise on technical aspects that may affect its implementation (deadlines, sampling points, indicators, evaluation methods).



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3. Aspects to be examined

3.1 Indicators and quality requirements

This section details the aspects to be examined in the certification process, namely:

- They are classified into the three main areas covered by the certificate (product, process, and landscape) and are sorted into "aspects", which are numbered to facilitate the organisation of documentation and evidence.
- Each aspect includes one or more indicators, which must comply with the requirements indicated in the column "recommendations/requirements".
- The format of the evidence to be requested is classified as (D) documentation; (I) images and (E) interview with managers and/or workers.

The following tables show the indicators and the criteria that must be fulfilled in order to qualify for certification. A minimum compliance of 75% is required for all indicators in each group (product, process, and landscape). For some indicators, compliance is mandatory. Thus, there are three types of indicators depending on the required compliance:

- **Mandatory indicators:** in general, those required by current legislation.
- **Optional indicators:** those which, without being obligatory by law, give added value to the salt. The required percentages of compliance guarantee that many of them must be respected, but it is up to the salina to choose which ones it gives priority to.
- **Recommended indicators:** those that are reflected in the recommendations in the annexes of document E.2. They are specified as "recommended compliance" in the attached tables.

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Table 2a: Indicators and quality requirements for the product

Aspect	Indicator	Compliance
<i>Product (P1)</i>		
1. Composition	Physical-chemical analysis	a) The results of the analysis must be in line with reality, with a margin of error of less than 1%.
2. Physical characteristics	Denomination (must be in accordance with the physical characteristics of each type of salt)	a) The salt must comply with the characteristics described in the description sheet.
3. Biological contaminants (e.g. contact with faeces / wastewater / livestock)	Microbial pathogens	a) Pathogenic micro-organisms must not be present in the salt.
4. Chemical contaminants (e.g. discharges at sea or groundwater; corrosion)	Heavy metals / VOCs	a) No heavy metals or VOCs must be present in the salt.
5. Physical contaminants (p.ej. insects, hay, plastics)	Foreign materials	a) No foreign materials must be present in the salt (maximum 2 visible particles per kg).
6. Traceability	Labels	a) The label must reliably indicate the geographical origin of the salt.

Under this heading (*P1 Product*), compliance with at least 5 of the 6 indicators must be achieved, with indicators 1 and 3-5 being mandatory.

Table 2b: Indicators and quality requirements for the process

Aspect	Indicator	Compliance
<i>Process (P2)</i>		
1. Identification of impacts on flora	Treading and compacting of vegetated slopes	a) Confirmation of the presence of flora species identified in the Natura 2000 Network form and related documents (eg NPA management plan). b) Vegetation and slopes in apparent good condition.
2. Identification of impacts on invertebrates	Adequate spaces for nests	c) Confirmation of the presence of invertebrate species identified in the Natura 2000 Network form and related documents (eg NPA management plan). a) Presence of vegetation and wetlands suitable for food, shelter and nesting.
3. Identification of impacts on birds	Trampling of nesting areas / Noise during breeding season	d) Confirmation of the presence of bird species identified in the Natura 2000 Network form and related documents (eg NPA management plan). a) Nesting areas (islands, dykes, slopes) in apparent good condition.
4. Employment	Contracts salt makers	a) Contracts in accordance with current regulations b) High satisfaction rate (>70%) in employee surveys. c) Employees receive annual training in sustainability and quality.
5. Local development	Local providers	a) If they exist, suppliers must be mostly (>50%) locally and regionally sourced.

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Under this heading (*P2 Process*), compliance must be achieved with at least 8 of the 10 (sub-)indicators, with indicators 1a, 2a, 3a and 4a being mandatory.

Table 2c: Indicators and quality requirements for the landscape

Aspect	Indicator	Compliance
<i>Landscape and natural / cultural assets (P3)</i>		
1. Compliance with the NPA conservation regulations	Compliance with NPA regulations	a) The requirements of the NPA protection regulations (management plan...) are complied with.
2. Respecting the breeding seasons (Annexes I and II of the Birds Directive)	Working and breeding calendar	a) The breeding sites of birds identified as vulnerable or priority species according to the Birds Directive and the Red Data Book or equivalent are known. b) The nesting calendar of the birds is known to the management. c) The work schedules are adapted to it. d) Management recommendations are followed ¹
3. Protection of bird nesting sites	Specific and appropriate action measures for the protection of birds	a) The breeding sites of the birds are known. b) Workplaces are adapted to the nesting sites. c) Management recommendations are followed ¹
4. Protection of non-ornithological species (Annexes II and IV of the Habitats Directive)	Specific and appropriate action measures for the protection of the flora	a) The location of occurrence of non-ornithological species identified as vulnerable or priority species according to the Habitats Directive and the relevant Red Data Book, or equivalent, is known. b) There is a specific plan for monitoring and management of invasive species. c) Management recommendations are followed ¹
5. Protección de especies de flora y hábitats vulnerables, (Anexos II y IV de la Directiva Hábitats)	Protection of vulnerable flora species and habitats, (Annexes II and IV of the Habitats Directive).	a) The location of flora species identified as vulnerable or priority species according to the Habitats Directive and the relevant Red Data Book, or equivalent, is known. b) Workplaces are adapted to the presence of these species. c) There is a specific plan for monitoring and management of invasive species. d) Management recommendations are followed ¹
6. Ecosystem functionality	The ecosystem is in balance	a) There is no presence of mucilage, algae and organic matter in the crystallisers. b) The brine is transparent. c) Micro-organisms and invertebrates common to saline ecosystems are present
7. Landscape protection	Natural landscape or landscape with predominantly natural elements	a) There is no presence of landscape disruptive elements in the vicinity of the newly installed salt works. b) The infrastructure and buildings are in good condition. c) There is no rubbish, dumping, abandoned machinery or scattered elements that show carelessness in the work and maintenance of the area.
8. Cultural heritage	Protection of cultural and intangible heritage	a) Protected heritage elements must be in good condition. b) Elements protected as monument or similar regulations must be open to the public according to the regulations.

¹ See document E2 Design of the certificate (in Spanish)



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Under this heading (*P3 Landscape and natural / cultural assets*), compliance with at least 17 of the 23 (sub-)indicators must be achieved, with indicators 1a and 8b being mandatory.

In order to obtain the certificate, 75% of the requirements in each category (product/process/landscape) must be fulfilled, except those marked with an asterisk, which are mandatory (see also Annex III). In any case, the company applying for the certificate may be granted exemptions from compliance, if these are duly justified and documented. The verifying entity will examine the request for exemption, an assessment which will in no case depend on the auditor carrying out the visit. Note that there is the possibility of validating some requirements, by means of official documentation that provides the required information and that is not older than two years (e.g. other certificates, Sanitary Register, environmental impact studies, etc.).

Some requirements are mandatory, as established by current regulations in areas such as food safety, nature conservation or labour legislation, to give a couple of examples. Other requirements are voluntary, but the percentage of the total that must be complied with ensures that many of them are respected and a higher quality product is achieved. A certain margin of choice is allowed, which makes it possible to adapt to the specific circumstances (geographical, tomographic, socio-economic, technological...) of the different salinas applying for the certificate.

In addition to all this, the rest of the documents of the certificate offer additional quality recommendations to which the salt works should ideally adhere. A certain degree of flexibility is thus granted, given that each salt making site is different from others and it is not always possible to establish universal standards that can be met in equal conditions in all of them.

3.2 Documents to be provided by the salinas

As many of the indicators to be examined require documentary evidence, it is necessary to prepare such evidence at the different control visits, especially at the first one. In order to be able to apply for the certificate, the company responsible for salt production shall therefore submit the following documentation:

1. Name and contact details of the person responsible for the certification within the company.
2. Plan of the salt works
3. Recent aerial photograph
4. Drawing on plan or photo showing the water circuit through all stages of production up to salt storage.
5. Designation of the protected areas affecting the site and their delimitation on a map.
6. Indication on a plan or photo of the nesting/feeding/resting areas of protected species and of habitats, as well as those (species and habitats) of greatest conservation interest.
7. Written description of the production process, including a flow chart.



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8. Environmental Management Report or similar document identifying the following aspects:

- o Description of the natural values of the salinas, including breeding seasons of protected or vulnerable species.
- o Environmental risks to flora, fauna, air, water and soil.
- o Prevention, correction and compensation measures
- o Environmental Monitoring Plan

This document can be replaced by an existing document covering these aspects, as long as it is recent and no significant changes have occurred at the salinas since its preparation.

9. Trade name and description of the salts to be certified, including images of the salt and packaging or product sheet, if available.

10. HACCP management system, quality plan or similar, including, for each stage of the production process:

- o Hazard identification and quantification of acceptable limits.
- o Preventive and corrective measures
- o Monitoring systems
- o Recording systems

11. Training and qualification plan for workers in positions directly related to production.

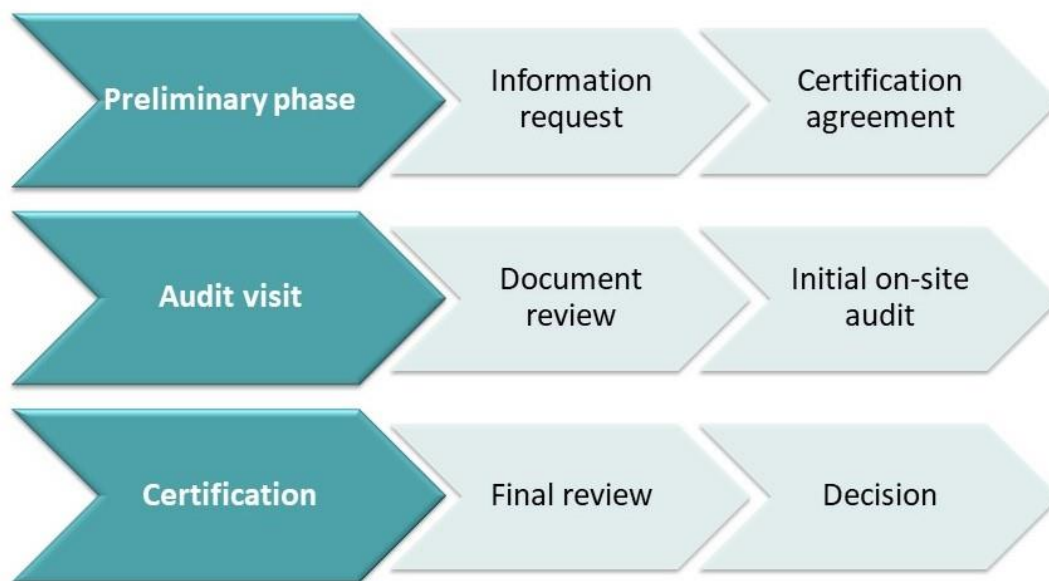
12. Any other document that the company deems appropriate to provide in order to facilitate the certification process.

All documentation will be treated with the utmost confidentiality, in compliance with data protection regulations, and will not be shared with anyone outside the certification process.

Languages accepted: Spanish, Portuguese, French, English. The official languages of the secretariat/common certifying body are Spanish, Portuguese and English.

4. Procedure for obtaining the certificate

In general, the steps required to obtain such a certificate are:



1. Information: The applicant interested in the certification is informed of the requirements, standards to be met and service fees.
2. Application: The applicant submits the certification application form (see annex).
3. Verification of the application: The certifier body checks that the application is correctly completed and will indicate the documentation it needs to receive and in what format (see section 3.2). The applicant will be provided with a budget for the audit and must accept it before proceeding with the next steps. 50% of the estimate will be paid in advance.
4. Certification agreement: The applicant and the certification body sign an agreement outlining the commitments and responsibilities of both parties. These agreements include a commitment to confidentiality of the documentation that will be required and the absence of conflict of interest on the part of the auditor (see annex).
5. Documentation: The certifying agency checks that the documentation received in the application is complete and gives it to the auditor to examine.
6. Initial audit: The auditor appointed by the certifying entity performs an evaluation of the application received by conducting a complete on-site audit of the applicant. It is estimated that an audit visit will last for a full day, which would be scheduled as follows:
 - o Morning: guided tour of the facilities with a person from the company. Image taking
 - o Afternoon: Interview with managers and workers. These interviews may be carried out in groups or individually, at the auditor's discretion.



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- o If necessary, a two-day visit may be scheduled, if the characteristics of the space or the products to be certified so require.
 - o The auditor will arrange his own transportation and travel to the door of the salt facilities. Travel, subsistence and accommodation expenses are at the auditor's expense.
7. Review: The evaluation of the application is reviewed by personnel of the certifying entity, different from the auditor.
 8. Decision: The Certification Committee of the certifying entity decides on the granting of certification. At this stage the applicant must pay the remaining 50% of the certification budget.
 9. Issuance of the certificate: If favorable, the certificate is delivered to the applicant as a supporting document.

The certificate has a life of three years. During this time, the following types of controls will be carried out:


1. Initial control: the one necessary to obtain the certificate (all evidence is verified).
2. Regular controls: Every three years, to extend the certificate (all the evidences are verified).
3. Random checks: Intermediate control visits, with three days' notice (some evidence is checked).

A detailed agenda will be prepared for each visit, depending on the characteristics and size of each site. The company must have the documentation prepared and release the agenda to the people to be interviewed. Audit visits during periods of high work intensity should be avoided.



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Annex 1: Request form



MODEL OF CERTIFICATE REQUEST "LIFE IN SALT"¹

Mr/Ms. _____ as _____,
 representing the company _____ with
 fiscal ID nr _____ and registered in _____

REQUESTS

The certification for the following brands:

¹ This model only covers the most important aspects. A more complete document will be prepared under legal supervision once the pilot audits have been carried out.



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Annex 2: Certification agreement



MODEL OF CERTIFICATION AGREEMENT "LIFE IN SALT"¹

By obtaining the "Life in Salt" certificate, the applicant agrees to:

- Ensure that all data provided in this application are true.
- Grant the certifying entity's staff access to its facilities during the audit as considered necessary, as well as any observers deemed appropriate.
- Facilitate the interview of staff members who may be considered relevant by the certifier agency to verify compliance with the indicators of the certificate.
- Provide access to the documentation necessary to verify the indicators required for certification.
- Inform the certifier entity of any significant change in their organization, notifying any modification to the information communicated, especially any modification that may have a significant influence on the certified products.
- Comply with the applicable legislation in force.
- Comply with the criteria established in the Procedure for the Use of the Certificate.
- Attempt, to the best of its ability, to comply with good process and landscape management practices, according to the recommendations document.
- Implement changes to the certification requirements when communicated by the certification entity.
- Consent to the publication or availability of information on the certification of their products to anyone who requests it.
- Pay all audit and administration costs regardless of the outcome of the audit.
- Identify and keep separately the product that complies with the certification requirements from those that do not comply or are disqualified, as well as from any other product that it manufactures or stores until its expedition.
- To withdraw from the market the product that, in its case, has motivated the suspension or withdrawal of the certification or, in its absence, to withdraw the brand advertising on it.
- Not to use its certification in a way that creates a bad reputation for the certifier entity, and not to make any statement related to its certification that could be considered misleading or is unauthorized.
- Cease using any reference to the certificate in all material in the event of suspension, withdrawal or termination of the certification.
- Agree that personal data may be processed by the certification entity in accordance with current data protection legislation.
- Agree that the product and company may be promoted by the certifying entity as a bearer of the certificate.

¹ This model only covers the most important aspects. A more complete document will be prepared under legal supervision after the pilot audits (outside the scope of the Life project).



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With the granting of the "Life in Salt" certificate, the certifying entity undertakes to:

- Grant the company with the certificate in force its use for the products produced in its facilities, in accordance with the specifications of the certificate.
- Give publicity to the granting of the certificate to a company as well as to the withdrawal of the certificate, as appropriate.
- Maintain the commitment to confidentiality and act with independence and impartiality.
- Comply with the audit control plan established in the Certification Procedure.
- Attend to the corresponding complaints or appeals and proceed to an effective resolution.
- Make qualified technical personnel available for the evaluation process (audits).
- Comply with the Data Protection Law.
- Maintain confidentiality on industrial processes and business strategies of the company, as well as any other information that may compromise its competitiveness.

Reference Documents

- Certificate Manual
- Good practice recommendations
- Specifications of the certificate
- Certification fees*.

*Outside the scope of the Life project

NOTE: The commitment to comply with the requirements set forth herein does not imply obtaining the certificate.

In _____, ____ / _____ /20__

Signed (the applicant, indicate position)

Signed (certifying entity)

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Annex 3: Table-summary of aspects to be evaluated and evidence

Aspect	Compliance	Evidence
<i>Product (P1)</i>		
1. Composition	a) The results of the analysis must be in line with reality, with a margin of error of less than 1%.	D: Analysis of the salt
2. Physical characteristics	a) The salt must comply with the characteristics described in the description sheet.	I: Printed information and content of the package; random sample of each salt D: Written information of the product sheets and documents of other certificates (eg PDO)
3. Biological contaminants (e.g. contact with faeces / wastewater / livestock)	a) Pathogenic micro-organisms must not be present in the salt.	D: Analysis of the salt
4. Chemical contaminants (e.g. discharges at sea or groundwater; corrosion)	a) No heavy metals or VOCs must be present in the salt.	D: Analysis of the salt
5. Physical contaminants (p.ej. insects, hay, plastics)	a) No foreign materials must be present in the salt (maximum 2 visible particles per kg).	I: Random sample of each salt
6. Traceability	a) The label must reliably indicate the geographical origin of the salt.	D: Registry of the salt batch, in which the origin, storage and packaging site of the product should be stated I: Random sample of each salt

Aspect	Compliance	Evidence
<i>Process (P2)</i>		
1. Identification of impacts on flora	a) Confirmation of the presence of flora species identified in the Natura 2000 Network form and related documents (NPA management plan, etc.).	I: Photographs of the salina
	b) Vegetation and slopes in apparent good condition.	I: Photographs of the salina
2. Identification of impacts on invertebrates	a) Confirmation of the presence of invertebrate species identified in the Natura 2000 Network form and related documents (NPA management plan, etc.).	D: Environmental management report or similar
	b) Presence of vegetation and wetlands suitable for food, shelter, and nesting.	I: Photographs of the salina
3. Identification of impacts on birds	a) Confirmation of the presence of bird species identified in the Natura 2000 Network form and related documents (NPA management plan, etc.).	D: Environmental management report or similar
	b) Nesting areas (islands, dykes, slopes) in apparent good condition.	I: Photographs of the salina
4. Employment	a) Contracts in accordance with current regulations.	E: Interview managers
	b) High satisfaction rate (>70%) in surveys.	E: Interview workers
	c) Employees receive annual training in sustainability and quality.	E: Interview workers
5. Local development	a) If they exist, suppliers must be mostly (>50%) locally and regionally sourced.	E: Interview managers

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D: Document, E: Interview, I: Inspection

Aspect	Compliance	Evidence
<i>Landscape and natural / cultural assets (P3)</i>		
1. Compliance with the NPA conservation regulations	a) The requirements of the NPA protection regulations (management plan...) are complied with.	D: Management plan
2. Respecting the breeding seasons (Annexes I and II of the Birds Directive)	a) The requirements of the NPA protection regulations (management plan, PORN, PRUG, PDS...) are complied with.	D: Management plan
	b) The breeding sites of birds identified as vulnerable or priority species according to the Birds Directive and the Red Data Book or equivalent are known.	D: Env. management report or similar I: Plans and photographs of the salina
	c) The nesting calendar of the birds is known to the management.	D: Env. management report or similar
	d) The work schedules are adapted to it.	D: Work schedule
	e) Management recommendations are followed.	D: Management plan
3. Protection of bird nesting sites	a) The breeding sites of the birds are known.	I: Plans and photographs of the salina
	b) Workplaces are adapted to the nesting sites.	D: Management plan
	c) Management recommendations are followed.	D: Management plan
4. Protection of non-ornithological species (Annexes II and IV of the Habitats Directive)	a) The location of occurrence of non-ornithological species identified as vulnerable or priority species according to the Habitats Directive and the relevant Red Data Book, or equivalent, is known.	D: Environmental management report or similar I: Plans and photographs of the salina
	b) There is a specific plan for monitoring and management of invasive species.	I: Plans and photographs of the salina
	c) Management recommendations are followed.	D: Management plan
5. Protección de especies de flora y hábitats vulnerables, (Anexos II y IV de la Directiva Hábitats)	a) The location of flora species identified as vulnerable or priority species according to the Habitats Directive and the relevant Red Data Book, or equivalent, is known.	D: Env. management report or similar I: Plans and photographs of the salina
	b) Workplaces are adapted to the presence of these species.	D: Management plan
	c) There is a specific plan for monitoring and management of invasive species.	D: Management plan
	d) Management recommendations are followed.	D: Management plan
6. Ecosystem functionality	a) There is no presence of mucilage, algae and organic matter in the crystallisers.	I: Photographs of the salina
	b) The brine is transparent.	I: Photographs of the salina
	c) Micro-organisms and invertebrates common to saline ecosystems are present.	I: Photographs of the salina E: interview workers
7. Landscape protection	a) There is no presence of landscape disruptive elements in the vicinity of the newly installed salt works.	I: Photographs of the salina
	b) The infrastructure and buildings are in good condition.	I: Photographs of the salina
	c) There is no rubbish, dumping, abandoned machinery or scattered elements that show carelessness in work/maintenance of the area.	I: Photographs of the salina E: Interview workers / managers
8. Cultural heritage	a) Protected heritage elements must be in good condition.	I: Photographs of the salina



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	b) Elements protected as BIC or similar regulations must be open to the public according to the regulations.	D: Master plan or similar
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D: Document, E: Interview, I: Inspection