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IH cantabria

**Copernicus Tools for Monitoring Global Change  
Effects in Rivers and Riparian Zones**

**(Cop.RIVER)**

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**Deliverable 12: National-level meeting 5**

**Reporting period 2024-2025**

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## 1 BACKGROUND

*Cop.RIVER* aims to promote the use of Earth Observation (EO) in applications and services related to the ecological status of fluvial landscapes (*i.e.*, rivers and their associated alluvial plains, floodplains and riparian forests). The action will strengthen the Copernicus user uptake by supporting regional and national authorities in the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, the Habitats and Birds Directives and the Water Framework Directive by applying GAP analysis, to complement available Copernicus information on the state and characteristics of rivers and riparian zones.

## 2 NATIONAL LEVEL MEETINGS

During the development of the project, we identified the following key agents for the co-design of relevant methodologies and products to be developed in the framework of Cop.RIVER:

- The General Directorate of Biodiversity, Forests and Desertification (terrestrial domain), a governing institution of the Spanish Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (MITECO).
- The General Directorate for Water (aquatic domain), MITECO.
- The Cantabrian Hydrographic Confederation (terrestrial and aquatic domains), MITECO
- The National Parks Autonomous Agency
- The TRAGSA Group (terrestrial and aquatic domains), a company owned by the Spanish State General Administration, the Autonomous Communities and Municipalities.

In multiple meetings with these agents, we exchanged key information for the development of Cop.RIVER and to identify needs and products for the indicators and methodologies proposed through the project.

### 2.1 Meetings with the General Directorate of Forests and Biodiversity and the Cantabrian Hydrographic Confederation

The General Directorate of Forestry and Biodiversity is one of four directorates under the General Department of Rural Development, Livestock, Fisheries, and Food. This directorate is responsible for overseeing the management of public utility forests, biodiversity monitoring (with a particular focus on protected species), fire prevention, and the regulation of energy and fishing activities.

The Hydrographic Confederation of the Cantabro is an autonomous body responsible for the management of the catchment areas of the rivers that flow into the Cantabrian Sea. Among the functions attributed to them are: the inspection and surveillance of the public water domain and its protection zones, the control of the state and quality of our rivers and groundwater, the hydrological planning (following the guidelines of the Water Framework Directive and the implementation of actions related to flood risk assessment and management).

Between June and September 2025, Cop.RIVER team members attended several meetings with these two institutions to develop a LIFE proposal related to the invasive species *Reynoutria japonica*. Both

## COP.RIVER: NATIONAL MEETINGS (SPAIN)

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institutions expressed their concern regarding the spread of the species in the Cantabrian territory, looking for solutions to control and monitor its distribution.

In this context, the Cop.RIVER team together with the leading research group (Freshwater Ecosystems Group at IHCantabria) proposed the inclusion of a mapping task involving Copernicus data and products as a cost-effective methodology to identify the presence of the species at the regional scale *via* model training with spectral indices from satellite image time series. The proposed methodology would allow to monitor the spread of the species in the future and, simultaneously, to evaluate the effectiveness of management strategies such as eradication and the application of control actions. This interaction resulted in the submission of a project proposal to the call LIFE 2025-SAP-NAT (ENVIRONMENT: NATURE & BIODIVERSITY).

This proposal received a support letter from the Water Protection and Risk Management Directorate of the General Directorate of Water, MITECO, among other environmental institutions.

### **3 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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