

CASE STUDY PT-2 SMALL-SCALE FARMING (PORTUGAL)

BRIEF PROFILE OF THE CASE STUDY

- The study takes place in the municipality of Montemor-O-Novo, in central Alentejo. An important characteristic of this area is its rurality with the proximity of Lisbon, and along the main axis of exchange between Lisbon and Madrid. The landscape is composed of a characteristic **small-scale mosaic of farm units** between 1 and 5 ha, sometimes up to 20ha.
- This mosaic landscape, composed of land use processes **hardly taken in account by authorities** in their different policies at the various scales, is nevertheless a provider of environmental and social benefits.
- The analysis focuses on two environmental and social benefits. Firstly, **sustainable food production** and secondly rural **vitality**. The present case study pays particular attention to the farmers and their collectives actions, their linkage with the other actors of the socio-economic system without forgetting the valuation of the key stakeholders on the field.



KEY FACTORS IMPACTING THE PROVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS

The globalized nature of the market of food products influences the **competitive capacity of small farmers** to provide food products, in terms mainly of regularity of the distribution, quantity and certainty of price, and this even if the small farmers are rarely directly connected to the global market. The policies at European or national scale are **indirect drivers for this socio-economic system**, as the small farmers are not mainly targeted, while other farming types (larger ones) receive support.

Thus these policies have mainly an influence on the activity of the competitors on the market: the financial aid for investment as well as subsidies for production allocated to the larger farmers allows them to be more competitive in the global sphere. However, the **demand for local products in the local market** and through **short supply chains** has been increasing slightly, as are observing small farmers involved in these networks.

It is important to remark that the farmers are **aware of their condition of environmental and social benefits keepers**, as one of them said: **“We know that what we are doing is good for the society, for the environment, and so on, and we are trying to keep/develop this”**.

EMERGING FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Our first conclusions are that there are some key **motivational, institutional and socio-economic factors**, important for taking in account in this particular case: **a. The market and social demand; b. The access to knowledge; c. The high level of awareness of the farmers, old farmers and new farmers; d. Local initiatives supported by the municipality; e. The proximity to Lisbon; f. The economic context.**

In this particular case, the **municipality** is configured as a big potential actor in order to improve, promote and assure the quantity and quality of the environmental and social benefits, nevertheless it needs an **institutional and law framework** for working on this.

