

## CASE STUDY

### SMALL-SCALE PERI-URBAN MOSAIC IN MONTEMOR-O-NOVO (PORTUGAL)

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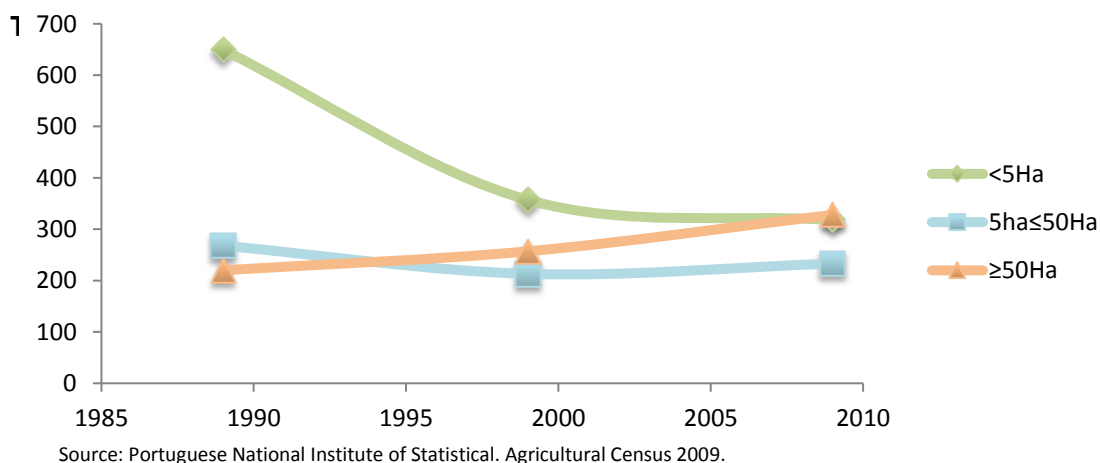
<b>Region or locality</b>	Montemor o Novo, Central Alentejo, Portugal.
<b>Main Farming/ forestry system</b>	Large scale extensive silvo-pastoral systems.  In the surroundings of the municipality main town: characteristic small-scale mosaic of farm units between 1 and 5 ha, sometimes up to 20ha. Small scale policultural mosaic in the surroundings of towns and villages, contrasting with the large scale farm structure in the rest of the territory, is characteristic of the region.
<b>Area (ha) of initiative (&amp; Case Study)</b>	Case study area is aprox. 1600 ha
<b>Key ESBOs covered</b>	Rural vitality and Sustainable Food Production.
<b>Total no. of farmers/ foresters involved</b>	About 300 farmers.
<b>Other key stakeholders involved</b>	The Local Administration, Cooperative MINGA, Liga dos Pequenos e Medios Agricultores, Citizen Network (Rede de Cidadania de Montemor), local NGO.
<b>Source(s) of funding</b>	No public funding.
<b>Start date of initiative</b>	Not defined
<b>End date of initiative</b>	Not defined



## 1 Introduction: What is the case study about?

The study takes place in the municipality of Montemor-o-Novo, in central Alentejo. In the surroundings of the municipality main town, as well as in the other, smaller, towns, the landscape is composed of a characteristic small-scale mosaic of farm units between 1 and 5 ha, sometimes up to 20 ha. The case-study focuses on this specific area, the small-scale mosaic landscape, those farms units between 1 and 5 ha. An important characteristic of this area is its rurality with the proximity of Lisbon, and along the main axis of transportation Lisbon-Madrid. The average population density in the municipality is 14 inhabitants per km, and despite being so close to Lisbon, the population has in average decreased by 7% since 1991. The small scale mosaic is nevertheless an area with higher population density, being the low density for the whole municipality strongly influenced by the large extent of the territory occupied by large estates, with very few inhabitants. In the municipality agriculture is still a significant activity in employment, with 14% of the active population still working in the agricultural sector<sup>1</sup>, and this sector is the second most important employer in the municipality (see Table 1). The overall landscape is dominated by large-scale extensive silvo-pastoral systems, in large estates ranging in size from 100 to 1,000 ha.

The total area occupied by these small-scale-farms, is small in relation to the remaining large-scale estates. However, although the number of these small-farms units is decreasing along the years (Figure 1.), this mosaic becomes of foremost importance, due to several reasons: i) it is the everyday landscape of the majority of the municipality population, living in the municipality town or in the surrounding small farms, ii) it is highly attractive to new comers, due to the small size of the farm units and proximity to the town and services; iii) it provides production linked to consumer through short supply chains; iv) it preserves practices and know-how specific to the region (e.g. irrigation by gravity), which are being abandoned in other land use systems.



**Figure 1: Farms units evolution according UAA types. Montemor-o-Novo**

<sup>1</sup> Portuguese National Institute of Statistical



Economic activity (CAV 3)	Working population (nº)	% of total working population
<b>Agriculture, animal production, hunting, forestry and fishing</b>	<b>1010</b>	<b>13,97</b>
Extractive industries	18	0,25
<b>Manufacturing Industries</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>10,99</b>
Electricity, gas, steam and air-conditioning supply	47	0,65
Capture, treatment and distribution of drinking water	21	0,29
<b>Construction</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>8,30</b>
<b>Wholesale and retail trade; Repair of motor vehicles, motor cycles</b>	<b>1250</b>	<b>17,29</b>
Transport and storage	236	3,26
Hotels and restaurants (restaurants and similar)	416	5,75
Information and communication activities	44	0,61
Financial and insurance activities	124	1,71
Real estate activities	12	0,17
Professional, scientific and technical activities	204	2,82
Administrative and support service activities	233	3,22
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	648	8,96
<b>Education</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>6,82</b>
Social activities and Health	724	10,01
Cultural, artistic and sporting activities	64	0,89
Other personal, social and community services	122	1,69
Families with household employees	169	2,34
International organisations and other extra-territorial institutions	1	0,01

Source: Portuguese State Statistical Office.

The analysis focuses on two ESBOs: sustainable food production and rural vitality. Previous research in the area and the related references, have demonstrated these small farms have a role on both. <sup>2</sup>

The main actors to consider in small-scale farming in Montemor-o-Novo are: older traditional farmers, lifestyle farmers (some of them new-comers and some originating from the area), some new farmers and landowners who use the farm as a secondary/weekend residence

Regarding *sustainable food production*, the production in these small farms is dominated by traditional Mediterranean high-quality products, as olive oil and olives, sheep for meat, winter and summer vegetables, fruits. The diversity of products and the traditional production techniques, especially concerning water use and irrigation by gravity, strongly contribute to this sustainability. Further, the relation to short supply chains, together with the contribution to

<sup>2</sup> Pinto-Correia T., Almeida M. and Gonzalez C., 2015. A local landscape in transition between production and consumption: can new management arrangements preserve the local landscape character? Danish Journal of Geography DOI 10.1080/00167223.2015.1108210

Pinto-Correia T., Guiomar N., Guerra C. and Carvalho-Ribeiro S., 2016. Assessing the ability of rural areas to fulfill multiple societal demands. Land Use Policy, 53: 86-96.

DOI 10.1016/j.landusepol.2015.01.031

Pinto-Correia T., Gonzalez C., Sutherland L.-A., Peneva M., 2015. Lifestyle farming: countryside consumption and transition towards new farming models. In: Sutherland et al (Eds.) Transition Pathways Towards Sustainability in European Agriculture. CABI International, UK, pp.67-82

Surova D. and Pinto-Correia T., 2016. A landscape menu to please them all: Relating users' preferences to land cover classes in the Mediterranean region of Alentejo, Southern Portugal. Land Use Policy, 54: 355-365



the household consumption and economy, is one of the contributions to the sustainability of this food production. Furthermore, in most cases, the farm household does not depend solely on the farming income – and thus, there is a capacity to maintain farming despite variations in productivity and income associated with production. Nevertheless, there are issues of scale, as farmers face constraints in accessing the market, due to their small size. There are also issues of environmental quality, due to deficient knowledge level and information of farmers. Mostly for traditional farmers, the use of chemical inputs may compromise the quality of the products and the environmental quality in the farm and its surroundings.

Attending to *rural vitality*, it has been identified as a potential important way to sum up synergies in this context. The attractiveness of the small-scale farms to newcomers, or to the new generations of families from the area, together with the proximity to the small town of Montemor and the interaction of new actors with the local ones, has created a new turn into a vital rural community, which maintains its rural character but also has been renewed. Most important, the separation between social spaces which often has been described in literature as the process which takes place when newcomers of different types settle in the rural landscape, does not seem to take place here, where a new and mixed community is being shaped. This happens probably due to the complex pattern of actors and to the traditional hybridity of Mediterranean rural relations (Gallego Bono 2010; Arnalte-Alegre and Ortiz-Miranda 2013), based on intense interdependencies among different types of farms and actors. As described by Woods (2011), there is a high diversity in farm managers profiles never seen before in Southern Europe, which is added to the characteristic social dynamism present in small scale farm areas in Alentejo (do Carmo 2007).

The future seems to be promising here, with several ESBOs' provision at the same time, especially if collective actions are enhanced and developed, as we will see later in this report.

The present case study pays particular attention to the farmers and their collective actions, their linkage with the other actors of the SES. This is why we identified and studied the action of several relevant actors for our case study:

- The direct actors are the small farmers; these are of different types, as described above. Furthermore, there are formal actors, as the local administration of Montemor-o-Novo, a recent local cooperative of producers named Minga (1,5 years old) , a farmers syndicate called LPMA (already existing for a few decades) , specialised associations, aiming at cultural, environmental or economic outlets such as bee keeping and honey production and hunting.
- Other important actors are first and foremost the consumers, local consumers or consumers linked to the farmers by direct sales in short supply chains, and a citizen network named *Rede de Cidadania de Montemor-o-Novo*, who has as main goal to contribute to the sustainability of the municipality and has in the last 6 years engaged much in the preservation of small-farms and local production.

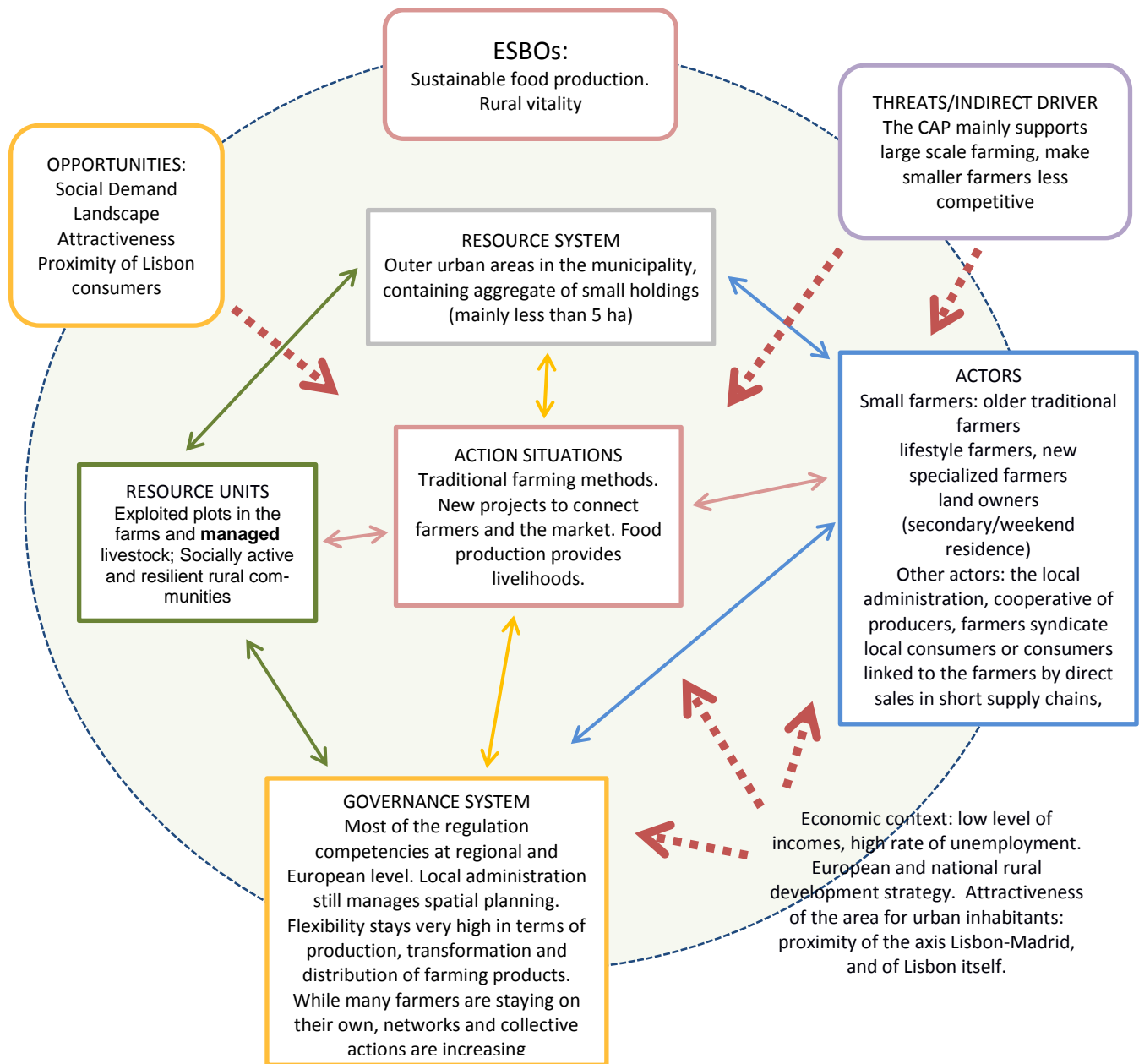
There is nevertheless no formal initiative concerning all small farms in this area, and no formal acknowledgement by the related authorities, of their role in rural vitality or food production. Thus, formally there is no voice of these small farms and farmers, and no well-defined project



or initiative. The analysis undertaken here focus on the above mentioned actors and their actions, as a process which can be considered together.

## 2 Definition of the social-ecological system (SES) studied

### 2.1 Figure of the SES, using the revised SES Framework



## 2.2 Description of the SES

In Montemor-o-Novo, small farmers (direct actors) have the potential to maintain and enhance the rural vitality and the sustainable food production. Crucial factors appear to be improving their exchange of know-how on farming practices, their capacity of networking within them and with other actors, and their access to markets (actions situation).

The existing collective actions which support in different and non-coordinated ways the small farms in Montemor-o-Novo, provide economic, bureaucratic and technical support to the small-farmers. There are interesting synergies as small farmers provide farming information and know-how to the new-comers, and these last ones contribute to renew of the rural community and keep small farms in production.

As a consequence of the global and national economic crisis, the rates of unemployment are high in Portugal, and this shows an important influence on the structure and operation of the small-farms system. Urban people (actors), mainly young adults, often with an academic background, search for other opportunities and move to rural areas in search for these new opportunities (in farming or in other rural activities). Further, and as a result of societal changes the demand for non-commodity functions, as nature conservation, new and second housing, leisure and recreation, are also increasing. Montemor-o-Novo, due to its proximity to Lisbon and attractive landscape, is also demanded accordingly (Pinto-Correia et al 2013).

Concerning the Governance System, the policies at European or national scale need to be considered centrally, as indirect drivers (see 2.3) for this SES. Small farming remains un-seen by most sectoral policies including agricultural policy is no specific national agricultural policy. The implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy is mostly focused on large scale and specialised farming, aiming to promote its competitiveness and positioning in the global market. Due to a series of interconnected reasons, small farming remains outside the focus (Pinto-Correia et al 2015). Small farms often do not comply with requirements for support in investment, or transaction costs are too high for them to be eligible for production support – this may happen for instance with Organic or Integrated farming, where certification and technical aid may be too expensive for a small unit, and not compensated by the support to be received. . The existing policies favour large and specialized farmers, and these can be considered as competitors on the market: the financial aid for investment as well as subsidies for production allocated to these larger farmers reinforces their higher competitiveness in food markets. Despite the quite different market targets that small farms main have in relation to large and specialised farmers, payments within the agricultural policy context strengthen the unbalance.

From the spatial planning perspective, there may be a different influence on this SES. There is national legislation, regarding farm structure and land use, and this national legislation has to be respected and implemented both in regional and local spatial planning instruments and land use permissions. The rather rigid regulation means that farm structure cannot easily be changed, and farm units below 7,5 ha cannot be aggregated or subdivided. Further, the classification of urban and rural zones, defined in municipal plans, sets strong constrains on urban development on agricultural land. Thus, the resource units structure, the small farm plots, are





kept unchanged. In the last decades, their production function has progressively been reduced, while their interest for other uses has increased – so their price in the market has gone up, following their residential value and not their productive value. In this sense and according to Pinto-Correia and Primdahl (2009), while functions in the landscape are deregulated, changes in structure are increasingly regulated – in an attempt from the spatial planning administration to maintain the landscape qualities of the place. And in fact this may be seen as a positive contribution from public policies, both at national and at regional and local level, to maintain the small farm SES. The price has radically gone up – but still the farms are there and there is a very weak urbanization expansion going on. Without this farm structure, the whole revival of the small farms would not take place, in any case.

There are thus two main types of public policies mechanisms interfering with the small farms in Montemor-o-Novo: agricultural policies targeting large farms and keeping small farms unseen, and spatial planning regulations guaranteeing the maintenance of the small farm units and the use of their land as agrarian land.

### 2.3 Levels of ESBO provision, trends and determinants

The small-scale agriculture has been long characterized by the low volume of its production, the difficulty in distinguishing between what is produced and what is consumed, the lack of professional training, and the lack of farming technology (Bandarra and Jazra, 1981). The idiosyncrasy of small-scale (see 2.2) farming in Montemor-o-Novo related to the ESBOs analysed on our case study, rural vitality and sustainable food production, implies to look at them attending to social and ecological performance measures.

Thus, the indicators used comprise:

#### ***Social performance measures:***

Two scales of analysis were used, farm level and local level.

Attending to the farm level it is observed how within the small farmers, there is a group much aware of the sustainability requirements in the farm management, and apply sustainability principles to decide on their practices. The cooperative Minga supports market linkages for small farms together, but only for those farmers who follow a sustainable production pathway, thus increasing awareness and application of sustainability principles. New-comers are often searching for a new lifestyle and therefore also more aware of environmental and socially friendly principles.

Related to the local level, the demand for short supply chains of sustainably produced food is increasing since a few years. Initiatives as the 'Kilometer 0' in cantines and restaurants of the municipality (food produced with very low transportation costs, with products originating from the municipality territory) or MINGA allow the general public to access locally produced food products through their short supply chains shows there is a growing interest in this kind of products and derived food. *“Sustainable food production is a response to the growing public awareness of the current impact of food*



*production on the environment, as well as trends for healthier and ethically produced food. Sustainable food is organic, local and fresh.”<sup>3</sup>*

**Ecological performance measures:**

The production of the small farmers serves different targets: consumption in the household and enlarged family, distribution to neighbors and friends, sales at the farm and locally, and sales to the external market, or sometimes directly to urban consumers (Pinto-Correia et al 2015): This diversity in destination of production, makes the small farming stronger in face of crisis, than other ways of farming. Small farms have resisted so far, despite being already in the last 40 years seen by the agricultural regime as farms with no future in the market. A quantitative indicator may be the number of farms that are maintained even with no formal connection to the global market.

**Key drivers and limiting factors**

The economic crisis has led to a higher social value attributed to farming, thus a collective awareness has been changing. This way, some young qualified families have moved to Montemor in the last 8 years, to take care of family farms which were out of use for one or two generations or were used extensively while they could have a more intensive use. This also means they have moved into houses which were left with no inhabitants for the last one or two generations. Further, two land banks have been created in the municipality. Land banks create the possibility for people who do not own land or cannot afford to formally lease land to use land from others, to a farming activity. There are different ways a land bank can be built up. In Montemor-o-Novo, there is one created by the Rede de Cidadania, where some owners who do not use their land, have made it available, in small plots, for people who would make a vegetable garden, with no payment required (except in some cases for the use of water for irrigation). There is another set up by the Liga dos Pequenos e Médios Agricultores, with the support of the Municipality Council, making municipal land available also in small plots and for vegetable and fruit production. These plots are located in one single area, outside the town of Montemor-o-Novo, and water is for free – therefore highly interesting for more intensive and market oriented production. Water availability and costs is always a limiting factor in the vegetable and fruit production in the Mediterranean.

On the other side, the local administration (municipality council) expresses the will to maintain small-farms and small farmers, but there is no local legal framework which supports higher intervention. The farming sector depends from central administration and has no delegation at the local level. The local municipality develops some actions to promote awareness on small farming. Further, it supports some of local action groups: some formal, such as *Minga*, a new distribution cooperative, *Liga dos Pequenos e Médios Agricultores dos Concelho de Montemor-o-Novo* (Union of the small and medium farmers of the county of Montemor-O-Novo), or other informal, like *Rede de Cidadania de Montemor* (Montemor citizenship network), or farmers organized as local products distribution groups. These local action groups are also promoting awareness campaigns for the importance of healthy food and food changing according to the seasons, thus linking to local production, with the support of the local administration. The will of the informal citizen network helped to gather the actors and to show to the municipality

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<sup>3</sup> **Arno Kompatscher (IT/EPP)**, President of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano and Regional Councillor at the **European Committee of the Regions**



that it was possible to build with small farmers. Despite, questions as the distribution of the small farmers production or the direct connection to collective procurement (cantines, health system, etc) could still benefit much from a more target investment from the local authorities.

Public procurement in particular, which is managed by the local administration for schools and third age homes, could engage in using local products, thereby supporting directly small-farms. Despite this mechanism being used in other municipalities in Portugal, it is not yet used in Montemor-o-Novo. There is an initiative for a Km0 school canteen, but only partial and only functioning one day a week – thus a very limited impact on the local production.

Another important driver is the demand for local products in the local market and through short supply chains that has been increasing slightly, as small farmers reported. Consumer attitudes, mainly of urban and more informed consumers have been changing in recent years, the sense of more awareness for the quality and specific characteristics of local products; societal demand for local products and thus also for small scale farming is increasing, turning it into an opportunity.

A limiting factor is the fact that many elderly farmers are without successor. This fact can partly be balanced with newcomers and the increasing interest in lifestyle farming. The main challenge here is the transmission of specific knowledge and know-how from these farmers who do not have any formal education but have accumulated experience, to the newcomers. Traditional intergenerational learning happened while working together, within the family and neighbor network. From older and traditional farmers to urban newcomers settling in the area, this transmission of know-how and knowledge requires new processes, still not developed.

As expressed in 2.2, the focus of the Common Agricultural Policy on large and specialized farming, is considered by some of the local actors as a considerable limitation to small farms, by lowering their turnover and the market chains they have access to. Some local actors consider that Europe is by this, distorting competition. As previous research has shown, small farming is kept as an unseen farming, not only in the formulation of the CAP, but also by its implementation in the Portuguese context (Pinto-Correia et al 2015a and 2015b). Even if rural development regulations express a willing to support farming contributing to rural development and rural communities, supports are still much concentrated in Pilar I and the large scale farming, than on rural development measures truly targeting small farming.

In the interplay of all the described factors, what is observed is that, despite some odds, small farming is maintained and even renewed in the Montemor-o-Novo surrounding area. And strongly supporting this renewal is the fruitful connexion network among local actors. This can be considered as a facilitator of social capital, mainly developing in informal spaces, which have been growing in number and strength. There is thus a high potential of strengthening the cooperation, the reciprocity and the collective actions , mainly grounded on the existing small initiatives, as the cooperative MINGA, the citizen network Rede de Cidadania, the association Liga dos Pequenos e Médios Agricultores. Being different in nature, but with similar goals and interconnected actors, these entities create complementary spaces for sharing and learning.



A drawback is the limited tradition on collaborative functioning, through networks. There is a strong tradition in Mediterranean rural communities, which are characterised by their hybrid composition, of collaborating closely in a one-to-one basis. And even highly advanced collaboration forms, where parts of the property rights are transferred by the land owner to others, for example – but always on the basis of unformal agreements and always one-to-one agreements. Associative or other network involvement has much less tradition. The trust in a community of actors, and sense of belonging to a collective, is thus limited. Actors responsible for launching the collective actions remarked that, despite many common objectives, small farmers remain mostly in an individualist logic. Recent entrepreneurs (with a highly educated profile, often newcomer) invested in the construction of a resilient network in order to help securing the small-farms existence and production. This should be local, qualitative, fair and environmental friendly, as suggested by the following interview's quote: *“Farmers distrust already a lot so we have to build a relationship based on trust: what is important is the commitment, and feeling what is important (aka : the value system). » (Administrator Minga cooperative)”. Still, there are constant constraints to the functioning of such a network, due to the lack of trust in the collective and lack of commitment of small farmers with the group.*

In this sense, and regarding the provision of the ESBOs, their reinforcement and support in the long term would require a more intensive investment in collective actions collective actions which increase the connections between small-farmers, promote trust between them and create new ways of cooperation. For this, also training for cooperation and networking would be required. To engage in close collaboration, besides formal knowledge, soft skills are much required, and these can only be obtained if unformal project base training is set in place. In this context, this could be a fundamental step for rural vitality to be revitalized and the sustainable food production to grow with a stronger basis.

## **2.4 Ancillary economic and social benefits provided ‘on the back’ of ESBOs**

### ***Sustainable food production***

On top of the sustainable food production in Montemor-o-Novo, some additional social and economic benefits were identified:

- The increasing awareness by the small farmers about environmental and social issues makes increase the collective awareness on this and vice versa.
- Initiatives like MINGA, which is fostering and promoting ecological production, is opening new markets, access to new consumers, and creating green employment.
- The diverse spectrum of short supply chains established and used (direct sale, basket, market, specific shop, online, ...), shows the innovating capacity of the different actors involved in this case study.



### **Rural vitality**

Attending to rural vitality:

- Newcomers and urban people coming back to their family houses, involve the land reclamation of the small plots as well the recovery of the old family houses.
- Also these newcomers and urban people, are bringing with them new innovative ways of farming or new connections to the market, or they are aiming to recover traditional ways of farming, helping preserving know-how which contributes to the sustainability of the farming process
- The increasing collective awareness is leading to new projects to connect farmers and the market.
- Also related to the last point, some initiatives as the land banks from the Liga dos Pequenos e Médios Agricultores and from the Rede de Cidadania, aim for sustainable local solutions, based on social innovation.
- The new dynamics created also increase the level of appreciation of local inhabitants and local farmers, for the community and the place they live in; there is an improvement of the collective local self-esteem, which contributes to the interest in staying in the area and creating new bindings and new projects, which in turn create more economic activity and social capital.

### **3 Shifting societal norms, collective learning and voluntary actions**

- Is there evidence in the case study of shifting societal ‘norms’ in relation to expected environmental or social behaviour among farmers or foresters or those with whom they deal in supply chains?

Concerning the small farmers studied in this case study, we can distinguish different categories: older traditional farmers, lifestyle farmers, some new specific farmers and landowners who use the farm as a secondary/weekend residence. These categories are particularly important when we talk about the existence or evidence of shifting societal norms in our case study.

*Traditional farmers:* who have done this activity all their life but see it more as a subsistence activity, even if they sell part of their products. They present an increasing environmental and social concern, or at least they are aware of societal concerns and demands for more sustainable production forms and product quality. Nevertheless, they don’t change fundamentally their ways of farming and according to Costa (2013) it seems they don’t have the intention.

*New specific farmers:* farmers who see farming more as their main activity and develop it as high quality niche production, often organic or biodynamic. This fact represents a change in the common thinking about agriculture, where the social, environmental and health concerns are gaining importance. There are also the ones more prone to work in networks and contribute explicitly to a collective action, also to support a better connection to the market or creation of new markets.



*Lifestyle farmers*: who have moved into the area due to the attractiveness of the rural ambience, the local landscape and the proximity of the city of Montemor, but also practice farming in their land. The origin of lifestyle farmers, involves foreigners, urban newcomers, local and returnees. The main characteristic of this group is their common concern about food production, the search for a better and “green” quality of life and the promotion of the natural resources. Since the 90’s, Montemor-o-Novo is hosting this group of new farmers, and the number of them is increasing. This group represents the evidence of a real change in societal norms, more than a change, and an evolution.

By the interaction of these different actors, who are neighbours or meet in informal meeting places such as the market or events organized by the Rede de Cidadania or the Cooperativa Minga, social norms are changing. The former rural community is turning into an even more hybrid community with different actors mixing – and this contributes to shifting social norms.

- To what extent does the innovation or success or potential of the case study incorporate collective learning?

Despite the difficulties in working in networks and trust in the collective, most of the farmers believe in interpersonal relationships and networking as a way to improve and promote the small farming (Costa 2013). They are thus open to support each other, and the newcomers and lifestyle farmers are welcomed by traditional farmers, if there are technical questions about farming or a need of information.

All exchange of information between the direct actors of our SES, happens in informal channels. This means, there is no formal space to this exchange of information between small farmers.

Concerning the exchange of information between small farmers (direct actors) and others actors: local administration, cooperatives, local consumers and the citizen network (Rede de Cidadania), we find different situations:

- First, the local administration doesn't exchange information with the others actors (indirect and direct). The local administration collaborates in some initiatives created by MINGA (cooperative) or Rede de Cidadania, but it is not involved in depth with them. At the same time, most of the farmers state that an important obstacle for their access to the market is the complex bureaucracy where the local administration doesn't give them any help to solve this situation.
- Second, the case study shows that the exchange of information is between the other actors (the citizen network (Rede de Cidadania), the cooperative (MINGA) and the local consumers) and between some farmers. Thus, Rede de Cidadania promotes and informs to the local consumers about sustainable ways of consumption and also offers plots of land to be farmed; Liga dos Pequenos e Médios Agricultores and MINGA offers legal, financial and technical consultancy to their farmers and connect them to local consumers by different ways described earlier (local shop, market, online shopping,



short supply chains) and Rede de Cidadania together with MINGA foster initiatives together to reach the local consumers and improve their environmental and social awareness.

Concluding, the exchange of information between small farmers responds to a cultural and traditional way of communication. This way the cooperative and the citizen network are the actors which configure formal spaces to the exchange of information. The local administration in this sense is neither an obstacle nor a promoter (as it might be) of improvement of inter- and intrapersonal relationship between all the actors in our SES. In this way, the local administration doesn't create spaces or mechanisms to enable this exchange of information, nevertheless, support in some ways initiatives triggered by the collective actions, thus the role of the local administration in this issue it could be said that doesn't exist.

In January 2017 an initiative was launched by the Municipal Council, which is a step forward in actively supporting small farming, and paying particular attention to the environmental sustainability: the municipality has organized a series of training sessions on organic farming and soil improvement, in the different localities in the municipality territory. There are one day training sessions, lead by an experienced organic farmers who is also an agronomist, and are free to anyone who wants to attend. In this way, it is expected that also more traditional farmers will receive information and training on environmental requirements for sustainable farming and will be able to apply new methods and technics in their practice, combined with the traditional knowledge. This may be a sign of a new involvement of the local administration in this process.

- What changes or processes in the case study have happened not because of policy or market instruments (incentives or regulations or changes in institutions) but simply because of individual or collective motivations to change, among the key actors or groups of actors?

The most important change observed in a short term is the increase of the environmental and social awareness. This is reflected in the cooperative MINGA, which started in 2015, and its incomes and people interested in its work are growing very fast. Also, the Rede de Cidadania which began in 2010 is still working with the population of Montemor and another entities, this means a change in the perception of the environmental and social issues being all of them more important in this county, as the Rede de Cidadania says on its description<sup>4</sup> *“it is a movement that is aware and acts towards new social, economic, environmental and cultural paradigms that enhance the construction of a sustainable future closer to the people”*

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<sup>4</sup> <http://mingamontemor.pt/>



## 4 Mechanisms, (collective) actions and governance arrangements to enhance the level of ESBO provision

### 4.1 Organisational capacities, leadership, networking and communication

Regarding the existence of a social network/collective action that can improve the provision of the ESBOs, rural vitality and sustainable food production, we must again refer to the different entities mentioned before in sections 2, 3 and 4: MINGA, Rede de Cidadania, Liga dos Pequenos e Médios Agricultores and MARCA a local association for development.

In Montemor-o-Novo, there is no social network or collective action that comprises all of the actors of the SES. In spite of this, and as referred to earlier, there are several collective actions and a citizen network that have the potential to improve the provision of the ESBOs.

This way, MINGA with just one year of operation has reached a small group who farmers who need consultancy, inhabitants who wanted to change their consumption habits, farmers who wanted to change their traditional way of farming to a sustainable one, and so on. the group of people interacting with Minga is growing and as such its influence is expected to grow.

The Liga dos Pequenos e Médios Agricultores, offers also technical and financial consultancy for the farmers and access to plots of land through the land bank, as well as the Rede de Cidadania. And MARCA not exclusively in the agriculture area but including it, promotes the formation of associations and work directly with some farmers trough development projects.



Inside of MINGA Cooperative

The leaders of some of these collective actions have close relationships with the population, as it is the case of the responsible of Liga dos Pequenos e Médios Agricultores. The founder of MINGA is not from Montemor-o-Novo and is building his network and relation with specific groups of the population, step by step. The Rede de Cidadania is composed of people both from the municipality and newcomers, but acting since 7 years, it is recognized by most inhabitants. Nevertheless, these leaders that don't have an institutional position or influence to arrange changes in a short term. This fact can be considered an obstacle for the development in the provision of the ESBOs. IT could be dealt with with more involvement and compromise



from the local administration, so that formal institutions also apply in their practices principles and actions that contribute to the support of small farmers.

#### 4.2 Innovative governance arrangements and mechanisms supporting ESBO provision

In some cases, the local administration supports initiatives from collective actions, in other cases it is not a facilitator as it might be, as is the case of the complex bureaucracy for accessing to the market for the farmers. Nevertheless, according to the Strategic Charter of Montemor-o-Novo, an official document from the local administration where is settled the objectives and the future actions for the local administration, some governance arrangements concerning the ESBOs studied can be found. They are the result of the participative processes of the Agenda 21:

- Land banks: For the one promoted by the Liga de Pequenos e Médios Agricultores, the local administration provides plots of lands free of charge or low cost. The objective is to promote the local farm products and the creation of community spaces for local production, socialisation and cohabitation. For the land bank promoted by the Rede de Cidadania, the Municipality has provided financial support to its divulgation, and to obtain small technical equipment required for the fencing of the plots and the water provision. The land in this case is private land. On both cases, the support of the municipality is important for the implementation.
- Green taxes incentives: Incentives to whom give land to the land bank. Thus, there is a reduction on the property tax up to 50%<sup>5</sup>, this is a national measure but implemented at a local level.
- Km0 food in canteens and restaurants – the initiative is a joint project of the Rede de Cidadania and Municipality. The Rede has dealt with Restaurants, and the Municipality with the school canteens. The Km0 food is only served in very limited occasions, but the concept has been spread in this way, through the schools and children. The Rede de Cidadania has engaged with the Restaurants, and promotes a monthly event (a km0 dinner) announced in the radio and through the Rede contacts, so that the concept is also spread in this way, and the restaurants created new business opportunities. This is still a small initiative, but as created higher awareness of the quality of local food and the role of consumers in protecting it.

Concerning to the land bank by the Liga dos Pequenos e Médios Agricultores, the plots are managed by the Liga, and the local administration just provides the land but it is not engaged directly with the people who use or manage the land. The general perception about the local administration is that they do not engage in this area.

In this context, alternative governance systems at small-scale, are emerging. Small farmers organize themselves, deciding individually, what they produce, how they produce and when they produce, and most important how they use the land. The exchange of related information occurs through informal channels, this kind of governance system, subtle, in some way is due to the land character, and determines the provision of the ESBOs. Regarding sustainable

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<sup>5</sup> Lei n.º 63/2012, de 10 de Dezembro



food production, the new ways of farming, techniques and the administrative procedures to become “organic producer” are communicated both informal channels and formal through the cooperative Minga or the Liga dos Pequenos e Médios Agricultores.

The same is observed with rural vitality, where newcomers find the information they need by the informal communication, spreading it to others potential newcomers, and maintaining the rural community.

MINGA, Rede de Cidadania and the Liga dos Pequenos e Médios Agricultores are positioning themselves as alternative governance systems, introducing new ways of farming, increasing the social and environmental awareness, promoting local products and production, etc. These collective actions are based on participative democracy procedures, making the farmers involved and engaged. In MINGA was born just a year ago, and aims at shared decisions, in the cooperative assemblies, to decide what is produced and how it is going to be sold. More collaboration training would be needed, but the platform for this collaboration is there, and would hopefully be more effective in the future. Rede de Cidadania and Liga dos Pequenos e Médios Agricultores organized together with MINGA several public actions to involve the society and making known the local products and farmers.

In the case of Montemor-o-Novo, it was important the implementation of the participative processes of the Agenda 21, a point in history, when it seemed that the local administration realized that the population of Montemor-o-Novo had something to say about the management of their municipality. For example, the citizen network (Rede de Cidadania) was born under the Agenda 21 frame, or mostly following some of the Agenda 21 objectives.

In summary, the local administration of Montemor-o-Novo, as states on the Strategic Charter of Montemor-o-Novo, should be more engaged with the provision of the ESBOs by the small farming, also establish a participative governance system and implement measures for accomplish the objectives proposed, connect and create spaces for exchange of information, and facilitate the bureaucracy for the farmers, in order to enhance the provision of ESBOs.

### 4.3 The role and impact of policy in ESBO provision

Despite the funds for the Diversification in Small-Scale Agriculture (e.g. Regulation (EC) 2075/2000 of 29 September 2000 or the latest Small-Scale Agricultural Regime, included in first Pillar of the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which came into effect in January 2015) to improve agricultural competitiveness and promoting rural sustainability, a significant rate (37%) of the respondents included in the work published by Barroso and Pinto-Correia (2014), conducted in several municipalities of the Alentejo (including our case study), don't have any subsidy – mainly small-scale farmers. The lack of information and knowledge about the subsidies and bureaucratic procedures makes the access to these subsidies difficult; also there is a general mistrust on the institutions from the part of the small-farmers. From the words of one of the responsible of MINGA: *“We don't have any support from the local administration, and we don't want it”*.



Attending to the policies at the municipality level, the spatial plan is managed by the local administration. According to Pinto-Correia et al (2015), the pattern of land cover, new buildings or the expansion of existing ones, need to respect the regulations, environmental restrictions and conservation measures imposed by different levels of administration, in an increasingly complex set of rules. Although, the local administration expresses the will to maintain small-farms and small farmers, so far it has not engaged in grounded projects aiming to cope with some of the constraints felt by small-farms, like the distribution or the legal requirements (e.g. livestock tracking and welfare reporting) imposed by the national legislation, which is focused on large production units.

The institutional frameworks are lagging behind. As an example, the burden of transaction costs it's not proportional to the farm and its productive scale, this can be an obstacle, mostly to the use of some policy scheme by small-scale<sup>6</sup> There are some recent and relevant mechanisms created within the Rural Development programme, but still not set into practice. Since the existing institutional frameworks, as CAP and national regulation, remain not concerned by this type of farming, the construction of a local institutional framework adapted to the territory and its people would be a most significant improvement of conditions of small-farms. Although the Pillar 2 of the CAP, related to the rural development policy, it is focused on the employment creation, the sustainability, modernization, innovation and the quality of the agricultural products, according to Da Silva (2016) in Portugal the beneficiaries of these measures are rural large scale farming and young farmers (Da Silva 2016), it's not consider the small-farmers as we explained before, they are not consider productive in economic terms.

#### 4.4 The role of the private sector in ESBO provision and enabling factors

In this case study, the private sector has a minor role, due to the fact that the ESBOs we are analysing and the direct actors are mostly related to collective actions. Nevertheless, the private sector engages in some ways with some of the small farmers in Montemor, like processors, traders and the retail sector.

According to *The Enterprises Survey with economic activity in Montemor-o-Novo (2015)*, the problem identify by the private sector in Montemor-o-Novo, is the national economic situation (73.3%) follow by lack of private investment (27.7%) and competition (25.5%), and the main solution to the economic situation in Montemor-o-Novo goes through more private sector investment in the agricultural sector (24.4%). Once again, the importance of the agricultural sector is a pillar on the economic context of Montemor-o-Novo. Nevertheless, the private sector initiatives are mainly targeted to the large-scale farming and intensive farming systems. On the other side, there is also the concern about improving and rising the dissemination and commercialization of local products, which can be the common share of one and another sector.

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<sup>6</sup> A local landscape in transition between production and consumption: can new management arrangements preserve the local landscape character? For revision



It can be found some private initiatives, looking forward to improve the rural vitality and the sustainable food production, but they cannot be considered representative of the private sector at all, nevertheless, these initiatives have some interest regarding the provision of the ESBOs:

- A large-scale farm, Freixo do Meio » sustainable and social values » own production and sells directly on farm or in Lisbon » in order to offer and provide sufficient products to their consumers ALSO some products sold come from small farmers.
- The project “Partilhar as colheitas- (Sharing the Crops) Community supported Agriculture”, implements a sustainable system of production-consumption.
- A consortium of large farms promote and sell extensive quality beef, “Solar da Giesteira” » sustainability as a label
- Some Restaurants promote and provide Km0 menus.
- Increasingly small initiatives promote and use the label “local”, “small Farm” »» a Montemor-o-Novo label has been under discussion.

In order to establish the existence of some benefits/risks related to the provision of the ESBOs, as was said, it is a potential on the private sector. Nevertheless is necessary to develop more this research line due to the fact that our ESBOs in Montemor-o-Novo are more related to the collective actions than to the private sector.

## 5 Potential pathways towards an enhanced provision of ESBOs

The enhancement of the provision of the ESBOs studied in Montemor-o-Novo, rural vitality and sustainable food production, need the empowerment of the collective actions, as well as more active contribution from the local administration. This way, the potential is there, and the ESBOs are being provided, nevertheless is needed to make these provider more effectiveness.

The interest from urban consumers and the societal demand for more rural lifestyles, are important drivers of a continued improvement in the condition of small farming.

A fundamental contribution for the increased resilience of the ESBOs in this context would be the increased collaboration and networking capacity, from all actors engaged in the process. In order to create new products, conquest markets, create new markets; promote better use of inputs and more sustainable farming practices, all this would be achieved in more sustainable ways with more grounded collective actions. There are a few, but so far they remain as limited small initiatives which lag behind when the whole potential is considered – they are only including a small part of this potential.

Regarding to the private sector, as was said in point 4.3, it was identified the potential in some initiatives, nevertheless it is an issue that need to be more analysed in order to see the different mechanism of this sector in the provision of the ESBOs, the governance system and the relation with the other actors.



## 6 Suitability of the SES framework and ‘action-orientated approach’ in the analysis of ESBO provision

The SES framework is quite useful in order to identify the main variables and processes related to the case study, this way it can be built a case study framework on which develop the work through the perspective of explaining and analysing the “why, how, where and when” of these processes and variables. Nevertheless, it is needed to develop this model in a more flexible way, adapting the SES framework to the specific ESBOs and widening the interlinkages that can occur.

Nevertheless, the SES framework in the present case study, enable to provide a holistic view-point of the socio-ecological interactions between farmers, collective actions, administration and the provision of the ESBOs.

One of the challenges for the researchers applying participative dynamics with the SES framework is the capability to explain and translate the objectives of this framework to the stakeholders. Nevertheless, using an action-oriented approach allows to establish objectives and a robust background for discussions on the entire complex issues related to the ESBOs. The same way, the action-oriented approach provides more transparency and coherence to the whole investigation in order to have realistic outcomes.

The context of particular territories has to be taken in account in order to adapt the approach, understanding the idiosyncrasy of the particular countries, cultural, economic, environmental and social aspects is mandatory to optimize the approach.

## 7 Main conclusions derived from the Steps 3-4 analysis

### 7.1 Key findings on the particular SES and the provision of ESBOs

Small farming in Montemor-o-Novo seems not to have economic or policy relevance for the local administration. Another commitment would mean much for the development of the provision of the ESBOs. However, the collective actions against this trend are arising, proving that another way of governance system is possible and these alternative ways can be sustainable. Although, the private sector doesn't have an active role related of the ESBOs, it can be said that has a great potential in this sense.

On one side, the appreciation and demand of the ESBOs provision, it has been proved than both, small farmers and society, are aware about the active role of these small farmers in the provision of the ESBOs, as well as in the importance of them. This way, as one farmer 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”*.

On the other side, in order to increase the awareness and provision of these ESBOs it is necessary more commitment at the local administration level, simplifying the bureaucracy, improving the educational and environmental policies and supporting and enhancing in a deeper way the collective actions.



## 7.2 Key findings on governance arrangements and institutional frameworks

Concerning to the institutional framework at the European level, the case study shows that although the small farmers do not receive target support, their activity is affected by the CAP, in the sense, that this one is focused on large-scale farming, what can lower the competitiveness of the small farming.

At the local administration level, as well as at the regional sectorial level of the administration (environment, agriculture) the bureaucratic processes for the small-farmers are being and obstacle for the provision of the ESBOs. Nevertheless, the implementation of the national measure of the land bank and the green taxes (4.2-), shows the relative importance that can have small-farming at a national level not local. The spatial planning, with rules decided at national level and implementation at local and regional level, contributes to the maintenance of a farm structure where small farms are kept as farm units, and no urban expansion is allowed in their land. This is a quite passive regulation, but surely contributes to the land use pattern which supports the ESBOs we are dealing with. So, in a way there are public interventions with limiting effect on small farms, but also some other, of different origin, which support the process of revitalisation of these same small farms.

## 7.3 Contributions to EU strategic objectives

After the analysis mostly of the collective actions in our case study that provide our ESBOs, it can be said that they contribute to the EU objectives in different ways:

- creating employment ('inclusive growth'): Initiatives as MINGA or Liga dos Pequenos e Médios Agricultores, through the consultancy and the creation of short supply chains, are creating employment for the farmers and for another people involved on this initiatives. This way, MINGA started one year ago, and now has 8 organic farmers who have a complementary salary, three people working in the shop and in the market. Through consultancy, both initiatives allow the small farmers go into the system and be quantify as new workers.
- enhancing sustainability ('sustainable growth'): MINGA offers only organic products, this sense, all their producers had to change to the traditional farming to the organic one. The increasing social demand is turning more traditional farmers to organic ones.
- strengthening innovative capacity ('smart growth'): Newcomers and the collective actions are bringing together to the county of Montemor-o-Novo new ways of farming, and making the local products more interesting and making Montemor more attractive for new initiatives.

## 7.4 How about the transferability of the approach/mechanism used?

The approach used to provide the ESBOs, rural vitality and sustainable food production, is mainly enhanced by the collective actions, and although is being implemented and it is arising, it can be transferred, according to the focus group, by:



- More extended knowledge about the collective actions existing in Montemor-o-Novo.
- More education to the consumers about sustainable and local food in Montemor-o-Novo.
- More training on close collaboration and network involvement, for all those engaged in the collective actions.
- More effective support from the local administration.

In this sense, there are a lot of small farmers and consumers in Montemor-o-Novo that are facing the same challenges that the collectives actions. This case study shows the enabling and limiting factors for the small farmers and their collective actions in order to provide the ESBOs, this way another farmers and collective actions can adapt all of this information to his own situation and to ensure a long term success.



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## 9 ANNEX: Reflections on the case study methodology used (focus group)

### 9.1 Objectives and activities undertaken with initiative/stakeholders

The participatory process implemented during the case study was:

- Individual interviews.
- Focus groups: validation process with the main stakeholders, small farmers.

Individual interviews: The main actors involved in these interviews were the managers of the collective actions. This way, we try to understand the main motivations to carry out these actions and to identify the implication of the small farmers on them. Also, the interviews were focused to understand the small farm system in Montemor o Novo and the role of the rest of the stakeholders, mainly the local administration, in the provision of the ESBOs analysed.

Focus groups: The schedule of the participatory process included two focus groups, one with the small farmers, another one involving the local administration and private initiatives. The main objective of the focus groups was to validate the information during the literature revision and the interviews, and analysed points that didn't come out during the two stages described before.



Small-Farmers Focus Group

At the end, one focus group was carry out with the stakeholders, related to the other focus group we found difficulties to contact the stakeholders and to have them involved in this process. In this way, we confirmed as was described in the case study, that the small farming is not a priority for the institutional stakeholders.

## 9.2 Outcomes and further steps

The main outcome we got was to make a first identification on how the small-farming system works in Montemor o Novo, identifying cultural issues related to the collective actions and channels of communication and bureaucracy obstacles in order to access to the market.



Dynamic of the small-farmers Focus Group

There is an important interest from the ICAAM to complement the collective actions related to small-farming in Montemor o Novo, the results of this case study are going to be used in order to continue working with these stakeholders and understand the cultural, social and environmental issues related to the territory. The ICAAM collaborate in many ways with the Portuguese Rural Network, that also has as an objective to enhance the sustainable small-farming system.

## 9.3 Judgement on the process

- What were expectations of actors towards this process?
- Were you able to meet expectation and why not?
- What was in your view the added value of the participatory approach?
- What are lessons learned during the process? What did not work well?

The main expectations of the actors who participate in the focus group were related to the process itself, in this way they show their interest in being involved in more focus group and activities which have the objective to enhance the small-farming system in Montemor-o-Novo.

Due to the interest that has the ICAAM in continue working with this sector, we found very possible to build a trustful relationship with them in order to meet this expectation.

The added value of the participatory approach is to empower, in this case, the small-farmers. In this way, their participation in this kind of activities makes them to feel in a position as a decision-maker that they are not use to feel they belong.

As was described before, the main difficulty we found was to involve other stakeholders, mostly from the local administration. In this sense, the Portuguese team is working to find the proper channels and ways of communication to enhance this relationship and to have them involved.

## 9.4 Supporting data and statistics

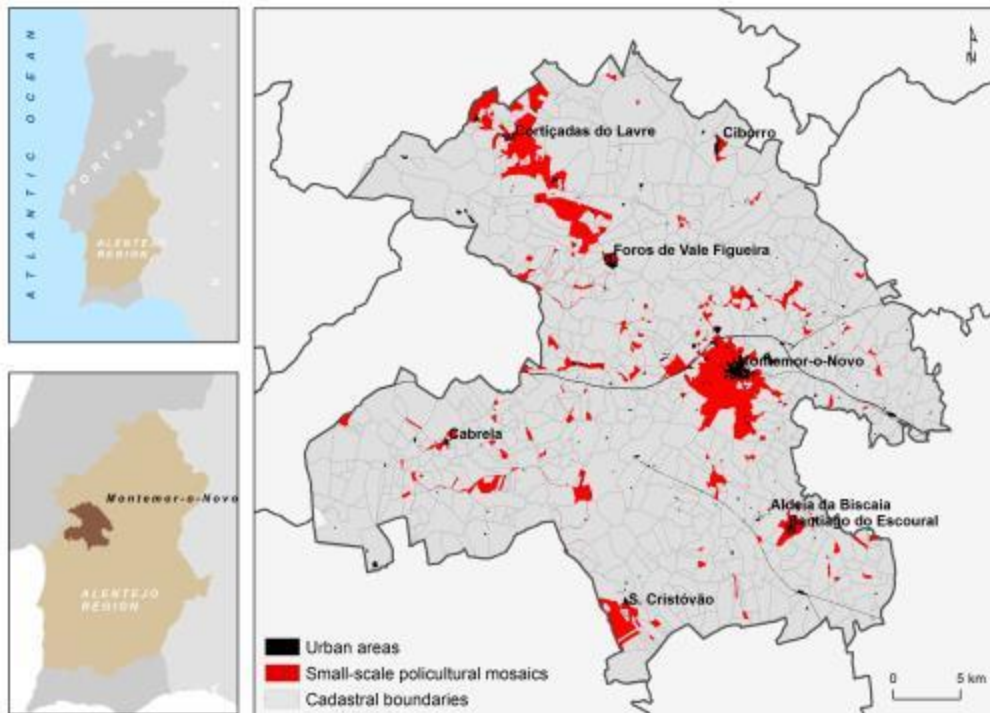


Figure 2: Small Farming Montemor o Novo

Table 2: Basic Data Montemor o Novo

## PORDATA



Montemor-o-Novo (Município)	2001	2011	2015
População	18.560	17.377	16.443
Superfície em Km2	1.232,4	1.233,0	1.233,0
Freguesias	10	10	7
Idosos por cada 100 jovens	203,4	236,9	264,1
Famílias	7.131	7.055	-
Alojamentos familiares	10.091	Pre 10.316	10.340
% população de 15+ anos sem nível de escolaridade	29,6	18,9	-
Pensionistas da Seg. Social e CGA em % da população	-	48,5	-

Table 3: Number of farms Montemor o Novo.

		Ano	
		1999	Montemor-o-Novo 2009
Área agrícola	Total	827	879
	< 1 ha	68	46
	1 - <5 ha	266	258
	5 - <20 ha	138	152

### Explorações agrícolas segundo os Censos

Fontes de Dados: INE - Recenseamento Geral da Agricultura

Fonte: PORDATA

Table 4: Working population by economic activity (2011)

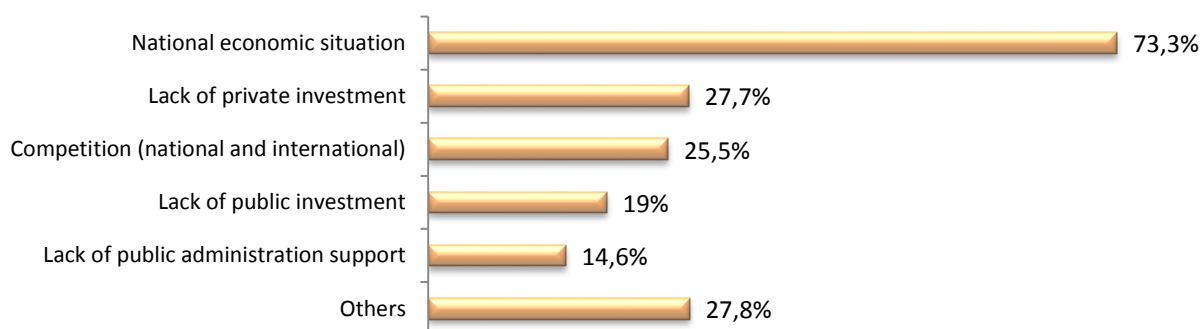
Economic activity (CAV 3)	Working population (nº)	% of total working population
Agriculture, animal production, hunting, forestry and fishing	1010	13,97
Extractive industries	18	0,25
Manufacturing Industries	795	10,99
Electricity, gas, steam and airconditioning supply	47	0,65
Capture, treatment and distribution of drinking water	21	0,29
Construction	600	8,30



<b>Wholesale and retail trade; Repair of motor vehicles, motor cycles</b>	1250	17,29
<b>Transport and storage</b>	236	3,26
<b>Hotels and restaurants (restaurants and similar)</b>	416	5,75
<b>Information and communication activities</b>	44	0,61
<b>Financial and insurance activities</b>	124	1,71
<b>Real estate activities</b>	12	0,17
<b>Professional, scientific and technical activities</b>	204	2,82
<b>Administrative and support service activities</b>	233	3,22
<b>Public administration and defence; compulsory social security</b>	648	8,96
<b>Education</b>	493	6,82
<b>Social activities and Health</b>	724	10,01
<b>Cultural, artistic and sporting activities</b>	64	0,89
<b>Other personal, social and community services</b>	122	1,69
<b>Families with household employees</b>	169	2,34
<b>International organisations and other extra-territorial institutions</b>	1	0,01

*The Enterprises Survey with economic activity in Montemor-o-Novo (2015),*

**Table 5: Main Problems (N=137)**



**Table 6: Measures proposed (N=90)**

