

Sustainable Value Chains in Mountain Rural Areas: Strategies for a Model Region

Catarina Afonso ¹ Violeta Lopes ¹ Ana Maria Barata ¹ Jorge Miranda ² Nuno V. Brito ^{3,4} Daniel Raposo ⁵ Teresa Paiva ^{6,7}

¹Banco Português de Germoplasma Vegetal, Instituto Nacional de Investigação Agrária e Veterinária I.P., Braga, Portugal ²ACIBTM/In.Cubo - Associação Centro de incubação de Base Tecnológica do Minho, Arcos de Valdevez, Portugal ³CISAS, Escola Superior Agrária, Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo, Viana do Castelo, Portugal ⁴1H-TOXRUN - One Health Toxicology Research Unit, University Institute of Health Sciences, CESPU CRL., Gandra, Portugal ⁵ReThink - Centre for Research in Design for the Territory, Polytechnic Institute of Castelo Branco, Castelo Branco, Portugal ⁶BRIDGES - Biotechnology Research, Innovation and Design for Health Products, Polytechnic of Guarda, Guarda, Portugal ⁷NECE - Research Centre in Business Sciences, University of Beira Interior, Covilhã, Portugal



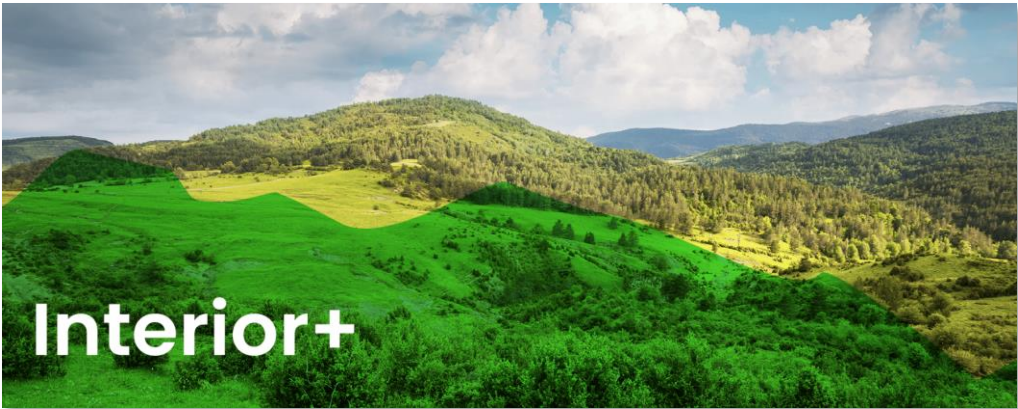
Sustainability
&
Circular Economy

INTRODUCTION

Mountain Rural Areas (MRAs) have always faced significant challenges due to their biogeographical location. These regions are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change¹, and their vitality is also weakened by significant demographic aging and fragility of their **agri-food systems**, which are often based on low-productive and low-value-added practices and an unskilled and/or underqualified workforce – typical of low-density territories².

Positive discrimination measures for these territories have been implemented in recent years, but the impact of these efforts remains limited in attracting population and investment and, thus, reversing the demographic circumstances of these areas³.

In Portugal, the **Interior+** project aims to address these issues by developing a sustainable revitalization strategy for the Mountain Rural Areas of **Alto Minho**, **Beira Baixa**, and **Beiras e Serra da Estrela**.



This project intends to create an intervention model aimed at the rural revitalisation of MRAs within the geographical scope of Alto Minho, Beira Baixa, and Beiras e Serra da Estrela. For that, **Interior+** is building a **Model Region** for the valorisation of **regional endogenous resources** of Mountain Rural Areas, to be replicated in other MRAs.

This model clearly identifies the **opportunities** and **critical factors** for the establishment of new agro-businesses in these MRAs. It targets young qualified professionals and supports small-scale family farming, while encompassing the broad agricultural sector (agriculture, agri-food, industry-related services, and tourism).

OBJECTIVES

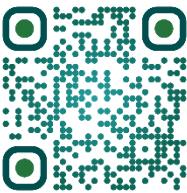
METHODS



Comprehensive Surveys

Comprehensive producer surveys serve as a crucial tool for gathering firsthand information about local agri-foods production and commercialization, and identifying challenges and opportunities these specific value chains face.

Are you a beekeeper?



We want to hear your opinion!
Please fill out this survey.



Capacity Building & Knowledge Transfer

Empowering economic agents to drive innovation.



SWOT and PESTLE analysis

A full assessment of key socio-economical, technological and environmental factors influencing is fundamental to identify the challenges and opportunities of agri-foods value chains in each target MRA.

STRATEGY

The **Interior+** strategy focuses on valorising the unique territorial capital and identities of Mountain Rural Areas, leveraging their historical, cultural, and natural heritage to create distinctive solutions.



This approach requires local participation to address the place-specific challenges faced by these regions⁴. Simultaneously, the strategy underlines the importance of enhancing the sustainability and the competitiveness of agricultural and agri-food sectors of MRAS through technological and social innovation⁵.

Interior+ is developing a **platform** for promoting and fostering Mountain Rural Areas agri-foods. Encouraging and facilitating territorial innovation will enhance and attract investment to MRAs, while boosting the commercialization of high-value local products.

REFERENCES

- [1] C. Adler, P. Wester, I. Bhatt, C. Huggel, G.E. Insarov, M.D. Morecroft, V. Muccione, A. Prakash, in Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegria, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Löschke, V. Möller, A. Okem, B. Rama (Eds.), Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA, Cambridge University Press, 2022, 2273–2318.
[2] Globalização, Agricultura e Zonas Rurais Desfavorecidas, M. B. Moreira, Oeiras, Celta Editora, 2001.
[3] M. A. Almeida, Revista Galega de Economía, 29(2) (2020) 1-17.
[4] T. Dax, Neoenogenous Rural Development in Mountain Areas, in Neoenogenous Development in European Rural Areas, E. Cejudo, F. Navarro (Eds.), Springer Geography, Springer, 2020.
[5] J. McEldowney, in Long-term vision for rural areas: European Commission communication, European Parliamentary Research Service (Eds.), Brussels, European Union, 2021.

Organized by:



FUNDING

