

## **Find your way to rural landscapes: contributions to integrated approaches for landscape analysis and management**

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This poster aims at presenting the approach developed within the research group DYNAMO, located at the University of Évora, and dealing with the dynamics and management of rural landscapes. This approach is being developed by an interdisciplinary group, within the scope of several research projects and applied studies for national and local customers: CapLand (Integrated Landscape Management in the Municipality of Mertola: new parameters for the CAP management), VISTA (Vulnerability of Ecosystems Services to Land Use Change in Traditional Agricultural Landscapes), EUROLAN (Strengthening the Multifunctional Use of European Land: Coping with Marginalization), ELCAI (European Landscape Character Assessment Initiative), Landscape Character Assessment in Action, BioHab (A framework for the coordination of biodiversity and habitats), Ribeira Grande – managing rural landscape for man.

During the last decades, the farming sector and its role in most European rural landscapes has been under strong processes of change. As a consequence of these various processes, farming does not anymore secure the preservation or simple management of many landscapes, which at the same time are considered valuable for many other functions they support: conservation, environmental balance, identity preservation, life quality, culture, recreation. Thus, the increasing expectations for the multifunctionality, not just of farming, but mainly of the connected landscapes, ask for new approaches that integrate farming and the related stakeholders and policy instruments with these other functions of rural landscapes. There is a need for the understanding and evaluation of these functions and of new forms of rural landscape management, taking into consideration the new conditions faced by rural areas.

The required analysis and understanding aims to be the role of DYNAMO, which tries to integrate various perspectives, not just for the analysis but also for the design of rural landscapes, seen in a dynamic perspective. As such, the scope of the work in this group is within the study and understanding of rural landscapes, their character, their multifunctionality and their changes, the changes in land use and land cover, the role and involvement of various stakeholders, as well as the evaluation of policies and instruments for management, and related proposals.

Most of the work is developed at a case-study level, integrating assessment of land use and landscape changes with stakeholders interviews. Some of the projects have the following objectives: understanding the reactions of different types of landscape users and managers to the changes occurred until now, as well as their expectations for the future; evaluating how the support for multiple functions does change in a local landscape when the land use pattern changes as a consequence of transformations in the farming sector; evaluating the process of land abandonment at the farm level: when is land really abandoned, what are the causes for it, what are other uses of land abandoned for agriculture; defining proposals for the design of instruments within the Common Agricultural Policy in order to better take in

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account the mentioned multifunctionality of the rural landscapes in concern; creating innovative design alternatives of local landscapes in the future.

But also some projects demand a more large scale approach. There is for instance one project dealing with the evaluation of the process, or processes, of marginalisation in rural areas, in a first phase at national level. And another dealing with methodologies and uses of Landscape Character Assessment at various levels, and comparing approaches developed in different countries and regions.

The different projects mentioned above are related to each other as they cross each others scope and concerns, or are applied to the same areas, or use similar methodologies. The main aim is to develop approaches which take in account the complexity of rural landscapes and of the relations established by different people, with different roles and positions, with these landscapes. Even if each project does not deal with this complexity, it tries to integrate in a framework where the various components and factors of rural landscape analysis are considered – so that it can be identified what the project contributes to, and what could be complementary studies, how the knowledge acquired could be used, etc. The philosophy of this group is mainly to produce research which may be used in different ways for a progressively more integrated and aware management of rural landscapes.

DYNAMO deals mainly with landscapes, but rural landscapes, and thus also with farming and with people. As a consequence, it was considered relevant to present the group in the framework of this Symposium as, looking at its subject and scope, it became clear that there may be many bridges and connections to establish with other projects dealing with farming and society and the challenges they face today in *learning to manage change*.