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ABOUT NATURAL CAPITAL

Country Fact Sheet
PORTUGAL



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Country Fact Sheet: Portugal (PT)

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This fact sheet is based on what partners in SELINA know about what is going on in their country and some additional literature. If you feel there are ongoing or upcoming research projects, policy initiatives or legislations, concerning the use of biodiversity, ecosystem condition and ecosystem services knowledge in decisions and policies, missing please contact inge.lieken@vito.be and we update the country fact sheet (until March 2027)

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Update on projects concerning biodiversity, ecosystem condition and ecosystem services assessment and accounting since 2022

The first Portuguese National evaluation was carried out in 2008 under the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (“Ecosistemas e Bem-Estar Humano - Avaliação para Portugal do Millennium Ecosystem Assessment”). In 2014 a short-term pilot MAES was set up in the Alentejo region. Based on the methodologies and indicators for mapping and assessing the status of the ecosystem and its services, a national level assessment was set up.

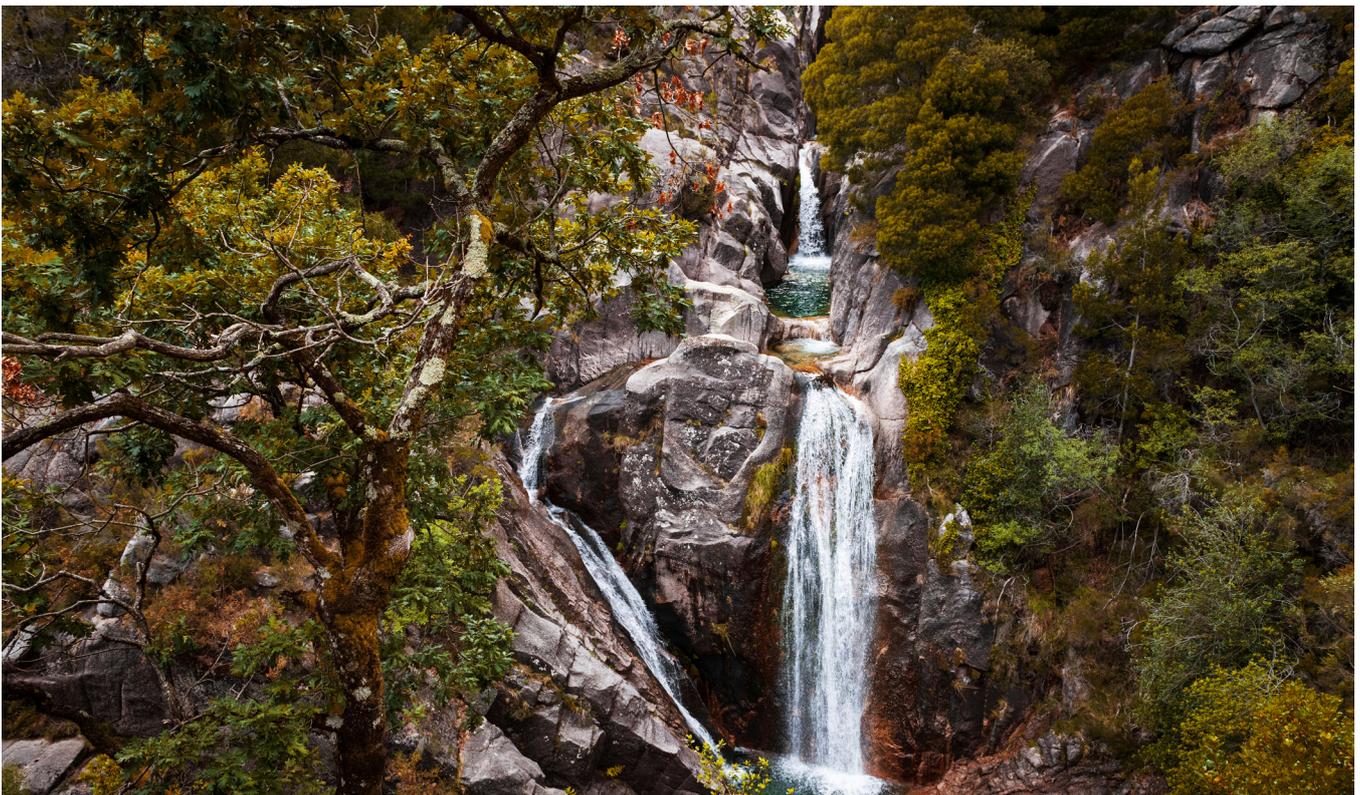
Since 2022, several scientific projects in Portugal have focused on mapping, assessing, and accounting for biodiversity and ecosystem services. These projects are mainly carried out by universities with focus on research. But there are many others with transformative power carried by companies, using frameworks like the natural capital protocol for sustainability reports or FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification for forest and ecosystem services (<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/47220be01de14ef8a4c073452429433e/?org=fscportugal>).

The researchers are not aware of any projects led by governmental authorities on national ES assessments, although some regional and local institutions may act

as partners. However, in 2022, at the request of the Ministry for Environment of the Portuguese Government, a national study called **Biodiversity 2030 - New agenda for conservation in the context of climate change** (Araújo, M.B. et al. 2022) was conducted to support the decision-making process and policies on biodiversity in Portugal.

Some examples of ES projects from academia emphasise ES analysis as the main focus, considering specific regions, basins, or ecosystem types in the country. For example:

- The iCarbono project by the **Polytechnic Institute of Bragança CIMO** – iCarbono.
- The **MaSOT** – Mapping Ecosystem Services from Earth Observations project by the University of Lisbon, funded by the Portuguese Science Foundation (FCT).
- **The ECOS** – Ecosystem Services Valuation by Nova University of Lisbon, ForestWise Colab and several companies from forestry sector.



1.1 Other projects integrate ES assessments as part of a broader analysis, for instance:

- On socio-ecological and biotechnological solutions for aquatic biodiversity conservation, such as the **River2Ocean** project, which involves stakeholders like fishermen, governmental technicians, NGOs, and tourism and recreation companies from three river basins in Minho region.
- Initiatives focusing on Biosphere Reserves, such as **Reservas da Biosfera project** with a community of practice in each of the nine Portuguese Biosphere Reserves.
- Projects aimed at development and innovation in the agri-food sector, such as Cultivar (involving stakeholders from the local farming sector – **Cultivar**).
- The Bonex project, which boosts NEXUS Framework Implementation in the Mediterranean, with local producers as stakeholders – **Bonex**.
- After 2017 wildfires, Portuguese Government made a contract from 2018-2038 of scheme for payments for ecosystem services in mountain of Açor and Natural Park of Tejo International in order to compensate landowners to establish a more **fire resilient forest type**.
- In the country there are several LIFE projects that support biodiversity conservation and ES uptake at the local level. For example, **LIFE MARONESA** (LIFE19 GIC/PT/001285) applies a sustainable model of extensive livestock production towards climate change adaptation, with stakeholders such as local farmers, producers' association and academia.





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Examples of uptake in decision processes, regulations and/or legislation

The Portuguese Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Strategy 2015-2020 includes several objectives and targets delivering national assessments, valuation and accountability of ecosystem services. Connected targets contributing to Target 2 of EU Strategy are also foreseen, namely related to the development of green infrastructures (rural and urban) and ecosystem restoration.

taxation regime that includes, inter alia, fiscal incentives to rural landowners within protected areas (including Natura 2000) that delivers ecosystem services. This incentive foresees a reduction up to 50% reduction of Municipal Property Tax on rural property and an exemption of this tax and Municipal Property Transfer Tax in the cases where a Forest Management Plan is in force.

In 2015 the Government also fulfilled an in-depth reform of the taxation regime adopting a comprehensive green

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Perceived barriers and needs to enhance uptake

3.1 Barriers

- Lack of dialogue between academia and the public sector, including harmonized language and willingness to seat at the same table
- Lack of time from both parts
- Low literacy from stakeholders
- Politics to support ES uptake
- High bureaucracy
- Lack of funding and investments.

3.2 Needs

- Common language
- More capacity building, communication initiatives, targeted local informative sessions
- Social recognition of the work developed
- Initiatives to promote the link between stakeholders and academia through local projects



4

On the way to transformative change

The overall conclusion of the IPBES global assessment (IPBES 2019) was that Goals for conserving and sustainably using nature and achieving sustainability cannot be met by current trajectories, and goals for 2030 and beyond, may only be achieved through transformative changes across economic, social, political and technological factors.

Transformative or transformational change refers to “a fundamental, system-wide reorganization

across technological, economic and social factors, including paradigms, goals and values” (IPBES, 2019). Simply said, doing things differently, rather than doing less or optimising the system.

A means to enhance uptake is bringing people of the quadruple helix together and exchange information and learn from each other. Another is to establish projects that can show that it works and lead to possible pathways of transformative change.

4.1 Community of practice

At the Northern Portugal test site (site 17), regional stakeholders have been identified, mainly technicians from regional and local authorities. However, it cannot currently be considered a community of practice for three reasons:

- The regional scale of analysis creates a distance from local issues, which is essential for a community of practice.
- There are significant regional asymmetries between the east and west of Northern Portugal,

which envisages the creation of a local community of practice focused on concrete problems with targeted solutions in which the stakeholder’s involvement from the beginning is very important.

- According to the established analysis at the Northern Portugal test site, only a final stakeholders’ meeting will be organised.

4.2 Seeds of transformative change

No projects were nominated through the online survey.



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PROJECT PARTNERS

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-  Stichting Capitals Coalition
-  Ecostack Innovations Limited
-  University of Trento
-  Pensoft Publishers
-  Centre for Ecological Research
-  Mykolas Romeris University
-  Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts
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-  Norwegian Institute for Natural Research
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-  The Cyprus Institute
-  Wageningen University
-  The Finnish Environment Institute
-  Global Change Research Institute SarVision
-  Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic
-  Gaspar Frutuoso Foundation
-  Flemish Agency for Nature and Forest
-  Municipality of Trento
-  Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania
-  Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia
-  Research Centre in Biodiversity and Genetic Resources
-  University of Haifa
-  COHAB Initiative Secretariat
-  KTH Royal Institute of Technology
-  Croatian Forest Research Institute
-  SEAcop
-  Macroplan
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