

Interreg Europe LCA4Regions Project

Peer review



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1. Baixo Alentejo Region's ID card

Country: Portugal

Capital of the region: Beja

Population: 114 887 inhabitants (2021)

Surface: 8.544,6 km²

CIMBAL

CIMBAL is an association of municipalities concerned with developing, at a regional level, multimunicipal public policies.

It is a public body financed by regional and local authorities, is subject to management supervision by those bodies, has administrative, managerial or supervisory board and more than half of whose members are appointed by local authorities

CIMBAL as an intermunicipal authority present a high competence and experience regarding the development and implement of instruments and policies for regional sustainable development.

Additionally, the region is responsible for the development and implementation of the region action plans.

Geographical Location

Baixo Alentejo is part of Alentejo region, bordered to the north by Évora district, to the east by Spain, and to the south by Faro district. This sub-region integrates 13 municipalities: Aljustrel, Almodôvar, Alvito, Barrancos, Beja, Castro Verde, Cuba, Ferreira do Alentejo, Mértola, Moura, Ourique, Serpa and Vidigueira.

Main Resources

The main economic activities in Baixo Alentejo are based on **mining (pyrites), forestry, hunting, agriculture and livestock** and therefrom derived products like cork, olive oil, wines, among others.

Guadiana River, one of the most important Baixo Alentejo's natural resources, is an international river beginning in Spain and following the border line, reaching Alentejo. It is about 870 kilometres long, only 260 in Portugal. Baixo Alentejo's landscapes, with high historical and natural value, testify the human action that throughout time has transformed the original landscape into a diversity of ecosystems, adapted to the dryness and aridity of the climate.

This sub-region is strongly marked not only by a cultural heritage, which is reflected in archaeological sites, castles, churches, old mines, museums and small towns and villages which, with their

traditional constructions, reflect the diversity of cultural influences to which this region has been subjected, but also by natural heritage- like, for instance the Special Protection Areas of Moura, Barrancos and Guadiana.

Climate

Baixo Alentejo has a Mediterranean climate, characterized by a high annual average temperature, between 15° and 17,5°.

According to the region Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan, the climate projections for Baixo Alentejo territory point to an evolving climate until the end of the XXI century, marked by several changes, which, in some cases, assume different magnitudes and highlight between administrative territories.

In general terms, there is an average increase of the minimum, average and maximum annual temperatures, for the whole territory. At the end of the century the minimum temperature could rise, on average, and compared to the reference period (approx. 9.1°C), between +1.7°C and +3.2°C, according to the most moderate scenario (RCP 4.5) and the most extreme scenario (RCP 8.5), respectively.

The maximum temperature is predicted to increase between 1.8°C and 3.5°C in relation to 1970-1999 (approximately 20.7°C), according to RCP 4.5 and RCP 8.5, respectively.

Regarding the average annual precipitation (accumulated), a potential decrease in the order of 10% (equivalent to an annual average decrease of about 43 mm) is predicted for the whole territory, by the end of the century, according to the most extreme scenario; while in the most moderate scenario a reduction equivalent to the previous one (i.e. about 9%) is predicted.

2. Policy Instrument

Regional Development Fund: Regional Operating Programme 2020 – Alentejo 2020

'Alentejo 2020' is the Alentejo Regional Operational Programme for the period 2014-2020. With an overall budget of 1,082.9 million euros, of which 863.2 million euros are ERDF and 219.7 million euros are ESF, the Programme has four agendas and ten strategic pillars, articulated between them.

Agendas:

- Competitiveness and Internationalisation;
- Human Resources;
- Social Inclusion and Employment;
- Sustainability and Resource Efficiency.

Strategic Pillars:

- Pillar 1. Competitiveness and Internationalisation of SME;
- Pillar 2. Human Resources;
- Pillar 3. Research, Technological Development and Innovation;
- Pillar 4. Urban Sustainable Development;
- Pillar 5. Employment and Economic Enhancement of Endogenous Resources;
- Pillar 6. Social Cohesion and Inclusion;
- Pillar 7. Energy Efficiency and Mobility;
- Pillar 8. Environment and Sustainability;
- Pillar 9. Institutional Capacity Building and Administrative Modernisation;
- Pillar 10. Technical Support.

Alentejo 2020 focuses on:

- Developing an economy of knowledge and innovation for Smart Growth;
- Human Resources focusing on it as a crucial aspect for overcoming main Region's weaknesses;
- Promoting Sustainable Growth and more efficient use of resources, Alentejo 2020 strategy is based on a perspective of valorisation of regional assets and transition to a low carbon economy;
- Contributing to Inclusive Growth is pursued in strengthening the skills of the active population, learning, and specialised technical training.

Where LCA could have been used: some hints for the future programming period

The Regional Operational Programme is divided into priority axes and specific objectives that are presented below taking into consideration the ones that **could have benefited from the inclusion** of LCA:

▪ **Pillar 1. Competitiveness and Internationalisation of SMEs**

The aim of this pillar is to strengthen the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises from the agricultural, fisheries and aquaculture sectors, through:

- Promoting entrepreneurship by facilitating in particular, the support for the economic exploitation of new ideas and encouraging the creation of new companies, through business incubators;
- Development and application of new business models for SMEs, especially with regard to internationalisation and;
- **Granting support for the creation and expansion of advanced capabilities for product and service development.**

▪ **Pillar 3. Research, Technological Development and Innovation**

The aim of this pillar is to strengthen research, technological development and innovation through:

- Strengthening research and innovation (R&I) infrastructures and capacities to develop R&I excellence, as well as promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest;
- Promoting business investment in R&D, developing links and synergies between business, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, applications of public interest, demand stimulation, networks, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced production and first production capacities, in particular for key enabling technologies, and diffusion of technologies of general interest, as well as fostering necessary investment to enhance health services' crisis response capacities.

▪ **Pillar 4. Urban Sustainable Development**

In this pillar, the goal is to support the transition to a low carbon economy in all sectors, preserve and protect the environment, promote the efficient use of resources, and promote the environmental, urban and landscape quality of the territory as a distinctive factor through:

- **Promotion of low-carbon strategies** for all types of territories, mainly urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multi-modal urban mobility and relevant adaptation measures for mitigation;

- Adoption of measures to improve the urban environment, revitalise cities, reclaim and decontaminate brownfield sites, (including brownfield sites), reduce air pollution and promote noise reduction measures and;
- Promotion of social inclusion and tackle poverty and any kind of discrimination.

- **Pillar 8. Environment and Sustainability**

This pillar aims to preserve and protect the environment and promote the efficient use of resources through:

- Conservation, protection, promotion and development of the natural and cultural heritage and;
- Adoption of measures to improve the urban environment, revitalize cities, recover and decontaminate abandoned industrial areas, including reconversion areas), reduce air pollution and promote noise reduction measures.

Regional Development Fund: Regional Operating Programme 2021-2027

Portugal 2030 materializes the Partnership Agreement between Portugal and the European Commission, setting the major strategic objectives for the application, between 2021 and 2027, of the global amount of 24.182 M€, from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund + (ESF+), the Cohesion Fund, the Fair Transition Fund (FTJ) and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF).

Its agenda is built around five European Union strategic objectives, in particular a smarter, greener, better connected, more social Europe and one closer to citizens:

- **Priority a smarter Europe**

A priority that focuses on investment in innovation, digitalisation, business competitiveness, skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship.

- **Priority a greener Europe**

A priority that follows the climate emergency and incorporates decarbonisation goals by supporting innovation and circular economy, contributing to sustainable production methods.

- **Priority a more connected Europe**

A priority supporting the connection between strategic transport networks and the implementation of new generation communications networks supporting the digital transition.

- **Priority a more social Europe**

A priority supporting education, equal access to healthcare, quality employment, lifelong learning and social inclusion, in line with the priorities set out in the European Pillar of Social Rights.

- **Priority a Europe closer to citizens**

A priority that supports development strategies at a local level, promoting social and territorial cohesion, and supports urban sustainable development, based on the concept of interconnection of networks, focused on people's needs.

Portugal 2030 is implemented through 12 programmes: four thematic programmes - Demography, qualification and inclusion; Innovation and digital transition; Climate action and sustainability and Sea; five regional programmes corresponding to the NUTS II of the mainland, two of the Autonomous Regions and one Technical Support programme. To these, the European Territorial Cooperation Programmes are added.

Financed by the ERDF and ESF+, the Regional Programmes mobilise most of the Strategic Objectives, with particular focus on the strategic objectives of a Europe + Proximity, a Europe + Green and a Europe + Intelligent.

These are specifically focused on the territorial dimension of public policies/territorialisation of public policies, including the Territorial Plans for a Just Transition, funded by the Just Transition Fund.

Jointly, the programmes will mobilise the total of available resources in a coordinated and coherent way, in compliance with the principles of simplification, transparency, partnership, effectiveness, efficiency and result-orientation.

Portugal 2030 is also aligned with the components of the Portuguese Recovery and Resilience Plan. The combined mobilisation of the envisaged funding allows an enhanced capacity to transform Portugal's economy, society and territory.

Portugal 2030 is also complemented by other European mechanisms that support economic and social development management centralised at the European Commission.

3. Other related instruments

Baixo Alentejo Strategic Development Plan (PEDBA)

Baixo Alentejo Strategic Development Plan (PEDBA) aims to materialize the Integrated Strategy for Territorial Development for Baixo Alentejo NUTSIII region and is connected with the implementation of the programming period of the European Structural and Investment Funds in Portugal.

It is a policy instrument that supports integration of regional strategy and EU objectives to sub regional level and at the same time mobilizes European Structural and Investment Funds resources of local intermunicipal community to implement the strategy adopted.

LCA is meaningful in the following priority measures:

- **Priority AE.02: Economic promotion of the endogenous potential.** This Action aims to expand the capacity to generate value from territorial resources and assets of Baixo Alentejo, through integrated initiatives and building on the mobilisation of key players (business and non-business) in the region;
- **Priority AE.06 Infrastructure and Environmental Services Network** of PEDBA directly contributes to the implementation of green economy and resource efficiency initiatives for more sustainable urban systems. It foresees interventions related to infrastructures and their integration in the specific context of urban rehabilitation operations, development of innovative solutions and pilot actions in the field of sustainable urban development and resource efficiency, support to the monitoring of environmental parameters and qualification of the urban environment and consequent rehabilitation.
- **Priority AE.08: Energy efficiency and renewable energy promotion.** This Action aims to contribute to the affirmation of Baixo Alentejo as a low intensity territory through the promotion of energy efficient practices and the increasing use of renewable energy sources.
- **Priority AE.08: Energy efficiency and renewable energy promotion.** This Action aims to contribute to the affirmation of Baixo Alentejo as a low intensity territory through the promotion of energy efficient practices and the increasing use of renewable energy sources.
- **Priority AE.09: integrated asset and environmental risk management.** This Action aims to promote the qualification of the environmental heritage present in the territory of Baixo Alentejo through the conservation and enhancement of its distinctive assets and the increase of its resilience in relation to factors and risks of natural and anthropic origin that may contribute to its degradation.

One of the regional challenges regarding LCA is to eliminate barriers in what regards sustainable and innovation processes, to generate new knowledge and to transfer that knowledge into new products, services and business models.

4. Circular Economy action plans

In Portugal, there are currently three action plans related to circular economy:

- PERSU 2020 - Strategic Plan for Urban Waste 2014-2020;
- Action Plan for Circular Economy (APCE);
- National Strategy for the Ecological Public Procurement (ENCPE 2020).

PERSU 2020 - Strategic Plan for Urban Waste 2014-2020 was approved by Decree No. 187-A on the 17th September 2014. The plan sets national targets for Urban Waste (UW) prevention and presents measures associated with accomplishing this objective. The waste strategy, advocated in this plan, maintains the objective of guaranteeing a high level of protection of the environmental and human health, through the use of appropriate processes, technologies and infrastructures. It also promotes the minimization of the production and hazardousness of waste and seeks to integrate them in the production processes as secondary materials in order to reduce the impacts of the extraction of natural resources and ensure the essential resources to the economy, at the same time as creating opportunities for economic and employment development.

The **Action Plan for Circular Economy (APCE)** approved by ministers Resolution n. º 190-A/2017 presents actions aligned with the European pillars of Action for the Circular Economy with the aim of establishing a carbon neutral economy with neutral GHG emissions and effective use of materials by 2050, focusing on research and innovation on sustainability. It creates solutions, with emissions and resources integrated into business models that stimulate the creation of jobs, an efficient and effective use of the resources mobilized and their economic duration, enabling inclusive and resilient economic prosperity and a thriving, responsible, dynamic, inclusive, informed, participative and more collaborative society.

The **National Strategy for the Ecological Public Procurement (ENCPE 2020)** approved by Resolution No 38/2016 of the Council of Ministers of 29 July 2016, provides that the inclusion of **environmental criteria in public procurement is mandatory**. Moreover, it is an instrument which intends to promote the reduction of pollution, the consumption of natural resources and integration of efficiency in the system.

Also, there is, in Alentejo region, a specific and dedicated **Circular Economy Forum**, implemented by Alentejo Coordination and Regional Development Commission (CCDR Alentejo).

Alentejo Circular Economy Forum's main objective is to stimulate circular economy in Alentejo region. It is a network of regional stakeholders, from public and private sector where opportunities and constraints related to circular economy in the region are discussed. Through regular and systematic interactions among different entities, Alentejo Circular Economy Forum is a space of debate, but above all, is a space where different stakeholders exchange knowledge, contacts, experiences, projects and identify opportunities or constraints for the application of circular economy concepts.

5. CIMBAL's team

Fernando Romba

Fernando Romba has a law degree, with special competence in the area of Public Administration and Regional Development from the perspective of the European Union. Develop functions as First Secretary of CIMBAL.

Pedro Pacheco

Pedro Pacheco has a degree in Resource Management and has worked as Coordinator of the Technical Services and Asset Valuation Unit in the following areas: Transport Authority, Forest Services, Training and Intermunicipal Networks, Procurement and Legal Support, General Services. Collaborates in the elaboration of the various planning, programming and control instruments of the Community activity.

Technical assistance

Elsa Ferreira Nunes

Elsa Nunes is IrRADIARE's CEO where she is also directly involved in project management. At IrRADIARE, Elsa has been in charge of several projects in diversified fields such as creative industries, social innovation, green and innovative procurement, among others. Her main interests are related to communication, social media, management and education. Before IrRADIARE, she worked in adult education and training both as trainer and training manager. Elsa has worked at the Portuguese institute that supports SME (IAPMEI) where she was in charge of programmes related to young entrepreneurship. Elsa has a Master Degree in Sociology, by ISCSP, UTL –Lisbon.

Sofia Martins

With a degree in Environmental Engineering, Sofia started her professional journey in energy regulation. She has participated in environmental and energy project management, environmental and sustainability reporting and national and international project management in the fields of Energy, Environment, Climate Change and Sustainability. Sofia works at IrRADIARE, Lda since March 2007, being involved in the application of support systems for energy efficiency and environmental sustainability monitoring, management and planning. She also performs activities in energy management buildings, process and product, national and European project management, in the fields of internationalization, innovation and development