

# VILLAGES OF SERRA DA LOUSÃ

WHERE VILLAGES SOUND UNIQUE

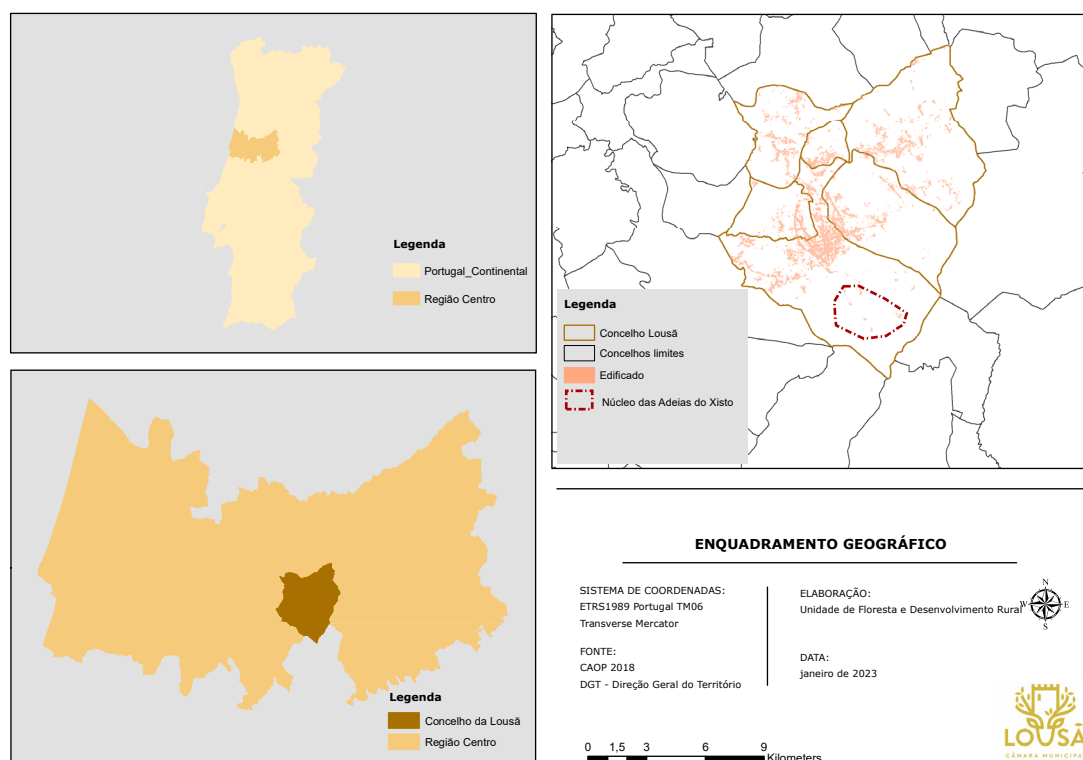




## PROJECT FRAMEWORK AND LOCATION

The Municipality of Lousã is located in the Central Region of Continental Portugal (NUTS 2 area), based in the Intermunicipal Community (CIM) of the Region of Coimbra (NUTS 3 area). It is part of the district of Coimbra, bordering the municipality of Vila Nova de Poiares to the north, the municipality of Miranda do Corvo to the west, the municipalities of Figueiró dos Vinhos and Castanheira de Pera to the south and the municipality of Góis to the east.

The Serra da Lousã has great natural and scenic value, revealing an extremely rich cultural and architectural heritage, and ecological structures caused by remarkable variations in geomorphology.



© Map 1 - Lousã and Villages Location in the National Context | Author: CML file

The settlement and construction of the first houses in Serra da Lousã date from the 18th century. In the final decades of the 20th century, interest in these mountain places has re-emerged, occasionally as secondary housing or as a form of isolated housing, as well as a tourism, sports, leisure and cultural location.

The villages are located in the southern sector of the municipality, in the sector south of the village Vila da Lousã, and are spread throughout the northwestern slope of the Serra da Lousã, in an area between coordinates 34.5 – 35 North and 19 – 19.5 West, between levels with altitudes ranging from 540 metres to 730 metres.



© Mons. Nunes Pereira illustration

At the end of the 17th century, a vast set of documents about the village of Lousã and its demography provided reliable information about the permanent occupation of the mountain villages. Two centuries later, with the institutionalisation of Statistics, it was possible to reliably follow the demographic evolution of the mountain villages. So, the natural increase of the population (in 1885, 334 inhabitants lived in the 5 villages, which represented about 3% of the population of the municipality) was not accompanied by an increase in income, which forced a progressive movement of the population either to the municipal seat, or to other places and even countries such as Brazil and the USA, especially for the youngest (Carvalho, 2009).

According to the 2001 population census, most of these villages lost their entire resident population. At the end of the 20th century, 7 inhabitants lived in the mountain villages, representing about 0.04% of the municipality's population.

In the villages of Casal Novo and Talasnal, unoccupied houses began to be bought in the second half of the 70s. Some mountain people remained on the mountain as living symbols of an umbilical bond that remained until the moment of death. Today the original population remaining in the village can be counted on one hand.

In addition to the renovation of housing, issues such as road accessibility, basic infrastructure, communications and fires are constraints that had to be addressed by the Municipality in partnership with other entities and agents, so that these villages would regain all the vitality of ancient times.





© Schist Villages 1990(Candal, Cerdeira and Talasnal). Author: CML file

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The "Villages of Serra da Lousã – Where Villages Sound Unique" Project involves the revival of five rural villages with popular architecture, located in a stunning mountain landscape. The interventions and revitalisation had several components, on different scales – renovation of the buildings, preservation of the landscape and recovery of flora and fauna, social and cultural promotion, improvement of access and mobility. The process initiated its first strategies from the 1980s onwards and had gained momentum as of 2002.

In the genesis of this project and as support for its implementation, an intervention plan called "Planos da Aldeia" (Village Plans) was developed, which was the object of community funding. As part of Measure II.6 "Territorial Base Integrated Action of Pinhal Interior Norte (FEDER), the strategy "Village Plans" was approved which serves as basis for the current application begun in 2002, and considered the revival of five villages, including Candal, Casal Novo, Cerdeira, Chiqueiro and Talasnal.

The intervention plan called "Village Plans", which serves as basis for this application, began in 2002, and considered the recovery of 5 villages, including Candal, Casal Novo, Cerdeira, Chiqueiro and Talasnal.

The homes of these villages were built in more challenging times. This construction focused on different types of housing and enclosures for goat cattle, exclusively using materials that could be obtained onsite, such as stone – schist – and chestnut or oak wood. It is this earthy rusticity, the perfect symbiosis between the "artificial" and Nature, that we appreciate and value today, comprising a rare and peculiar landscape.

The schist and wood constructions were simple and rudimentary houses that now seem like "natural monuments" of Popular Architecture.

Framed in the above sustainable development strategy targeting the villages' landscape planning and management, the "Villages of Serra da Lousã – Where Villages Sound Unique" project aimed to: improve the environmental and aesthetic quality of Serra da Lousã; promote the protection and valorisation of the architectural and tangible heritage; promote the protection and valorisation of the intangible cultural heritage; promote the revitalisation of Cultural Tourism and Ecotourism; promote permanent, seasonal and tourist occupation; promote the revitalisation of villages and support the local economy and job creation;



improve the quality of life of inhabitants and ecovisitors and, finally, encourage active participation and awareness of civil society concerning the importance of the landscape and environment protection.

## 2.1 Description of the villages

The Schist Villages of Serra da Lousã are urban clusters with typical rural and mountain characteristics, either due to their placement on inclined slopes or by the construction materials that are intended to be preserved, given their differentiated typological features and scenic value. There was no intention of encouraging the growth of the built area in these villages, but rather the recovery and conservation of existing buildings, in order to maintain the typological characteristics and materials commonly used.

## RESULTS ALREADY ACHIEVED

The following results can be identified from the implementation of the project:

### Built Heritage

Restoration of the buildings (buildings and enclosures) of the five mountain villages (Candal, Casal Novo, Cerdeira, Chiqueiro and Talasnal).



# VILLAGES OF SERRA DA LOUSÃ



© Schist Villages 2020 (Cerdeira, Chiqueiro, Candal, Casal Novo and Talasnal). Author: CML file

### Nature Conservation

Revival of habitats with increased examples of endemic wildlife species, some of which with protection status (red deer, which has been in extinction since the 19th century), roe deer, boar, fox, weasel, genet, rabbit, hare and otter.



Growth of the forest area of Serra da Lousã populated by endemic species in particular native foliage species (Portuguese oak, cork oak, chestnut tree, strawberry tree and several fragrant plants).



© Serra da Lousã Flora and Fauna (Carqueja, Wild Boar, Roe deer, Urze and Oak leaf) Author: CML file

### Nature Conservation

Area of 3810 ha in the context of the Natura 2000 network.

Execution of the project “Área integrada de gestão da paisagem da Serra da Lousã” (Integrated landscape management area of Serra da Lousã), intended to promote the valorisation of the territory through the landscape and the economic revitalisation of the low density forest areas, making them more resilient to risk, namely fire.

### Appreciation and Valorisation of the Landscape

Creation of the “Marca Aldeias do Xisto” brand (Schist Villages Brand) as high-quality landscape for visitors and new residents.

Classification of villages in 2015 as “Conjuntos de Interesse Municipal” (Municipal Interest Sets).

The average number of visitors between 2019 and 2022: 40,000 visitors.



## Mobility

70 km of approved, signposted walking routes, including identification, information and educational signs.

14.8 km of access routes to the villages restored through public investment.

50 km of signposted cycling routes.

Provision of electric car chargers in the parking area of the village of Cerdeira.

## Raising Awareness

Creation of a dynamic landscape experience, with regular programmes of cultural activities centred on the values of heritage, the identity of the territory, and traditional habits and customs.

Number of events and participants, per year, in the different social, cultural, religious, and sports activities: 100 events / 15,000 participants.

Promotion of Training Activities and Workshops such as Basketry with Vegetable Fibres; Chestnut Woodwork; Pottery Wheel Starter Course; Introduction to Natural Cosmetics and Handmade Soap.

Holding Cultural Events according to the annual calendar such as Christmas at Candal, Fado at Talasnal; Fado at Candal; Schist Sounds; Xjazz – Jazz meetings in the Schist Villages; Seasonal Festival – Mother Nature Cycles;

Promotion of Exhibitions of different types such as “Elements on the loose”, “Make a Kite”, “Uses of water in Serra da Lousã”.

Food Promotion Actions such as the Chanfana Gastronomy Festival; Craft Beer Festival; Meeting of Masters and Chefs – Ceramics and Gastronomic Experiences.

Religious pilgrimages undertaken to enhance self-esteem and identity of the population.

Creation of the brand “Isto é Lousã” (This is Lousã) by a group of young people from the municipality of Lousã.

Holding international sports events such as the European Downhill Championship, the Vodafone Rally of Portugal and the SkyRace (Trail) World.

Villages hosting events of great national importance such as National Trail Championships; National Enduro Championships; Passagem Volta a Portugal (Tour of Portugal Cycling); National Paragliding Championships.

Holding leisure events such as motorcycle, bicycle, and walking tours.





© Raising Awareness (Cultural Events, Workshops, Walking Routes and Vodafone Rally of Portugal) Author: CML file

## Economic Development

Revitalisation of the local economy with the emergence of 7 companies / associations in cultural and tourist activities.

Creation of 50 new jobs, which bring sports activities, organised hikes, bike treks and other activities related to nature tourism (Geocaching, Birdwatching and Paragliding).

Installation of catering and bar services and opening of accommodation units in schist houses (Candal – 12; Casal Novo – 5; Cerdeira – 6; Chiqueiro – 4; Talasnal – 29).



© Economic Development Author: CML file and Cerdeira Home For Creativity



## Circular Economy

Promotion of the project “Aldeias Resíduos Zero” (Zero Waste Villages) that aims to valorise solid urban waste. Taking into account the type of resident and visitor populations, bilingual awareness actions on composting and reuse of waste were developed.

## SUSTAINABLE TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

The initiatives developed in these villages fall within the sustainable development strategy adopted by this Municipality, which incorporates the 17 objectives of the United Nations (UN) Resolution, published on January 1st, 2016, and intends to meet tourism demand and the reasonable and rational use of natural resources and the preservation of natural ecosystems.

This strategy also includes the implementation of environmental education programs for sustainable development, the inclusion of environmental concerns in municipal policies, the development of local sustainability indicators and the implementation of the Local Agenda 21.

As examples of the implementation and promotion of sustainable development at a local level, the following programs stand out: i) ECOXXI; ii) Study for a classification proposal for the protected landscape of Serra da Lousã; iii) Ecological corridor; iv) Control/Eradication of Invasive Alien Flora for the Conservation of habitats and species of the Sobral Forest (SIC Serra da Lousã); v) Constitution of the Agency for the Development of Serra da Lousã (ADSL; vi) The Safe Village, Safe People Program (including the operationalisation of fuel load reduction actions, with the aim of ensuring more resistant communities adapted to the occurrence of extreme events such as rural fires).

The natural space surrounding this network of villages is part of the Natura 2000 Network, Sítio de Interesse Comunitário Serra da Lousã, PTCON0060 (Serra da Lousã Community Interest Site) which covers territories classified as Special Areas of Conservation (Zonas Especiais de Conservação, ZEC) and Special Protection Areas (Zonas de Proteção Especial, ZPE).

Plans were also created for the strategic management of environmental, social, heritage, identity and symbolic values, supported by a network of knowledge building and private and public agents who, together, developed a global heritage revival and restoration project resulting in the emergence of exquisite products and services.

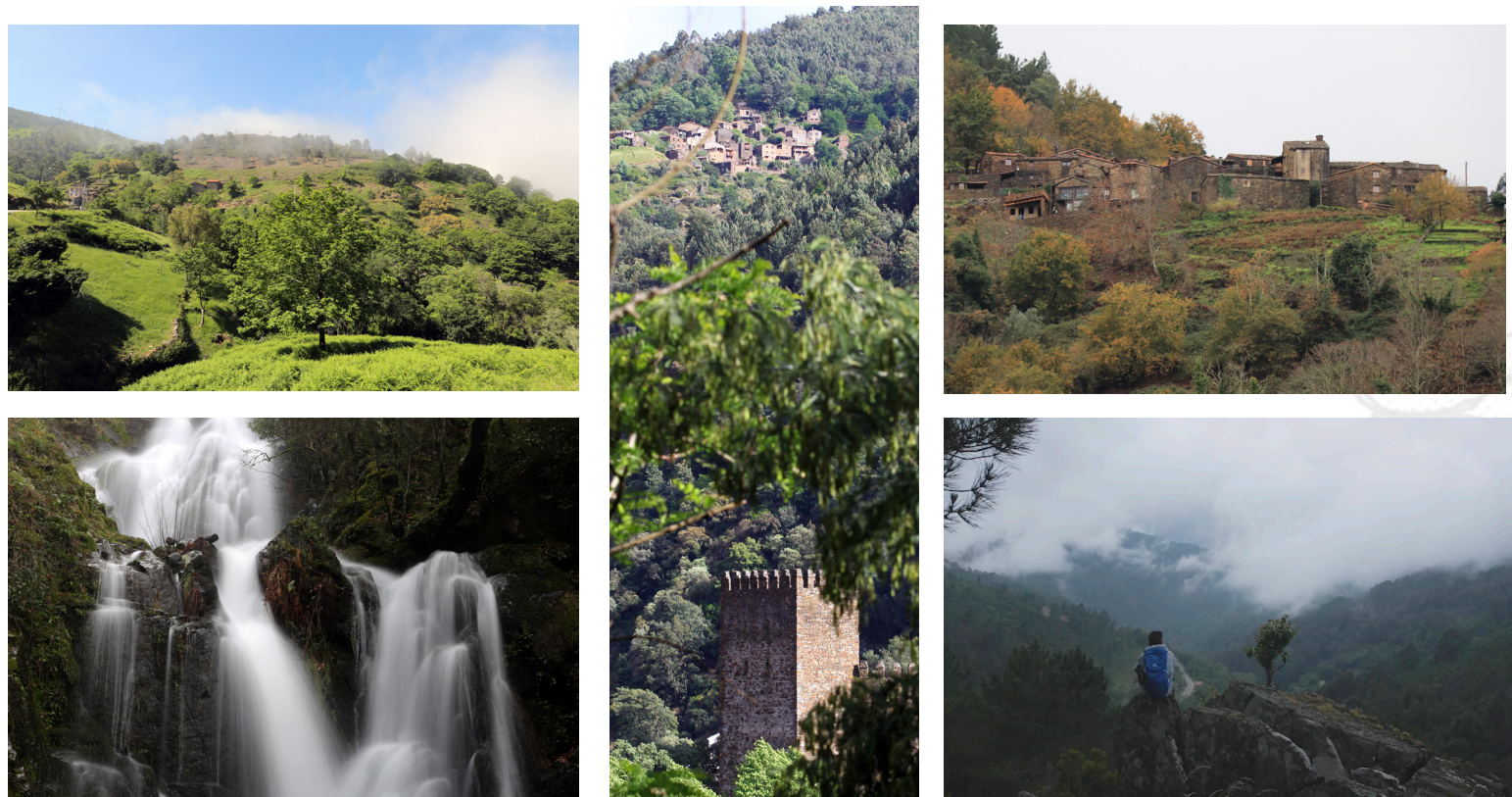
The dynamics associated with the restoration and reconstruction of buildings prevented the existence of degraded and abandoned housing areas with a negative impact on the Serra da Lousã landscape, thus exposing vulnerable zones to danger.

The improvement in environment and landscape quality and the successful sustainable development of the territory due to the implementation of this project led the municipality to propose to the Government the classification of this ter-



territory as a Protected Landscape at the regional level. This initiative, which starts from the local level, meets European policy targets for 2030 in the field of nature conservation and biodiversity, by revitalising a landscape which was in decline.

This project is part of a policy of sustainable development based on a “balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the environment” (European Landscape Convention).



© Serra da Lousã Landscape. Author: File CML

## EXEMPLARY VALUE

The “Aldeias da Lousã – Where Villages Sound Unique” Project is a success story that has been replicated in other territories.

The interest in improving the mountain villages of Lousã, as part of the framework and with the participation of the owners and inhabitants, began in the late 80s, with the exhaustive diagnosis of the existing situation and with the definition of the courses of action to develop. The proposed interventions for the revival and preservation of the villages and surrounding areas considered the following guidelines: i) preserving the architectural features of the villages; (ii) creating and reinforcing basic infrastructure (water, sanitation, communications, and electricity); (iii) paving existing roads and building new roads, in order to facilitate the connection between places; (iv) preserving local fauna and flora; (v) marking hunting areas; (vi) promoting sports support infrastructures.

Serra da Lousã is a mountain range of mainland Portugal, measuring 1205 metres of altitude at the highest point. It is located on the border between the district



of Coimbra and Leiria. It is part of the northern branch of the Central Mountain Range, consisting of the Serra da Estrela, Serra do Açor and Serra da Lousã, and is also part of the Montejunto-Estrela System.

The ecological value of Serra da Lousã has already been recognised in the context of the Natura 2000 Network (Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 76/2000, of 5th July), as well as in the territorial management tools, through the definition of a set of regulations and guidelines, regulating conservation policy.

In order to avoid disturbances to natural habitats, the legislation associated with the Natura 2000 Network defines the set of acts and limited activities and prohibits certain activities/actions.

The distinctive profile of the villages of Serra da Lousã justifies the classification claim and the inclusion of Serra da Lousã in the national network of protected areas, taking into account the high ecological, cultural and aesthetic value of the landscapes. They now reflect the most relevant results of the harmonious relationship of human beings with the physical support, in order to ensure adequate protection for a significant universe of ecocultural resources, as well as to open new perspectives for its effective valorisation, through a management model (supramunicipal) capable of involving, bringing together and raising new forms of participation and collaboration between institutional actors (ICNF, municipalities, universities, polytechnic universities, development associations and other relevant entities) and the populations. The objective is to provide this area of nature conservation with a protection status, within the legal regime of nature and biodiversity conservation.

Started in 2002, the project targeting these five villages was pioneering in the revival of mountain landscapes with dwellings made exclusively from materials that could be obtained onsite, such as stone (schist) and chestnut or oak wood. The landscape planning and management, along with the revival of the heritage, improved the aesthetic and environmental quality of these places. The intangible cultural heritage has been an object of interest and study, and we are witnessing today the promotion of cultural tourism and ecotourism, revitalising the villages, and supporting the local economy and job creation. This model of revitalisation was later adopted in other villages, resulting in the creation of Rede das Aldeias de Xisto (Schist Villages Network), which now includes a total of 27 villages (<https://www.aldeiasdoxisto.pt/en/villages/territory/>), spread across different territories, four of them within classified areas. Many of these sites were abandoned, with no strategy or policy aimed at revitalising them. Pioneering and innovative, the project submitted in this application has already been replicated in many places. It is an inspiring example whose management model can provide a reference for other degraded, abandoned, and devitalised landscapes. Its implementation generated know-how about the rehabilitation of the built heritage of schist villages that is now used in other contexts and locations.

There are several initiatives included in the development strategy that constitute a set of best practices that can be easily replicated by other agents in other regions, from which the following stand out:

Restoring housing buildings and corrals using original materials and preserving



the original architecture and plan, still using traditional techniques;

Restoring buildings and structures of great documentary value (mills and schools), converting them into spaces of cultural interest and village activity (regional product shops, support point for sports activities, hosting space for people and entities that carry out activities in Serra da Lousã and in the region);

Restoring village paths and public spaces using original materials;

Involvement and awareness-raising actions among residents through their respective associations, created in the meantime, with a view to restoring the building, and promoting and enhancing the village;

Organising sports, recreational and cultural events, at the local, regional, national and international levels, only possible due to the unique characteristics of the landscape;

Marketing and communication actions to disseminate the history, and heritage, cultural and religious value of the villages;

Reviving the native forest through the planting of endemic species;

Awareness-raising for the valorisation of urban solid waste – The “Zero Waste Villages” project was pioneering in Portugal since Lousã was the first municipality to apply the integrated concept of “Zero Waste” in a schist village. This pilot project aimed to selectively collect or treat locally (community composting) all valuable waste generated in the village of Cerdeira, with low environmental impact and reduction of the carbon footprint, compared to the current collection and transport practices for the mechanical and biological treatment plants;

Boosting and promotion of environmental awareness actions directed to the school community, involving local associations (seed collection and consequent creation of nurseries and keepers; reforestation; cleaning of walking paths).





## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It is understood that the project encouraged public participation, mobilising the owners of the land and dwellings of the mountain villages for its implementation. Public participation was decisive for the success of the project.

The revival of the villages also brought new residents (domestic and foreign), some of the houses were sold for second housing, and others serve as accommodation for tourists, with a balanced diversity that allows the villages to be endowed with life and guarantee the economic sustainability of these territories. Meanwhile, the residents of the villages organised themselves into resident associations with the purpose of defending landscape interests, implementing and proposing actions to preserve the cultural and natural heritage, and alerting the municipal authorities to possible abusive practices.

The dynamics around the villages, at the social, environmental, cultural, religious, and sports levels continues to deserve the interest and participation of permanent and temporary residents, owners, and tourist agents, but also of the entire population of the municipality of Lousã. The villages are an excellent asset to preserve as an identity space for rurality and local history.

The project is aligned with the inter-municipal strategy promoted by the Inter-municipal Community that this municipality integrates, called Agenda XXI Local. This strategy, which in addition to the municipality of Lousã, covered 13 other municipalities, is built upon a participatory and dynamic process that aims to promote the sustainable development of the inter-municipal territory, through shared management actions that guarantee a sustainable future for that landscape.

Thus, in 2014, during the development process of the Sustainability Strategy of the Municipality of Lousã, several local entities and agents were involved: Municipality of Lousã, Parish Councils, Association of Forest Producers of Lousã – Aflopinal, Dueceira, Activar, Civic and Cultural Associations, Non-Governmental Organizations for Nature Protection, Sports Associations, Recreational and Improvement Associations, School Groups, Parent Association, Scouts, Municipal Firefighters of Lousã, Humanitarian Association of Serpins Volunteer Firefighters, Social Security, Private Institutions of Social Solidarity, Lousã Professional School, Other Vocational Training Entities, Local Media, Association for the Recovery of Unadapted Citizens of Lousã – ARCIL, Portuguese Institute for Employment and Vocational Training – IEFP, Rodoviária da Beira Litoral, Institute of Mobility and Transport – IMTT, National Authority for Road Safety, National Forest Authority, Associação Lousitânea, ICNB, Centro Pinus, Quercus, Schist Villages Network and Promoters of the Rivers Project.

In 2018, the Municipality of Lousã, as managing entity of the Urban Rehabilitation Strategy of Villages, disseminated that Strategy, through awareness-raising actions among local people and agents. The following points were highlighted: the importance of the restoration of this landscape for local economic development; the advantages of the restoration process of the built heritage; the duty of everyone (private and administration) and the framework of supports and incentives for urban restoration of a technical-administrative, financial and fiscal nature.



Despite the exit of the population and the abandonment of built structures and productive spaces in different places – consequence of a deep crisis that has shaken rural areas in general, and mountain areas in particular –, there are now evident signs of revitalisation in some old villages, with variable geometry actors (but where the secondary housing played an essential role), resulting in huge national and international visibility and projection of Serra da Lousã – undoubtedly expanded, in the last two decades, through the “Rede das Aldeias do Xisto” (Network of Schist Villages), in which the Serra da Lousã is the most represented landscape unit, with the highest number of villages.

Considering likewise those who remained in the mountain, those who had settled in other places maintained a close connection to the native land and contributed to the improvement and revitalisation of these places, as well as the new residents (nationals and foreigners) attracted by the charms of the villages. All of these constitute the group of actors, along with innovative policies and instruments, that must be remembered to understand the recent and current dynamics and realities of Serra da Lousã.

These new residents have organised themselves in resident associations to defend interests for the common good, namely the preservation of the natural heritage, denouncing abusive practices of changing the landscape and that question the scenic value.

The paradigm shift, for a sustainable community, must operate through the functional and organisational systems, through the dissemination of a culture of sustainability and concerted work among the entire civil society, in a process led by the Coordinating Group and the Participatory Forum.

The project is part of the Strategic Plan “Lousã Horizonte 2031” (Lousã Horizon 2031), which identifies as a strategic vision for the 2031 horizon to “Qualify the territory, Empower resources, Create opportunities and Mobilise networks”, recognising its dimension as “Lousã sustainable territory, of environmental reference for the enhancement of resources and the natural framework.”



© Examples of civic participation. Author: CML file

## RAISING AWARENESS

It is understood that over time, the implementation of this project has been significantly contributing to the awareness of the value of the landscape of Serra da



Lousã, both in terms of the appreciation of its built heritage, as well as in the cultural issues, knowledge, and appreciation of local traditions, as well as the natural heritage.

Recently, in collaboration with the Pedro Nunes Institute, the University of Coimbra and the ICOMOS-Portugal (International Council of Monuments and Sites), the International Day of Monuments and Sites has been celebrated.

Integrated in the theme of the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage, Passados Complexos: Futuros Diversos, the Municipality held a digital initiative, with thematic visits and an educational game entitled "Aldeias do Xisto: segredos do passado, desafios do futuro (Viver, Criar, Pensar e Construir)" (Schist Villages: Secrets of the Past, Challenges of the Future (Living, Creating, Thinking and Building)). This way, the Municipality put out an invitation to rediscover the "complex pasts" of our Schist Villages, to better design their "diverse futures", through the memory hidden in the stones, letters, wit and art of these places. This, starting "online" in three visits, where it addressed the origin, secrets, and the intelligence of the schist masonry walls, of the work tools, of the memories written about the hardness and joys of life and the way art portrayed them. The settings of this informal and relaxed online tour included several villages, the Municipal Library Comendador Montenegro, the Ethnographic Museum, Dr. Louzã Henriques and the Municipal Museum Prof. Álvaro Viana de Lemos, including a discovery game.

In the construction of the identity of the Schist Villages, several entities contributed to this vision, developing different activities. As an example, Activar – Associação de Cooperação da Lousã promoted several work camps, involving international volunteers, to clean walking paths (September 2006 – Work Camp – In the Mills Route of Serra da Lousã – Pedestrian Path Cleaning PR1 and September 2007 – Work Camp – in the Mills Route of Serra da Lousã – Part II – Pedestrian Path Cleaning PR1. In 2012 the installation and approval of PR 1 was carried out, and in September 2015 these contributed to the requalification and opening of the Casa do Caminheiro and Casa da Eira in the village of Talasnal.

Another partner of the project is Dueceira, the Development Association of Ceira and Dueça, which, in 2018, promoted several awareness-raising and environmental education actions of a supra-municipal nature under the "Seed for the Future" program involving about 200 participants. Another component of the program included the collection of seeds and consequent creation of nurseries and keepers.

In July 2018, the first village of Social Innovation emerged in Lousã. Portugal Social Innovation, together with its partners, took place over two days in Cerdeira, transforming it into an interactive and sharing space where social innovation projects were gathered.

This space fostered the discussion of ideas, sharing experiences and best practices and inspiration with success stories.

In 2017, the village of Cerdeira was a finalist in the category of "Authentic Villages", in the "7 Wonders of Portugal" program. Integrated in the Network of Schist Villages, Cerdeira, as well as the other 4 villages, are one of the natural treasures of the municipality of Lousã.





© Examples of civic participation sessions. Author: CML file

For this increasing awareness, much is owed to the activities developed by local associations and by the Municipality of Lousã that have been developing cultural programs and implementing different activities, widely disseminating the culture of Serra da Lousã, its traditions, local products, gastronomy, and crafts. In short:

- Creation of a dynamic landscape experience, with regular programmes of cultural activities centred on the values of heritage, the identity of the territory, the traditional habits and customs;
- Promotion of Training Activities and Workshops such as Basketry with Vegetable Fibres; Chestnut Woodwork; Pottery Wheel Starter Course; Introduction to Natural Cosmetics and Handmade Soap;
- Holding Cultural Events according to the annual calendar such as Christmas at Candal, Fado at Talasnal; Fado at Candal; Schist Sounds; Xjazz – Jazz meetings in the Schist Villages; Seasonal Festival – Mother Nature Cycles;



Promotion of Exhibitions of different types such as “Elements on the loose”, “Make a Kite”, “Uses of water in Serra da Lousã”;  
Food Promotion Actions such as the Chanfana Gastronomy Festival; Craft Beer Festival;  
Meeting of Masters and Chefs – Ceramics and Gastronomic Experiences;  
Religious pilgrimages undertaken to enhance the identity and self-esteem of the population.

The activities referred to are part of a much wider and more comprehensive annual program, of about 100 events, with an estimated participation of about 15,000 people per year.

The pedestrian and clickable route networks totalling 120 km ensure safe access to the Serra landscape, exposing its native flora and fauna. This landscape and intangible heritage is now the object of study in Universities and has great recognition on a national level.

All these aspects contributed to the consolidation of the identity of the villages, to the recognition and identification with the territory by its residents who organise in associations and promote activities.

The increasing awareness of the importance of this landscape allowed it to create conditions for the development of a proposal that aims to give this territory the classification of protected landscape, with the inclusion of Serra da Lousã in the National Network of Protected Areas, which will allow it to further reinforce the protection of its natural values.

With the submission of the application “Villages of Serra da Lousã | Where Villages Sound Unique” to the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe, we intend to demonstrate that the territory outside of urban centres is a source of opportunities, enhancing heritage at the architectural, cultural, natural, and landscape level and the people, looking at a territory full of diversity, tradition and charm.

Sources:

Carvalho, Paulo (2009) Património Construído e Desenvolvimento em áreas de Montanha – O exemplo da Serra da Lousã, Câmara Municipal da Lousã, ISBN:978- 972-8572-13-6













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