

Portugal – innovation example 2

AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURE – ZONAL PROGRAMME OF CASTRO VERDE – WITHIN THE NATURA 2000 PAYMENTS (ZONAL SUPPORTS)

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- **Location:** South Alentejo, Castro Verde, Portugal
- **HNV system:** Cereal steppes
- **Scale of operation:** 85000 Ha
- **Timespan:** Operating for approximately 25 years.
- **Keys to success:** Public awareness related to a charismatic conservation species - the Great Bustard; The united action of three organizations: the NGO Nature protection league (LPN), the Municipality of Castro Verde and the Farmers Association of Campo Branco.



Figure 1

Problems addressed by this example

- Endangered cereal steppe birds within an important agricultural area were declining fast.
- Avoidance of afforestation (by the paper industry) of a large important area for cereal steppe birds' conservation.
- Low income of farmers with holdings in that areas when following conservation supporting agricultural practices (extensive cereal production)

Story in a nutshell

In the late 80s, a very important area of private farmland for the conservation of endangered "cereal steppe" birds, in Castro Verde Municipality was bought by the paper industry for planting eucalyptus. The eminent disappearance of such an important ecosystem led to a united reaction by several private and public institutions led by the NGO Nature protection league (LPN) and including the Municipality of Castro Verde and the Farmers Association of Campo Branco. LPN developed a strong and very successful awareness campaign in favour of conservation of the Great Bustard. The united efforts resulted in: (i) the interdiction of afforestation of such lands through municipality mechanisms; (ii) submission of a LIFE project for acquisition of part of those farmlands by LPN and the submission of a proposal for the creation of a zonal plan for Castro Verde by the farmers' Association which became the main nature conservation instrument for that area.



Figure 2

What does the Zonal Programme of Castro Verde achieve for HNV farming?

- Promotes nature conservation through the maintenance of habitat and quantitative improvement of cereal steppe avifauna.
- Minimizes income losses of farmers resulting from the commitment to keep agricultural practices compatible with nature conservation
- Contributes to the conservation of cultivated areas of HNV.



Figure 3

Achievements

Continuous, though variable support to farmers, through different agri-environmental schemes, since 1995. This financial support is very relevant to minimize the income losses of farmers resulting from the commitment to keep agricultural practices compatible with the conservation of endangered “cereal steppe” birds.

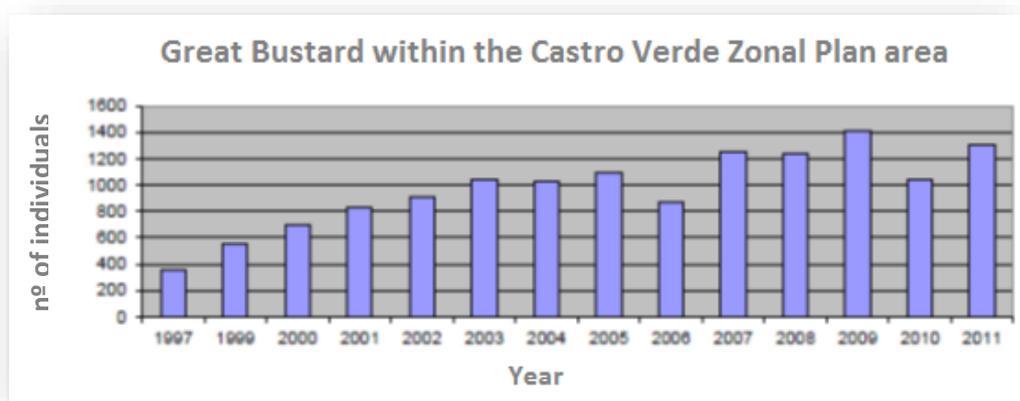


Figure 4

How does the Zonal Programme of Castro Verde respond to the HNV LINK innovation themes?

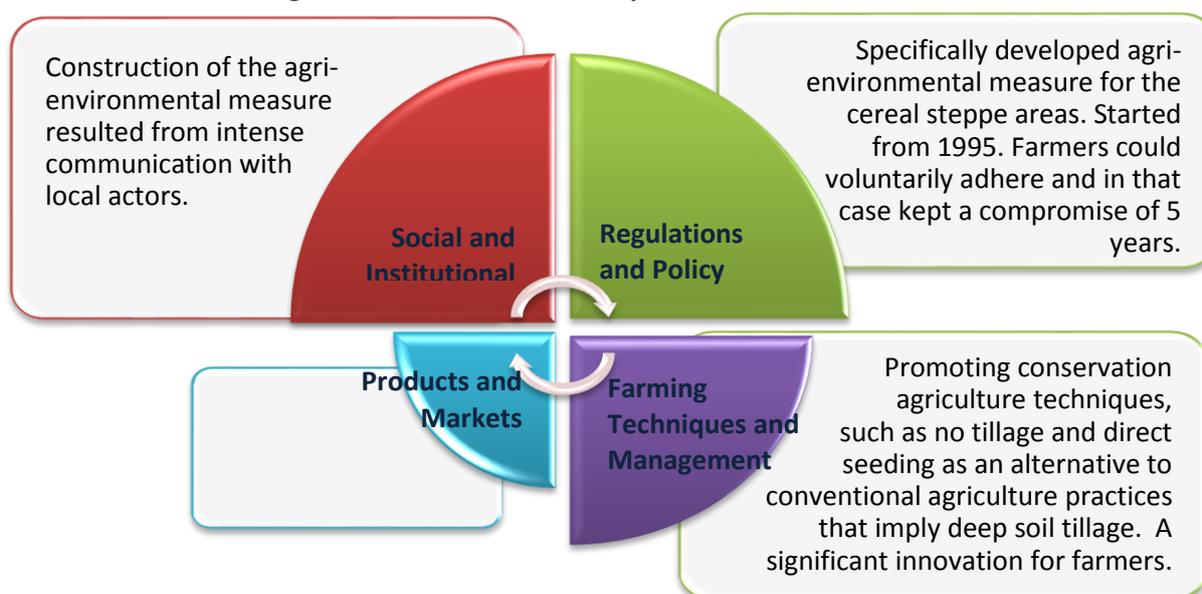


Figure 5 Shows how this innovation addresses the four themes of the HNV-Link innovation framework.

The process that made it happen and critical factors for success

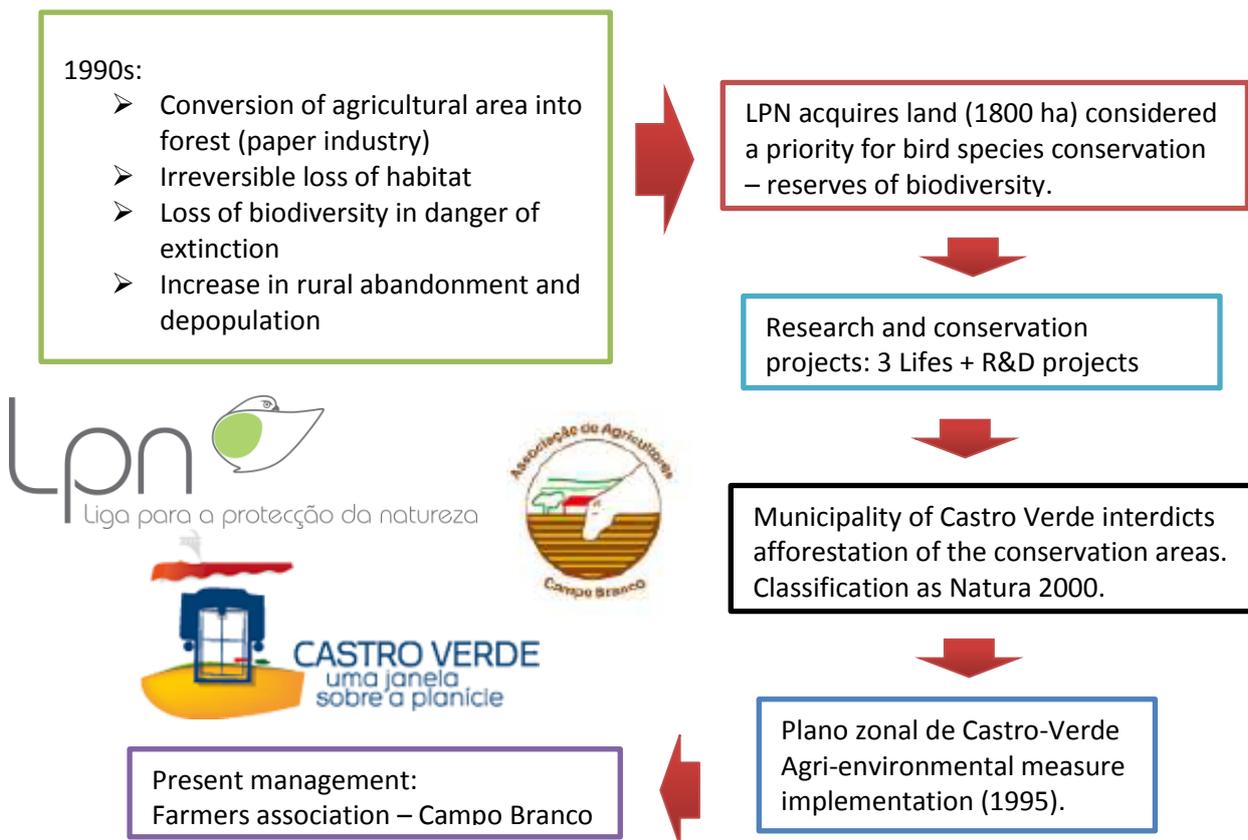


Figure 6

The process of development and implementation of the presently named zonal support of Castro Verde has gone through many different phases over the last 25 years. Critical factors for success were the active participation of many different actors, in a mostly bottom up process of construction of the agri-environmental measure. Actors involved include the NGO- Nature protection league that triggered the process and has been the leader of most actions, the Farmers Association of “Campo Branco”, the Municipality of Castro Verde, different research institutions as Universities and research institutes and the Portuguese General Direction of Agriculture and General Direction of Environment. The fact that there was, from the beginning, a great involvement of farmers mostly through the Farmers Association of Campo Branco, and that the management of the Agri-environmental measure is under the responsibility of the Farmer’s association, is considered an important factor of success for the engagement of individual farmers and thus for the effectiveness of the measures.



Figure 7



Figure 8

Lessons learnt from this innovation example, and its potential replication

- To use research results as a support for the construction of agri-environmental measure is fundamental.
- The multiactor approach resulting in a continuous collaboration among civil society, research and academia and local and central administration.



Figure 9

Overall lessons from this example, especially from point of view of HNV farming?

Multiactor approach is fundamental for the development of such a measure; The existence of a charismatic conservation species is very relevant for creating public awareness and engage all type of stakeholders.

Is the innovation unique to its territory and its characteristics, or is it replicable in other areas?

It is probably replicable in other areas, as long as similar conditions can be found, mostly related to the existence of charismatic conservation species.



Figure 10

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