

## THEMATIC NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2018

### THE INNER LAND AND LOW-DENSITY TERRITORIES

**Quaternaire Portugal** decided to publish thematic newsletters aiming at sharing with our clients some reflections about current problems challenging territorial and socioeconomic development. At the same time, we want to inform how **Quaternaire Portugal** gathers their competences and experience to offer consultancy services fitting well the market needs. Following previous newsletters in which the public intervention challenges in the fields of culture and heritage and of urban agendas were the main topics, we propose in this thematic newsletter a new one: the inner land and low-density territories.

The problems arising in the low density and inland territories have now an increasing relevance in political, technical and scientific debate. This trend is reinforced by the convergence of several factors (demographic decline, climatic change impacts, worsening accessibility conditions to social services, among others) and recent events observed in Portugal. Consequently, the several levels of public administration are called now to tackle these problems with new public policy instruments and new approaches, more integrated ones, involving different territories and fitting their particularities, in order to generate favourable conditions to a broader participation of other actors and communities.

Recognizing the magnitude of the problems affecting low-density territories, **Quaternaire Portugal** wants to be an **active partner and contribute to achieve the national and European goals of territorial cohesion and sustainable development**. As a consultancy firm that integrates so diverse expertise fields – such as spatial planning, environment, economic, social and cultural development, education and training, employment, institutional and organizational networks and fabric –, **Quaternaire Portugal** is well placed to design and manage new operational approaches.

The issues presented in this newsletter aim to begin and deepen a dialogue with institutions and organizations responsible to manage these territories, in order to jointly search for collaborative practices that can be able to cope with these problems.

The Board of Directors

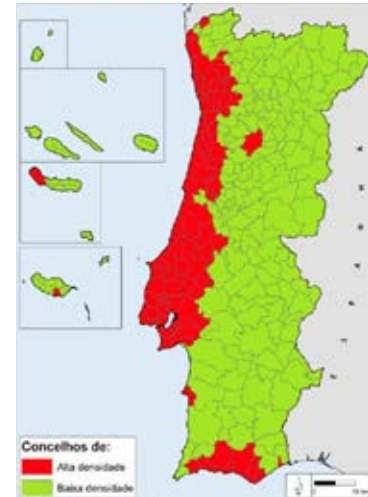
## INLAND/INLANDS/LOW-DENSITY TERRITORIES

The tradition of highlighting the development bottlenecks of the inner territories of the Portuguese mainland has been always strong.

This tradition is in line with the relevance of the paradigm “coastal areas versus inner territories” in analysing Portuguese territories and their territorial development dynamics. It is also in line with the Professor Sedas Nunes ideas on the Portuguese economic and social dualism, a concept submitted to academic and national civic debate from the 1960s onwards.

As long as the knowledge of territorial development dynamics has been reinforced, the Portuguese mainland territory began to be interpreted in larger contexts, such as the Iberian and the European perspectives. It was then possible to put into evidence the existence of several inlands. Several factors contributed for that result, such as, for example, the greater or smaller distance to more densely populated coastal areas; the different strength of the urban centres located in these territories; the different intensity of the flows with the Spanish territory; the spatial uneven effects of the agro and forest sector crisis.

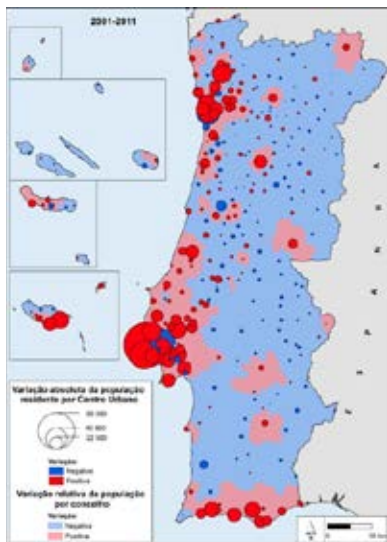
More recently, the concept of low-density territories emerged. It means the possibility of introducing again some homogeneity, as a common criteria to guide public policies targeted at these territories. Despite the emphasis on common criteria, it is understandable that, however, several typologies of low density territories are still currently available and used.



Map of distinction between High and Low Density territories, according to the Deliberation No. 55/2015 of the Interministerial Coordination Commission

Source: National Policy on Territorial Land Management Policy, 2018

## PUBLIC POLICIES CHALLENGES DETERMINED BY LOW-DENSITY TERRITORIES



Variation of resident population by urban center and by county (2001-2011)

Source: National Policy on Territorial Land Management Policy, 2018.

The challenges are the result of the ambivalent answers to tackle these territories.

On the one hand, policies and human, technical and financial resources allocated to these territories should correspond to their weaknesses and vulnerabilities. The lack of human resources in these territories is already beyond the idea of demographic decline. It is now clear that national demographic problem, aggravated in low-density areas, has no possible endogenous regeneration in the next decades. We also know that climate change has severe impacts in these territories. In these conditions, public policies should embrace investment, employment, and new residents' attraction strategies, not ignoring the need for proactive adaptation to new climate scenarios.

On the other hand, public policies cannot ignore the existence in these territories of resilient practices and social capital, considered key resources to any strategy to reverse the current trends, both are necessary to preserve and enhance.

An entrepreneurial fabric also exists, part of which now disappearing and another still emerging, that it is strongly relevant to have a more balanced relationship between employment and local income and quality of life. The recent forest fires (2018) showed the relevance of this entrepreneurial fabric at a local level. A local associative fabric also exists, principally generated and preserved by rural development policies (LEADER approach), which should be seen as inescapable instruments to play the role of 'gatekeepers', 'brokers' or 'intermediators' between public policies and populations.

To manage this dual role is a key challenge for public policies. They should counterbalance atomization of initiatives, increase the capabilities to be resilient and foster entrepreneurship, guide the public investment to achieve effective decentralization and deconcentration of policies and guarantee that low-density areas remain diverse, excellent and alive considering the resources and services that they offer to residents and to all the Portuguese citizens.

### **WHAT QUATENAIRE PORTUGAL CAN OFFER?**

Throughout its existence, **Quatenaire Portugal** had relevant contributions to the interpretation of low-density territories and their problems. Based on those contributions, **Quatenaire Portugal** presents itself as a partner of civil society and local, regional and national public institutions to tackle the challenges previously identified.

This partner role is based not only on knowledge acquired about these territories, that has been permanently renovated, but also in **Quatenaire Portugal's** organization, competences and capabilities able to offer consultancy modalities fitting well the identified challenges. We can be a partner either in designing strategies and action programmes, or helping technically to foster partnerships and collaborative practices between local actors, or developing and organizing new governance models, or supporting transversal and integrated approaches.

In particular, **Quatenaire Portugal** can offer knowledge and partnership in so diverse matters such as:

- Strategies and Plans for Enhancing Specific Assets in low density territories;
- Services to increase the capabilities and organization of institutions dedicated to supporting territorial-based entrepreneurship in this kind of territories;
- Integrated policies of enhancing and fixing human resources involving the different levels of regular and vocation education;
- Strategies and plans to combat school failure and school dropout;
- Tourism Development Strategies and Plans enhancing the singularity of heritage and cultural resources;
- Intervention Plans in Rural areas;
- Technical assistance to Intermunicipal Communities targeted at reorganizing and searching for a new positioning in developing these territories.

## QUATENAIRE PORTUGAL ACTIVITY

The aim to be a partner in developing low-density territories is based on the company's internal competencies that we have already tested and validated in previous work experiences.

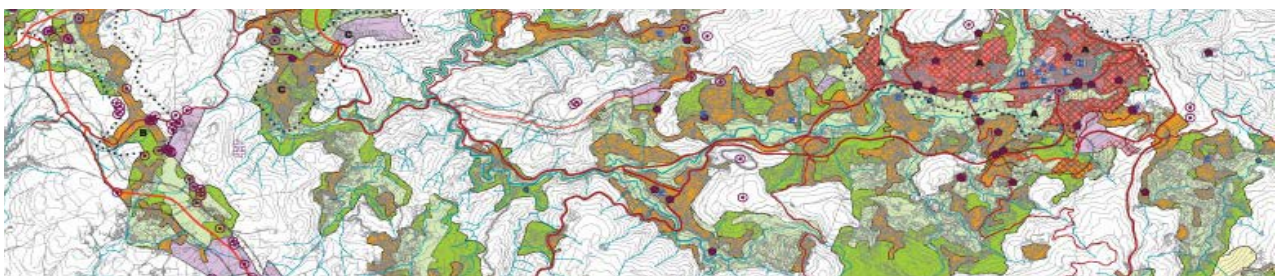
### STRATEGIC AND SPATIAL PLANNING

Historically, **Quatenaire Portugal** has been influent in several technical support modalities developed within the framework of territorial-based Collective Efficiency Strategies, such as the **Programme of Enhancing Economically Endogenous Resources** (the acronym in Portuguese is PROVERE).

These programmes have been developed in order to achieve new combinations of endogenous resources aiming to generate competitive singularities in these territories. **Quatenaire Portugal** is also the author of several works covering urban axis in the inland territory, such as the Axe Vila Real-Régua-Lamego in the Northern Region of Portugal.

More recently, within the framework of a continuous advising activity to the Arouca Municipality, it has been possible to develop a coherent work involving spatial planning and the design of a local strategy to a sustainable enhancement of local assets. The work started in the 1990's with the elaboration of the Local Development Strategy and the Municipal Master Plan (two main planning instruments now being revised also with the participation of **Quatenaire Portugal**). The collaboration with the municipality covered the urban policy dimension (not circumscribed to the town centre, but also integrating the network of different territories) and the attraction of investment and qualifications.

Through the participation in several Intervention **Plans in the rural areas** (microscale spatial planning instruments), developed particularly in Alentejo region, **Quatenaire Portugal** tried to develop territorial management models prepared to guarantee the multiple uses of the land. These models generate the needed complementarity between land use – such as agriculture, livestock, agroindustry, tourism and leisure practices –, enhancing at the same time local economic and social development.



Extract from the 2010 Arouca's Master Plan Planning Plant



## LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE HIGH VALUE OF ITS INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Within the framework of the professional relationship with AMAL – Algarve Intermunicipal Community, **Quatenaire Portugal** supported the elaboration of the Action Plan for the Enhancement of Endogenous Resources. The Plan aimed at reinforcing the coherence between Local Development Strategies presented by Local Action Groups (LEADER groups) operating in Algarve (Associations INLOCO, Costa Vicentina and Baixo Guadiana), investment projects presented by the municipalities, and the Algarve regional strategy. This work experience is particularly relevant in terms of the full use of the past experience of Local Action Groups as an example of social capital.



Via Algarviana. Source: [www.viaalgarviana.org](http://www.viaalgarviana.org)

## THE QUESTION OF FIXING LOCAL HUMAN RESOURCES

Low-density territories face a strong dilemma. On one side, they are committed to offering the best education possible for their young people, increasing their ability to face the current global world and the mobility that it demands. On the other side, they need to fix qualified young people as a necessary condition to fight against the lack of people and entrepreneurship.

In several works generated by the National System of Qualifications Anticipation (the acronym in Portuguese is SANQ), we deal with efforts to improve the rationale and the coordination of intermediate qualifications supply, professional and vocational courses and Professional Schools. These works cover low-density regions like Alto Tâmega, Terra de Trás-os-Montes and Dão-Lafões, and involve Intermunicipal Communities as the main stakeholders. The above mentioned dilemma is taken into consideration and the work done by **Quatenaire Portugal** in reinforcing the capabilities of local actors is our differentiating brand.

Besides this kind of consultancy, **Quatenaire Portugal** developed diverse works targeted at education systems prevailing in these territories, focused particularly on school failure problems and in the strategic repositioning of higher education institutions.

**CULTURE AS AN ASSET ENHANCING TERRITORIAL IDENTITY, SOCIAL CAPITAL AND DIFFERENTIATION**

The watermark of **Quatenaire Portugal's** culture consists of joining internal expertise competences and the commitment to develop territories and populations.

This is the reason why **Quatenaire Portugal** considers that preservation and enhancement of local communities' symbolic capital and heritage is something that not only helps to affirm local singularities against current standardization and globalization trends, but also works as a development asset to these territories increasing local wealth.



Alentejo's traditional pottery and traditional blankets and carpets workshops.



Several examples can be presented: the design and certification of crafts competences regarding the Vilar de Nantes' black pottery ; the design of professional profiles and identification of training needs in craft activities; in projects targeted at upgrading the international affirmation through the world certification of UNESCO, as there are the cases of Montado Cultural Landscape, Magalhães Route (the first world circumnavigation), the Campo Maior popular festivities, and the Amarante Creative City project, which is based on music.

The **Quatenaire Portugal's** watermark is also present in new services based on the combination of endogenous resources, as it is the case of the Operational Plan for the UNESCO World Heritage Cities of Évora and Elvas, both in Alentejo region, or developing touristic experiences based on the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Alentejo and Ribatejo regions, or either in the Romanesque Route of Tâmega and Sousa regions.



Montado Cultural Landscape

## URBAN POLICIES AND LOW-DENSITY TERRITORIES

**Quatenaire Portugal** has also been focused on urban policies (urban rehabilitation, for example) in urban centres located in low-density areas, for example, in Chaves, in Mangualde or in Viana do Alentejo. It has also participated in the preparatory studies that lead to the creation of the Eurocity Chaves-Verín (Portugal-Spain).



Cover of the publication Chaves-Verín Strategic Agenda



Mangualde's Misericórdia Church

## ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

The study elaborated by **Quatenaire Portugal** to Central Alentejo Intermunicipal Community (CIMAC in Portuguese) has been focused on shared services between the Intermunicipal Community and the municipalities that are integrated into it. It is a good example of the organizational and governance challenges generated by development approaches in low-density territories. It is a matter for a repositioning of municipalities in local proximity issues (to be closer to citizens and their problems), but also of creating new resources centres at intermunicipal level.

## QUATENAIRE PORTUGAL

**Quatenaire Portugal** is a corporate society created in 1990 and working on the following fields of expertise: Evaluation; Culture; Employment, Competences and Vocational Training; Strategic planning; Spatial Planning; Urban Projects and Policies.

Our approach integrates the development of territories with the improvement of capabilities of private and public organisations. We aim to produce solutions that fit the specific needs of clients and to generate and diffuse pertinent strategic knowledge. In doing so, our multidisciplinary and increasingly qualified group of full time consultants regularly interacts with a network of high-skilled and well known national and international shareholders as well as with a regular and flexible group of external advisers in various fields of expertise.

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Matosinhos

Rua Tomás Ribeiro, 412 – 2o

4450-295 Matosinhos Portugal

Tel (+351) 229 399 150

Fax (+351) 229 399 159

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Lisboa

Av. 5 de Outubro, 77 – 6oEsq

1050-049 Lisboa Portugal

Tel (+351) 213 513 200

Fax (+351) 213 513 201