

NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLETATION OF THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN PORTUGAL

PORTUGAL

Focal Point, April 2002



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Summary

Portugal rectified the Convention on the 15th October 1996.

The NAP elaboration process occurred between December 1997 and June 1998.

The NAP (National Action Plan) was approved by the Government on the 17th of June 1999, Resolution of Cabinet number 69/99.

The National Coordinating Body of NAP, created by Ministerial Dispatch number 979/99 of 19/10/1999, took a year to be established and had its first meeting on June 19th, 2000. Nowadays it has regular meetings and has five Regional Subcomissions.

Because it is impossible to cover the whole continental territory susceptible to desertification, it was established under the scope of four Subcomissions, the "Pilot Areas". The approach utilised to enhance the local actors participation was the EASW (European Awareness Scenario Workshops), developed and validated by the EU (DGXIII). The next step is the elaboration of an Activity Program for each Pilot Area.

Portugal has several plans and sectorial strategies concerted with a sustainable development. It is necessary to ensure coherence between them. .

There is no specific financing fund for the application of CCD. Public financing under the programs for regional, rural and environment development might support the activities.

Nineteen indicators are under analysis covering parameters like: soil, climate/water, vegetation and, land and land resources management, leading to further selection of the necessary indicators for the monitoring of the desertification process with up dates every ten years.

Strategies and priorities established under the plans and/or policies for sustainable development

Portugal has several important planning tools to combat desertification and drought whose synergies between them and NAP must be assured.

Of these we stress the following:

National Agricultural Policy based in two fundamental axes – irrigation and forestry.

National Strategy for the Conservation of Nature and Biodiversity with a deadline of 2010, adopted by the Government, Resolution of Cabinet number 152/2001 of 11/10/2001.

Some of the strategically options are: to promote the integration of the nature conservation policy and the sustainable management of biological resources under the policy of land use and under the others sectorial policies.

National Water Plan recently approves by the Government, Decree-Law number 112/2002 of 17/04/2002. Even though it announces that in a whole there is no lack of water in the country, nevertheless it draws our attention towards the critical regions where the supply does not satisfy the demand.

Plan for the Sustainable Development of the Portuguese Forest approved in 1999. It establishes objectives, strategy axes and goals for the national forest, namely in what concerns the sustainable management of forest land use.

Regional Plans for Forestry Planning, Resolution of Cabinet number 118/2000 of 13/07/2001, in a total of twenty-one, which will define rules for the adequate forestry use of the land.

National Program of Climate Change is in the moment in public debate. In spite of basically focused on the problem of reduction of gas emissions with influence of the greenhouse effect, the Program selects among the key sectors; the Forestry sector. The reduction of forest fires and the increase in productivity of forestry areas are determining elements. Both are achieved by the adoption of sustainable management plan of forestry that go, hand in hand, with the conservation and rational use of soil and water resources.

Portugal ratified recently the Kyoto Protocol.

The Special Plans of Land Use (Management Plans of Protected Areas, of Watershed and of Border Coast), with compulsive application, establishing preferential,

conditioned and interdict uses, determined by criteria of nature conservation, they protect the uses of soil and water and the conditions of change of that uses.

National Program of Land Use Policies, that is under public debate, at moment.

Nature 2000 Network established by Resolution of Cabinet number 66/2001 of 06/06/2001, whose management plan must define the system of safeguard of the natural resources and the landscape's value of all places within the network, consistent with sustainable land use.

Institutional measures taken to implement the Convention

As we had already announced in our first report to COP 4, by the time of the approval of NAP in 1999, the Government decided to create the National Coordinating Body (Resolution of Cabinet number 979/99 of 19/10/1999).

This Body took one year to become operate. Today it holds regular meetings and it is constituted by Government Institutions (General Directorate of Forests, Cabinet for Planning and Coordinating Agriculture Policies, General Directorate of Rural Development, Scientific and Technological Research Institute, General Directorate of Multilateral Affairs, Nature Conservation Institute, General Directorate of Spatial Planning and Urban Development and Portuguese Institute of Water). It has five regional delegations, the Subcomissions, constituted by 3 bodies, Regional Directorate of Agriculture, Regional Directorate of Environment, and Regional Commission for Coordinating.

The National Coordinating Body has as main objectives, to push the implementation of NAP and to monitor and evaluate that implementation.

As it is impossible to cover, because of limited human and financial resources, the whole area susceptible to desertification and drought, estimated to be about 60% of the continental territory, the NCB decided to establish four Pilot Areas. One in the North, another in the Centre and two in the South, see Map. In those Areas, it claims a concentration of inter-professional efforts to achieve concrete accomplishments in the field, with the active participation of the local community.

The criteria that oriented the choice of the four Pilot Areas were essentially, the knowledge of the field and the predisposition of the local institutions to involve themselves in the activities to be developed.

An effort has been made by the Focal Point towards materialising the synergies between the Rio's Convention, either promoting meetings between the Focal Points of the three Conventions, or inviting them to participate actively in the work to be developed in the Pilot Areas.

Also, under the coordination of the Focal Point and, in the DIS/MED (Desertification Information System to support National Action Programmes in the Mediterranean) framework, initiative of the Secretariat of the CCD and Italy Government that covers the countries of Southern Europe and those of the Northern Africa, nineteen indicators (see table) are under study based on the soil, vegetation, climate/water and land and land resources management parameters, that will allow the updating of the susceptibility map of desertification of our NAP and answer the demands at the level of the Mediterranean exercise .

The participatory process in support of the preparation and implementation of NAP

During the elaboration of NAP, the participation of the local actors was enthusiastic. However, the time that took for the approval of NAP and the establishment of the NCB, practically 2 years, had as a consequence, the lost of that dynamic.

The consultative process in support of the preparation and implementation of NAP and partnership agreements

To surpass the lack of enthusiasm created by the inactivity of the process, the beginning of the activities within each Pilot Area started with meetings with the local actors, making use of the EASW method (European Awareness Scenario Workshops), developed and validated by the EU (DGXIII).

The method showed to be a useful tool able to make all the presents participate independently of their socio-professional category; farmer, politician, technician, NGO, businessman or simple citizen, and to create “natural partnership”, so that, each element present promises to follow and evaluate the activities of the solutions adopted.

The next step of the activities will consist on the consolidation of the concerns expressed, in an Activity Program that the Regional Subcomissions worked on, making partnerships with local actors.

Some partnerships were already formally established between Focal Point and the Geography Department team of the New University of Lisbon and the NGO/Florasul, in the framework of the projects financed by the EU, DESERTLINKS (Combating Desertification in Mediterranean Europe: Linking Science with Stakeholders) and MEDACTION (Policies for Land Use to Combat Desertification) respectively. Others are being established with the Environment Department the University of Aveiro and the Farmers Association of Cumeadas.

This participatory process of the local communities will also be useful as support the second workshop of the MEDRAP (EU Concerted Action of support the Northern Mediterranean Regional Action Programme to combat Desertification), in “Identification of Sensitive Areas”, that will take place in Portugal, next June.

Measures taken or scheduled under the nap to improve the knowledge of the phenomenon of desertification and monitor and evaluate the effects of drought

The axes of intervention and the operation guidelines established in the National Action Programme has been a constant concern to agents and institutions involved and interested in the question of desertification.

The operation guidelines has been developed under many ways, for example:

- Projects developed by government bodies, universities, scientific researches centres as “Land use management and urban development in the sensitive areas to desertification”, “Dam’s recovery”, “Recovery of network monitoring of hydrological resources”.

- Rural extension activities of regional technical staff like “The open day in the Experimental Erosion Centre of Vale Formoso” and Commemoration of “International day of Tree” in the school community.
- And many other activities taken by public and private organisms, such Thematic Meetings, Courses and Workshops.

Financial allocations

Portugal does not have a specific Fund for the implementation of CCD. For the implementation of the activities foreseen in the NAP, in the definitions of the Third Community Support Framework care was taken to foresee situations that could answer the activities already identified. For example, under the Agricultural and Rural Development Operational Program, in the support of sustainable development of forestry in areas with high susceptibilities to desertification, it was foreseen to maximize the financial support in 10%. The support to maintenance indigenous species, agro-forestry system, biological agriculture and the maintenance of traditional systems was foreseen under the Plan of Rural Development 200-2001. The actions concerning the water resources were mostly covered by the activities of the INAG (Portuguese Water Institute).

We think that in the framework of the Government financing for regional, rural and environment development, there will be no lack of funding. What is still not sufficient is the diffusion of those possibilities near the local development agents and probably, a more clear evidence of the application of those funds in the combat of desertification.

Benchmarks and indicators for measure progress and an assessment thereof

By the time of the NAP design, three categories of index were utilised for the mapping of susceptible areas to desertification; climate index, soil loss index, drought index. From the very instant it was recognised that socio-economic indicators had to be added on, so that man’s activities influence was better identified.

At this moment nineteen indicators are under analysis, Table 1. We hope that until June of next year, this phase of the exercise is finalised and ,a data base created that will allow the feeding of selected indicators so we can have updates the desertification process in Portugal every 10 years.

This activity besides giving answers at the national level will contribute towards the regional exercise of the Mediterranean Basin, under the DISMED project.

Map of sensitive areas to desertification

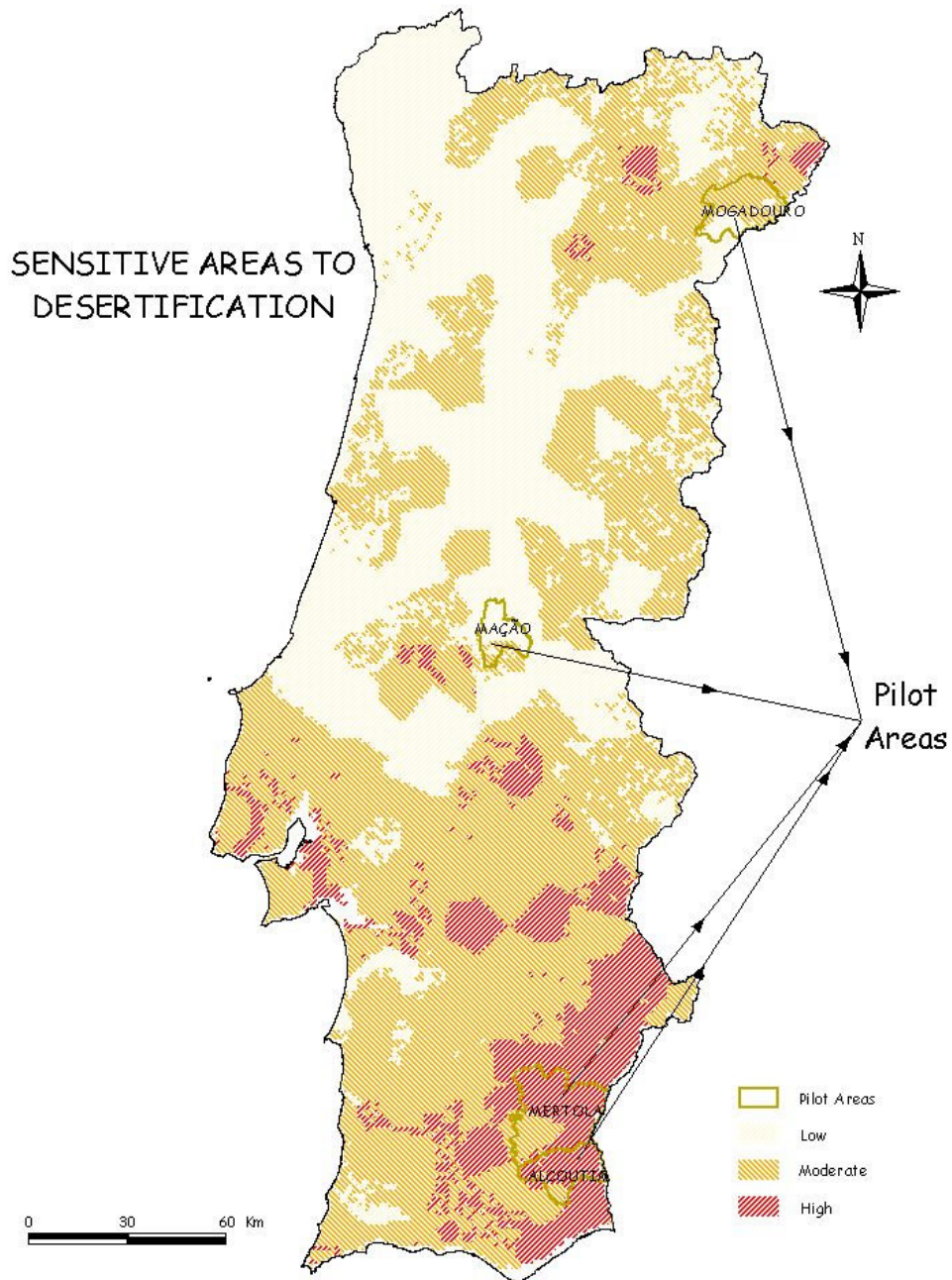


Table indicators

n	Indicator name	Method of measure	Raw data
1	Population Density	inh / km2	Demographic statistics
2	Rock fragments	% area	Soil cartography
3	Soil depth	cm	Soil cartography
4	Slope	%	Topographic maps / DTM
5	Rainfall	mm	Rainfall (Annual mean)
6	Aridity	class	Rainfall / Temperature (Monthly means)
7	Fire risk	class	Soil Use / Vegetation Cover
8	Erosion Protection	class	Soil Use / Vegetation Cover
9	Drought resistance	class	Soil Use / Vegetation Cover
10	Plant cover	%	Soil Use / Vegetation Cover
11	Employment index	%	Employment statistics
12	Old age index	%pop > 65/?5 y	Demographic statistics
13	Aridity index	class	Rainfall (annual mean) / Temperature (monthly mean)
14	Rain erosivity	mm / hour	Rainfall
15	Drought index	class	Rainfall (Annual mean)
16	Urban sprawl	ha / year	Soil Use / Vegetation Cover
17	Infiltration capacity	mm / hour	Rainfall / Infiltration
18	Stability of surface horizon	class	Soil cartography
19	Grazing intensity	class	Livestock's statistics / Vegetation Cover