



Cultural Landscapes Conference 2022

Activity Report

Prepared by
Burcu Ateş and Miro Osório
Yolda Initiative & AMNC

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National Laboratory
for Civil Engineering
Lisbon, Portugal

For more information



Organized by



Alliance for
Mediterranean
Nature & Culture

Funded by



Event Summary

Organizers

Alliance for Mediterranean Nature & Culture (AMNC)
Yolda Initiative
ANP-WWF Portugal

Funding Support

MAVA Foundation Pour la Nature

Venue

National Laboratory for Engineering (LNEC), Lisbon-Portugal

Participating Organisations

Al Shouf Cedar Society (ACS), Associação Natureza Portugal (ANP|WWF Portugal), Association Biom - BirdLife Croatia, BirdLife International, EuroNatur, Global Diversity Foundation (GDF), Global Footprint Network, GOB Menorca, International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative, IUCN Med, LogistiX-movingideas, MAVA Foundation Pour la Nature, Mediterranean Institute for Anthropos and Nature (MedINA), Nature Metrics, Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL), StoneSoup, The Biodiversity Consultancy, Tour du Valat, Trashumancia y Naturaleza (TyN), UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme, United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability, Universidade de Évora, University of Gottingen, Vulture Conservation Foundation, WWF North Africa, WWF Spain, Yolda Initiative



Conference venue
National Laboratory of Civil Engineering LNEC - Lisbon, Portugal

AMNC Overview

The Alliance for Mediterranean Nature & Culture (AMNC) is a group of NGOs working together to support Mediterranean cultural landscapes. Working in local communities to promote, improve and sustain their traditional practices, we effectively contribute to biodiversity and local livelihoods as well as to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Funded by the MAVA Foundation between 2017 and 2022 to implement a joint action plan on promoting sustainable land-use practices, we have been collaborating since 2017 to deliver a more comprehensive environmental impact alongside socio-economic improvements. This is possible through an ever-stronger bond of 14 partners around the Mediterranean with pilot sites in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Greece, Lebanon, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey, allowing for impact at scale.



The Cultural Landscapes Conference 2022 aimed to discuss and widen the cultural landscapes approach with its diverse elements such as climate crisis adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation and empowerment of local livelihoods. The conference showcased the results of the AMNC's work as well as served as a key occasion for learning from each other and developing synergies and collaborations for the future of conservation of cultural landscapes in the Mediterranean via engagement with practitioners, conservationists, researchers, policymakers and the private sector.

The event aimed at contributing to demonstrating and promoting:

- The knowledge about the links between cultural practices, biodiversity and climate crisis and how these links support human well-being;
- The approaches which ensure economic and financial sustainability of cultural practice-based economies;
- The advocacy work that enables policy changes in favour of cultural practices and cultural landscapes;
- The governance systems for participatory cultural landscapes management;
- The approaches which strengthen local capacities for improved and sustainable management practices;

Aim



Aim

While offering a space for exchanging ideas and experiences, learning from each other and co-initiating new ideas, actions, and collaborations for the future of the conservation of cultural landscapes in the Mediterranean. The event was a milestone for the Alliance for Mediterranean Nature and Culture, marking the transition to a new period, with different dynamics and goals, as the whole scope of work of the AMNC has been financially supported by the MAVA Foundation and the Foundation comes to a close.

Scope

Culture is a combination of sets of practices, networks of institutions and systems of knowledge and beliefs including spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features. As it is based upon the ways in which people imagine, build on and transform the world around them, it is a web of evolving and shifting patterns that link not just individuals with each other but also with their environment. There is a widespread recognition that mutual feedback exists between culture and the environment, with shifts in one leading to changes in the other. Thus, the cultural evolution of humans is based on the constant action and interaction of natural and human factors and is led by means of practices, knowledge, institutions, and values developed and created by humans while interacting with the environments they live in.

In that context, cultural landscapes refer to the landscapes in which human activities are key agents in the evolution of the environment. Conceptually it moves beyond the human-nature dichotomy, based on a recognition that humans are integral components of ecosystems and human history is essentially connected with the cultivation of nature, of the physical environment, which has historically shaped and engendered present-day landscapes. This relation can also be found in the root of the word 'culture' in Latin, which is *cultum*, referring to lands and cultivated plants.

Scope

We understand cultural landscapes as a term that embraces the diversity of tangible and intangible manifestations of the interaction between humankind and its environment.

On the other hand, cultural practices are shared perceptions of how people routinely behave in culture and so are the customary, habitual, or expected procedures or ways of acting, performing, producing, and doing something. They reflect and are built on knowledge, beliefs, and institutions of society for periods often spanning generations. In our understanding, this definition includes but is not limited to production systems such as traditional agriculture, pastoralism, traditional forestry, harvesting of edible plants and traditional management of salinas and fishery.

Our conference in this context will host several plenary sessions, exhibitions and screenings disseminating the links between cultural landscapes, sustainability and social well-being, as well as exchange sessions inviting participants to explore new collaborations, synergies and actions for the conservation of cultural landscapes in the Mediterranean region.



Themes

- Community-based conservation for biodiversity and climate action: Connecting cultural practices with nature conservation
- Sustainable communities and societies: Establishing sustainable, nature-positive agri-food systems with community-led governance
- Beneficiary-focused work: Collaborating with local communities for their socio-economic well-being and for protecting their rights
- Economic sustainability of cultural landscapes: Funding schemes and on-site income generation
- Scaling up partnerships: From strategic priorities to international fieldwork cooperation

Conference Format

The three-day conference comprised 9 plenary sessions, 8 workshops, open-air cinema, local product stands and an exhibition. The conference programme was structured to foster exchange between participants around the possible future areas of collaboration. This was achieved by hosting workshops on 8 different topics. Each day of the conference also allotted 1-1,5 hours for lunch, coffee breaks and dinners to allow participants to continue their discussions after each session. Time was allocated as part of the last session on the third day for reflection on the discussions during workshops, which addressed clues for future actions and collaborations.

The stands with local delicacies and products from the AMNC pilot sites (High Atlas Mountains, Morocco; Shouf Biosphere Reserve, Lebanon; West Bekaa and Mount Lebanon, Lebanon; Taurus mountains in Turkey; Dehesas of Extremadura and Córdoba, Spain; Montados of Santarém and Vale do Sado, Portugal; Kroumirie Mogod, Northwestern Tunisia; Livanjsko polje, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Lemnos Island, Aegean Sea, Greece; Kythera Island, south-western Aegean Sea, Greece; Menorca Island, Balearic Islands, Spain) were opened at the end of the first day, inviting participants to feel the cultural landscapes and practices via five senses.



Conference Highlights

Setting the Scene

The conference opening was attended by the president of the LNEC, Laura Caldeira; the director of the ANP-WWF Portugal, Inês Morgado and the director of the Yolda Initiative and coordinator of the AMNC, Engin Yilmaz with a special welcome highlighting the strategic importance of the conference in the context of conservation from a nature and culture perspective which acknowledges human communities as allies of the nature conservation efforts. The opening session ended with the keynote by José Muñoz-Rojas of Universidade de Évora, marking the landscape approach in conservation as an operational construct enhancing rural sustainability and key participation of local communities for good and sustainable management of the landscapes.

Showcasing the work and impact of the AMNC between 2017-2022

The four consecutive sessions on the first day addressed the collective work of the AMNC partners in 8 sites and 7 countries. The discussions also highlighted the impact delivered regarding environmental, socio-economic and political aspects. The presentations provided an overview of the thematic work on:

- enhancing and communicating multiple knowledge sources regarding promoting traditional ecological knowledge and community-based conservation
- conservation for sustainable livelihoods based on actions targeting favourable policies and economical options
- supporting community-based governance systems for participatory cultural landscapes management
- the collective impact on biodiversity & climate, the socio-economic well-being of local communities and policies

Conference Highlights

Potential future work of the AMNC 2023-2025

The second day of the conference kicked off with presentations on the current and foreseen challenges in the nature conservation sector and the AMNC's strategic plan drafted by the AMNC consultant Marko Pećarević as a response to those identified challenges. In terms of this alignment, the AMNC's strategic objectives based on the proposals below were presented:

- Sustainable Agri-Food Systems: Healthy food and thriving communities with small-scale production for large-scale impact
- Land Stewardship for Cultural Landscapes: The economically viable path
- Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation for a Sustainable Impact: Tackling the Climate Crisis Together
- Supporting Community Based Actions Lead to Biodiversity Conservation
- Pastoralism: A Game Changer for Biodiversity and Climate Action

Financial frameworks in support of cultural landscapes, for biodiversity, for climate and for livelihoods

The financial frameworks sessions at the conference were composed of 3 parts in a series during the second day:

- A public plenary for all conference participants on the role of public funding and funding through multilateral organisations
- A public dialogue open to all conference participants advanced the plenary and asked questions on the origin and future of cultural landscapes related to funding and financial frameworks through philanthropic foundations and in cooperation with other stakeholders
- A closed session for selected conference participants with a focus discussion on the future of the AMNC in terms of funding





Conference Highlights

Financial frameworks in support of cultural landscapes, for biodiversity, for climate and for livelihoods

The series of sessions included speeches and a Q&A with Terrence Hay-Edie from the UNDP-GEF Small Grants Programme as well as Makiko Yanagiya from the United Nations University, Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability and International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative. Moreover, video contributions from the long-standing funder and supporter MAVA Foundation with Gonzalo Oviedo and from the Endangered Landscapes Programme of the Cambridge Conservation Initiative with David Thomas were presented. Lastly, concrete funding and financing sources were discussed, such as possible collaborations with philanthropic foundations in Europe and the Mediterranean, as well as with alternatives such as crowdfunding. The latter was introduced by GoParity's CCO Manuel Nery Nina, showing their successful experiences since their start in 2017.

Thematic Exchange Sessions

Aiming at triggering active exchange and collaboration between participants, the conference hosted 6 thematically oriented workshops, aligned with the strategic priorities of the AMNC.

Innovative tools to monitor biodiversity

Within this workshop, three innovative tools researchers, conservationists and any interested stakeholder could use for implementing biodiversity monitoring were exhibited. Experts shared perspectives from modelling to laboratory analysis with the contributions from Resalliance about how we can use a satellite image to monitor biodiversity at different scales, from STAR (Species threat abatement and restoration) metrics, about how we can estimate the potential reduction in species extinction risk that could be achieved in a targeted area and finally from NatureMetrics about how we can use DNA to deliver scalable biodiversity data monitoring in contexts ranging from conservation to environmental impact assessments.

Gender Aspects of the Cultural Landscapes Approach

The workshop aimed to exchange lessons on the integration of gender in the cultural landscape approach & feminist conservation and to co-create a roadmap for more gender-careful actions in the conservation of cultural landscapes. Attendees exchanged their experiences, learned from that of others, and identified initial paths forward for gender approaches in conservation, which highlighted forming of a working group and keeping exchanging with each other while also inviting experts on gender and conservation to build a concrete methodology and tool kit to be applied both in terms of the institutional structures of nature conservation organisations and the encounters with the local communities.



Thematic Exchange Sessions

How can traditional products find their place in a globalized market:

Co-developing regional standards

The main objective of this workshop was to co-develop an understanding of inclusive regional standards to be promoted by the AMNC and diverse stakeholders, for the sustainable maintenance of cultural practices in the Mediterranean and their promotion to the wider public and consumers. As a result of the discussions, the following core values of regional standards were proposed: Enhancing biodiversity, preserving landscapes and ecosystem services; using resources responsibly; producing in terms of the Mediterranean diet and culture; following a socially responsible process; supporting sustainable local traditional communities; fair pricing and keeping a short value chain.

Role of human mobility in the use and management of resources in cultural landscapes

The workshop aimed at exploring together the concept of human mobility and its impact on the management of resources, whether human or other, in cultural landscapes and its relationship with the climate crisis. During the workshop, the participants shared experiences narrating the mobility factor affecting the use and management of cultural landscapes. To illustrate, in Lebanon Syrian refugees have been one of the key actors in agricultural production or in Greece Albanian shepherds have played an important role in transhumance. The same happened in Turkey, where in the last couple of years Afghan shepherds have been hired to take care of herding.



Thematic Exchange Sessions

Collaborating with pastoralists toward UN IYRP 2026

This workshop addressed policy actions to be co-created towards the UN International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) 2026 within different regional support groups to exchange on the current socio-political challenges that pastoralists have faced in Europe and Middle East & Northern Africa (MENA) regions and that conservationists have experienced regarding the conservation of rangelands and other ecosystems, identify common actions to be applied until and during 2026 towards favourable policy changes in Europe and MENA. Possible actions were drafted based on strategic target groups, thematic points of intervention and policy frameworks to be addressed.

Land Stewardship: Keeping farmers engaged with nature conservation and sustainable practices

This workshop hosted diverse experiences of joint work between environmental conservation and agricultural food production within the context of land stewardship schemes applied in cultural landscapes. The workshop showed that it is necessary to build a common vision with practitioners, based on environmental improvements and economic benefits. After signing the land-stewardship agreements with practitioners, the next step proposed was to organise trainings for sustainable management of landscapes and promote the local products of farmers in diverse contexts.

Last Remarks

- Collaborating with local practitioners but also other stakeholders and joining forces together from the beginning is key to the conservation of cultural landscapes.
- Being very clear about what we mean by what we communicate makes the change happen.
- Convincing the key audiences regarding the relevancy and the value of cultural landscapes and practices in responding to the multiple crises (climate, biodiversity, economic) we face is necessary for a sustainable impact.
- Being flexible enough to be responding to the needs of each case effectively requires understanding each context, so cultural landscapes, uniquely.
- Developing effective and practical solutions for achieving impact in all the themes we work with needs innovation and tradition to go hand in hand.
- Social challenges based on gender, race, age, etc., should be elaborated and considered carefully, with certain actions to be utmost inclusive in the conservation of cultural landscapes.



Alliance for Mediterranean Nature & Culture

Many Paths • One Mediterranean



YOU CAN WATCH A VIDEO OF THE CONFERENCE
BY FOLLOWING [THE LINK HERE](#)