

PARTICIPATORY APPROACH IN LA VERA, SPAIN

The HNV-Link project in Spain is represented by European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism (EFNCP) (www.efncp.org) and Entretantos (<http://www.entretantos.org/about-us/>). The two organisations teamed up to initiate HNV-Link in La Vera with a largely blank slate: there had been no previous project or process to engage with the community of extensive livestock farmers or to address the challenges they face at a territorial scale. The only prior projects were some small academic studies and a couple of local projects for rare breeds and agri-tourism. This community of farmers has been largely ignored by all levels of government (and by society at large) and is severely threatened with extinction. Absence of dialogue, awareness and understanding on the side of the regional authorities is evident in policies that are very poorly adapted to the circumstances of these farmers and the territory they manage. Within this context, HNV-Link initiated a process for more sustainability and innovation to build a future for these pastoralists and for HNV farmland.

The team started by building a database of farmers and other relevant actors (councils, cooperatives, authorities, nature wardens, extension services, researchers, etc.) with 99 entries in total. The team then conducted a round of bilateral interviews with a cross-section of these actors. It carried out 22 fully structured interviews (including 4 goat farmers, 4 cattle farmers and 2 representatives of the local farmers' association) and several more unstructured interviews.

The interview process was very time-consuming but essential for gathering information and getting an understanding of different actors and their viewpoints for HNV-Link's Baseline Assessment, to establish constructive relationships, and to prepare the ground for thematic workshops and building the vision for HNV farming in La Vera.

During the course of several months in 2017, the team organised a series of thematic workshops with farmers, producers, scientists and other actors. This included a specific innovation seminar to refine the future vision for HNV farming in La Vera and to discuss and propose innovation priorities for the next phase of the project.

Table 1: List of participatory events in Learning Area La Vera, Spain (up to April 2018)

Activities (links are to Spanish website)	Number of participants	Date
Interviews with farmers and other stakeholders		Oct 2016-March 2017
Workshop on products and processing	16	April 2017
Workshop on conservation of pastoral landscapes and habitats		May 2017
Seminar on innovation proposals		July 2017
Seminar on TB eradication campaign	45	Sept 2017
Meetings with Regional Government departments		Feb 2017-Oct 2018
Practical case study – Garganta la Olla		Oct 2017-Oct 2018
Regional/National innovation seminar – Territorios Pastoreados		April 2018



These events are part of a wider process for supporting livestock-based HNV farming that has been running since the project began and continues through 2018. For example, Entretantos has been in constant dialogue with a small number of farmers from the local graziers' association and has been supporting them in their biggest current concern - the government's high-impact TB eradication campaign. Here, HNV-Link is playing a key role in promoting constructive dialogue by initiating and facilitating a series of meetings between farmers and regional authorities to discuss adaptations to the TB campaign. To assure a sustainable future for HNV farming, the team is, through numerous meetings with different departments during 2017 and 2018, discussing with the government a range of policy issues that need resolving. They have also had meetings with the municipalities and organised a joint written request to the regional government for more action in support of extensive grazing in La Vera.

Finally, EFNCP established a practical case study in one municipality, Garganta la Olla, where they are undertaking a more intensive process with participation of nearly all of the farmers (approx. 10 in total) and other actors (council, foresters, hunters) in order to develop practical proposals for innovative actions for improving the viability of sustainable grazing practices as a livelihood. It is clear that without such actions, especially from the authorities, extensive grazing will disappear from this municipality within a few years, and the mosaic of Natura 2000 habitats that make up most of the landscape will be lost.





Links

Baseline assessment process <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOZKgeHhLTA&t=3s>

Report from the innovation seminar (national language)

<http://www.hnvlink.eu/download/SpainReportInnovationSeminar.pdf>

Proceedings from event 27-28 March 2017: Territorios Pastoreados 2 (national language)

http://www.ganaderiaextensiva.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ActasJornada_TerritoriosPastoreados2_Zaragoza_red.pdf

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