

SUSTAINABLE PASTORALISM AND LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

FINAL TRAINING ACTION

Mondim de Basto, Portugal, 5th of Decembre of 2025

The final training action of the **Sustainable pastoralism and landscape management course** in Serra do Alvão (Portugal) took place on the last 5th of Decembre. The course was promoted by Terra Maronesa, the Municipality of Mondim de Basto and the local Farmer Support Office with the funding of Finerge, a renewable energy company. Its objective was to raise awareness and build capacities on the multifunctionality of mountain pastoralism, in line with the model developed by Terra Maronesa to foster economic development, territory management and climate action. Participants included mainly herders of local indigenous breed of goats (cabra bravia) and cattle (vaca maronesa). This last action comprised three sessions.

1. **Marco Fernandes** (Terra Maronesa) presented the results of the course and the positive environmental impacts of the model developed by Terra Maronesa within the EU-funded LIFE Maronesa project. This model promotes the integration of local ecological knowledge with innovative technologies to support landscape restoration and climate action. It also includes a market valorisation dimension through the implementation of the recently launched CLIMA+ label that guarantees the evidence-based positive climatic impact of these products. The model is an integrated agropastoral approach to the challenges of mountain territories, respectful of the historical communities, animals and nature balanced relationship. Trainees are now expected to integrate the regenerative practices into their everyday activity, thus contributing to enhance the social perception on the environmental role of pastoralists.
2. **Julio Sa Rego** and **Diego Amoedo Martinez** (RHE Initiative) presented the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists and its strategic synergies with the concept of intangible cultural heritage in the context of mountain pastoralism in Alvão. They presented the concept and showed how it applies to pastoralism in Alvão, an activity full of cultural meanings and social functions for the local communities. They advocated for its recognition as an intangible cultural heritage and explained the technicalities of the national inventory process. The promotion of this initiative in 2026, International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, is an opportunity to amplify the political message on the benefits of mountain pastoralism to the communities, the territory and the environment.

3. Last but not least, a **roundtable** was organised with selected trainees and trainers to track the individual uptakes from the course. Participants were **Avelino Rego**, trainer and Maronesa herder, **Tiago Farroco**, trainee and herder of Bravia and Maronesa, **Cidália Duarte**, trainee and Montesinho goat breeder, and **Marco Fernandes**, trainer and Churra sheep breeder. Discussions addressed the use of new technologies, the management of natural resources and the conservation of the landscape. Consensus was that the management of the common lands has to be more collective and not falling exclusively on shepherds, as it is now, and that new technologies are helpful when associated to the local ecological knowledge. Technology itself is not a solution and continued training of shepherds are needed to ensure the transmission of knowledge and updates on climate change and technologies. The round table was moderated by **Diego Amoedo Martinez** (RHE Initiative)

Bruno Ferreira, Mayor of Mondim de Basto, **Duarte Marques** (Terra Maronesa) and **José Miguel Oliveira** (Finerge) delivered the closing talks focused on the importance of private-public-community partnerships to develop the territory.

This event was part of **Terra Maronesa** and the **RHE Initiative**'s preparation for the IYRP 2026. The partners combine new technologies and landscape research with local ecological knowledge and intangible cultural heritage. Their ongoing collaboration focuses on voicing for agropastoral communities and bridging with institutions and the private sector to develop and valorise mountain landscapes.

Terra Maronesa is a community of practice from northern Portugal. It promotes the territory of the Maronesa cattle breed and its economic, cultural and environmental values. Terra Maronesa brings together breeders, researchers and authorities to design and implement holistic interventions (<https://terramaronesa.pt/>).

RHE Initiative is a Portuguese research-action startup for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage and the resilience of mountain territories (<https://www.rhe-initiative.pt/>).

