

## The Green Heart of Cork

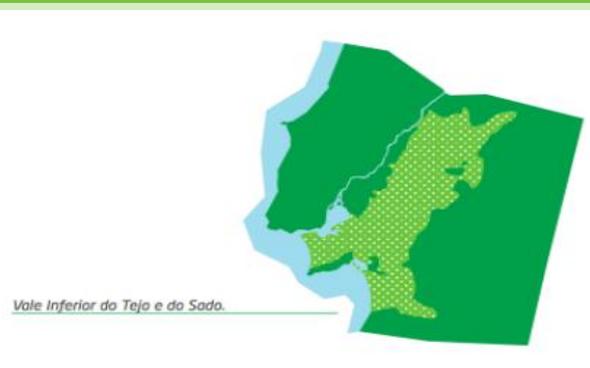
### Location

**Country:** Portugal

**Scale:** local

**Region:** Tejo and Sado river basins

Site name	Tagus and Sado watersheds
Landscape area (ha)	500 000
Population	1 000 000
Forest area (%)	60
Agricultural area (%)	30



Main forest tree species	Primary: <i>Quercus suber</i> , Other: <i>Pinus pinea</i> , <i>Pinus pinaster</i> , <i>Eucalyptus spp.</i>
Main forest functions and uses	Cork and livestock production, hunting
Main risks and threats	Overgrazing and consequent lack of oak regeneration in localized areas, generalized oak mortality, lack of management and abandonment in other areas
Private forest (%)	85
Public forest (%)	15
Management focus	Cork production and multiple use
Project thematic focus	Payments for ecosystem services

### Compensated /improved ecosystem services

- carbon sequestration
- erosion prevention
- regulation of water cycle and biodiversity

### Management

The Green Heart of Cork (GHOC) Project aims to promote the conservation of the world's largest continuous patch of cork oak woodlands, spanning over half a million hectares, which is located in the Tejo and Sado river basins. This forest area harbours high levels of biodiversity and also coincides with the larger aquifer in the Iberian Peninsula, the T3-Aquifer. The project aims to compensate rural landowners that practice sustainable forest management and contribute to the conservation and the improvement of the key ecosystem services provided by cork oak woodlands, such as carbon storage, erosion prevention, water cycle regulation and aquifer recharge.

### Stakeholders

#### Sellers or service providers:

- landowners - both public and private entities can participate

### **Buyers and beneficiaries of services:**

- Coca-Cola Portugal – Refrige (beverage company) provides payment for those forest owners implementing sustainable forest management. Coca-Cola is the first and leading pioneer supporter of this WWF Portugal initiative. By sponsoring the project, the company is assessing two main guidelines: contributes to the sustainability of its business – the Refrige plant is located within the aquifer area consuming 500 000m<sup>3</sup>/year of groundwater; and build conversation about the cork oak and the Coca-Cola efforts towards the sustainability and water protection, linking it to one of the Portuguese emblematic symbols, the cork.
- Beneficiaries: regional and local community

### **Donors – funding agencies or sponsors:**

- Jerónimo Martins (a retailer) and Grupo Onyria (hotel company) finance the GHOC Project

### **Intermediaries:**

WWF mediated a pilot PES-like case. WWF also identifies the hotspot areas for payments through the WebGIS HABEaS. It annually monitor and helps the landowner association to improve their management plans

## **Timeline**

**Establishment year:** 2011

**Time horizon:** medium term

**Status of PES:** active scheme

## **Availability of economic data**

Coca-Cola pays 17 €/ha to forest landowners in order to protect the natural capital present in their properties.

## **References / Source of information**

Bugalho, M., Silva, L. 2014. Promoting sustainable management of cork oak landscapes through payments for ecosystem services: The WWF Green Heart of Cork project. In *Unasylva* 242 (65), 29-33.