



## **Valorization of the agricultural and natural heritage of the "Sierra Grande" space (Hornachos, Extremadura, Spain) from an agroecological territorial perspective**

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The Sierra Grande de Hornachos (SW area of the Iberian Peninsula in Extremadura, Spain) is the expression of the complex relationship among culture, modes of use and the potentialities of the territory.

"Sierra Grande" area presents an enormous cultural richness (as result of the coexistence of Muslim, Jewish and Christian civilizations), a great diversity of agrarian and livestock uses (expressed in particular meadows, olive groves, moresque orchards, traditional knowledge linked to phytotherapeutical use of mediterranean plant biodiversity and the maintenance of autochthonous varieties of a great genetic, cultural and economic value), as well as environmental potentially protected by several administrative figures at regional, national and international levels. Area of Regional Interest [ARI, ZIR], Site of Community Importance [SCI, LIC], Special Protection Area for Birds [SPA, ZEPA], Special Conservation Zone [SCZ, ZEC]), even included in the Conservation Network of the Biodiversity of the European Union Natura 2000.

However, this cultural and agro-environmental complexity has not been transformed in opportunities for the revitalization of the local economy, generating to date, an old approach that faces conservation of the natural environment against agrarian production, situation that nowadays is quite current.

In this context, where the conventional approach to the management of rural development is not assuming advances, agroecology as an integrating proposal. It can provide, from a new paradigm, an approach that recognizes the complexity of the territory, giving value and building the rural development from multiple dimensions: ecological, social, economic, political and technological. From the point of view of agroecology, we believe that it is possible to promote sustainable local development, based on the implementation of development models based on the endogenous potential of the territories themselves.

**Keywords:** Agroecology; endogenous rural development; territorial development.