

# *Salve a terra*

**The Renaissance of the Portuguese  
Village of Salvaterra do Extremo**



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Village of Salvaterra do Extremo**

**Politecnico di Milano  
School of Architecture Urban Planning Construction Engineering  
M.Sc. in Sustainable Architecture and Landscape Design  
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**Contribution to the scientific research of the Politecnico di Milano in  
collaboration with Landscape Together**

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# *Salvaterra do Extremo is dying.*

This small rural village in central Portugal, located on the border with Spain, faces an imminent threat of extinction, with only 170 inhabitants, a population that continues to decrease over time.

## **Abstract**

### **Salvaterra do Extremo is dying.**

This small rural village in central Portugal, located on the border with Spain, faces an imminent threat of extinction, with only 170 inhabitants, a population that continues to decrease over time.

Despite being a small village, it has a valuable historical, cultural and natural heritage, being part of important protected areas such as the UNESCO Geopark and the Tejo-Tajo Biosphere Reserve.

This thesis aims to explore possible solutions to avoid the disappearance of Salvaterra do Extremo. Through an integrated approach that includes territorial analysis at different scales, field visits and study of local social dynamics, and aligned with the objectives of the Landscape Together project, multi-scale strategies are proposed to revive the village of Salvaterra do Extremo.

These proposals are divided between immaterial and material, from the search for repopulation and social and economic activation to the reuse of the ruins, the generation of an integral relationship of the village with its natural environment and the revitalization of the main trekking route of the village, The Vulture Route. This thesis aims to seek solutions that are not only feasible for Salvaterra do Extremo, but also for the villages in the area that share both conflicts and opportunities

# Landscape Together

*"Landscape Together is an European project funded by Creative Europe (cooperation, medium scale), starting in February of 2023 in an intense cooperation between 17 international partners (Spain, France, Germany, Italy and Belgium) and a pilot territory in the center of Portugal.*

*Between 2023 and 2026, the Project Landscape Together will create a dialogue between heritage and contemporary art in the pilot territory, through a transdisciplinary expert network working on Cultural Mediation, Environment Development, Sustainable Design, Art Appropriation, and Communication. This evidence-based methodology is deepened through workshops, exhibitions and talks in strategic places of this network (e.g., Paris, Berlin, San Sebastian, Milano, Brussels).*

*Landscape Together is a singular project which proposes to find innovative and concrete answers for urgent questions: how can art and culture lead to sustainable longterm solutions that contribute to the process of settlement of rural territories and that communicate effective answers for the challenges related to the consequences of climate change.(...)*

*Landscape Together (LT) promotes the cooperation and mobility of more than 90 european artists and their works in a compromised relationship with the communities, with intentions set on transforming this experience in a replicable model. LT Model will constitute itself as a tool to other communities who look to regain a sense of belonging to a place, to landscape, to culture. This project is found upon reflection of tested evidence with 16 interdisciplinary events, more than 70 workshops, 8 cultural itineraries, 18 artistic residencies, 2 permanent art pieces, 4 summer courses, 20 creative talks, 8 exhibitions in 6 countries and the Toolkit LT Model. Landscape Together intersects experts experience and institutions in key areas for longterm territorial transformation anchored on its citizens, with Cultural Mediation, tangible and intangible Heritage, Artistic Creation and Communication. In Cultural Mediation, with the development of educational programs and activation of projects promoting a fruitful integration of the arts and landscape, with the Museo Chillida Leku (Spain)."*

Source: [www.landscapestogether.eu](http://www.landscapestogether.eu)

Picture: Nagore Legarreta

# Objectives

## **1. Environment Challenges of Rural Areas**

The Pilot Territory

## **2. Communities and Environment**

Proposing life quality improvement in remote rural areas establishing new interactions between the communities and their environment.

## **3. A Strategy for the Rural Areas Challenge**

Addressing different life models, economic potentialities, circular models, heritage safeguard and promotion.

## **4. Rural Areas Environment Model**

Development of a model based in interconnected villages strengthened by cultural identity, art routes, endogenous resources, new tourist flow and the reinhabiting of citizens.

## **5. Research Support of Rural Areas Environment Development**

Analysis of examples of other regions in danger, for further replication of the model, will integrate architectural and urban proposals for the development of the pilot territory environment.

# Introduction

The movement from the countryside to the city has been a phenomenon that has affected the whole world. Depopulation and aging in rural areas is a major social and economic problem, triggering the creation of ghost towns and invaluable losses of traditions and of that quiet life in the countryside that was replaced by the accelerated and opposite life in the megalopolises, which face completely opposite problems.

In the case of Portugal, the highest percentage of the population is concentrated in the coastal areas, in large cities such as Lisbon, Porto or Faro, while in the rural regions bordering Spain, the population decreases considerably.

It is in central Portugal that Landscape Together, a project that aims to create a dialogue between cultural heritage and contemporary art in rural territories, carries out participatory projects in the municipalities of Sertã, Proença-a-Nova, Pedrógão Grande, Oleiros and Idanha-a-nova.

Salvaterra do Extremo belongs to Idanha-a-Nova and is a small rural village that is separated from Spain only by the Tagus River. It is located in an area dominated by eucalyptus and cork oak forests and large areas of grasslands, where the human presence is reduced to only 170 inhabitants. The image of Salvaterra is of a ghost town, with many uninhabited houses, a closed school, a single cafeteria, a disused parish, public spaces without public and many ruins that once had agricultural and farming uses and that today only the rubble remains.

Despite being an endangered village, it has a valuable cultural and natural heritage, being located within natural areas such as the UNESCO Geopark and the Tejo-Tajo Biosphere Reserve.

Salvaterra also hosts trekking routes, the main one being The Vulture Route, a pedestrian route of 10.5 kilometers that runs from the center of the village, passing through the banks of the Tagus River, through pastures and forests and passing through active livestock and agricultural areas and others in ruins.

Both the fragility and the potential of Salvaterra, and the fear of its complete extinction, motivated this thesis to explore possible solutions to avoid its imminent disappearance.

To establish a solid base to guide the development of the project, a territorial analysis was carried out at various scales, while the analysis criteria contemplated demography, natural conservation, land uses, climatic conditions, risks and emblematic sites. An analysis of case studies that faced similar social problems, how they faced them and what were the results was also carried out.

Aligned to the objectives of the Landscape Together project, multi-scale strategies are proposed to revive Salvaterra do Extremo. These proposals are divided between immaterial and material, from the search for repopulation and social and economic activation, to the reuse and adaptation of the ruins, the generation of an integral relationship of the town with its natural environment and the dynamization of the main trekking route of the town, the route of the vultures.

This thesis aims to analyze and search for solutions that are not only feasible for Salvaterra do Extremo, but can also be adapted for neighboring towns that face similar conflicts and share similar opportunities.



# History

Salvaterra do Extremo was initially known as Salvaterra da Beira, which dates back to the early 13th century. In 1229, it received its charter from King Sancho II. Its first fortification may have been built at that time, with the sponsorship or direct intervention of the Knights Templar. The signing of the Treaty of Alcanices in 1297 defined the Portuguese-Castilian border, and the crown committed to a program of restoration and new fortifications to secure the negotiated border. It was in this context that Salvaterra do Extremo acquired local strategic importance.

On the king's initiative, a castle was built, with an unusual circular layout, well defended by towers.

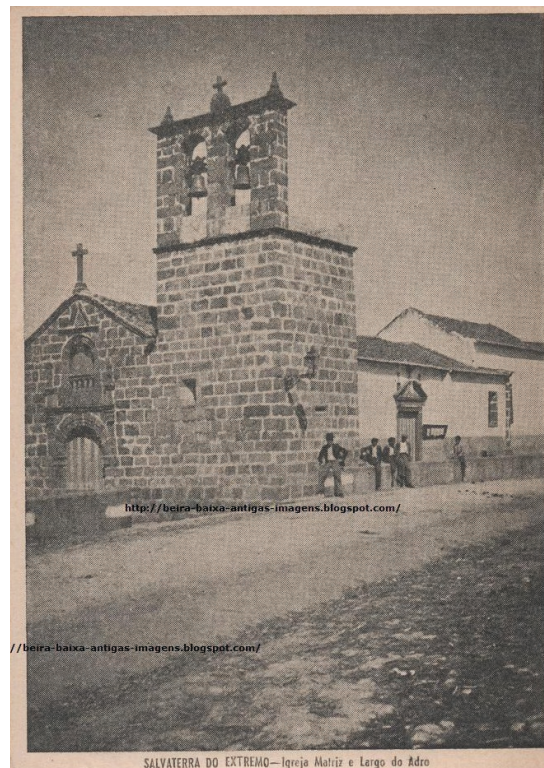
During the Restoration War in the 17th century, it was equipped with an extensive bastioned fortification. The old medieval castle was partially preserved, but surrounded by new walls, the citadel, known locally as Castelo.

The town was completely enclosed by the fortification, the Praça. The urban fabric was subjected to a regularization of orthogonal tendencies, typical of the military engineering of the time: straight, wide streets, forming right angles at their intersections. Most of the walls were dismantled after the Peninsular Wars. Having lost their usefulness, the stones from the castle and walls of Salvaterra were used to build houses.

The main church and the Chapel of Mercy are notable examples of traditional architecture, combining the construction styles of Beira Baixa, Alto Alentejo, and Spanish Extremadura. At the top of a straight street leading from Misericórdia is the square, where the old Casa da Câmara (Town Hall) is located, as it was the seat of the municipality until 1855, and opposite it, the 16th-century pillory ("pelourinho").

Down:  
Postcard of Main Church and Churchyard Square ("Igreja Matriz e Largo do Adro"), 1940  
Source: Beira Baixa em Antigas Imagens

Right:  
Postcard of Former Town Hall and Pillory ("Antigos Paços do Concelho e Pelourinho"), 1940  
Source: Beira Baixa em Antigas Imagens



# History

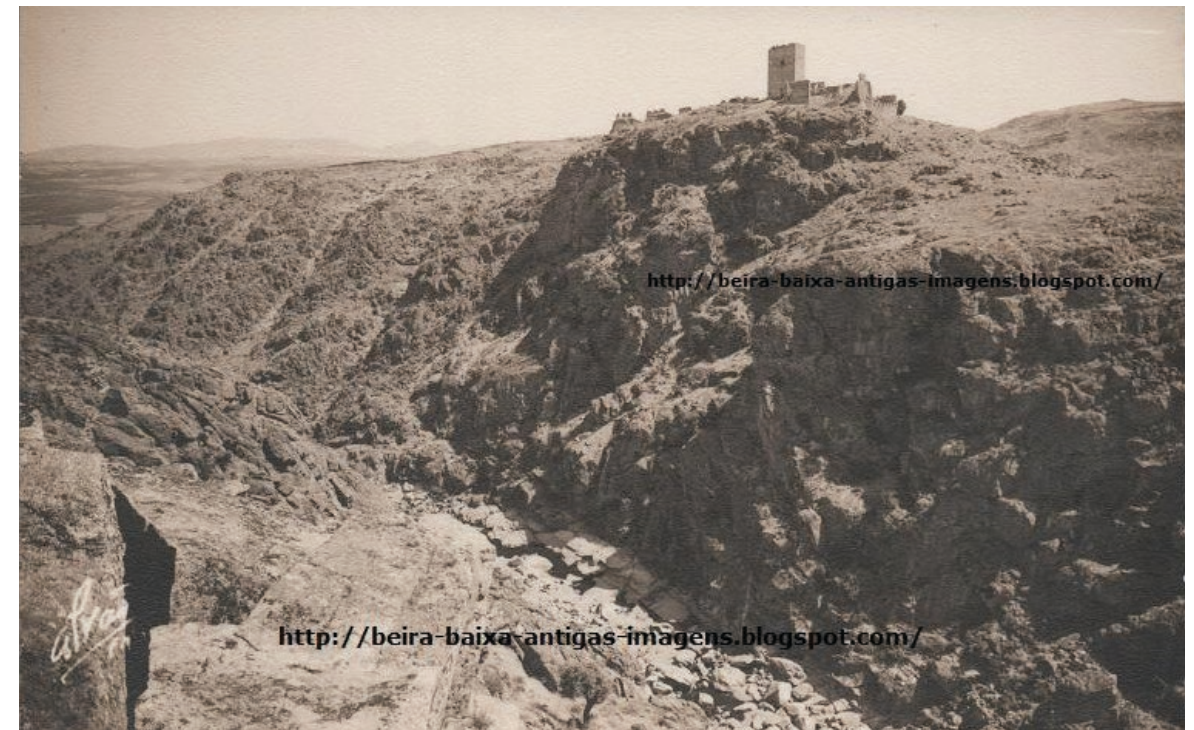
## Border conflicts: Smuggling

During Franco's dictatorship in Spain and Salazar's regime in Portugal, coffee was not freely traded on the Iberian Peninsula. For decades, the border between Portugal and Spain witnessed intense coffee smuggling, as coffee was considered a luxury item in Spain, while in Portugal it was more affordable. Smugglers traveled through mountains and rivers in extreme conditions to bring coffee to Spain, even using old buildings to hide sacks of coffee. Now, the smuggling route is one of several trekking routes offered to visitors who wish to learn about this place and its history.

## Vernacular architecture: Pigsties

These are buildings considered primitive, used for raising pigs until the late 1950s. Typically made of slate, granite, or mixed masonry, these structures represent a specific type of building mainly intended to house breeding pigs.

A notable feature of these structures is their earthen roof, which acts as a natural and effective barrier against rain. The creeping vegetation that grows on the surface helps to stabilize the roof thanks to its intertwined roots, thus improving its durability. The need for these constructions was particularly justified during prolonged births, when continuous monitoring was required to ensure the safety of the piglets and prevent the sow from accidentally harming them. These buildings are a distinctive feature of the regional rural landscape and form part of a relatively recent collective memory. However, despite their heritage value, there is still little research on their origin, which cannot be clearly traced back to distant historical periods.



Up:  
Postcard of Spanish-Portuguese Border  
("Fronteira Luso-Espanhola"), 1940  
Source: Beira Baixa em Antigas Imagens

Down:  
Pigsty (Casa de Porco), 1955  
Source: Inquérito a Arquitectura Regional Portuguesa (1955-1960) Ordem dos Arquitectos.

# Territorial Analysis

It was considered essential to carry out a multiscale analysis prior to focusing specifically on the town of Salvaterra do Extremo, with the aim of understanding its complexity from various perspectives, such as landscape, urban, ecological, and demographic. This approach made it possible to adequately contextualize the territory within a hierarchical system of territorial scales, thus facilitating a comprehensive and coordinated reading of the environment.

The analysis was carried out on six different scales:

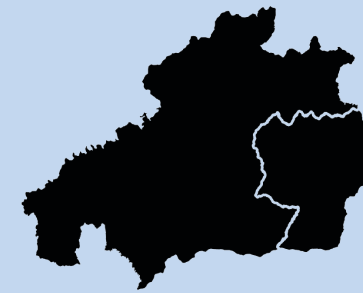
XL scale: the national territory of Portugal,  
L scale: the regional area of Castelo Branco,  
M scale: the municipality of Idanha-a-Nova,  
S scale: the “fregesia” of Salvaterra do Extremo,  
XS scale: “The Vulture” trekking route,  
XXS scale: the population center of Salvaterra do Extremo.

At each of these scales, various key components were analyzed, such as land use, demographic trends, territorial connectivity, the state of nature conservation, as well as other factors that are crucial to understanding the dynamics of the territory. This approach made it possible to identify the interrelationships between the different scales and establish a solid frame of reference for the formulation of specific proposals at the local scale.



**XL**

Portugal



**L**

Castelo Branco



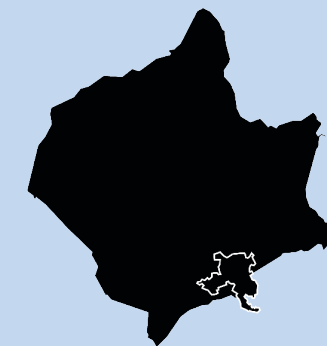
**M**

Idanha-a-Nova



**S**

Salvaterra Do Extremo



**XS**

The Vulture Route



**XXS**

The Center

# Portugal (XL)

## Landscape Together

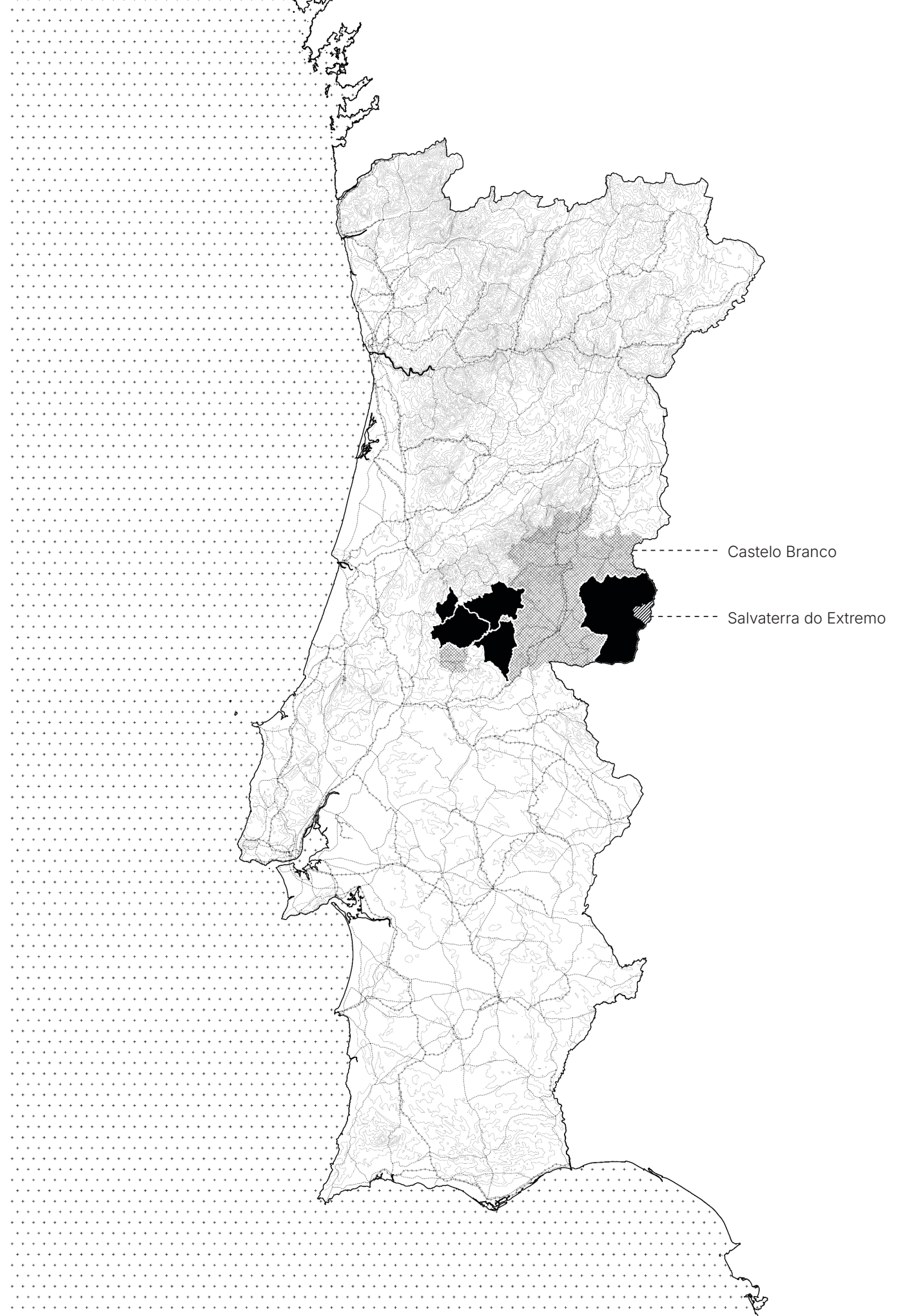
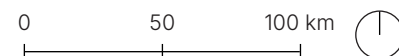
The five municipalities that participate in the Landscape Together program are located in central-eastern Portugal, a region bordering Spain. These municipalities share a number of characteristics.

One of the most significant features shared by them is their very low population density, the result of progressive depopulation, an aging population, and migration to large urban centers or abroad.

In addition, these territories have serious deficiencies in terms of connectivity, which contributes to their difficult accessibility and relative isolation from other regions of the country. This limited territorial articulation not only affects the mobility of their inhabitants, but also represents an obstacle to economic development and attracting investment and new inhabitants.

Municipality	District	Community	Inhabitants	Density
Sertã	Castelo Branco	Médio tejo	14 770	35,5 hab/km <sup>2</sup>
Proença-a-Nova	Castelo Branco	Beira Baixa	7170	24 hab/km <sup>2</sup>
Pedrógão Grande	Leiria	Beira litoral	3390	26,3 hab/km <sup>2</sup>
Oleiros	Castelo Branco	Beira Baixa	4905	14 hab/km <sup>2</sup>
Idanha-a-nova	Castelo Branco	Beira Baixa	8356	8 hab/km <sup>2</sup>

..... Main roads  
 +++++ Railways



# Portugal (XL)

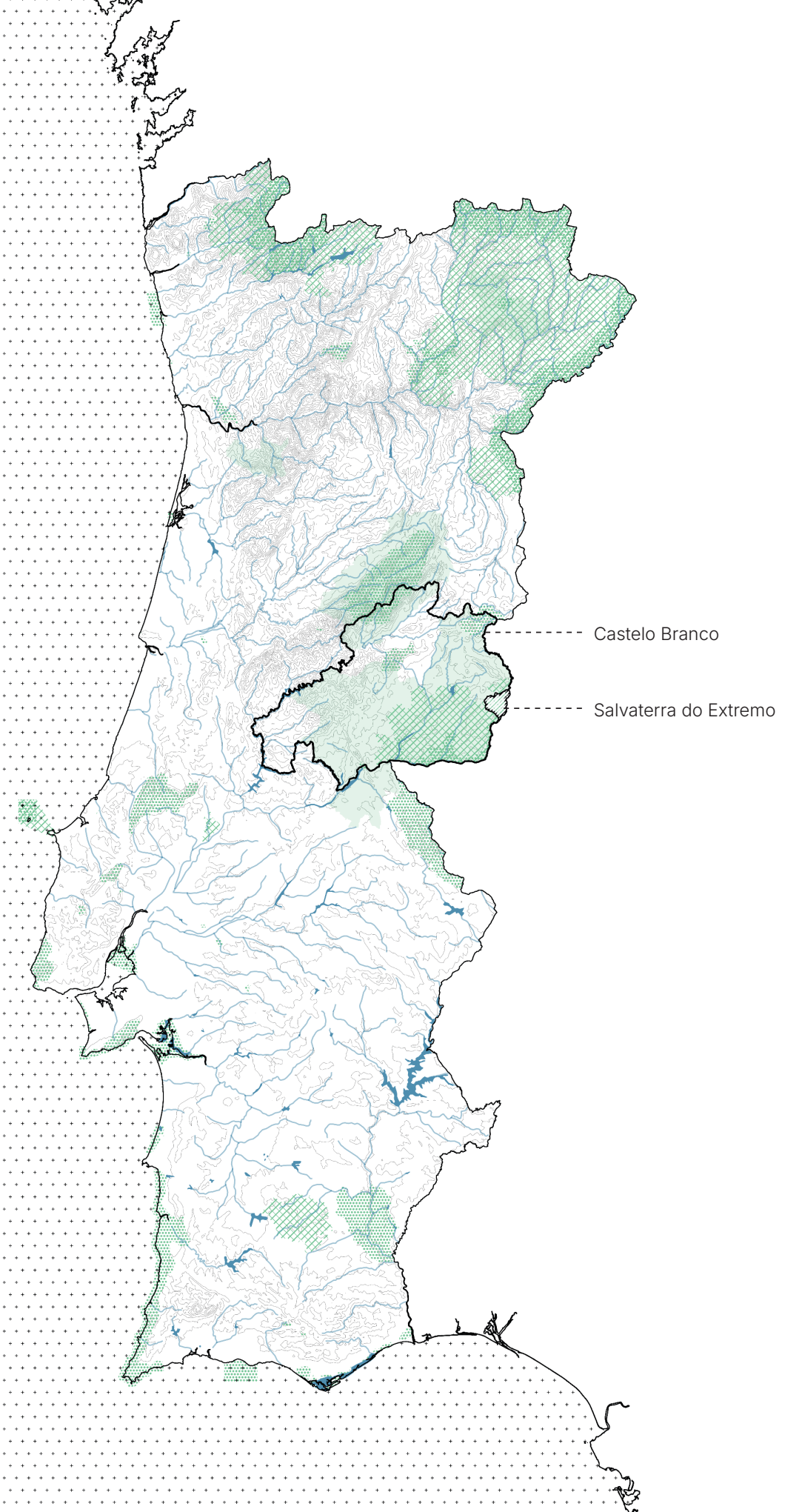
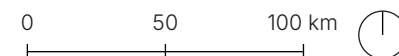
## Nature Conservation

In addition to sharing a low population density and limited connectivity, these municipalities have in common a privileged location from an ecological point of view. They are located within an area of high environmental importance in the national context.

The territory they cover is part of important internationally recognized biosphere reserves, includes areas included in Portugal's National Network of Protected Areas, and in some cases overlaps with areas belonging to UNESCO Global Geoparks, highlighting their exceptional geological and landscape value.

In addition, the area is crossed by ecological corridors that are fundamental for connectivity between natural habitats. Added to this is the presence of the Tajo River on the eastern border of the territory.

-  Biosphere Reserves
-  National Network of Protected Areas
-  Unesco Geoparks
-  Ecological Corridors
-  Atlantic ocean
-  Water bodies



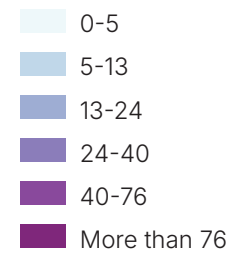
# Portugal (XL)

## Demography

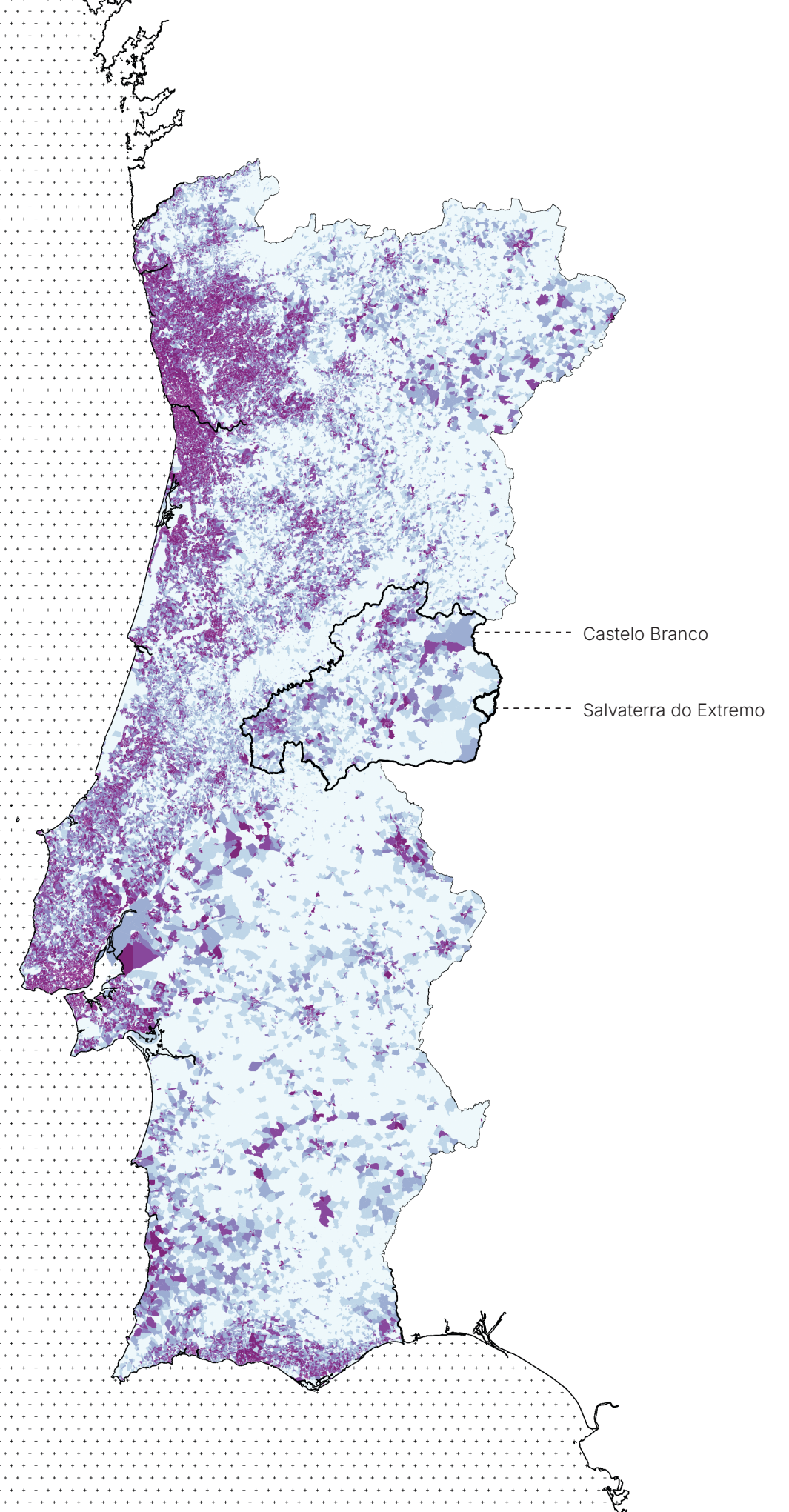
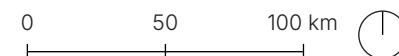
The Portuguese demographic map shows a very clear picture: most of the population lives in the coastal area facing the Atlantic Ocean, while in the eastern part of the country the population drops sharply, mainly in the area of these five municipalities involved.

This low population density is the result of decades of population decline caused by internal migration to larger cities, which has led to towns with few inhabitants and a worrying tendency towards complete disappearance.

Total Inhabitants per block



Portugal National Census 2021

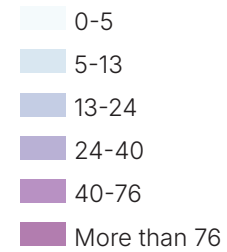


# Castelo Branco (L)

## Demography

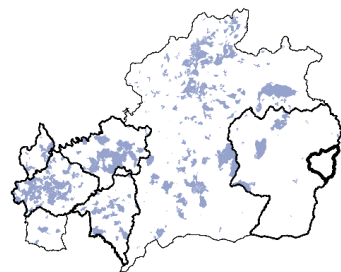
On the L scale, in the Castelo Branco regional area, the demographic problem affecting these five municipalities in particular is evident. The most critical case is that of Idanha-a-Nova, with a population density of 8 inhabitants per square kilometer. Added to this problem is the excessive number of second homes, which leads to seasonal depopulation. This map also reflects the consistency between low density and lack of connectivity.

Total Inhabitants per block

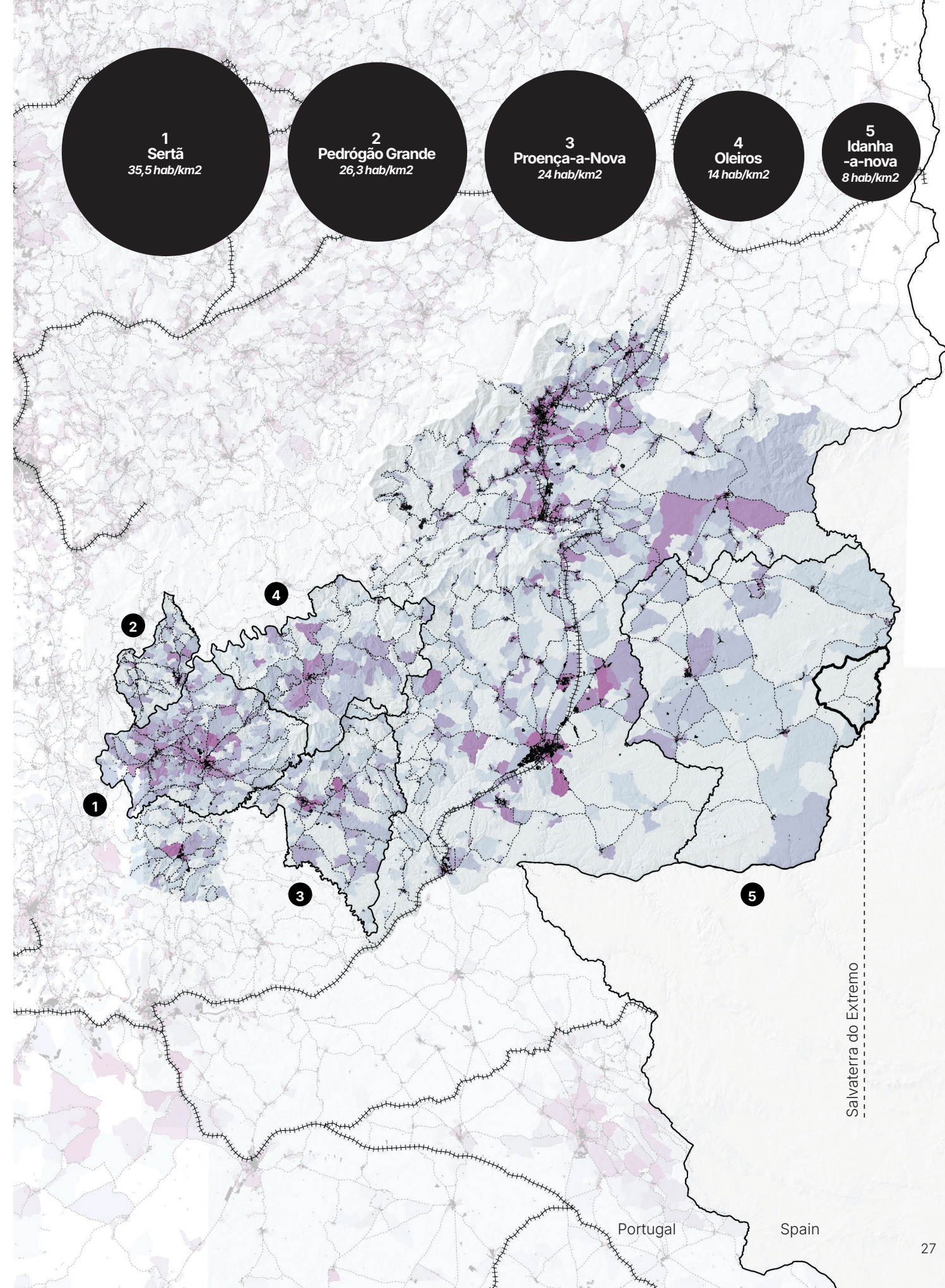
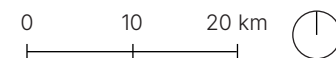
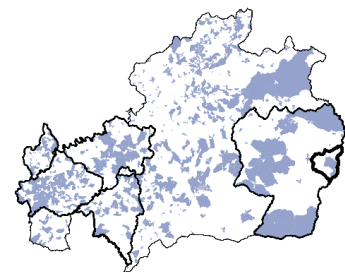


Portugal National Census 2021

More than 10 primary houses per block



More than 10 secondary houses per block



# Castelo Branco (L)

## Land Uses

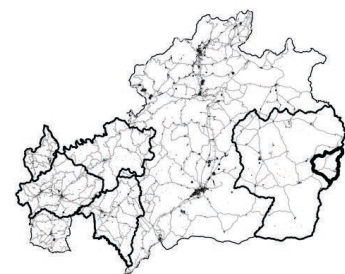
In terms of land use, there is an imbalance between different types of infrastructure: gray, green, and blue, as well as land dedicated to agricultural and agroforestry activities. In the central part of the region, agricultural land use predominates, with large areas devoted to crops and pastures. This pattern coincides with marked north-south connectivity.

Green infrastructure, consisting of forested areas, ecological corridors, and protected areas, is widely and continuously distributed throughout the territory. Added to this is the presence of blue infrastructure on a smaller scale.

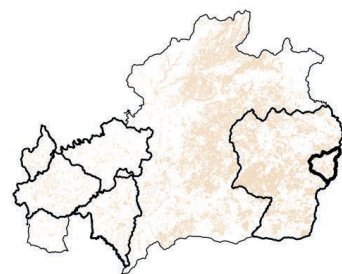
In contrast, gray infrastructure, which includes urban centers and major paved roads, has a reduced and less dominant presence in the region. Urbanized areas are scattered and low-density, while the main road network does not cover a large part of the territory, reinforcing the image of a predominantly rural, natural landscape with little human intervention.

-  Artificialized territories
-  Main roads
-  Railways
-  Cannals and rivers
-  Wetlands
-  Forests
-  Sparsely vegetation
-  Bushes
-  Agriculture
-  Agroforestry
-  Grasslands

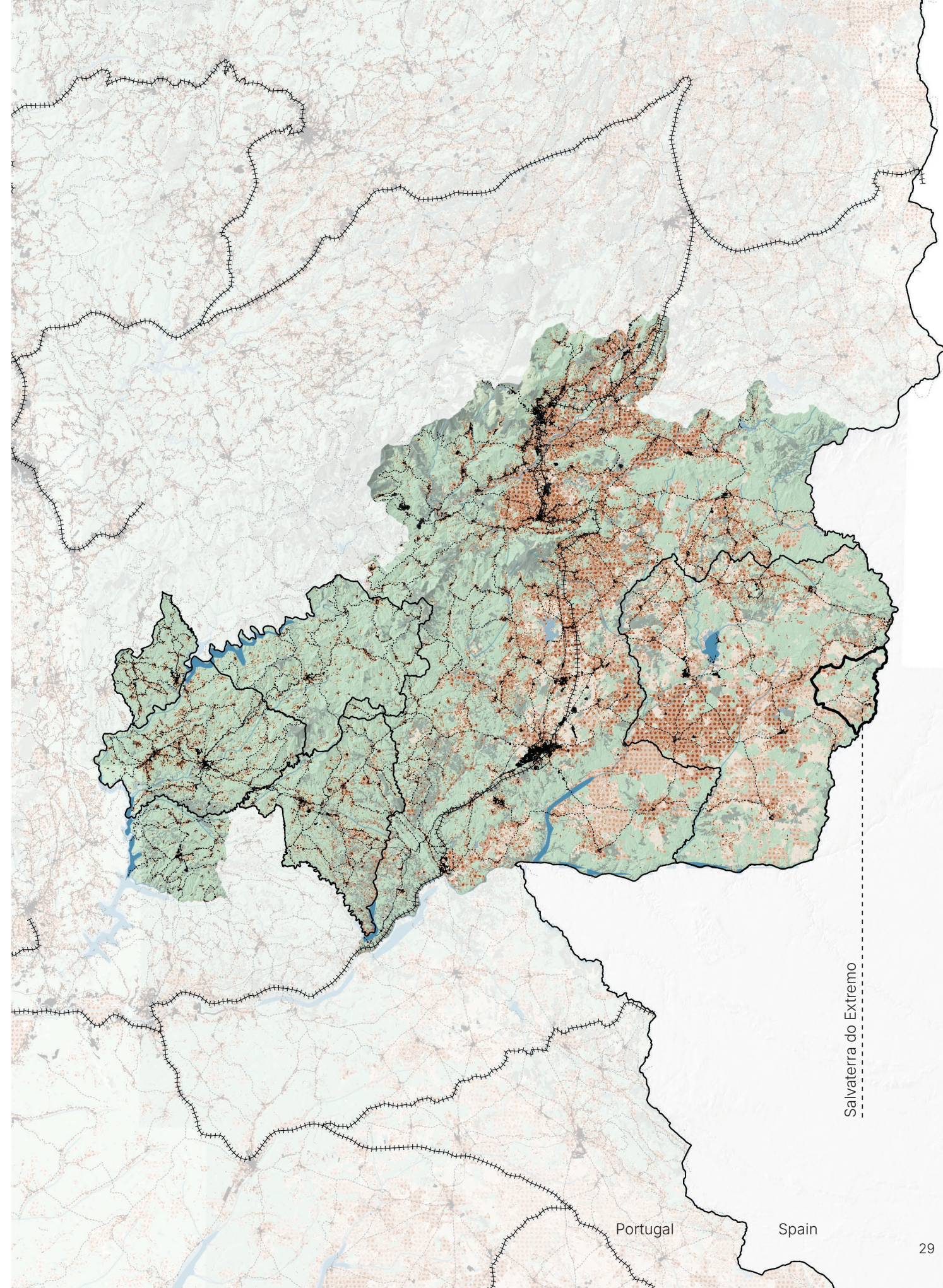
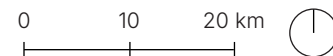
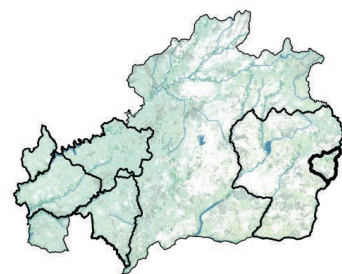
Gray infrastructure



Agriculture



Green/blue infrastructure



Salvaterra do Extremo

Portugal

Spain

# Castelo Branco (L)

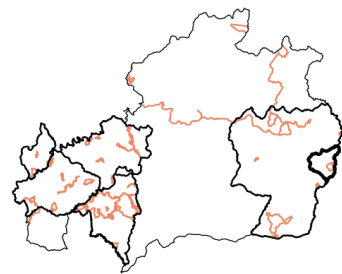
## Nature Conservation

In terms of nature conservation, UNESCO Geoparks cover almost the entire region, spanning an area of 506,935 hectares, which is also overlaid by biosphere reserves (covering an area of 428,304 hectares) and national protected natural areas (covering an area of 143,252 hectares).

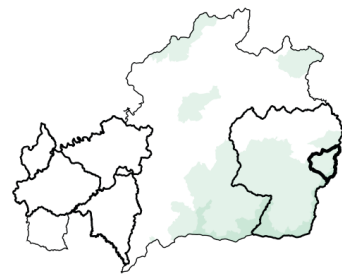
In addition to sharing these important natural areas, the five municipalities involved also share the similarity of having trekking routes of varying lengths and difficulties, totaling 67 trekking routes. On these trekking routes, which pass through villages, UNESCO geoparks, biosphere reserves, and protected natural areas, various types of infrastructure can be found to meet the needs of the visitors. These types can be categorized in: crossing, climbing, sightseeing, resting, and bathing.

-  Urban fabric
-  Main roads
-  Railways
-  Water bodies
-  Trekking routes
-  Ecological Corridors
-  Biosphere Reserves
  - Meseta Iberica*
  - Tejo-Tajo*
-  Unesco Geoparks
  - Naturtejo da Meseta Meridional*
  - Estrela*
-  National Protected Areas
  - Protected regional landscapes*
  - Natural parks*
  - Natural reserves*

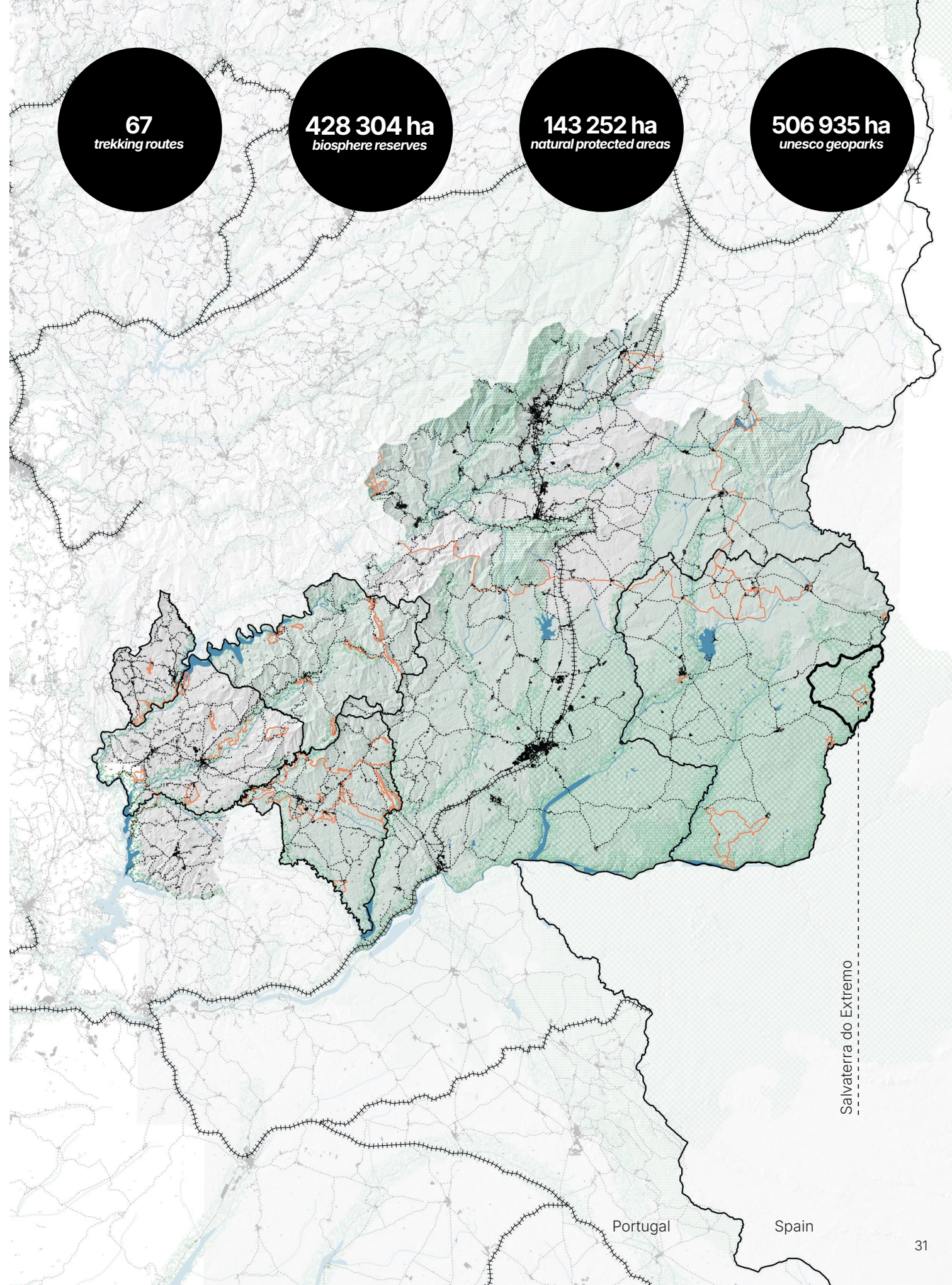
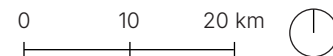
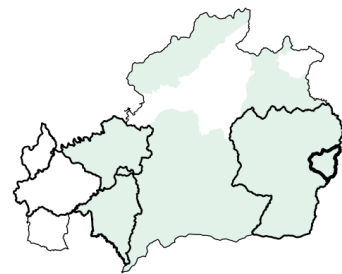
Trekking routes

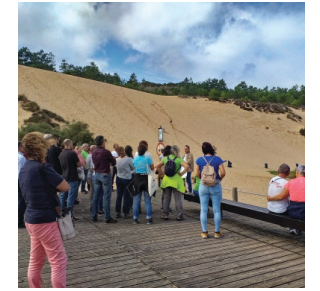
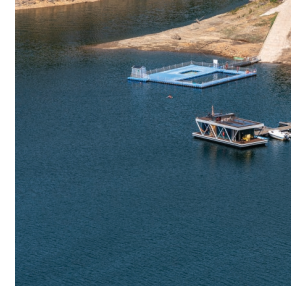
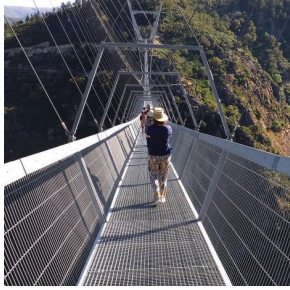
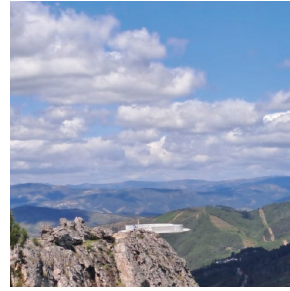


Biosphere reserves and National protected areas



Unesco Geoparks





**Cross**

**Climb**

**See**

**Bath**

**Stop**

Source: Naturtejo Geopark

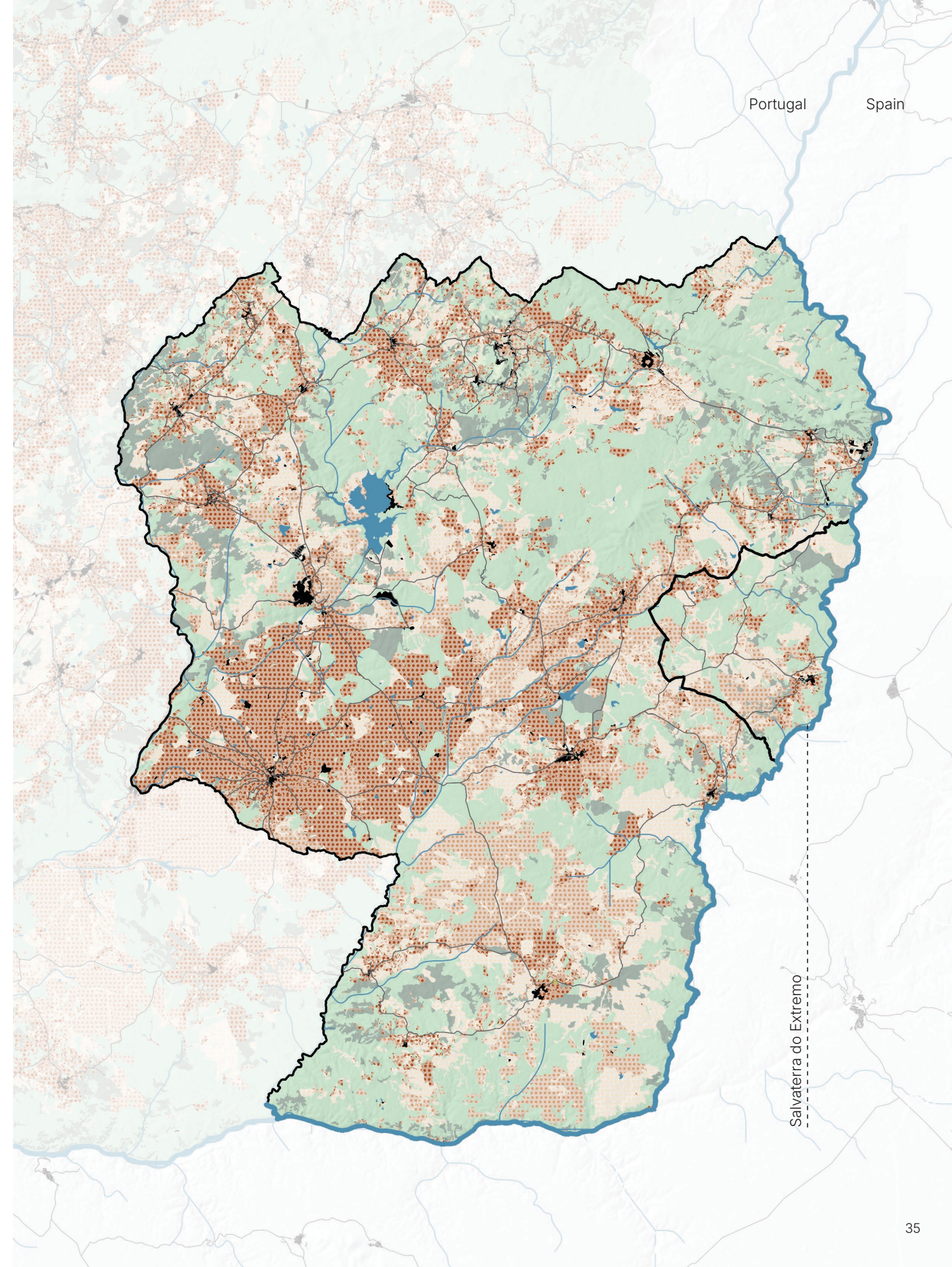
# Idanha-a-Nova (M)

## Land Uses

A land use analysis was carried out on the M scale for the municipality of Idanha-a-Nova. The presence of gray infrastructure is even lower compared to the other four municipalities on the Castelo Branco scale, also because it is the municipality with the lowest population density.

The presence of agriculture, agroforestry, and grasslands is very significant, almost equal to the proportion of green infrastructure, which includes forests, sparse vegetation, and shrub areas. The presence of blue infrastructure is significant, mainly due to the imposing presence of the Tagus River, which completely delimits the eastern part of the municipality, serving as a physical boundary with the Spanish border.

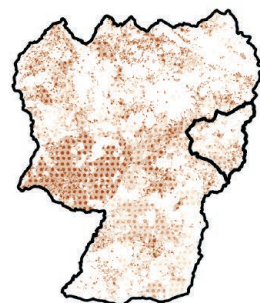
-  Artificialized territories
-  Cannals and rivers
-  Wetlands
-  Forests
-  Sparsely vegetation
-  Bushes
-  Agriculture
-  Agroforestry
-  Grasslands



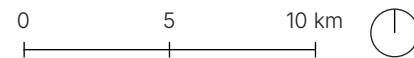
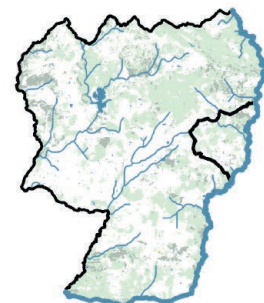
Gray infrastructure



Agriculture



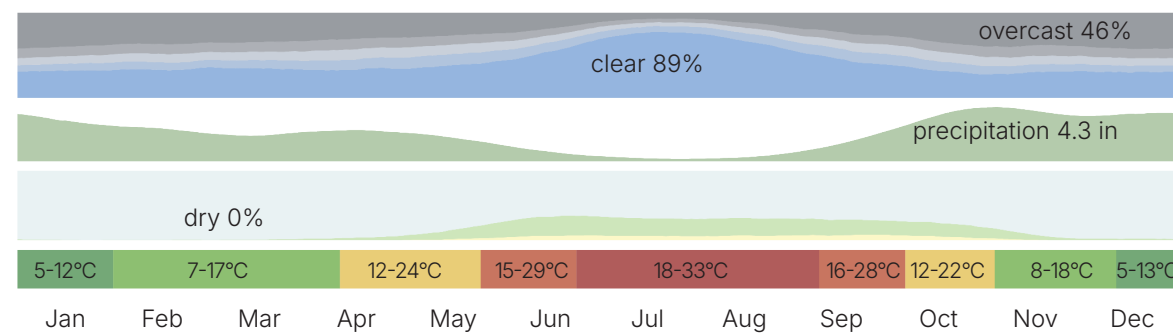
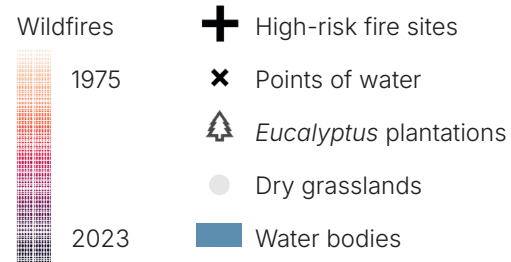
Green/blue infrastructure



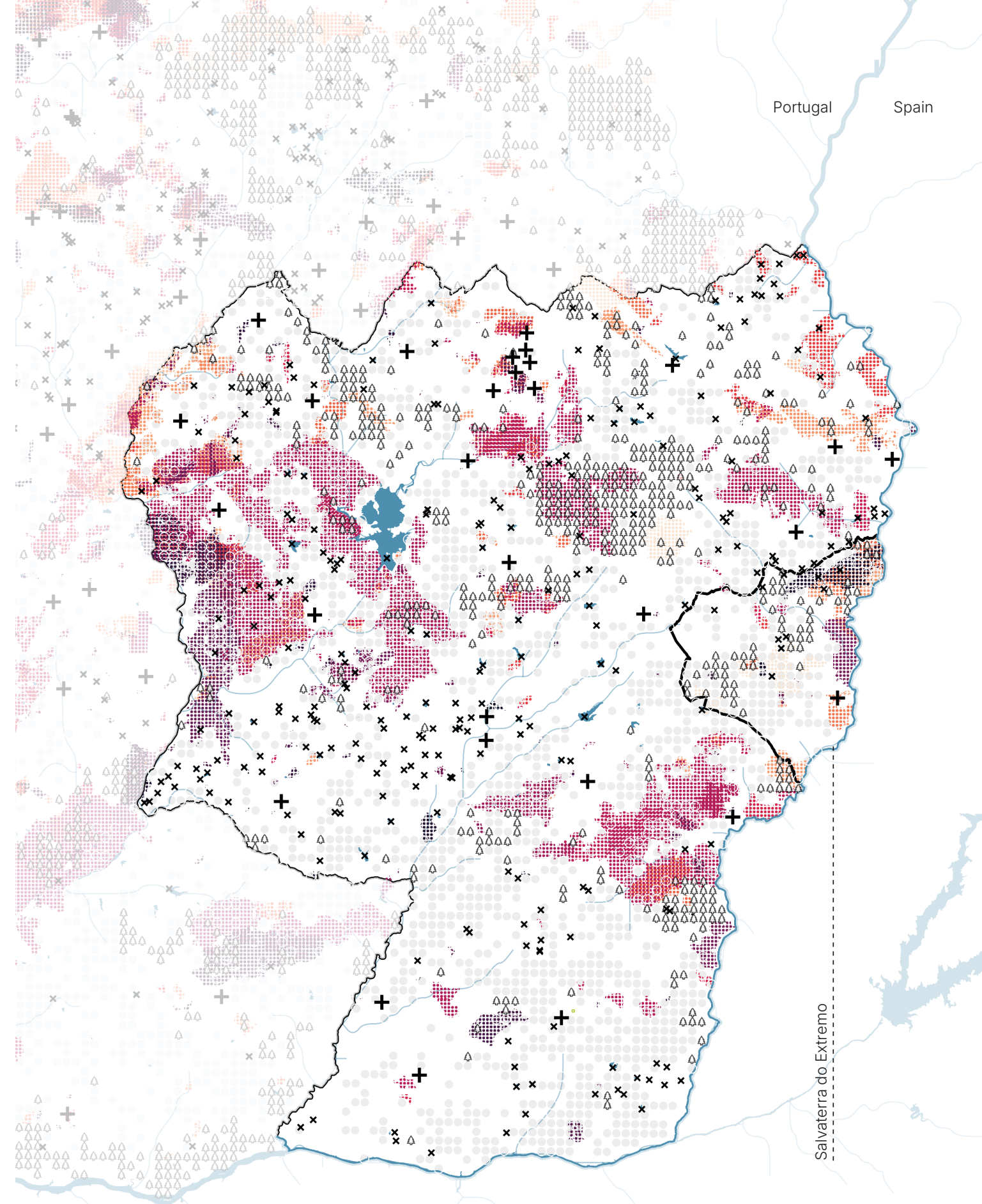
# Idanha-a-Nova (M)

## Climatic Conditions and Risks

Idanha-a-Nova has a Mediterranean climate with long, dry, hot summers, making it particularly vulnerable to forest fires. This situation is exacerbated by the abundance of eucalyptus trees, a highly flammable species that has been widely planted in the region due to its rapid growth and economic value. However, these trees contribute to the rapid spread of fire during the dry season, posing a serious environmental risk and making it difficult to control forest fires.



Source: Weather Spark








# Idanha-a-Nova (M)

## Nature Conservation

The municipality of Idanha-a-Nova is made up of 17 "freguesias" where the connectivity is limited because of the lack of public transportation. One of the most significant features of this municipality is its important environmental value. Its entire territory is included within recognized conservation frameworks, such as UNESCO geoparks, biosphere reserves, and protected natural areas. This coexistence of protected areas reflects the ecological richness of the territory, as well as its potential in terms of conservation, nature tourism, and sustainable development.


Despite this cross-border proximity, the physical connection with the neighboring country is limited, as there are only three crossing points via bridges, one of which is located in the parish of Salvaterra do Extremo.

-  Artificialized territories
-  Main roads
-  Water bodies
-  Trekking routes
-  Connections with Spain



### Biosphere Reserves

-  Tejo Tajo

### Unesco Geoparks

-  Naturtejo da Meseta Meridional

### National Network of Protected Areas

-  Natural Park
-  Natural Reserve



### Portugal

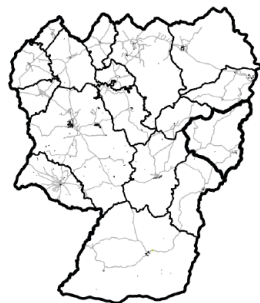
- 1 Salvaterra do Extremo
- 2 Monfortinho
- 3 Segura
- 4 Zebreira
- 5 Rosmaninhal
- 6 Toulões
- 7 Monsanto
- 8 Penha Garcia
- 9 Ladoeiro
- 10 Alcafozes
- 11 Idanha-A-Nova
- 12 Idanha-A-Velha
- 13 Sao Miguel de Acha
- 14 Oledo
- 15 Aldeia De Santa Margarida
- 16 Proenca-A-Velha
- 17 Medelim

### Spain





- A Zarza La Mayor
- B Piedras Albas
- C Alcántara

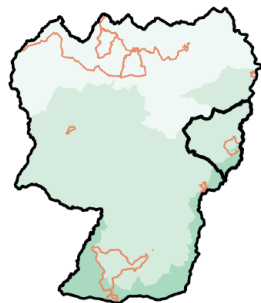
### Administrative limits and connections

-  17 Freguesias
-  Main roads



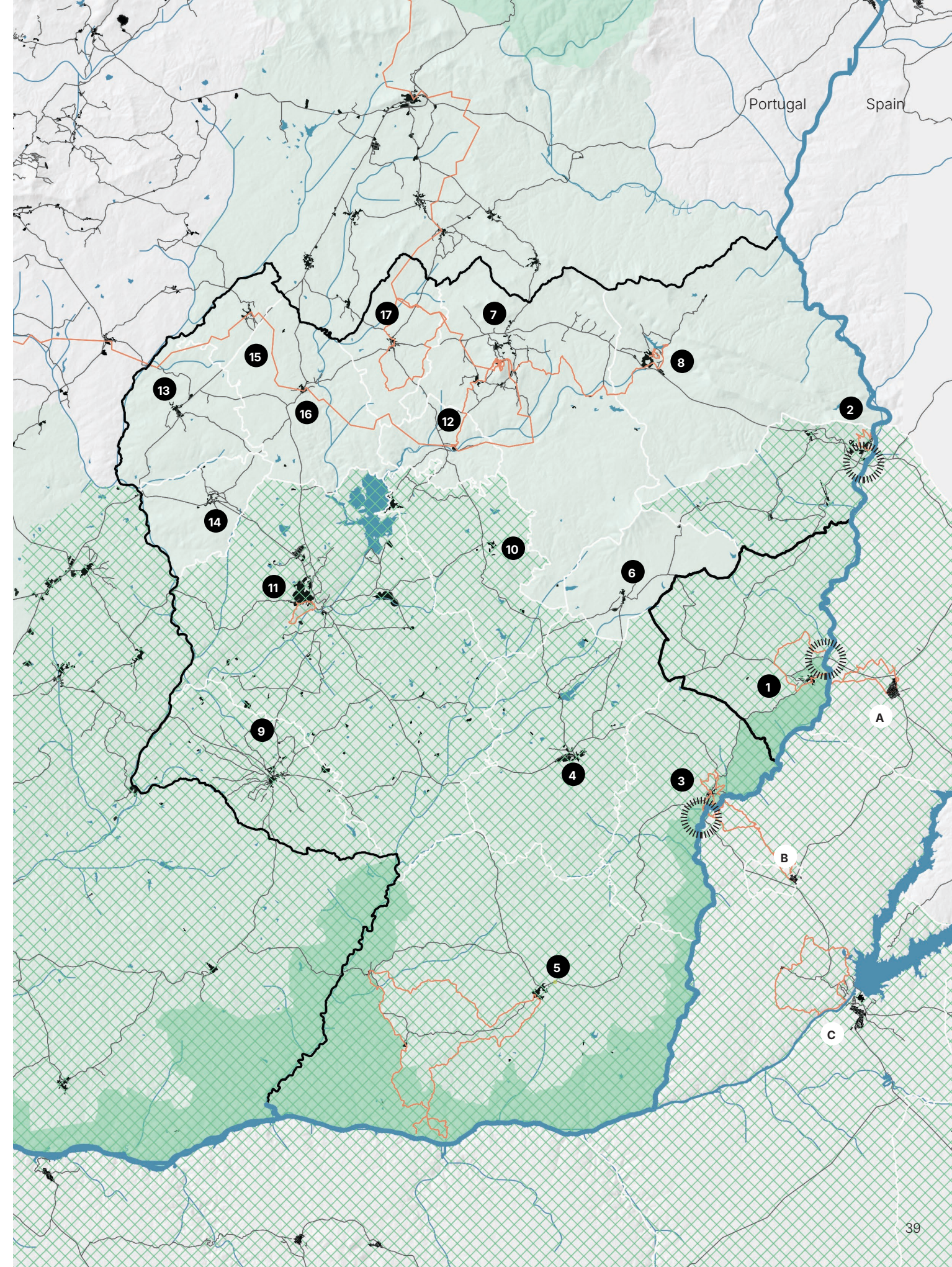
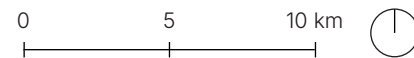
### Nature conservation

-  Unesco Geopark
-  Biosphere reserves
-  National Protected areas
-  Trekking routes



### Natural border

*Erges river and canyon as a natural physical border between Portugal and Spain with 3 points of connections.*



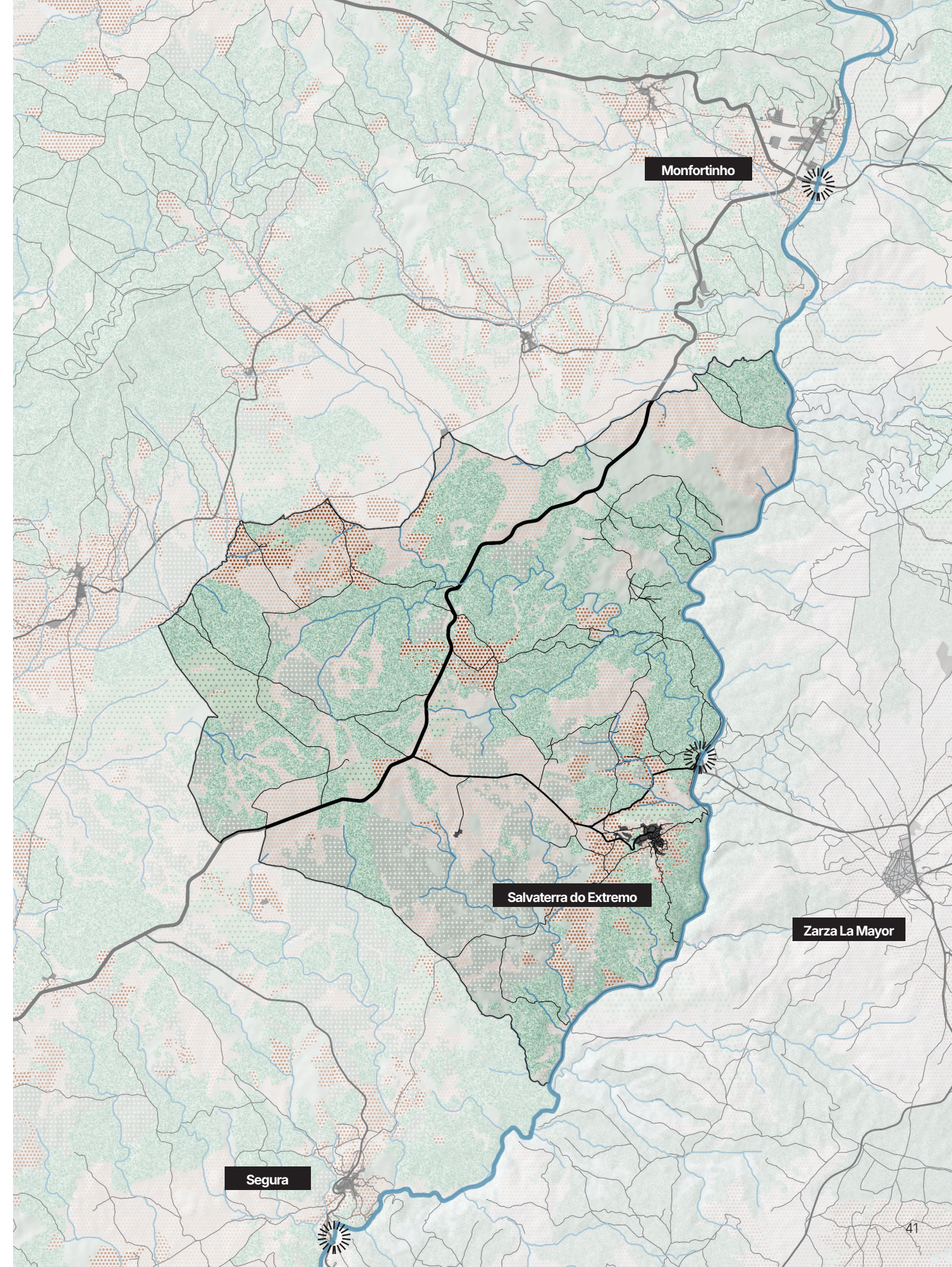
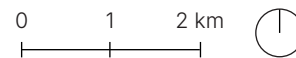
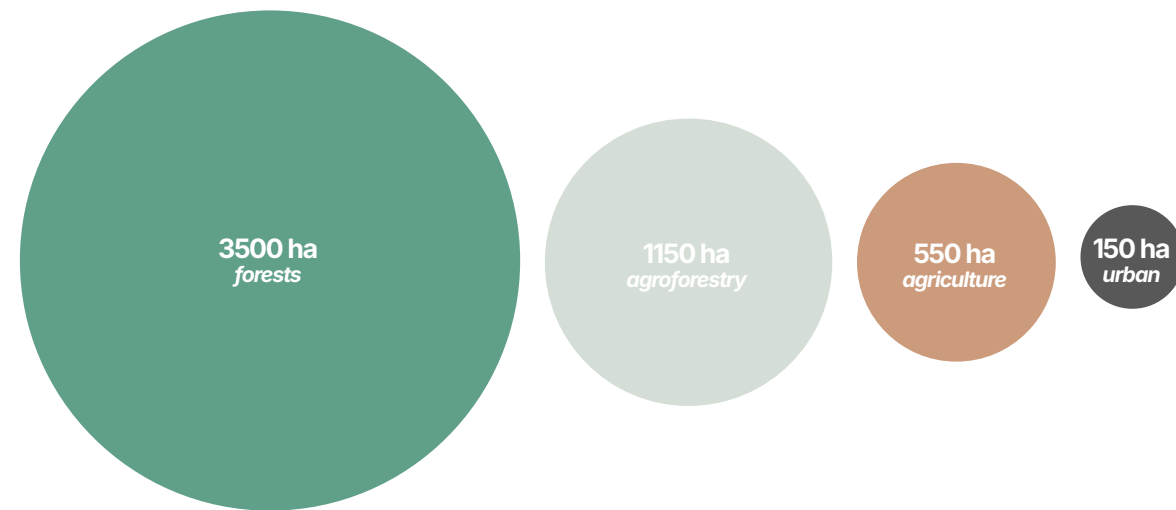
# Salvaterra do Extremo (S)

## Land Uses

Salvaterra do Extremo has diverse land uses, but forests occupy a significant area of the territory, covering 3,500 hectares, compared to 1,150 hectares of agroforestry, 550 hectares of agricultural fields, and only 150 hectares of gray infrastructure.

The agricultural fields in this area are dominated by olive groves, temporarily irrigated crops, orchards, improved pastures, complex mosaics, and spontaneous pastures, while agroforestry is characterized by the presence of cork oak and holm oak.

- Gray Infrastructure**
  - Urban fabric
  - Main roads
  - Secondary roads
  - Minor roads
  - Bridges
- Blue Infrastructure**
  - Erges River
  - Cannals
- Green Infrastructure**
  - Forests
  - Bushes
  - Bare rock
  - Sparse vegetation
- Agroforestry**
  - Cork Oak
  - Holm Oak
- Agriculture**
  - Temporary irrigated crops
  - Orchards
  - Olive groves
  - Improved pastures associated with olive groves
  - Complex mosaics
  - Agriculture with natural spaces
  - Improved pastures
  - Spontaneous pastures



# Salvaterra do Extremo (S)

## Nature Conservation

As part of the 3,500 hectares of forest, there are seven main species, including forests of cork oak, holm oak, other oaks, eucalyptus, other hardwood forests, and stone pines, as well as areas of scrub and sparse vegetation. This green system is complemented by the blue infrastructure of the Erjas River and the canal system. This area of analysis is also notable for its low human presence compared to the rich animal life, where there are 6 types of bats, 13 types of birds, and more than 28 types of reptiles and amphibians.

Another noteworthy feature of the Salvaterra do Extremo area is the presence of the vulture trail, a trekking route that runs through forests and farmland as well as the city center.



### Gray Infrastructure

-  Urban fabric
-  Main roads
-  Secondary roads
-  Bridges

### Blue Infrastructure

-  Erjas River
-  Cannals and Ponds










### National Protected Areas

-  Natural Park Tejo
-  International

### Trekking routes

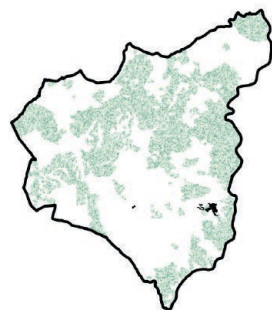
-  1 Erges Route
-  2 Vulture Route
-  3 Penafiel Castle
-  4 Mining Route

### Green Infrastructure

-  Cork Oak
-  Holm Oak
-  Other Oaks
-  Eucalyptus
-  Other Hardwood
-  Pinus Pinaster
-  Stone Pine
-  Bushes
-  Sparse vegetation

### Forests

7 species of forests



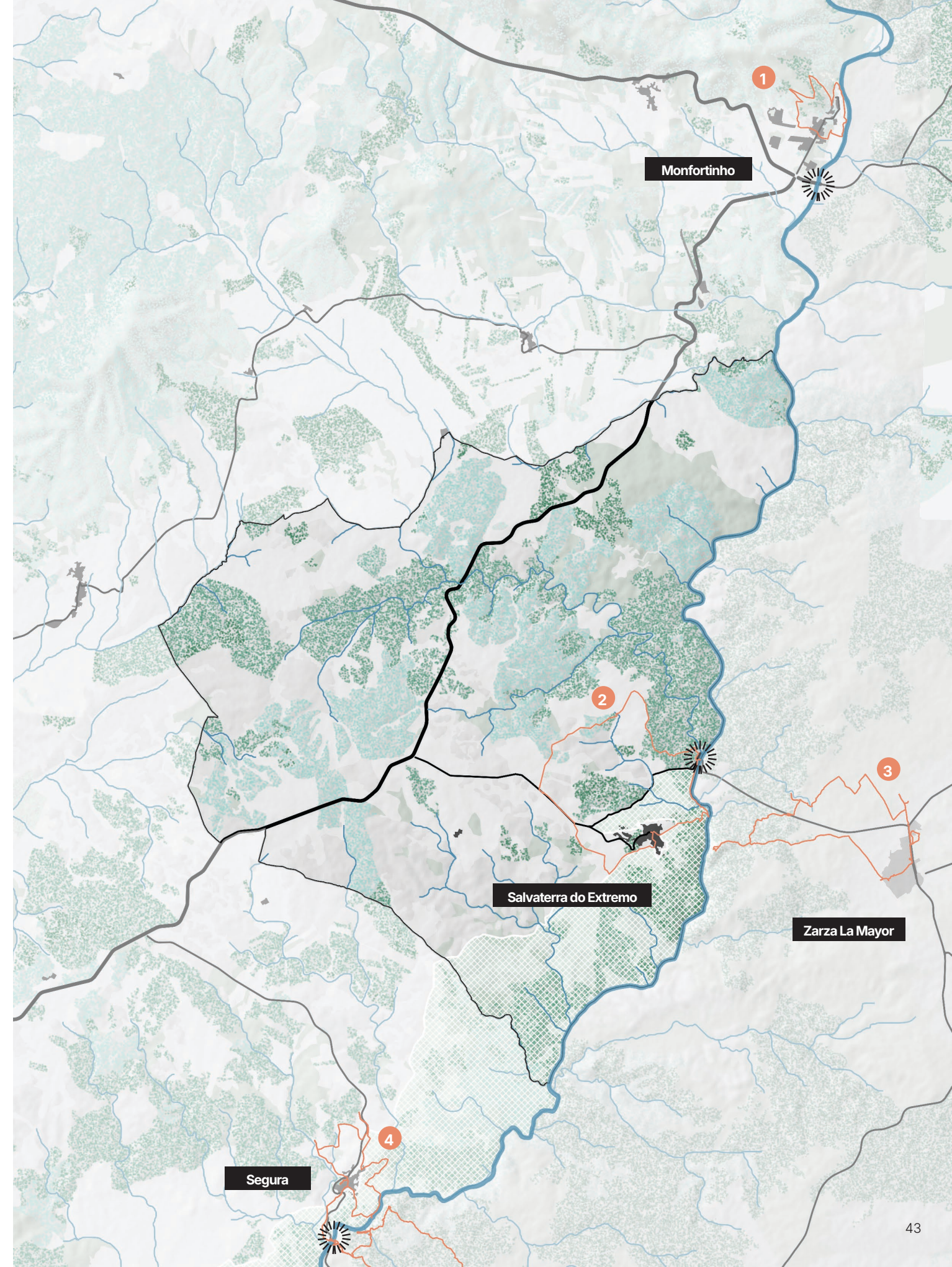
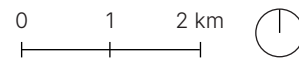
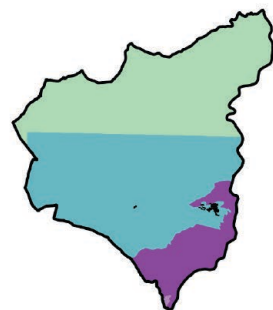
### Blue Infrastructure

Erges River and Cannals system



### Human vs Animals

Humans, 6 types of bats, 13 types of birds, 28 types of reptiles and amphibians



# The Vulture Route (XS)

## Land Uses

The Vulture Route, which is 10.5 kilometers long, starts in the city center and forms a circular route that ends at the same point where it began. Along the way, it passes through a wide variety of landscapes. The trail crosses forests of cork oaks, holm oaks, eucalyptus, and stone pines. The presence of eucalyptus is particularly notable, although it represents a weakness in the environment due to its high flammability.

The route also stands out for its diversity of Mediterranean flora, where it is possible to find species such as *Pistacia lentiscus*, *Calluna vulgaris*, *Cistus albidus*, *Salvia rosmarinus*, *Lavandula stoechas*, and *Arbutus unedo*, among many others.



### Gray

#### Infrastructure



-  Urban fabric
-  Main roads
-  Minor roads
-  PR 1 IDH Rota dos Abutres

### Blue





#### Infrastructure

-  Erges River
-  Ponds
-  Cannals

### Agroforestry

-  Cork Oak
-  Holm Oak

### Agriculture

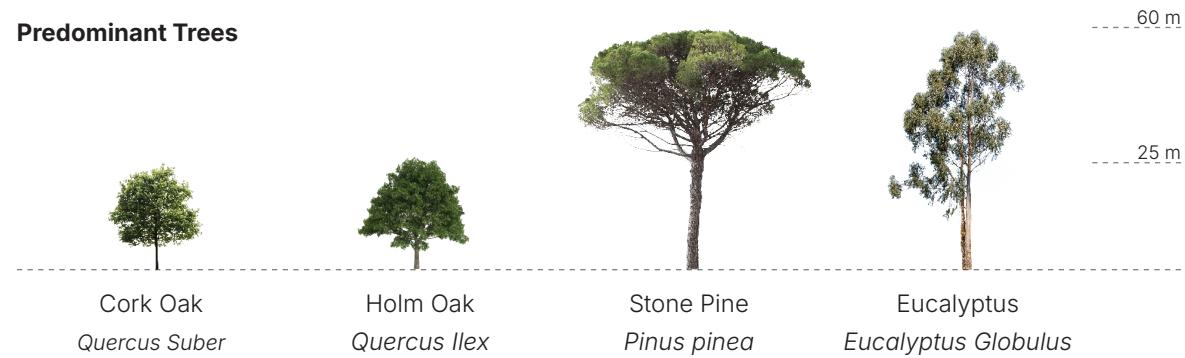
-  Temporary irrigated crops
-  Olive groves
-  Grasslands
-  Spontaneous pastures

### Green

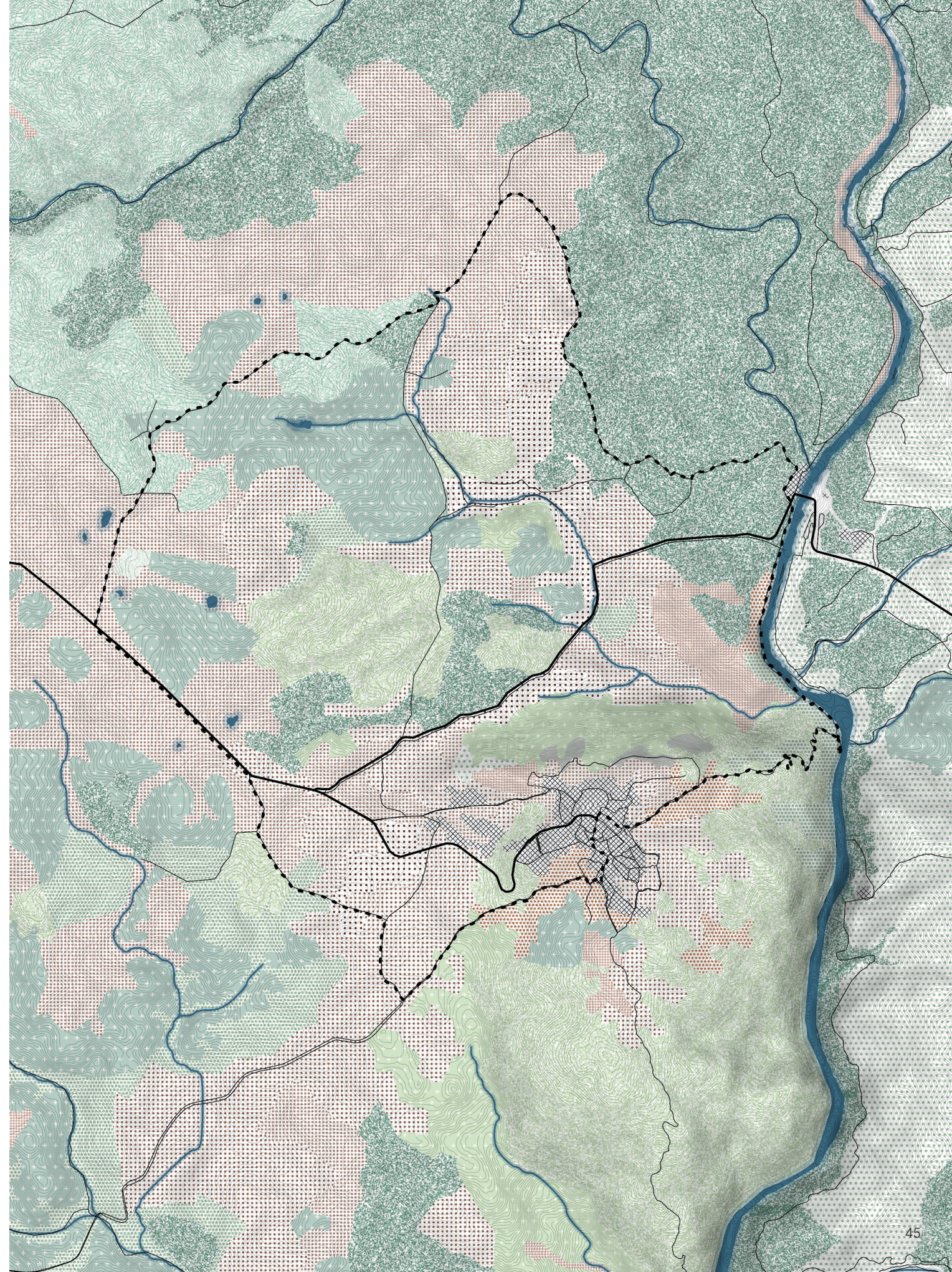
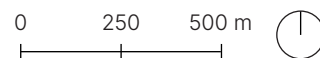
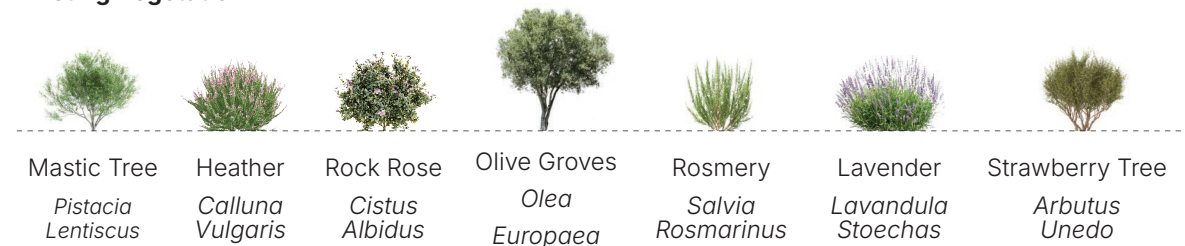
#### Infrastructure

-  Cork Oak Forests
-  Holm Oak Forests
-  Eucalyptus Forests
-  Stone Pine Forests
-  Bushes
-  Sparse vegetation

## Predominant Trees



## Existing Vegetation



# The Vulture Route (XS)

## Wildlife

The Tagus International Natural Park is notable for its rich bird community, many of which depend on the steep riverbanks for nesting. Among them, the black stork stands out, an emblematic species of the park, which has its largest population in Portugal here. Threatened birds of prey such as the Egyptian vulture, Bonelli's eagle, golden eagle, and black vulture also inhabit the area.

In the flat areas near the river valleys, you can find the Iberian imperial eagle, an endemic species in critical danger of extinction, which is key to European conservation. This protected area is also home to the only breeding grounds in Portugal for equally endangered species such as the black wheatear, the roller, and the black-bellied sandgrouse.

The riverbanks have well-preserved vegetation which, together with the rocky outcrops and the geomorphology of the valley, provides essential habitats for wildlife. The flat areas are home to montados and scrubland of high ecological value, representing key stages in the succession of holm oak and cork oak forests. As a whole, the Tagus International is a biodiversity refuge that is home to a wide variety of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and plants.



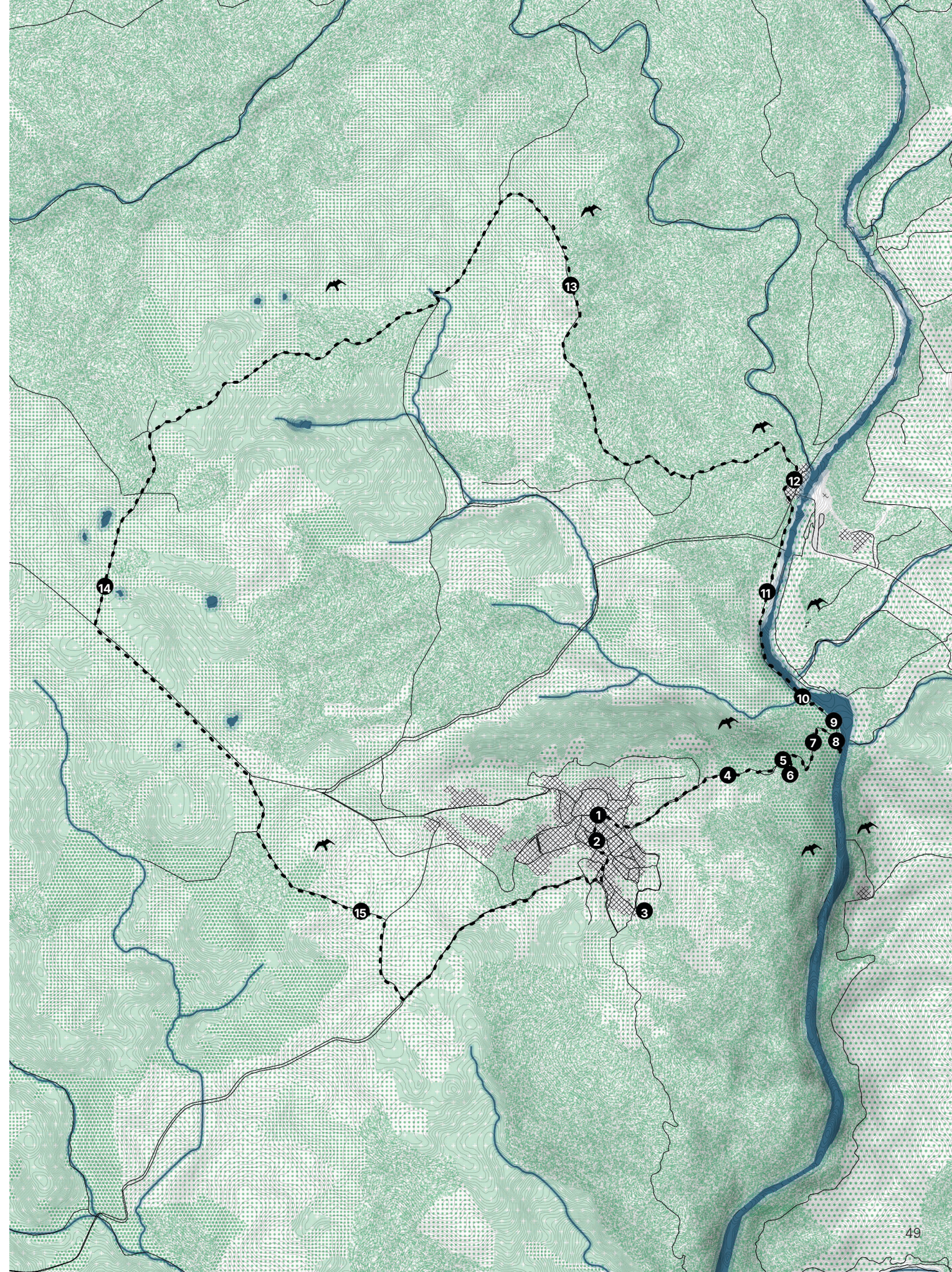
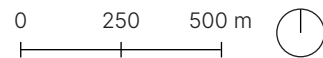
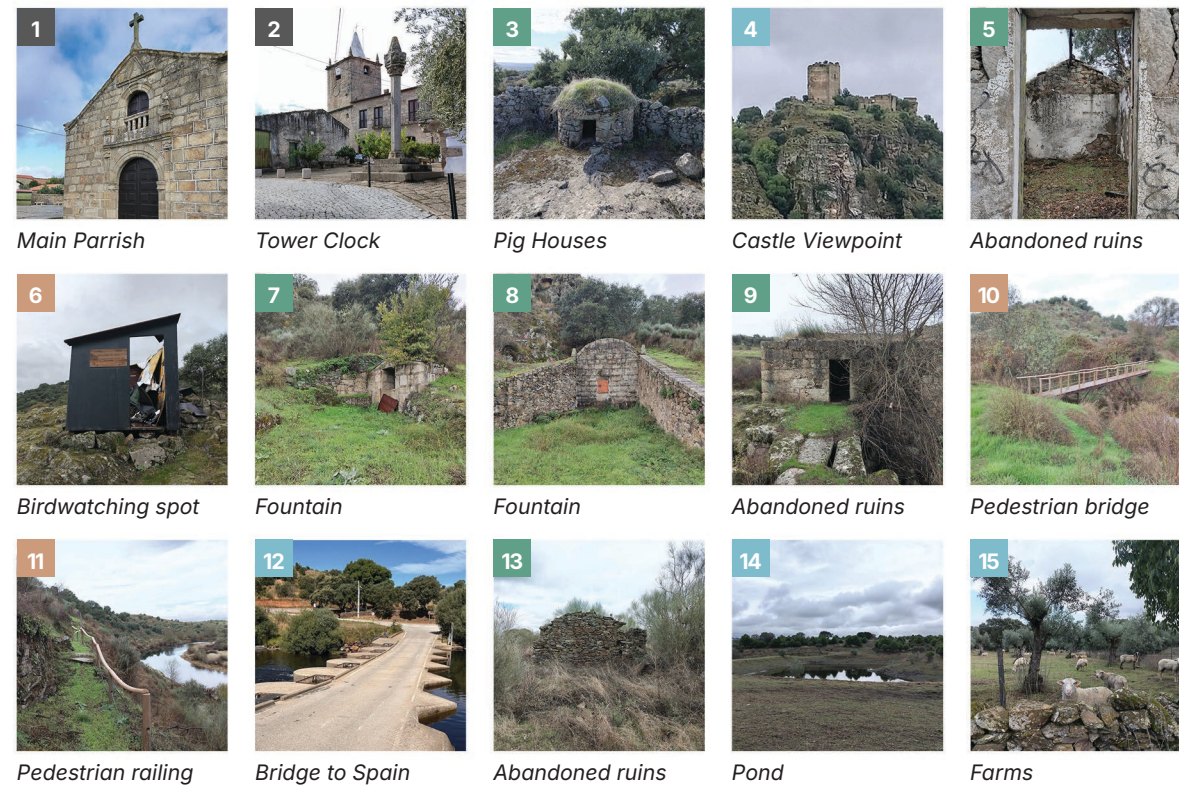
# The Vulture Route (XS)

## Landmarks

The 10.5 kilometers and 3 hours long trail begins in the city center, heading toward the path there is a bird observatory with a clear view of the Penafiel Castle located just across the border in Spain's Extremadura region, where a significant colony of griffon vultures nests and resides. The trail continues to Fonte da Ribeira, near the Erges River, where some remnants of old water mills can be seen, the river's narrow banks forming rapids, and two ancient fountains. Following a path north along the river, the trail meets a paved road. Following the trail, an ancient road flanked by stone walls is found, followed by "Quelha de Segura," a stone-paved road that runs for about 1.5 kilometers toward Salvaterra.

- PR 1 IDH Rota dos Abutres**
- Landmarks
- 🦅 Bird watching areas
- Gyps fulvus*
- Aegypius monachus*
- Neophron percnopterus*
- Hieraetus fasciatus*
- Circaetus gallicus*
- Ciconia nigra*
- Alcedo atthis*
- Urban fabric
- Main roads
- Minor roads
- Water bodies
- Agroforestry
- Forests
- Bushes
- Sparse vegetation
- Grassland
- Agriculture

**Categories** City Center Viewpoints  
 Turistic Infrastructure Ruins



# The Vulture Route (XS)

## Landmarks: City Center

1. 2. Main Parrish of Salvaterra do Extremo
2. Tower Clock, Square of "Pelourinho"



# The Vulture Route (XS)

## Landmarks: Touristic Infrastructure

1. Birdwatching Hut. Current State is destroyed
2. Pedestrian Bridge to cross a small cannal
3. Pedestrian rails for protection due to the height difference



# The Vulture Route (XS)

## Landmarks: Ruins

1. Remains of the walls of a house
2. Ruins of a water mill, Erges River - Outside
3. Ruins of a water mill, Erges River - Inside
4. Remains of a Fountain
5. Remains of the Fountain "Ribeira"
6. Abandoned ruins
7. "Pocilga", house for the pigs



# The Vulture Route (XS)

## Landmarks: Viewpoints

1. Sheep Farms along the path
2. Pond in a private area
3. Viewpoint of Peñafiel Castle along the path





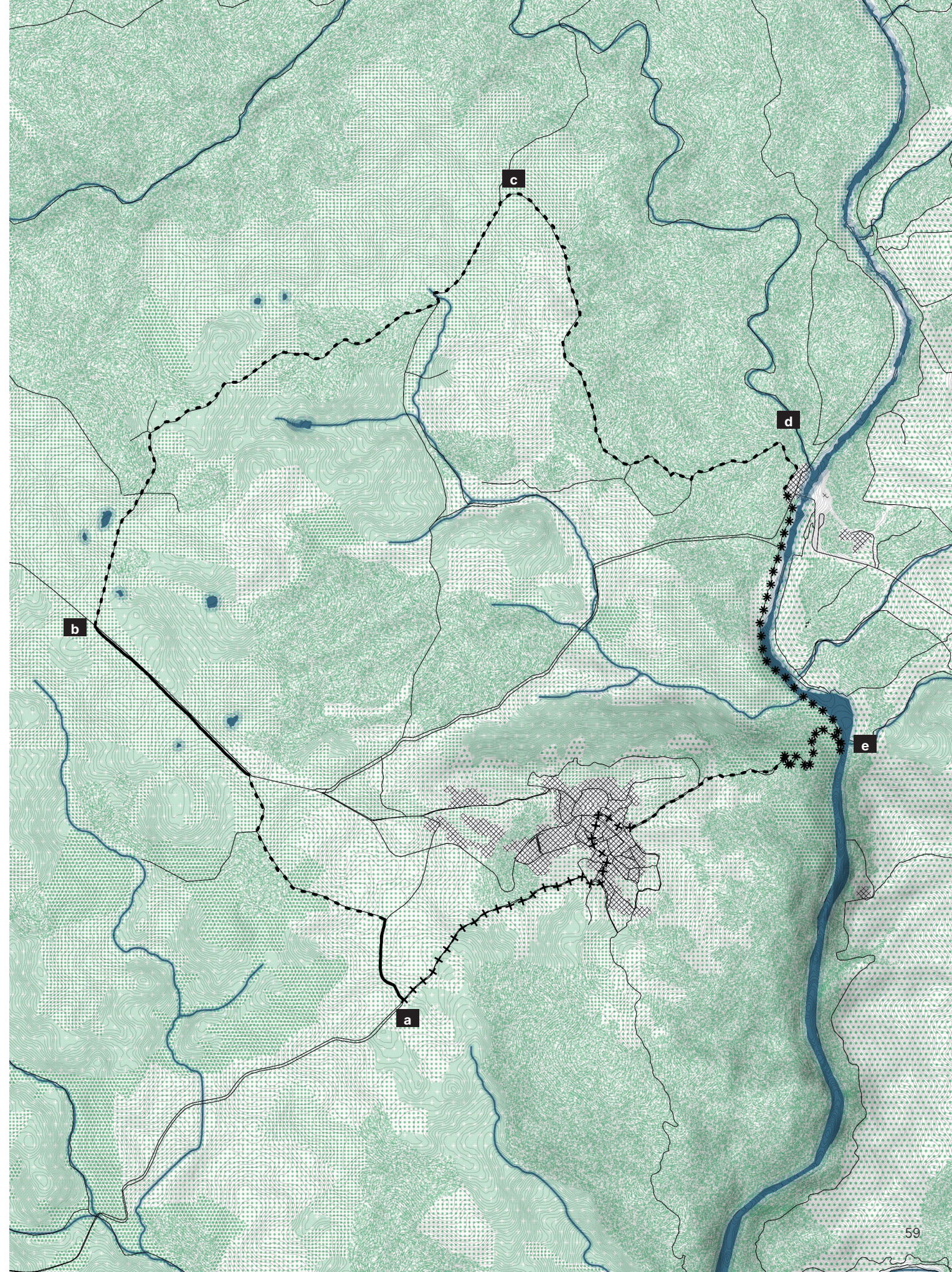
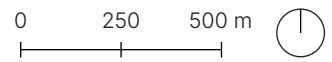
# The Vulture Route (XS)

## Types of Paths

The route is rated as "intermediate" in difficulty and consists of four different types of terrain, with soiled surfaces being the most common. The steepest section, with inclines reaching up to 12%, occurs between points A and B, presenting a challenge for hikers.

A significant portion of the trail follows a paved road, shared with occasional vehicle traffic, though it is typically quiet. Several kilometers offer little to no shade or rest areas, which may make this part of the hike feel monotonous.

-  Urban fabric
-  Roads
-  Water bodies
-  Agroforestry
-  Agriculture
-  Forests
-  Bushes
-  Sparse vegetation
-  Grassland



# The Vulture Route (XS)

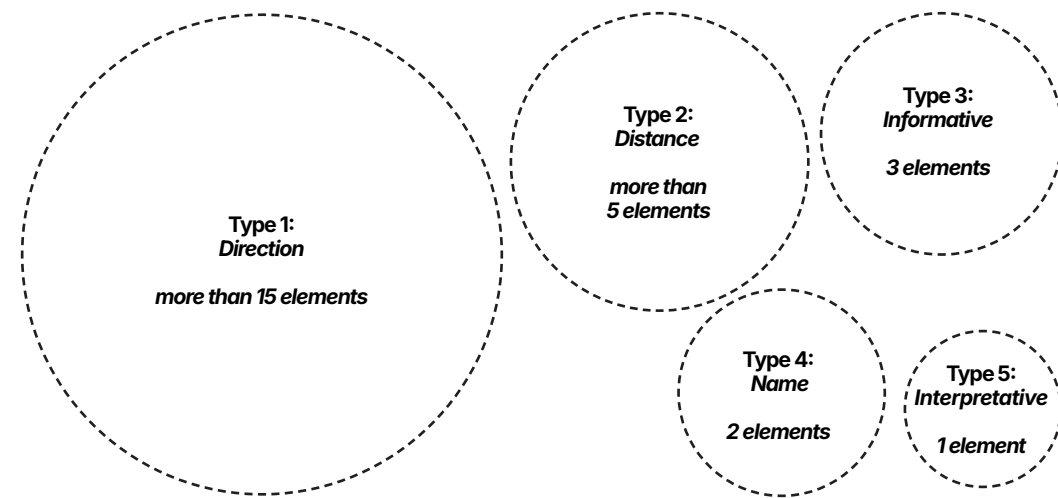
## Types of Paths

1. Walking through meadows
2. Soiled path
3. Asphalt road shared with cars
4. Cobblestone path taken over by nature



# The Vulture Route (XS)

## Trail Signages



Type 1: Direction

Right way  
=

Wrong way  
×

To the left  
⌋

To the right  
⌋



Type 2: Distance Markers



Type 3: Informative Totem



Type 4: Name of Area or Site



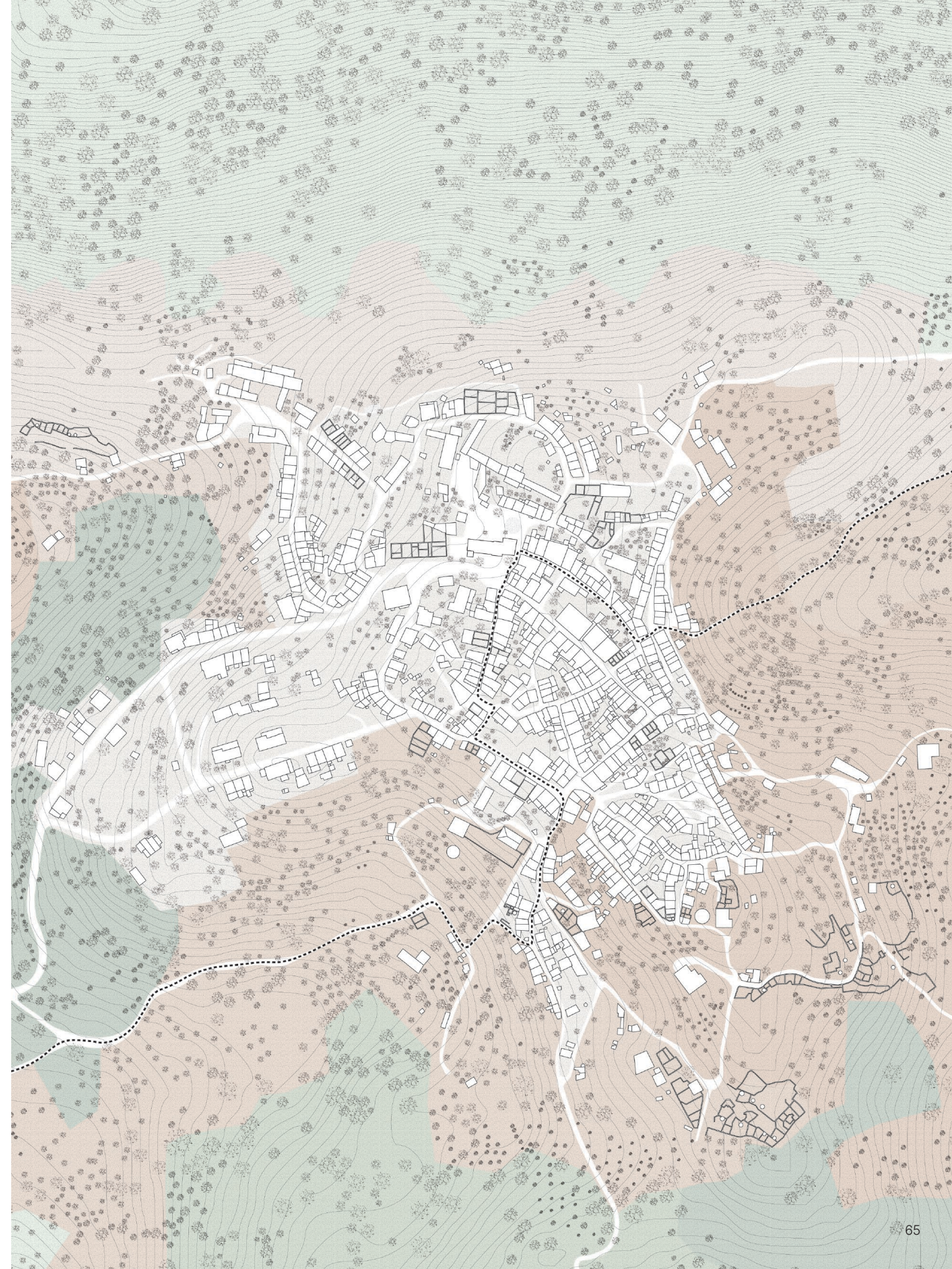
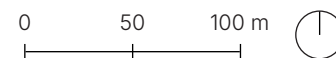
Type 5: Interpretive Panel



# The Center (XXS)

## Green Infrastructure

In the vicinity of the center of Salvaterra do Extremo, the main green areas are olive groves. There are also significant areas of forest and agroforestry, such as cork oak and holm oak, while dry areas can also be seen.

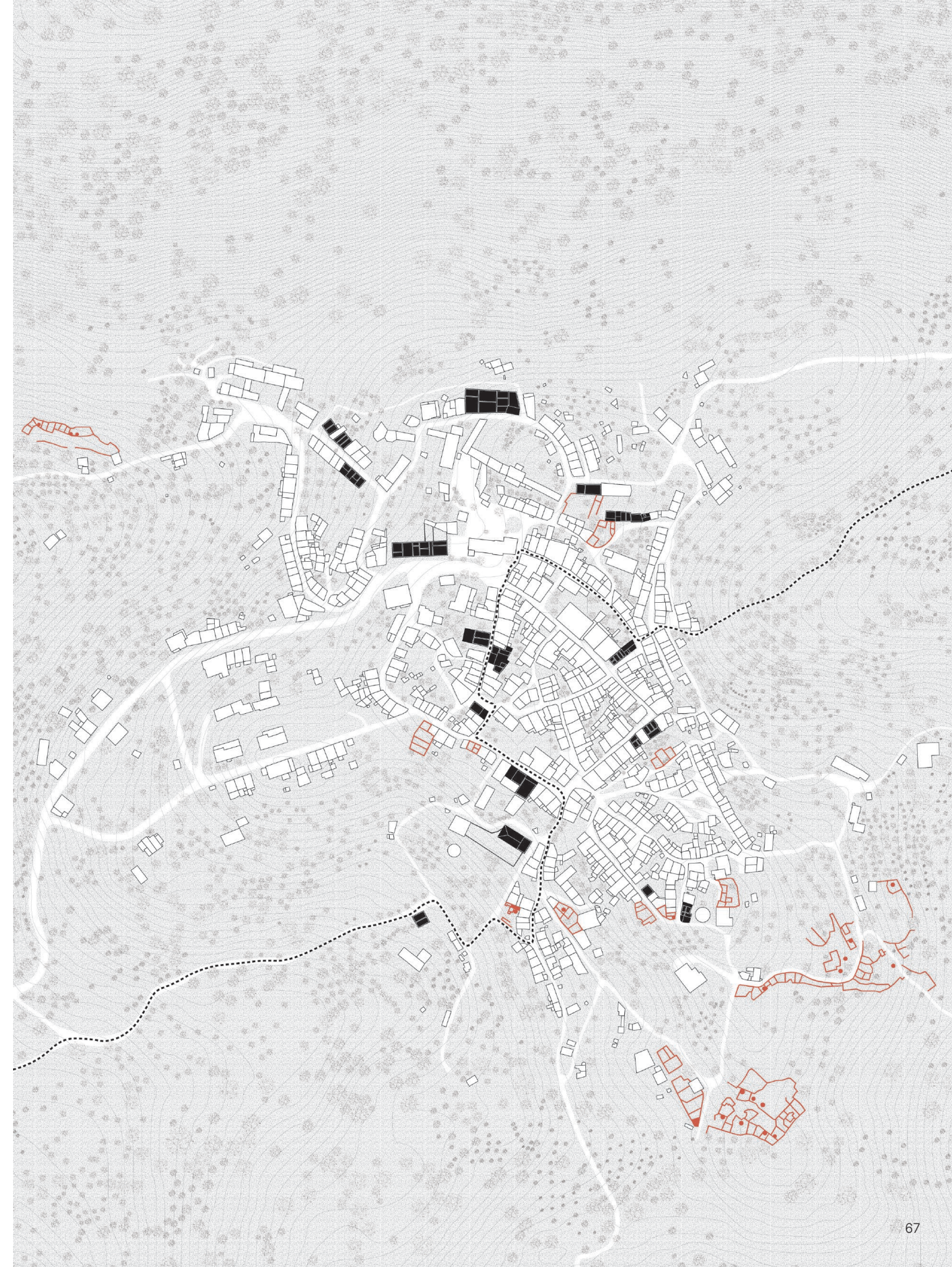
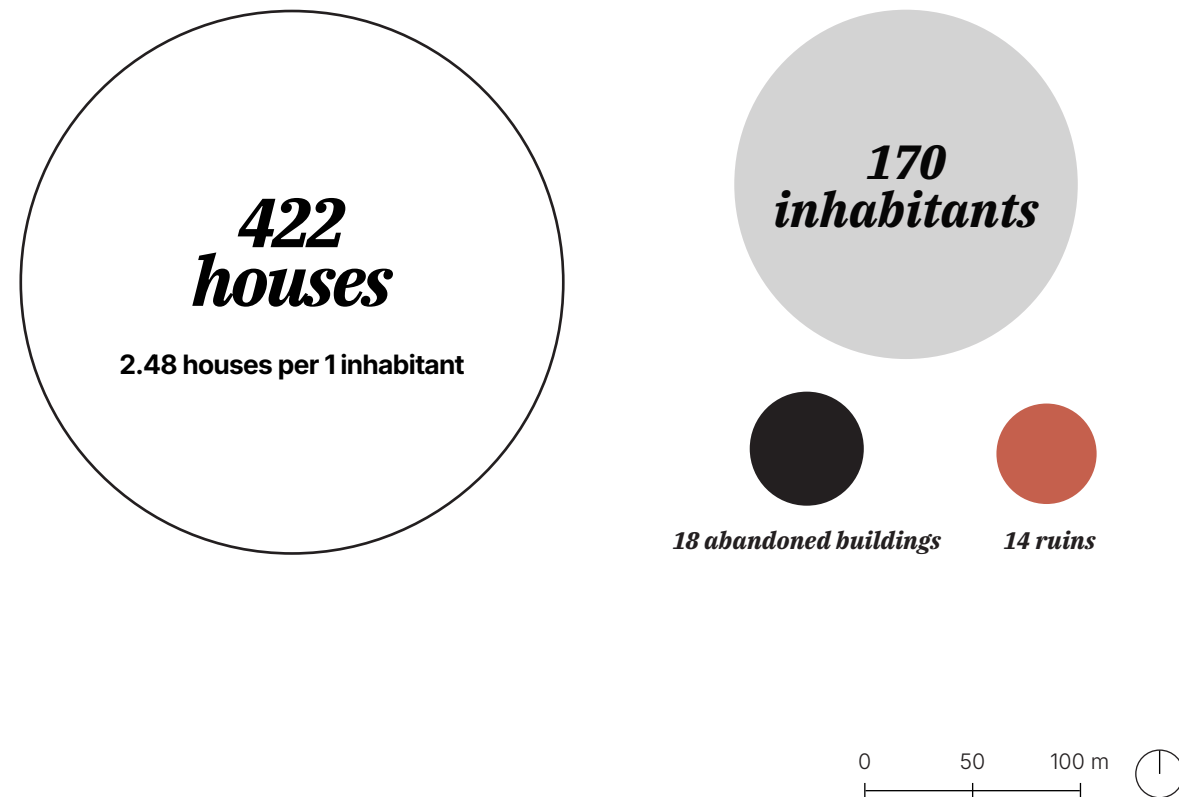


# The Center (XXS)

## Ruins and Abandonment

Salvaterra do Extremo, with a population of just 170 inhabitants and a total of 422 dwellings, has a ratio of 2.48 dwellings per resident. This disproportion highlights the phenomenon of progressive depopulation and residential abandonment.

At least 18 abandoned but structurally recoverable buildings were identified, with the potential to be rehabilitated. In addition, there are 14 ruins in an advanced state of deterioration, with no use whatsoever. These unoccupied infrastructures reflect the significant loss of dynamism in the urban center of Salvaterra do Extremo.





**Ruins**

**Abandoned**





# The Center (XXS)

## Landmarks and Public Spaces

The center of Salvaterra do Extremo is home to several important landmarks, including the main parish church, the Chapel of Mercy, and the Clock Tower, all within a 1-kilometer radius.

Two distinct squares define the area. Behind the main parish, there is a larger square designed for public gatherings during special celebrations. This space features an open-air grill, public restrooms, and a stage. In contrast, the smaller square in front of the Clock Tower has a more historical character and is home to Salvaterra do Extremo's pelourinho (pillory), symbolizing its rich heritage.



1. Main Parish



2. Chapel



3. Unoccupied school



4. Clock tower



5a. Open air grill



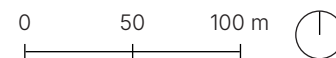
5b. Public toilets



5c. Stand



5d. Playground



Underused main square



RUA  
IO FERREIRA  
IZ TRINDADE  
O CIRURGIÃO  
8 16 1821  
5 2 1890



Civic square with Pelourinho

# The Center (XXS)

## Salva a Terra: Ecofestival The city as an Ephemeral Stage

The Salva a Terra event is a free festival held once a year with the aim of raising awareness about ecology, biodiversity, and sustainability. It combines cultural and environmental activities with concerts, dances, workshops, nature activities, and more. During these days, temporary stages appear in various parts of the city, and it is an important moment to highlight how this city has great potential and can come back to life with human presence.

Pictures: Salva a Terra EcoFestival 2024



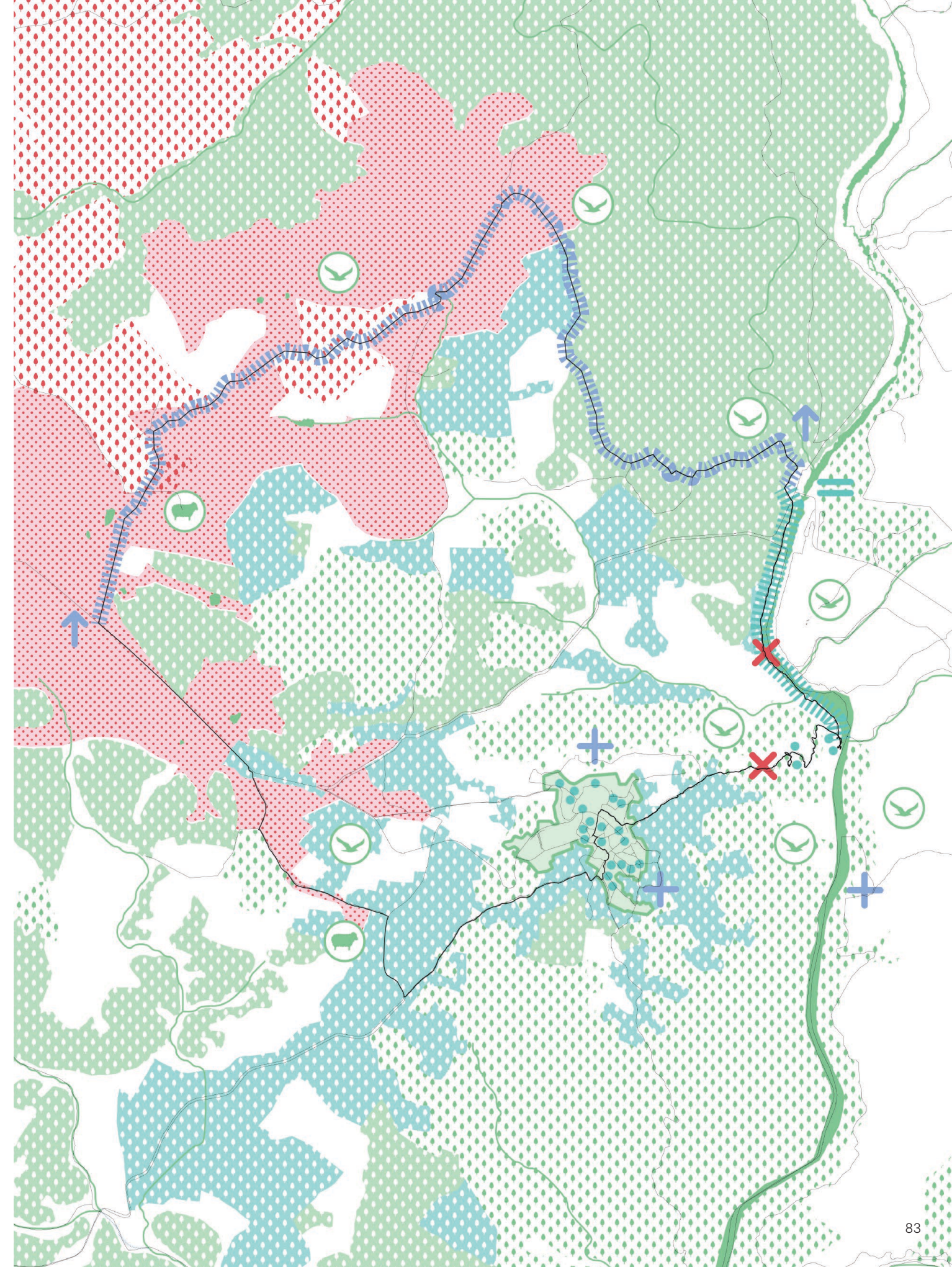
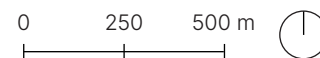
# Diagnosis

## The Vulture Route (XS)

After conducting the territorial analysis as well as the field visit walking along the trekking trail and the city center, a territorial SWOT analysis was performed with the aim of developing an informed, multi-scale proposal.

Many strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were found not only along the route, but also within the city center and the rest of the territory.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Presence of wildlife	Monotonous path	Path near the river	Hard access
Presence of farm animals	Landmarks outside trail	Unoccupied ruins	Shared road with cars
Connection with city center	Hard orientation	Olive groves	Deforested and dry areas
Water bodies		Connection with Spain	Eucalyptus forests
Holm Oak Forests			
Cork Oak Forests			



# Concept and Vision

## ***Salvaterra do Extremo is dying.***

The marked loss of population, the abandonment of homes, and the decline in socioeconomic activity are evidence of a process of decline that threatens the disappearance of this historic village.

The concept of the project is based on a basic but fundamental premise: to prevent the imminent disappearance of Salvaterra do Extremo, not through invasive and unjustified expansion, but through a recovery strategy that is sensitive to the context and, above all, respectful of its valuable natural environment.

The concept focus on the strengths and opportunities, its architectural heritage, its strategic location within the UNESCO Geopark, its presence in the Tagus International Natural Park, and its unique biodiversity, as axes for regeneration. At the same time, it proposes to reformulate weaknesses and threats as challenges that can be transformed into opportunities.

The main goal is the rebirth of Salvaterra do Extremo as a sustainable community, where recovery is based on taking advantage of the wide availability of abandoned buildings. Instead of building more, the proposal is to revive what already exists, rehabilitating homes, activating public spaces, and creating conditions for community life connected to nature.

This vision for Salvaterra do Extremo in 2050 is based on a key principle: living in harmony with the surrounding ecosystem. Repopulation should not put pressure on the environment, but rather integrate into it, respecting both the current human inhabitants and the animal and plant species that are part of this place.

The aim is to create a model of human occupation that is compatible with conservation, where rural life, heritage, biodiversity, and sustainable innovation can coexist in balance.

## ***Salvaterra do Extremo is being reborn.***

# ***Salvaterra do Extremo 2025***

**422 buildings**  
**170 inhabitants**  
**18 abandoned buildings**  
**14 ruins**

# ***Salvaterra do Extremo 2050***

**422 buildings**  
**1000 inhabitants**  
**18 recovered buildings**  
**14 reused ruins**  
**Integrated trekking routes**

# Case Studies

## Italy: One-euro Houses and Sustainable Tourism

Migration from the countryside to the big cities has affected Italy mainly since the “Italian Economic Miracle” between 1958-1963, when the country went from being mainly agricultural to becoming an industrial power. This period generated a rapid loss of inhabitants in the rural areas of the country. However, since 2010, programs and initiatives have been implemented to attract new residents, especially young families in the center and south of the country.

A well-known municipal program within this initiative is the “One Euro House” for people who are willing to move for at least five years. Currently, the most widely used scheme for this sale is that of auctions, which start with the price of one euro and end with a higher cost, but much lower than the market standard. Part of this deal is to be responsible for the restoration and rehabilitation of the purchased property. Localities that have adopted these measures include Sambuca di Sicilia (Sicily), Salemi (Sicily), Castropignano (Molise), Laurenzana (Basilicata), among others. This initiative of houses for one euro has also been questioned and criticized, arguing that housing should not be seen as an isolated physical object, but as an intrinsic element of a community. Likewise, the lack of an integral vision is criticized, since the physical rehabilitation of housing should also include education, health, transportation and other services.

Another recent case is that of Ollolai in Sardinia, which, in addition to offering housing for sale at a reduced price, also has the “Work from Ollolai” program, which is aimed at professionals from various fields to reside for a month in this town, in exchange for a symbolic rent of one euro. In exchange, the professionals must share their knowledge with the villagers through workshops

or presentations. This aims to foster cultural exchange and the development of digital skills of Ollolai residents.

Likewise, several towns have chosen to promote sustainable tourism in their territories to attract visitors. This is the case of Grosseto, in Tuscany, which despite not being an endangered town, is an example of responsible tourism promotion. Grosseto has been internationally recognized with the “European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism 2024” award due to its practices that seek to minimize environmental impact as well as benefit the local community. Part of its attractions include the Maremma Regional Park, agritourism and sustainable mobility.

Another case of the promotion of sustainable tourism is in the town of Rorà, in Piedmont. This town has 258 inhabitants and has opted for sustainable tourism as a strategy to boost its local economy while preserving its local identity. Rorà promotes activities such as mountain biking, hiking, visits to its local museum, which revalorizes its farming and quarrying tradition, and the promotion of its typical products such as honey, cheeses and sausages. This responsible tourism promotion strategy contributes to strengthening the local community by keeping its customs alive and attracting conscious visitors.

Picture: Literature Festival in Ollolai, Sardinia (Simone Sechi, 2021)



# Case Studies

## Wonder Grottole (Italy): Rural Co-Living

Wonder Grottole is a social enterprise founded in 2018 with the aim of promoting the regeneration of the historic center of Grottole (Matera, Italy) by restoring abandoned and disused buildings and integrating new energies into the local community. It boosts housing, agriculture, business, and tourism, promoting an active and sustainable tourism model.

In recent decades, the town has experienced emigration, leading to the abandonment of the historic center. With 300 inhabitants, more than 60% of whom are over 70 years old, and 600 abandoned buildings, the trend indicates the imminent disappearance of Grottole.

Grottole is proposed as a laboratory-city where it is possible to experiment with pilot projects for the regeneration of tangible and intangible heritage, based on the connection between the local community and external energies, through residencies, co-design, and calls for proposals, utilizing disused buildings, historical monuments, local memory, among others.

The project is based on four assets: housing, agriculture, commerce, and tourism, integrating local products such as ceramics, honey, wine, and oil, and enhancing the unique features of the landscape, such as the winery/cave system, rural agriculture, and the San Giuliano Nature Reserve.

Wonder Grottole implements a new tourism model capable of systematizing the recovery of the territory, promoting urban regeneration, and creating a new tourism offering capable of improving the quality of life, as well as boosting and generating new economies. The ideal tourist for Grottole is one who does not live the territory

passively, but rather, rather, experiences the inhabitants offer. Tourists who visit Grottole become true temporary residents of the village. They carry and exchange knowledge and values with the territory and its resources, in a harmonious relationship with the local people.

In 2019, Wonder House was inaugurated, created from the recovery of an abandoned building in the historic center, as a pilot project and home for temporary residents. The platform offers various "travel moods" with specific experience offerings to "re-inhabit" this historic center.

City Quitters: A stay designed for those who want to temporarily abandon the urban lifestyle and immerse themselves in the nature, history, and living culture of Grottole.

Digital Nomads: An ideal retreat for remote work, equipped with high-speed Wi-Fi, coworking spaces, and immersive experiences that combine productivity and relaxation.

Artists and Creatives: A creative residency that invites artists and artisans to be inspired and collaborate with the local community through traditional techniques and shared projects.

JOMO Seekers: A retreat to consciously disconnect from technology and reconnect with well-being of body and mind in a serene, natural setting.

Impact Travelers: An immersive experience where travelers actively contribute to the village's revitalization process, contributing their talents and values in collaboration with the local community.

Picture: Wonder Grottole, 2018



# Case Studies

## Extremadura (Spain): Digitalization and Mosaic Landscape

“Vive en Ambroz” (Live in Ambroz) is a program that started in 2024 and seeks to provide opportunities for people who wish to live and work in a more natural and healthy environment. The program consists in offering a bank of housing and arable land available in the eight localities of the valley. The program also provides support and economic benefits for digital nomads who want to settle in the valley for a minimum of two years. On the other hand, they also offer support in the labor market in various sectors.

Furthermore, the Business Federation of Merida and Region (FEMEC) launched in 2024 an investment of 4.5 million euros for the development of the program “Digital skills for citizenship in areas with special demographic difficulties”. This public-private program aims to reach almost twenty thousand people between the years 2024, 2025 and 2026 with the main goal of promoting economic activity and productive renewal. As part of the program, the aim is to incorporate information and communication technologies to facilitate citizens’ access to secure online procedures and transactions, especially for procedures in public administrations. The goal is to generate equal opportunities and services for rural residents. The promoters of this program consider that digitalization is a “lever for the transformation of society and the economy, as it increases the competitiveness of companies in a global world and is an element of progress”.

Extremadura is also affected by wildfires due to rural abandonment and dry grasslands in the warm seasons, and since 2015 the “Proyecto Mosaico” (Mosaico Project) initiative emerged with the aim of recovering and revitalizing the affected areas of the region. The program de-

velops fire prevention strategies with the use of participatory tools, through agricultural livestock and forestry activities that promote a more diverse landscape with a lower risk of fires. The main objectives and actions of the project focus, through sustainable land management, on the recovery of abandoned lands and the diversification of crops and sustainable livestock through community participation, involving farmers, ranchers and other local stakeholders from decision making to the implementation of specific projects. The project has been successfully implemented on 12,000 hectares in the regions of Sierra de Gata and Las Hurdes.

Picture: Forest stand (left), conventional firebreak line (central road) and productive fire-break (chestnut plantation on the right).  
Source: Cortafuegos productivos UNEX



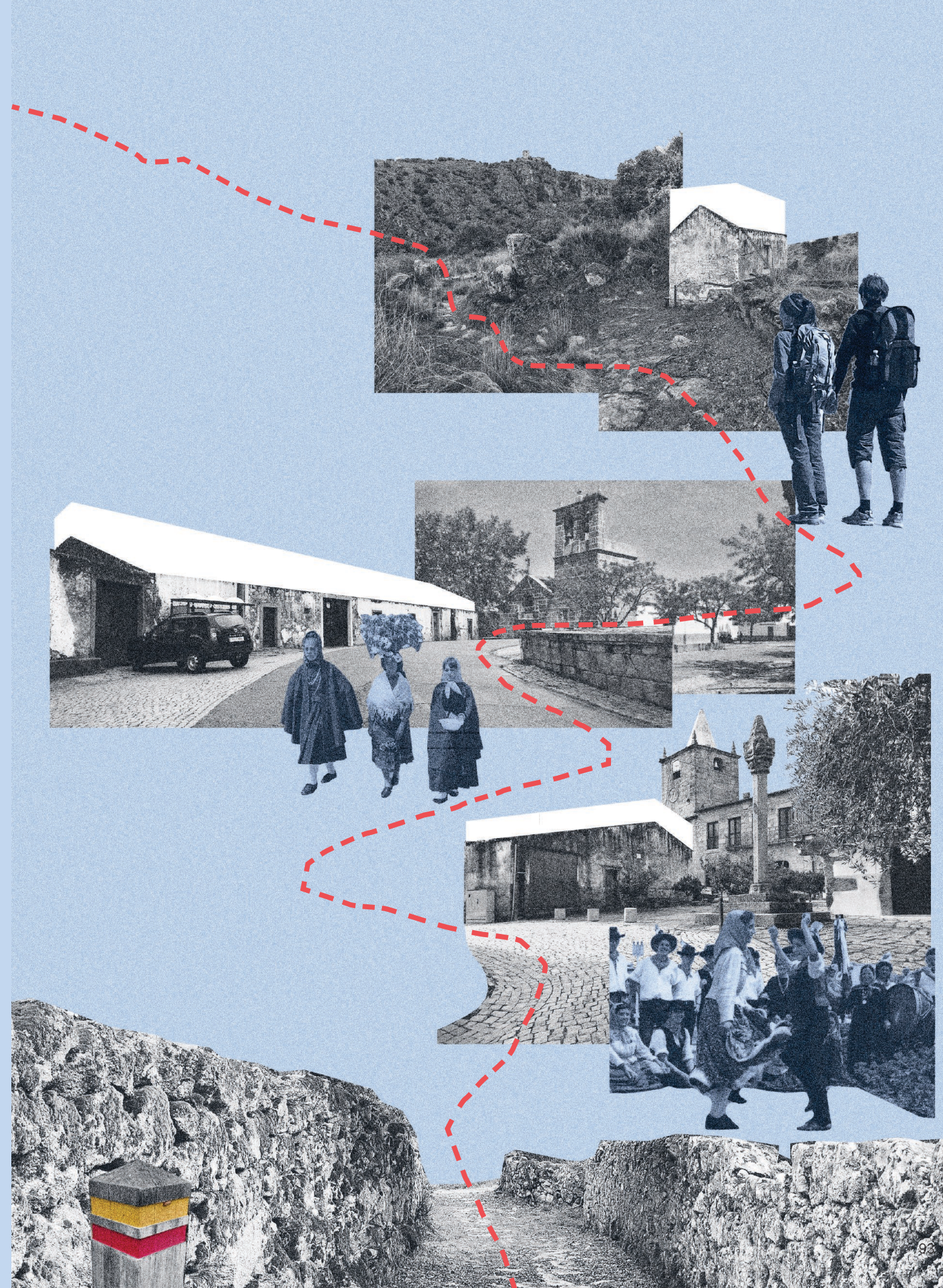
# Proposal

The proposal is based on the objectives of Landscape Together: Environmental Challenges, Cultural Art Routes, Community Interaction, Re-Population, Cultural and Heritage Preservation, Replicability, Tourism Flow, and Economic Development. Starting from these objectives and based on the premise that physical interventions alone cannot solve a problem of this magnitude, both socio-political and physical and spatial interventions were proposed.

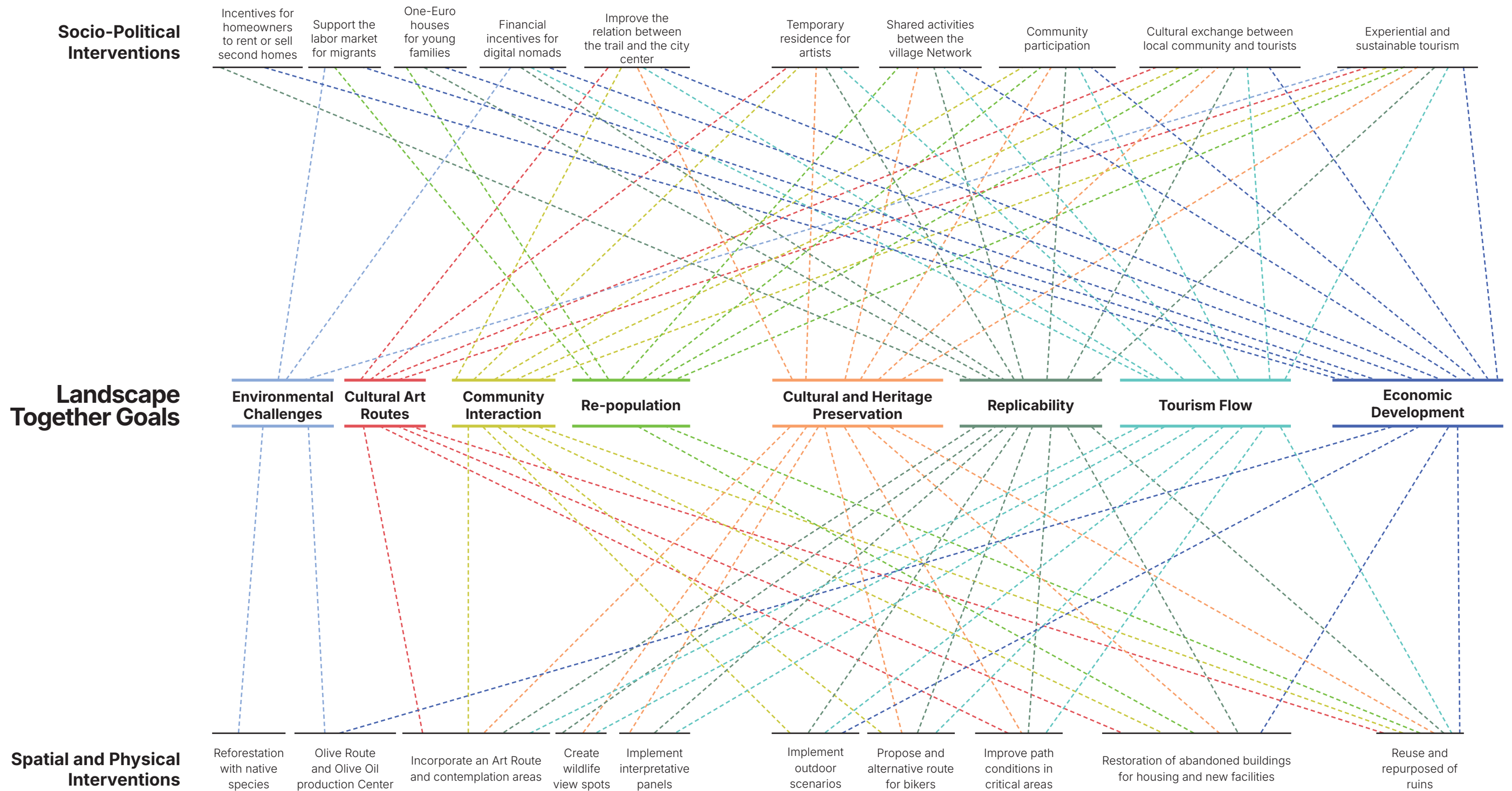
The proposal also considers that a village the size of Salvaterra do Extremo cannot survive on its own, so a larger-scale strategy is proposed, on the scale of Idanha-a-Nova (M scale), to connect it with other villages that have similar characteristics and problems. The proposal then focuses on the XS scale, the vulture route, with proposals aimed at preventing forest fires, productive landscapes, and the dynamization and diversification of trekking routes.

At the center scale, the XXS scale, it is proposed to give new life to abandoned and ruined buildings through their reuse and repurpose.

The objective is that any physical intervention should be reversible, thus ensuring minimal permanent impact on the environment.



# Goals and Actions

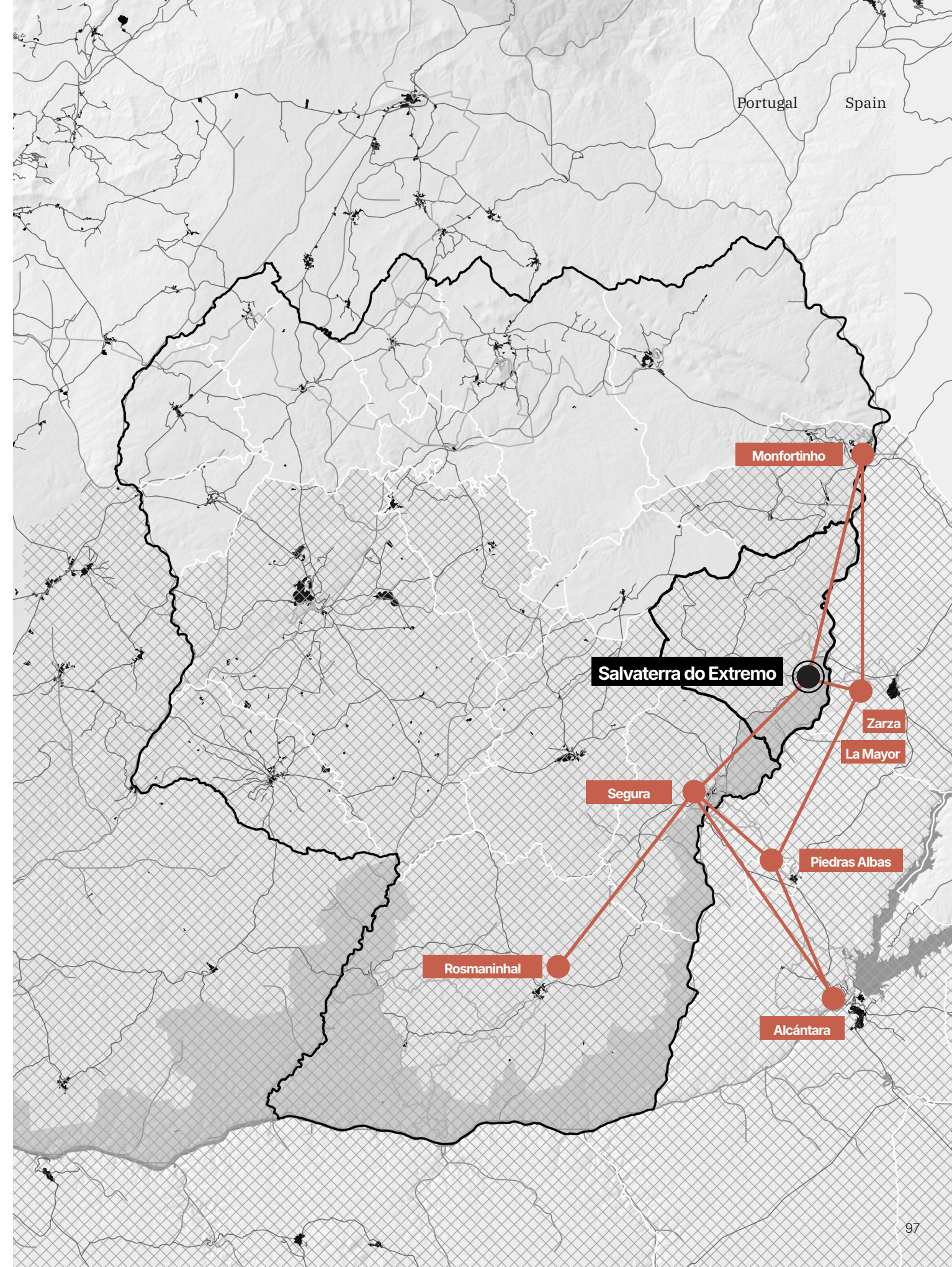
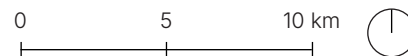
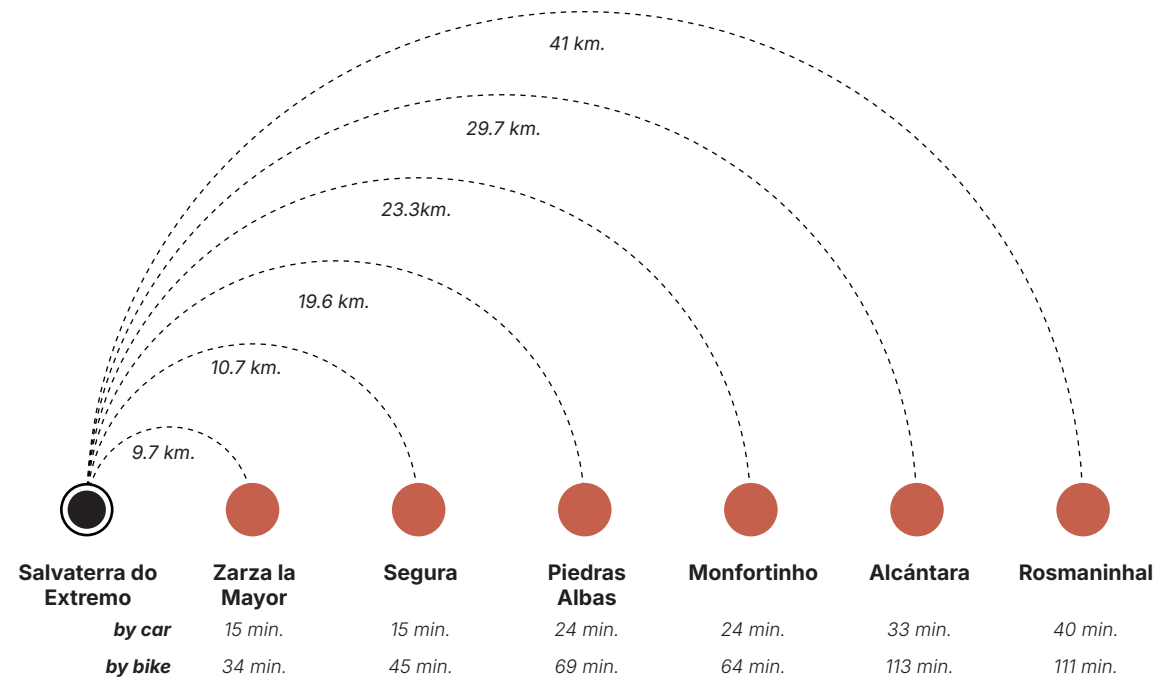
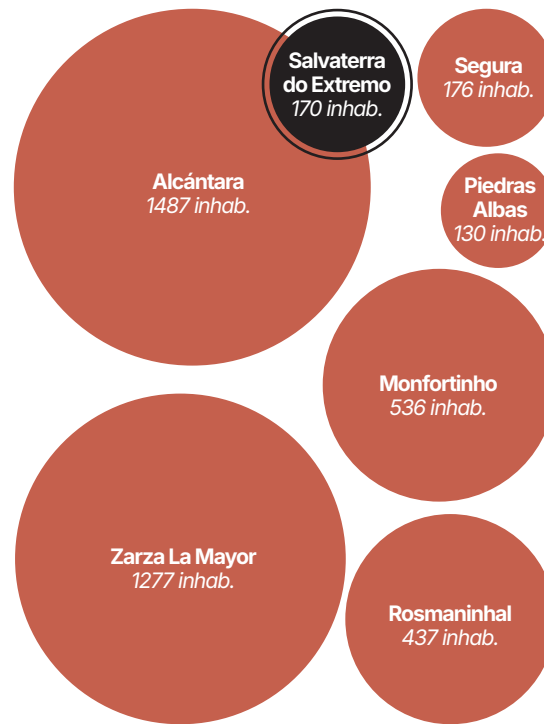


# Village Network

## Common Conflicts, Common Opportunities

Two main variables were considered for the creation of the Village Network: low density and proximity. This choice also took into account villages in Spain, considering that political boundaries should not be an impediment to joint activities.

The network of villages proposes a connection between them through public transportation and bicycle-friendly routes to facilitate travel for their residents. It also envisions that they will complement each other by sharing services such as schools and markets, among others.



# Village Network

## Calendar of Activities

To promote cultural and economic exchange between these villages, a calendar of joint activities was developed, based on activities that are already taking place but in isolation. The proposal for joint activities also took into account the weather conditions for each month in order to determine which activities would be most suitable for each season of the year.

### Categories of Current Activities\*

- Dance and Music
- Gastronomy
- ⊙ Sports and Adventure
- ⊙ Art and Local Identity
- ⊙ Theater and Cinema
- ⊙ Tourism
- Shared activities between villages

### Proposal of Calendar of Activities

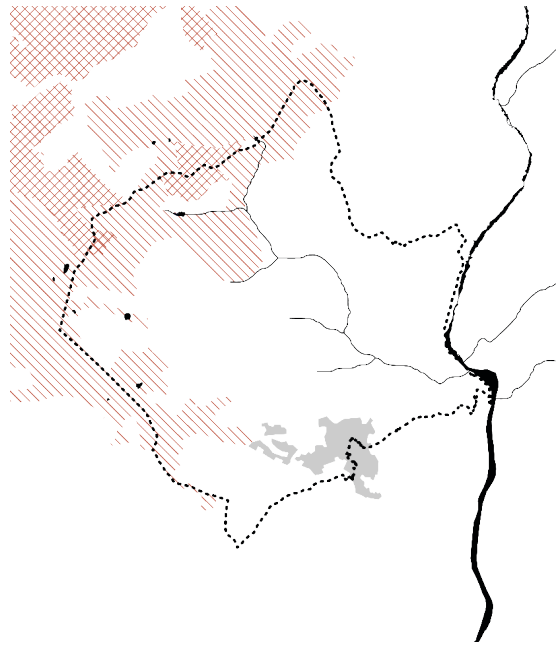
- Dance and Music
- Gastronomy
- ⊙ Sports and Adventure
- ⊙ Art and Local Identity
- ⊙ Theater and Cinema
- ⊙ Tourism
- Shared activities between villages

\*Duration in days based on the 2024 Calendar of Activities for each village




	January 12 °C / 5°C	February 14 °C / 6°C	March 17 °C / 7°C	April 19 °C / 9°C	May 24°C / 12°C	June 29 °C / 15°C	July 33 °C / 17°C	August 33 °C / 18°C	September 28°C / 16°C	October 22 °C / 12°C	November 16 °C / 8°C	December 13 °C / 5°C
Zarza la Mayor	○		⊙	⊙ ○	⊙ ○	○	⊙	⊙	⊙		⊙	⊙ ○
Salvaterra do Extremo	○	○	⊙	○	⊙	● ● ●	●	●	⊙	⊙	○ ○	⊙ ○
Segura	○	○	● ⊙	⊙			○ ●		⊙	○	○ ○	⊙ ○
Monfortinho	○	○	⊙	○	● ○	● ●	⊙ ●	● ●	● ●	⊙ ○	○ ○	⊙ ○
Piedras Albas	⊙	○	○	○	⊙	●	●	○	⊙	○	⊙ ○	⊙ ○
Alcántara			○	○	⊙	⊙ ●			⊙	● ○	⊙ ○	⊙ ○
Rosmanihal	⊙		●	● ●	●	●		● ● ●	⊙		○ ○	⊙ ○

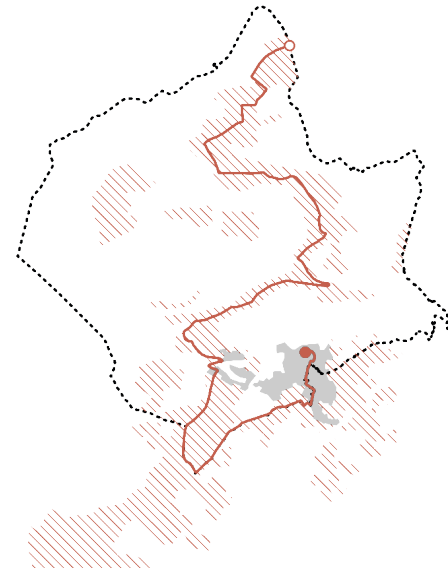
# Strategies

## The Vulture Route (XS)



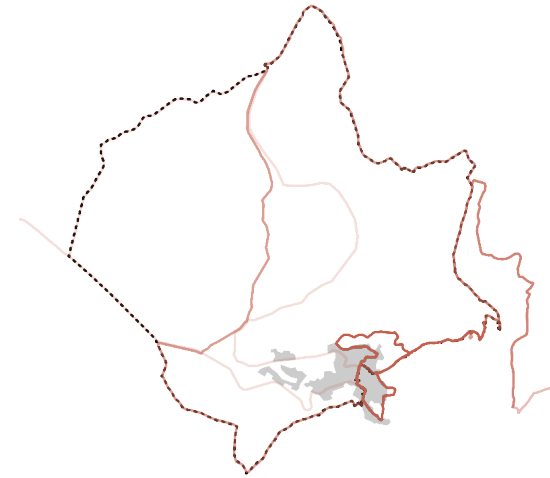
### Wildfires Preventions

-  Replacement of Eucalyptus with Holm and Oak forests
-  Mosaic landscape replaced on dry areas
-  Water bodies

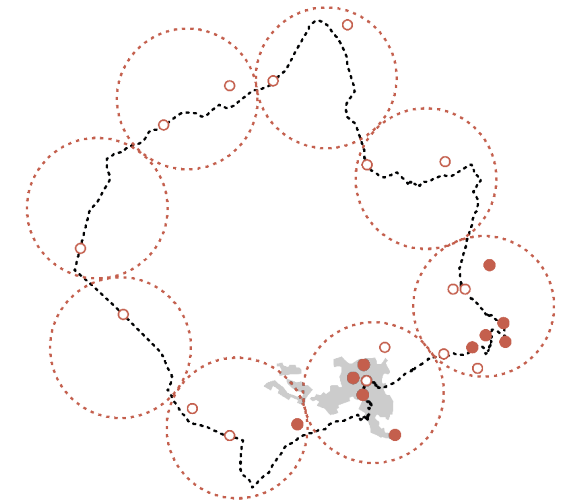


### Productive Landscape

-  Olive trees plantations
-  Olive Route
-  Rest point
-  Production Center of Olive oil in a recovered building



### Routes Diversification



### Routes Dynamization

-  Guarantee at least one equipment every 1000 meters
-  New Infrastructure
-  Reuse and Repurpose of ruins

# Masterplan

## The Vulture Route (XS)

### Existing Green Infrastructure

- Olive Groves
- Cork Oak
- Holm Oak

### Proposed Green Infrastructure

- Cork Oak (Reforestation)
- Portuguese Oak (Eucalyptus Replacement)
- Olive Groves Plantations

### Connections

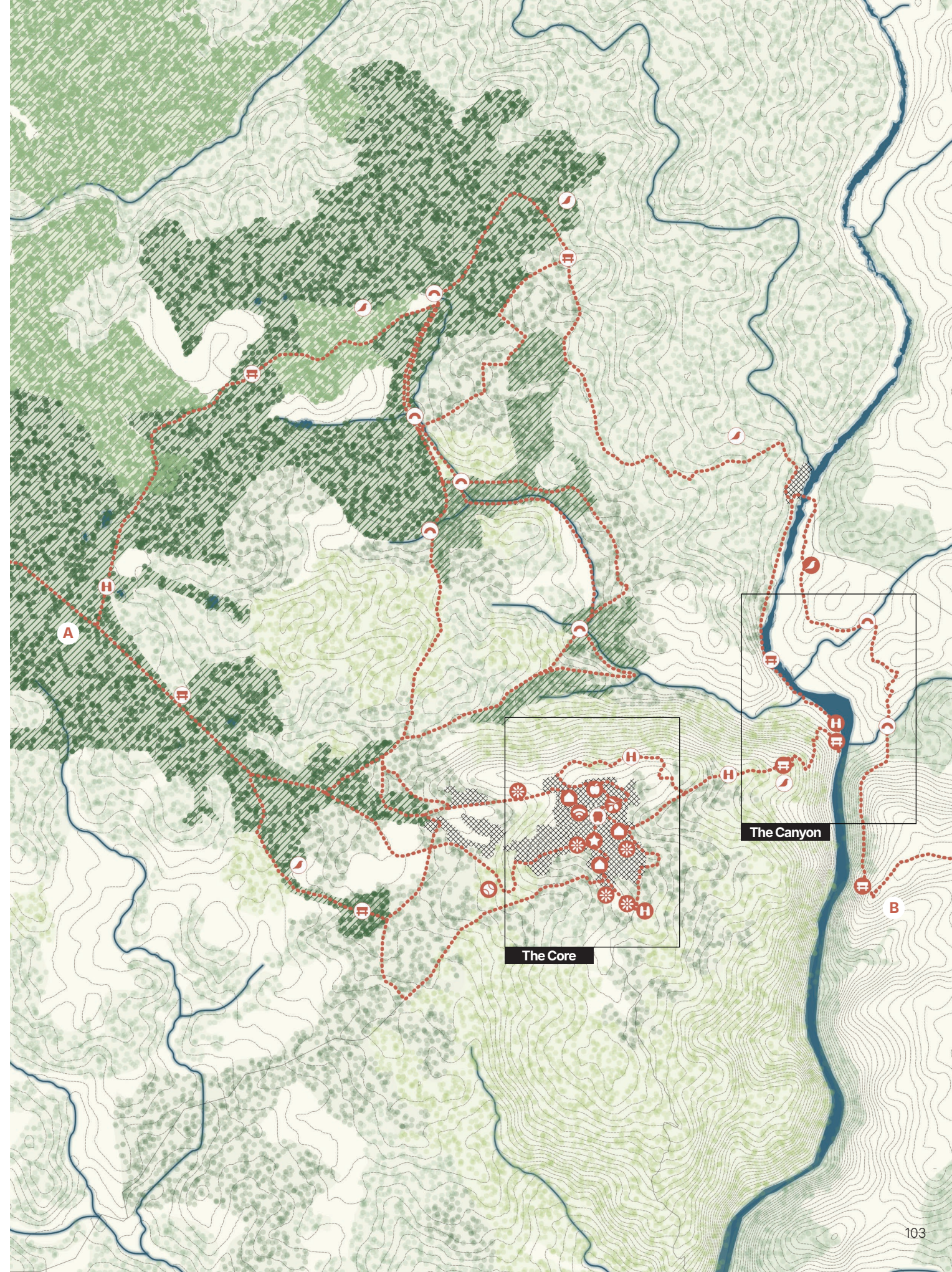
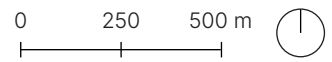
- A** New Bicycle lane
- B** To Peñafiel Castle trekking route
- Routes Diversification (rehabilitation of existing roads)  
*Art, Wildlife, Smuggling and Bike Routes*

### Types of interventions

- New Infrastructure
- Reuse and Repurpose of ruins

### Program

- Housing
- Coworking
- Olive oil production center
- Communal Gardens
- Market
- Sports facilities
- Wildlife observatories
- Rest stops
- Contemplation/ Art spaces
- Bus stop
- Bridges
- Community Art Center



# Masterplan

## The Vulture Route (XS)



**H** Contemplation Spaces

Contemplation points and rest areas are proposed as part of a strategy to revitalize the route. The ruins along the route, are enhanced by this intervention, highlighting their presence and relevance in the landscape.



**⌘** Rest stops

Given the lack of resting areas, rest stops are proposed. In the shadowless portions of paths, where there is no vegetation cover, the planting of trees is contemplated to provide shade in the future and improve the conditions of the route.



**⌒** Bridges

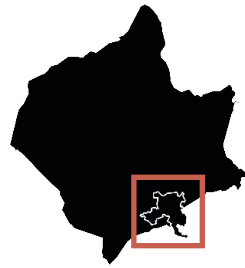
Currently, the route crosses six irrigation canals, but only one has a bridge. The installation of lightweight pedestrian bridges is proposed to allow safe and continuous crossing, minimizing the impact on the environment.



**—** Routes Diversification

The adaptation of some existing roads is proposed. These new routes will be permeable and made of natural materials. In some sections, a route suitable for mountain bikers is also incorporated, expanding the uses of the route.

# The Core: Masterplan



## 1. Consolidation of the City Center






The aim is to consolidate the center of Salvaterra by restoring and connecting its public spaces and landmarks, as well as integrating the proposed trekking routes. A bus stop is also proposed to connect Salvaterra with the other towns in the Village Network.







## 2. New life to abandoned buildings



Abandoned, but still habitable buildings, are being restored to provide new facilities for Salvaterra. New housing for permanent residents and temporal residences for artists are being proposed, with the ground floor intended for cafés, small restaurants, and mini markets. A local market, an olive oil production center, and a Community Art Center are also being proposed. It is proposed to reopen the long-closed school that closed and connect it to the Day Center.

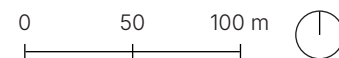
## 3. Repurpose of Ruins

The ruins of Salvaterra are relatively recent remains of pigsties and other animal pens that later became obsolete. The aim is to reuse these ruins, which also have great potential for biodiversity as a third landscape, by converting them into community gardens and pollinator gardens. It is also proposed to create outdoor stages for artistic and cultural events.

-  Redesign of public spaces with permeable pavement
-  Existing trees
-  New trees
-  Trekking routes
-  Bus stop

-  1 Coworking
-  2 Community Art Center
-  3 Local market
-  4 Olive oil Production Center
-  5 School and Day Center
-  Housing with public groundfloor

-  Communal Orchards and Pollinator Gardens
-  6 Stage

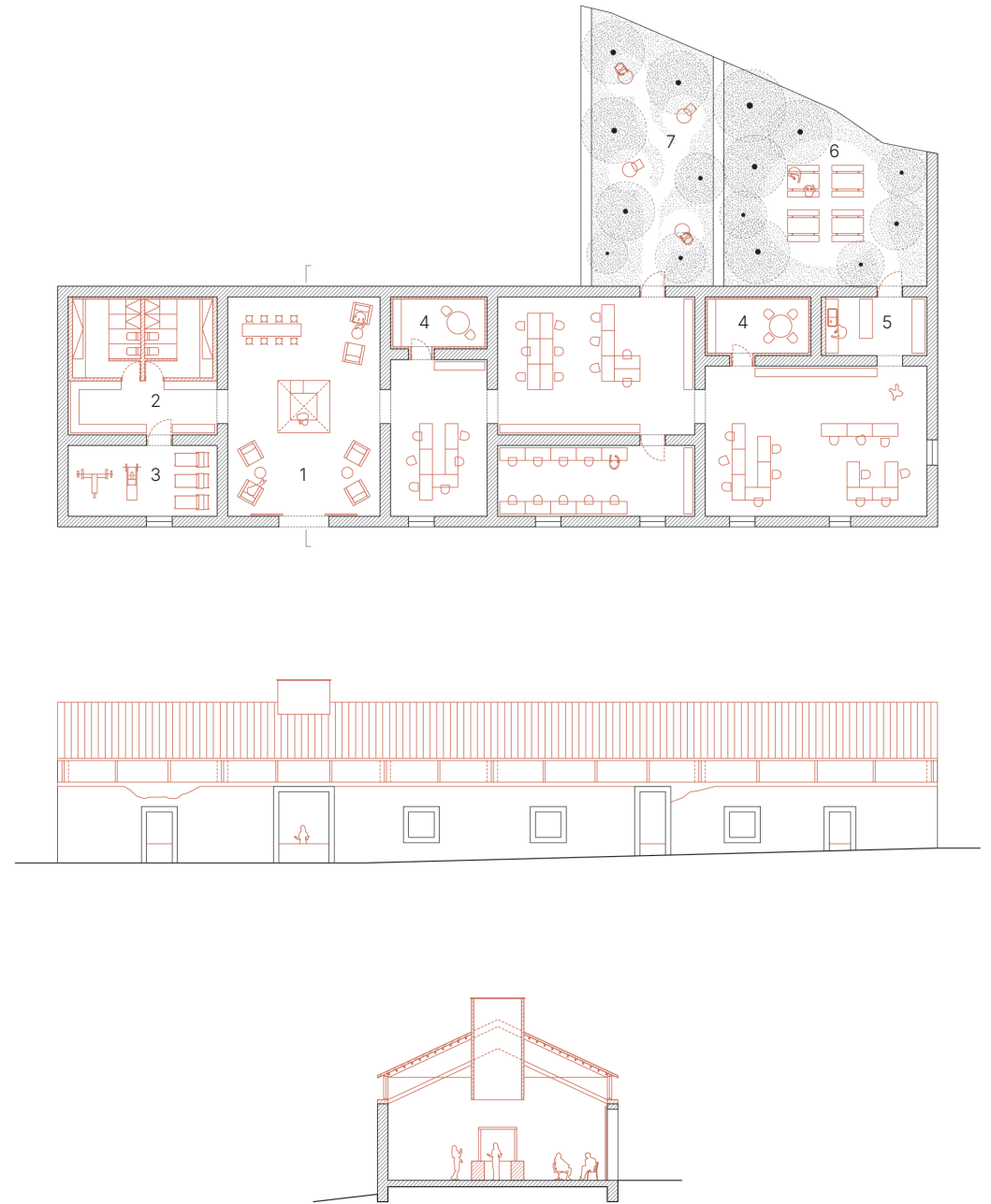
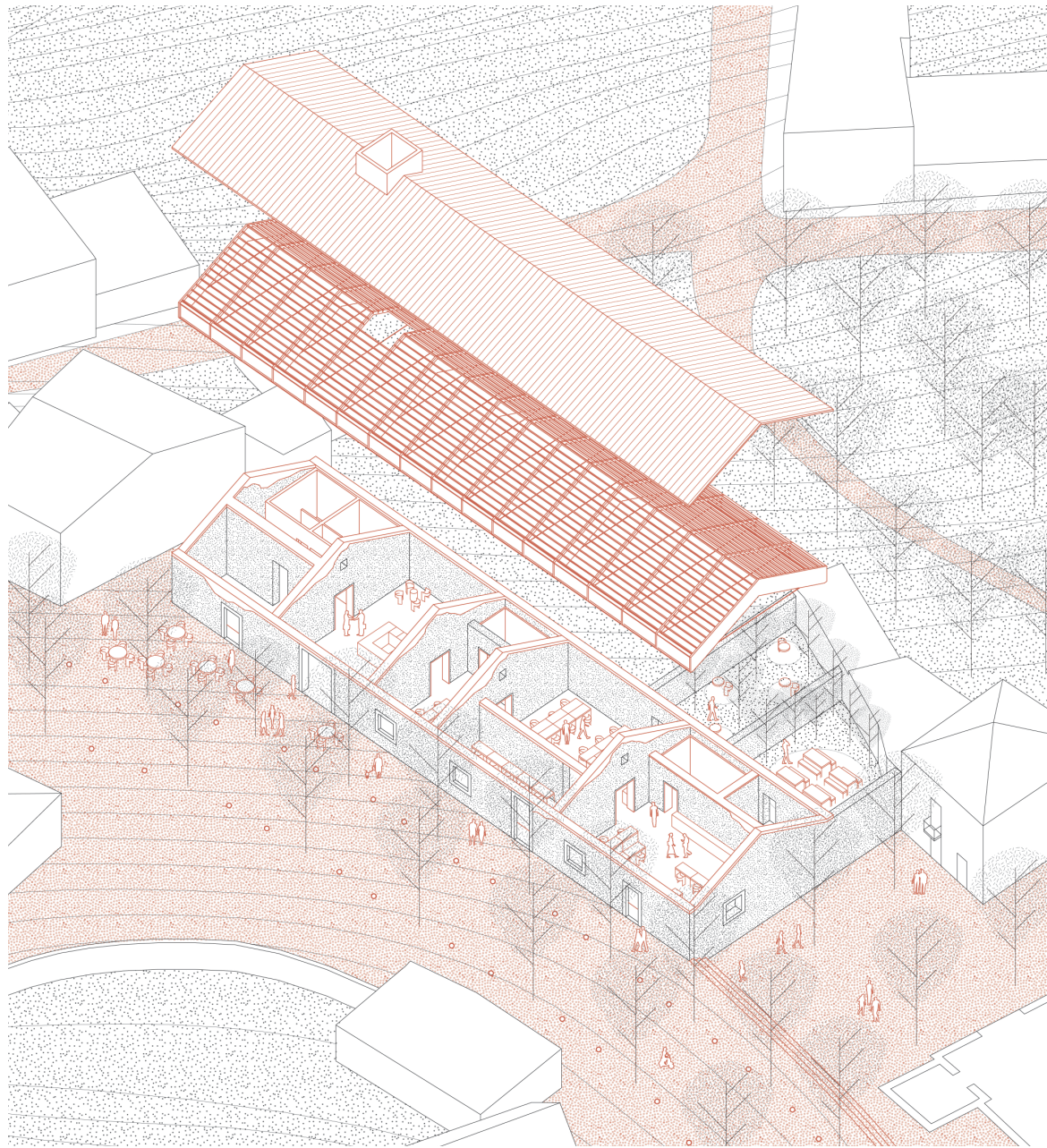


## The Core: Coworking

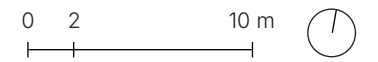
A coworking space is proposed in the abandoned building right in the historic center of the town, through its rehabilitation. The proposal is to restore the existing walls and propose a light roof that rises from the walls to provide adequate ventilation and lighting for the digital nomads who will work in this space. The heart of the coworking space is also the entrance, café, and meeting area. This café also activates the outdoor public space.



# The Core: Coworking



- 1. Cafeteria, meeting place and entrance
- 2. Lockers and restrooms
- 3. Gym
- 4. Private meeting rooms
- 5. Kitchenette
- 6. Exterior lunch area
- 7. Outdoors working spaces



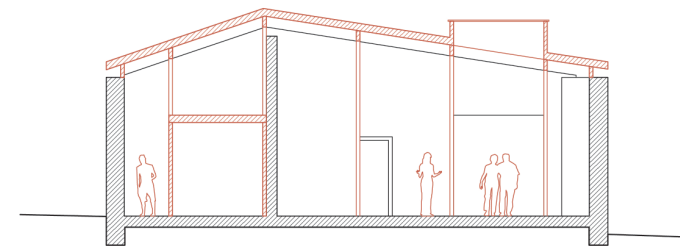
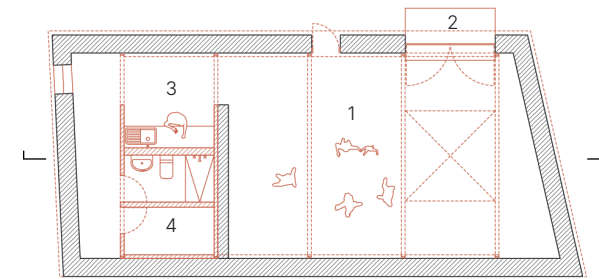
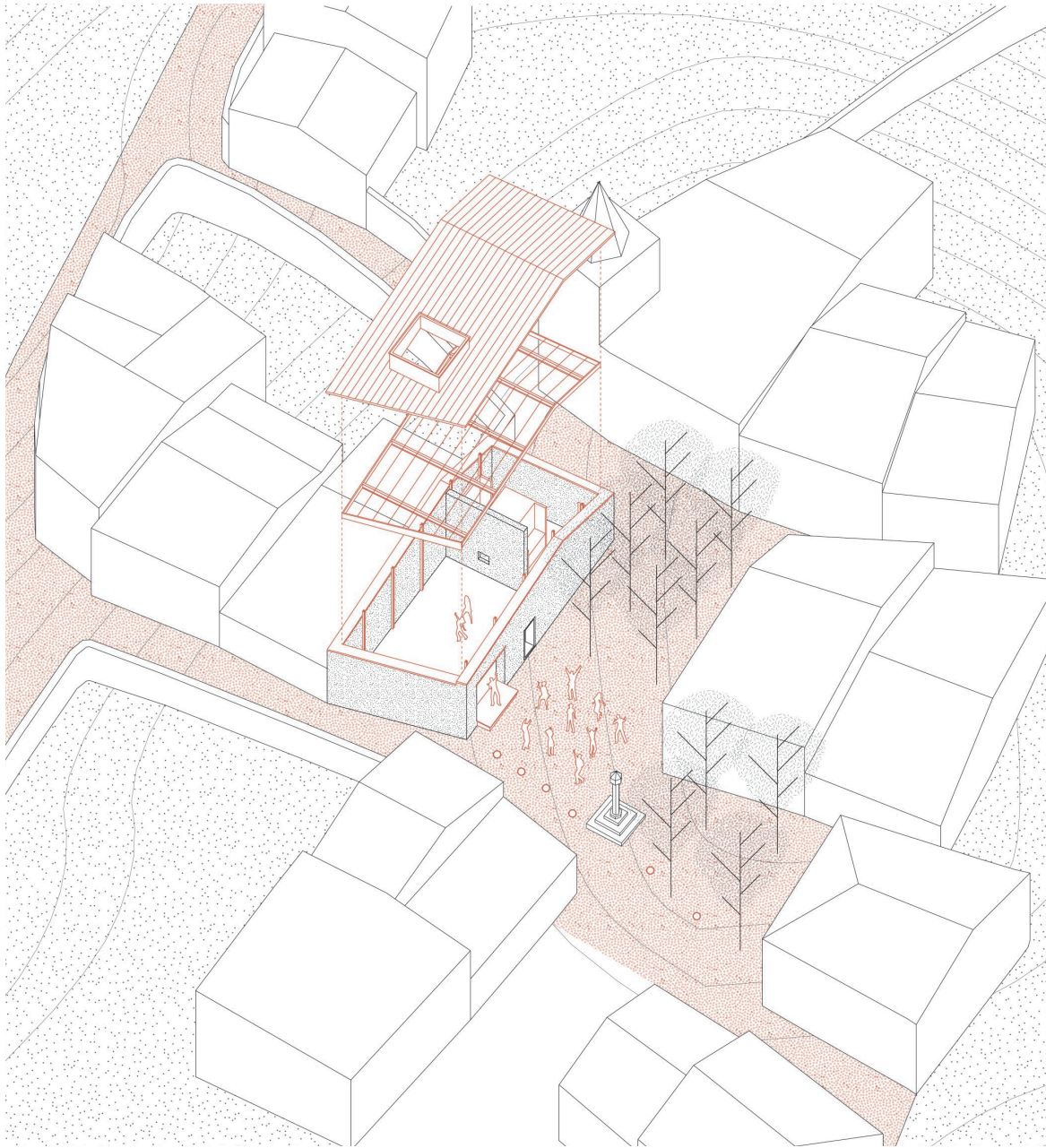
# The Core: Community Art Center

In the abandoned building opposite the Pilourinho square, a community art center is proposed for all types of artistic expression. This location has great historical potential because it is opposite the old town hall building and the Pelourinho, as well as facing a very important small square.

This intervention seeks not only to revive the building but also the public space in front of it. The intervention focuses on opening up the building to the city by replacing the entrance to a parking lot with a window facing the outside. A lightweight roof with a wide opening is also proposed to ensure significant light intake.



# The Core: Community Art Center



1. Flexible space for performances and exhibitions 2. Stage facing the square 3. Kitchenette 4. Bathroom and storage



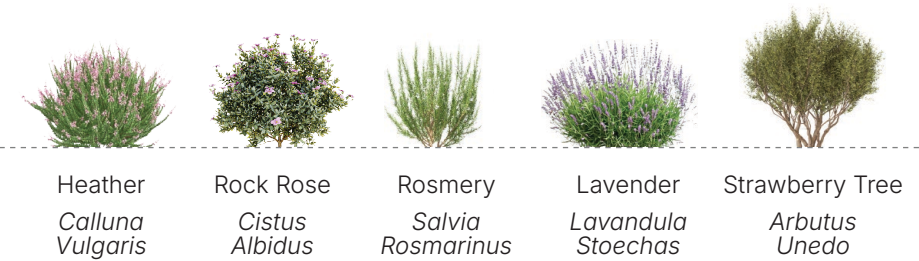
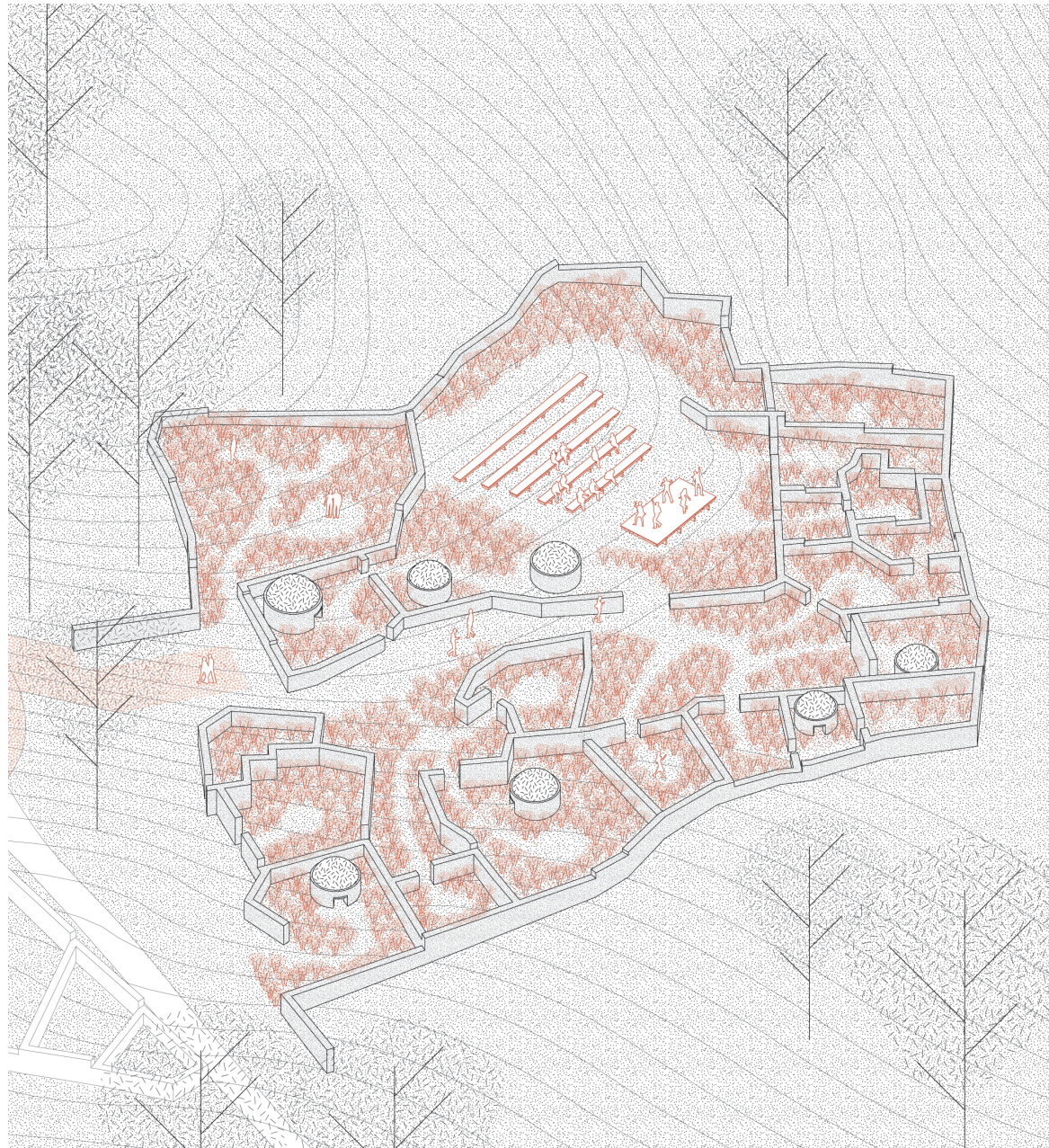
## The Core: Stage, Communal and Pollinator Gardens

The abandoned pigsties are a landmark in the village but are no longer used for their original purpose. As they are a space with great potential for biodiversity, and could be considered as “third landscape,” the proposal is to create pollinator gardens with native species, as well as bee hotels.

It is proposed that these gardens remain accessible to people and can be spaces for meditation. In the larger gardens, it is also proposed to create stages that encourage social interaction and culture, as well as the performing and musical arts.



# The Core: Stage, Communal and Pollinator Gardens





# The Canyon: Masterplan

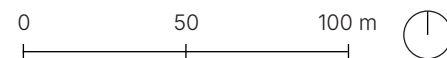


As an example of the planned interventions, the section of the trail leading to the river was chosen. According to the assessment, this area is in good condition and has abundant vegetation, ensuring a comfortable experience.

The proposed strategies include specific interventions: a camping area in the abandoned cabin, a wildlife observatory, rest areas taking advantage of existing ruins, and wooden footbridges at intersections with irrigation canals.

-  Existing trees
-  Trekking routes

- 1** Wildlife Observatory
- 2** Camping
- 3** Rest stop in ruins
- 4** Contemplation area in watermill ruins
- 5** Bridges over canals
- 6** River stop

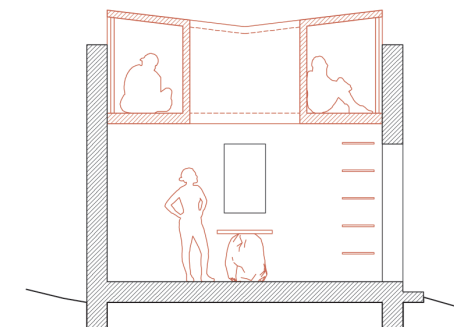
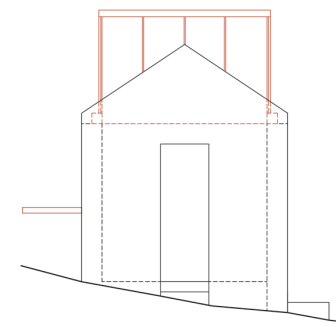
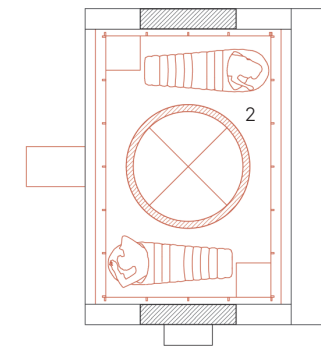
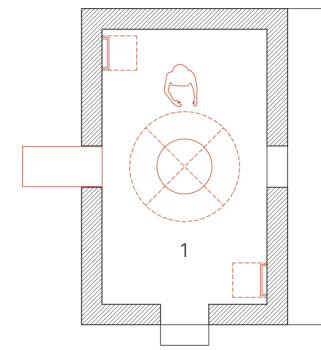
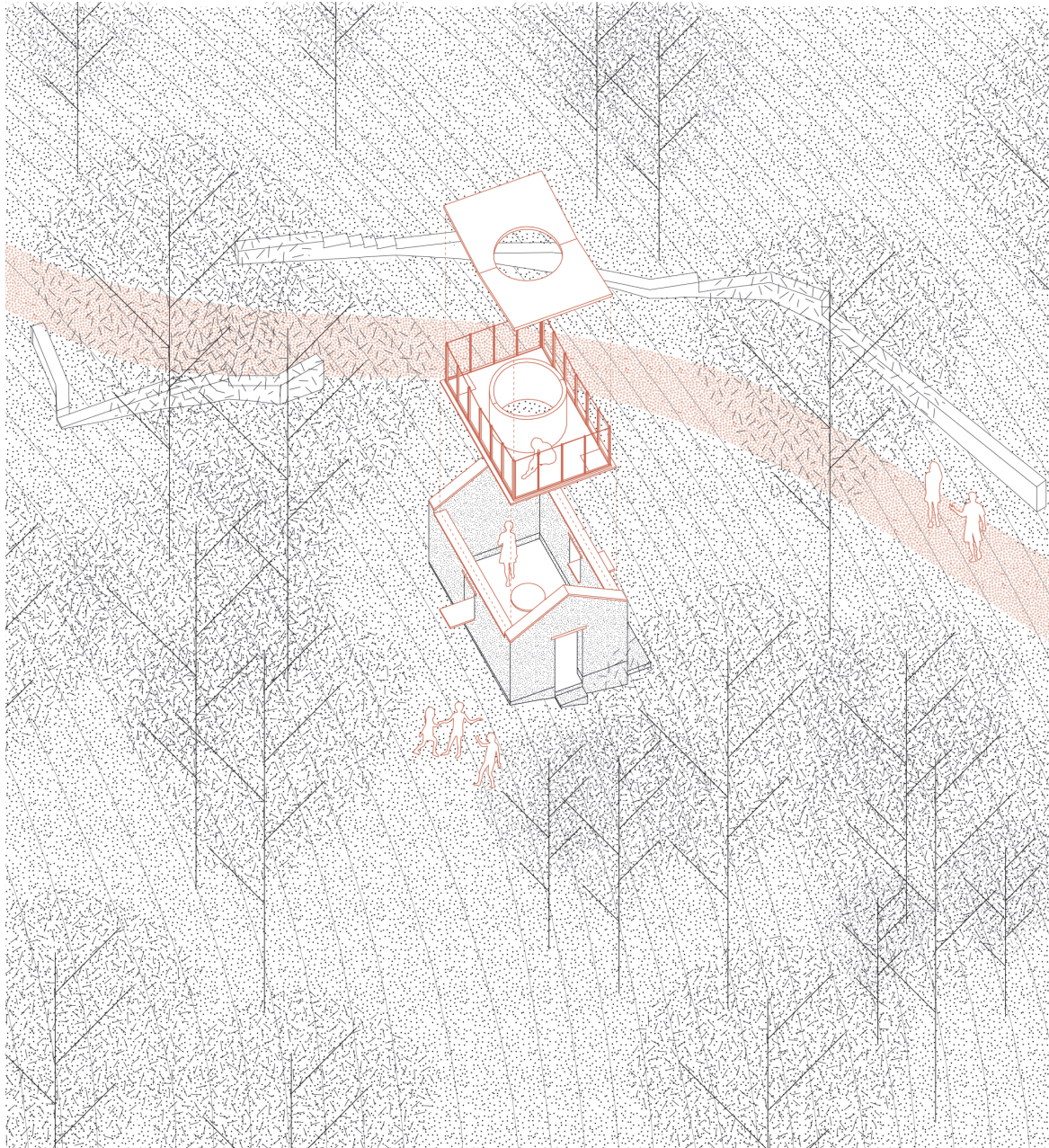


## The Canyon: Camping

One of the first abandoned buildings that are found when leaving the city center and setting off on the vulture route is this roofless house. A minimalist camping space is proposed for visitors who want to spend the night in the middle of the forest and experience a starry sky in the midst of absolute darkness. The sleeping area is raised off the ground to avoid contact with moisture and animals. This ground floor instead is designed as a space with only a table for eating or playing games.



# The Canyon: Camping



- 1. Groundfloor with an indoor table and outside table for social activities
- 2. Elevated floor with spaces for two people with their sleeping bags

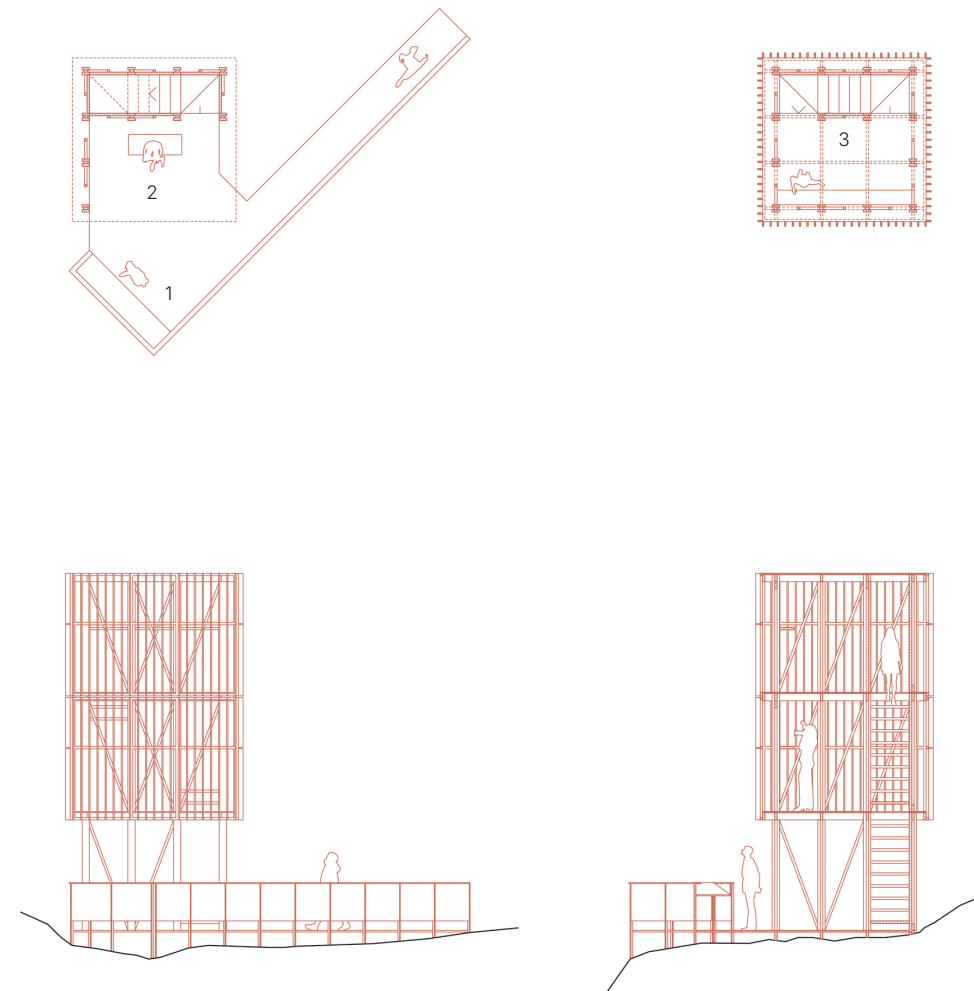
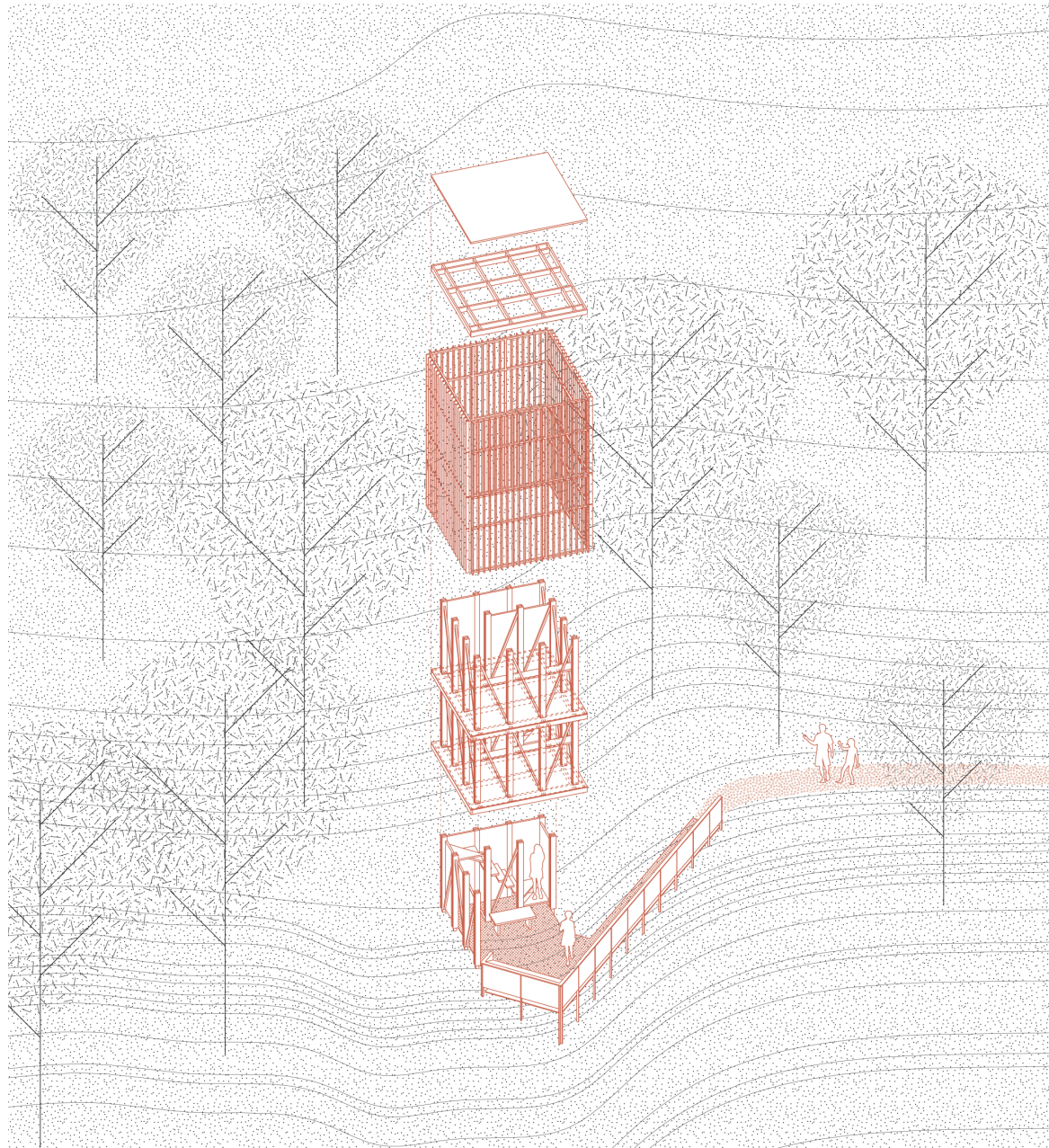


# The Canyon: Wildlife Observatory

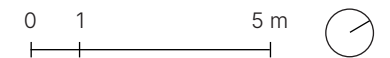
The new wildlife observatory aims to replace the old hut, now destroyed, which served as both an information point and a wildlife viewing spot. The proposal calls for a structure with low environmental impact, based on an elevated metal platform that allows access to the site without significantly altering the terrain. At ground level, an extension of the existing trail is planned as a walkway, accompanied by an information panel on local wildlife and a rest area for visitors. The design includes two additional observation levels, designed for bird watching. The structure is designed with a partially enclosed façade that allows observation without being seen, minimizing disturbance to the species and facilitating the study of animal behavior in their natural environment.



# The Canyon: Wildlife Observatory



1. Interpretative panel with information about local wildlife 2. Rest point and access to other levels 3. Levels one and two for wildlife observatory



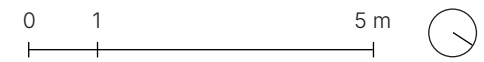
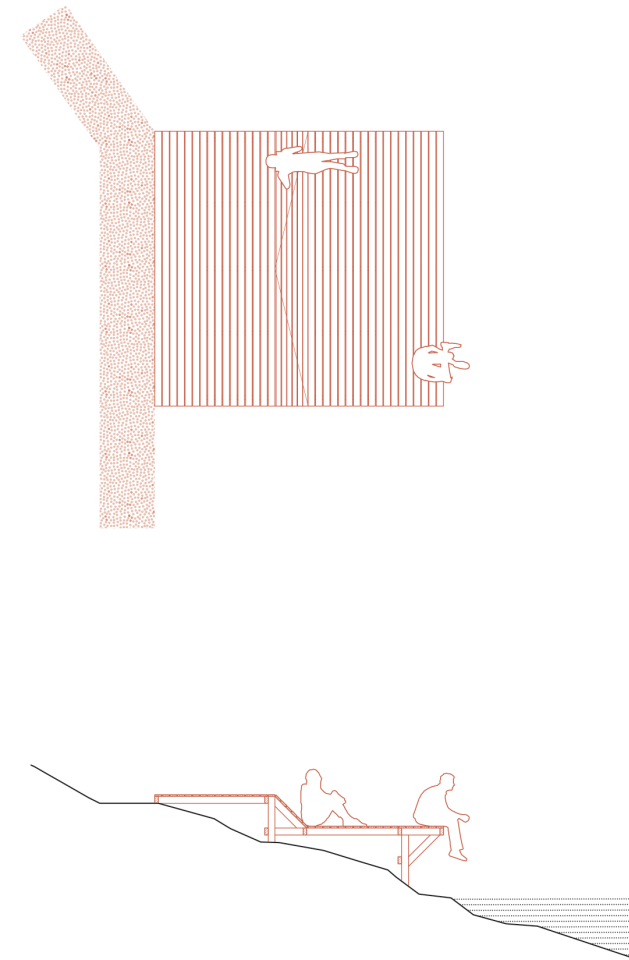
# The Canyon: River Stop

Along The Vulture Route, the Erjas River remains visually present, but there is no access point to its banks. For this reason, a type of access and rest area facing the river is proposed, in a section where access is currently difficult due to the presence of a large rock formation.

The intervention proposes to skirt this area, taking advantage of the fact that it is a point on the route that is at a similar elevation to the water level. The proposed structure will function as a small viewpoint and rest area. The wooden structure is used to avoid any permanent impact on the territory.



# The Canyon: River Stop



# The Renaissance

The proposal seeks to revitalize Salvaterra do Extremo through physical and social interventions that respect its history, culture, and community. These actions are designed to maintain the original character of the buildings, revealing which parts are new and which belong to the existing heritage, promoting an honest understanding of the site. Furthermore, the Vulture Route is integrated as a strategic axis that connects the natural landscape with the urban fabric, promoting sustainable tourism and environmentally friendly experiences. The overall approach advocates a rebirth based on sustainability, adaptation, and a balance between human, heritage, and natural aspects, without imposing a transformation that displaces the identity of the site.



# Conclusions

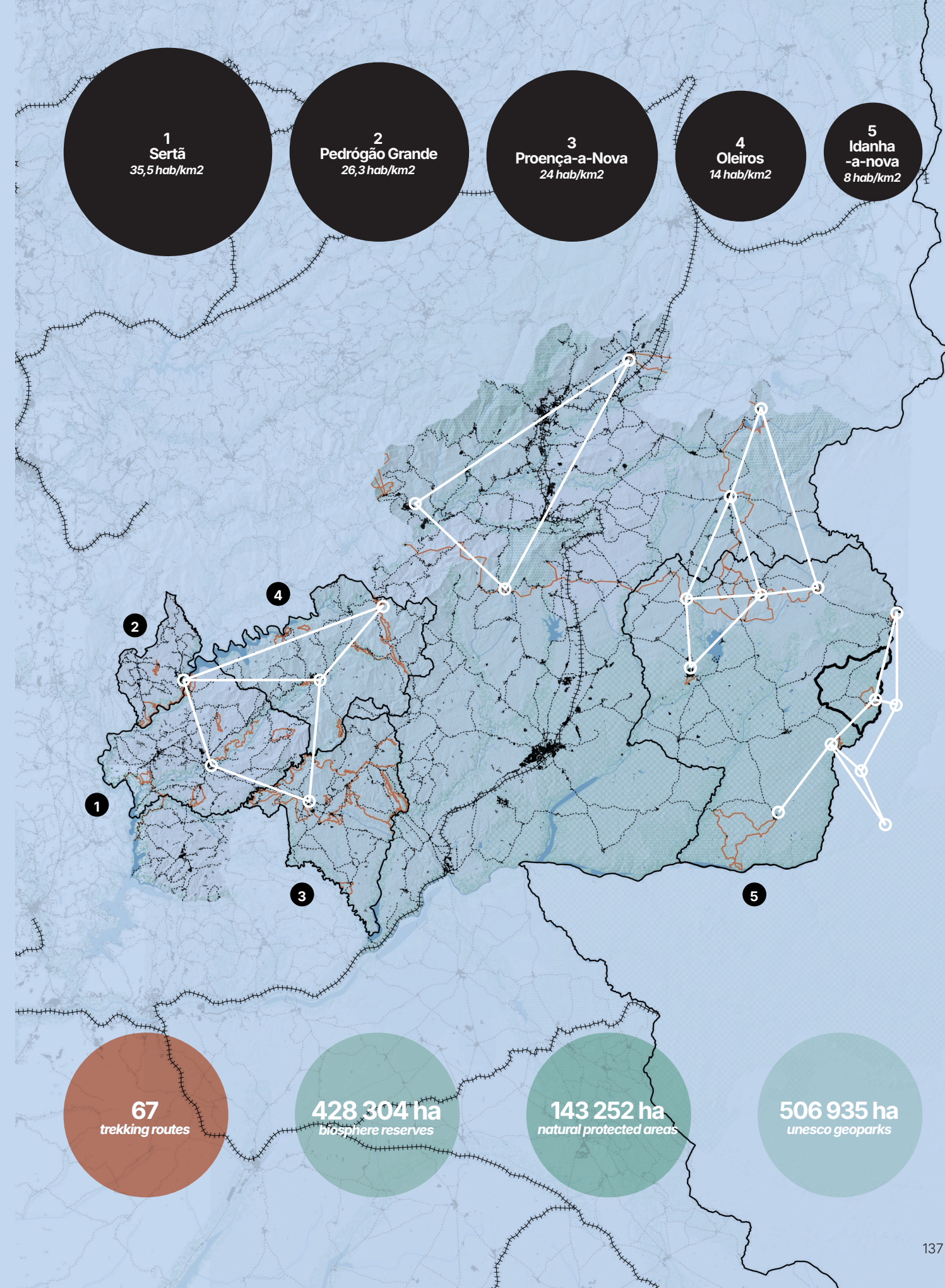
## Replicability

These interventions, both physical and socio-political, carried out in the village of Salvaterra do Extremo, can be replicated at the Village Network level in the other localities that comprise it: Zarza la Mayor, Segura, Piedras Albas, Monfortinho, Alcántara, and Rosmaninhal. All of them share similar characteristics: they are villages with low population density and at risk of disappearing, they are located within protected natural areas, they have well-established hiking trails, and they are geographically close to the canyon.

The aim is not to standardize or homogenize these communities, but quite the opposite: the aim is to preserve the unique essence of each village, respecting its identity and local characteristics. Based on this authenticity, the aim is to encourage collaboration and interconnection between them through shared networks of services, mobility, and land management. This replicability can also be applied to the other villages that make up the Landscape Together program, as they have similar characteristics, where groups can be formed, creating new networks of villages among themselves.

Replicability is based on strategies such as the recovery and adaptation of ruins, the revitalization and diversification of trekking routes, and the implementation of preventive measures against forest fires. The aim is to replicate methodologies and intervention approaches, not uniform architectural or landscape models.

The ultimate goal is to consolidate a system of interconnected villages that function as a large resilient community, linked through the Village Network.



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