

ipaast-czo project report: workshop on connecting remote and near surface sensing across archaeology and precision agriculture – focus on agricultural and environmental land management in Dehesa landscapes

– 15-16 June 2022 – Report prepared by Victorino Mayoral-Herrera



On June 15 and 16, 2022, the ipaast project team participated in the [IV Iberian Congress on the Dehesa/Montado](#). The event was held in the city of Badajoz as the closing activity of the [LIFEAdapt project](#), and was organized by the Associação de Defesa do Património de Mértola, the Center for Scientific and Technological Research of Extremadura (CICYTEX), the Spanish Dehesa Federation (FEDEHESA), the National Institute for Agricultural and Veterinary Research (INIAV), the Institute for the Conservation of Nature and Forests (ICNF), the Andalusian Government, ADENEX and the universities of Extremadura and Évora.

This important event brought together actors across the livestock sector in the Spanish-Portuguese cross-border environment to share knowledge and debate ideas generated through the LIFEAdapt project, related initiatives, and teams which are taking diverse approaches to the management of this high natural value agrarian system. The event aimed to demonstrate to decision-makers and politicians, who are direct actors in the adaptation process, that it is possible to adapt the Dehesa to climate change, while preserving its natural values, implementing new forms of organization and management that provide greater economic benefits for rural territories, and creating new products and services essential for sustainability.

The ipaast project team presented a poster titled: "Looking for meeting points between the management of the dehesa and the valorization of its cultural heritage". In it, ipaast's aims and methods were explained. The poster highlighted connections to prior and ongoing projects led by ipaast's Spanish-Portuguese regional team and their collaborators, who are actively working to create synergies between Precision Agriculture and Archaeology in the region.



Poster presentation by Victorino Mayoral-Herrera and Jose Maria Terron

The team led a one-day field visit workshop, organised at the Finca La Rinconada (Calamonte, Badajoz) as the closing event of the congress. This event included a presentation titled: “Potentialities and challenges of the dehesa cultural heritage from the perspective of Landscape Archaeology”.

The field visit offered the opportunity to exchange impressions with other agents and professionals involved in the management of the dehesa and its adaptation to climate change. The field visit group included a comprehensive range of specialists from the region's technological centres: agronomists and forestry engineers, researchers, land owners and livestock entrepreneurs. Discussion group topics included the recovery of dehesa biodiversity, the improvement of pastures, water management, repopulation, and erosion control.



Presentations kicked off the field visit at La Rinconada.

Discussion and feedback on the presentation focused on the appreciation of how human activity has transformed the dehesa across time. The presentation argued that human agency had a decisive impact, and that this kind of landscape should be considered a cultural product. Some participants expressed concerns about the need to preserve the material legacy of past forms of rural life, questioning how this provides added value to present day activities. Reactions to the idea of full interoperability between the agronomic and archaeological approaches were diverse, and no agreement on how, or indeed if, this could be actively pursued or achieved was reached. Consequently, conversations within the group stressed the need to open new lines of “hybrid” research.



Discussions during the field visit workshop focused on practical challenges of land management in Dehesa environments.

Beyond engaging a new community of practitioners with the ipaast project's approach, through the workshop, a direct discussion was established with the estate owners about incorporating the outcomes of ipaast project work into plans for the future management of the Rinconada Estate. As a result, the ipaast project's Spain-Portugal group is now carrying out field work to develop a practical case study on combined use of the conventional non-invasive methods of Archeology and Precision Agriculture at La Rinconada. Data collection commenced in Summer 2022 and is expected to continue into Autumn 2022. The case study focuses, on the one hand, on the assessment of the potential usefulness of these data for the improvement in the management of the pastures of the dehesa, and on the other, in the detection and characterization of various archaeological sites identified in a specific sector of the Rinconada Estate. Reports on the fieldwork and cases study materials will be available on the ipaast site.