

SUMMARY REPORT ON LOCAL STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

WP8: Implementation of good practices on the ground	
Study Landscape:	Sierra de Guadarrama foothills, Colmenar Viejo
Title of meeting:	Diálogo para promover el paisaje: Relación entre el paisaje y el bienestar humano.
Date of meeting:	6 October 2014
Location of meeting:	Pósito Municipal Calle del Cura, 2 Colmenar Viejo 28770 Madrid

1. Short description of the study landscape



Foothills of the Sierra de Guadarrama mountain range

The area encompasses the foothills of the Sierra de Guadarrama mountain range, which is situated in the Northwest of the Autonomous Community of Madrid, Spain. Although it is a rural area when it comes to the physiognomy of the landscape, its economic and demographic characteristics more closely resemble urban dynamics due to its historic role as head of the northern region of Madrid and its proximity to the capital.

The topography is soft and irregular, dominated by an undulating landscape of hills and shallow valleys (mostly in the Northwestern sector), with scarcer areas of pronounced valleys and ravines, rocky outcrops of granite, and the prominent San Pedro Hill; all carved by watercourses. The area is crossed by many streams which dry out in summer and the Manzanares River (controlled by the impoundment of water Embalse de Santillana).

The main land use is farming, with some areas dominated by pastures with scarcer trees (holm oak, Pyrenean oak, prickly juniper, elm) and other areas dominated by holm oak *dehesas*. In the areas where there is no farming, there are thicker holm oak and other evergreen and broadleaf tree woods, Mediterranean scrubland (thyme, broom, rockrose...) and riverbank vegetation (willow, poplar, Montpellier Maple...). Other characteristic uses of the area, although not so important as they were in a recent past, are mining and military uses.

The main settlement still maintains its medieval character thanks to a compact urban development, the intricate lay-out of the streets, and most important of all, the silhouette dominated by the main church tower, which is a benchmark from any point of the municipality.

The cultural heritage presented in the landscape is very rich. There are many remnants of the past: Visigoths remains; medieval bridges, chapels and a basilica; water mills and fulling houses from the Modern Age; a dense net of drove roads, dry stone walls, and many other elements linked to the farming tradition. The SL also has extraordinary natural values.

2. First stakeholder workshop

What makes life good is one of humankind's most fundamental questions. Given recent experiences of extreme droughts, soil degradation and a multitude of other existent or foreboding ecological crises around the world, there is increasing acknowledgement that human well-being is tightly linked to the natural environment and landscapes people live in.

To discuss landscapes in general and their close link to human well-being, while introducing the research activities carried out in the frame of HERCULES, the project partners in close collaboration with the municipality of Colmenar Viejo, hosted the first local workshop entitled "*Linkages between landscapes and human well-being*" on the 6th of October, in Colmenar Viejo.

Following the opening of the Mayor of Colmenar Viejo, HERCULES researcher, Claudia Bieling, set the scene for the discussion by explaining "*The core idea of the project is to link different perspectives and knowledge on the past and present of landscapes across Europe, in order to concretize pathways for their sustainable development. This most importantly includes the views of people living in very distinct areas across the continent.*"

The concept and philosophy of HERCULES was further explained by another HERCULES partner Pip Howard, saying: "*HERCULES is the first project where there is a concerted effort to actually provide the materials to build the bridges needed to cross the chasms between those who plan our landscapes, work in them and most importantly live in them.*"

The project introduction was closed by a brief summary on the project structure, members, objectives, goals and expected results, which were presented by the study landscape responsible María García Martín.

The workshop also hosted a presentation by César Agustín López, professor at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, who discussed the importance of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and the necessity of encouragement of finding new ways of how to address the future challenges of European landscapes – such as overcoming the conservation vs. development paradigm and the conservationist attitude in managing natural heritage.

After Mr. López, María García Martín explained the objectives of HERCULES in Colmenar Viejo, and the goals of the local workshops. She finished by a report about the region of Colmenar Viejo, showcasing the participants what is the current knowledge of the project.

After the panel section the participants were asked to introduce themselves (share their name and relationship with Colmenar Viejo). To feed the discussion four questions were raised by the organizers:

- What are the main threats to local landscapes?
- What are the characteristics of the local landscape?
- Does the landscape of Colmenar Viejo maintain its personality and originality?
- What aspects should the project address to be relevant for the people living in Colmenar Viejo?

The answers to these questions were interrelated. Due to the different perspectives the discussion became very interesting therefore the organizers decided to extend it by half an hour. People were generally interested by the project and keen to collaborate.

The 3 hour workshop finished with the concluding remarks of Berta Martín López, professor at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid who identified the variety of presented stakeholders and their willingness to actively cooperate with the project as the two main reasons that made the workshop a positive experience.

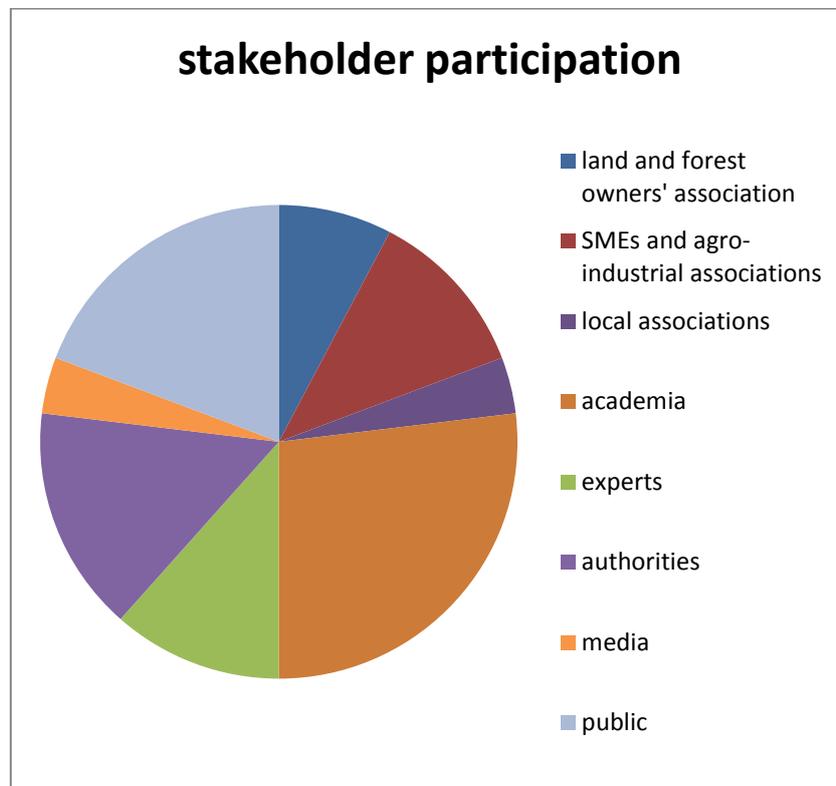
Aim of the workshop

The aim of this first local workshop was to contact with the local stakeholders in order to:

- Introduce HERCULES to the local stakeholders.
- Collect their opinion on what role HERCULES should/could play in the local context.
- Collect their opinion on what are the main characteristics of the local landscape and what are the main threats to these values.
- To inform local stakeholders about different perspectives related to landscapes in general.
- Establish bidirectional cooperation between Colmenar Viejo and HERCULES in order to work together towards finding new solutions for the problems that European landscapes faces.

Description of stakeholders participating to the workshop

The workshop gathered a wide range of local stakeholders (27 people) representing different sectors, profiles and interests:



3. Issues and challenges raised by participants

The main issues raised are the following:

- **The need of** going beyond the description and assessment of current systems; stakeholders are looking forward to not just receiving **solutions and new alternatives on how to face future challenges**, but they are willing to be consulted and to take active part in decision making.
- **Importance of awareness raising**; besides focusing on monetary values of landscapes, traditional values should be explained to the wider public.
- **Importance of stakeholder consultation** in relation to landscape issues; especially with landscapers (farmers, landowners, foresters, land managers, etc.)
- **Importance of the involvement of students and retired people in HERCULES.** Students represent the future generation, while retired people represent the knowledge on local territories.
- **The importance of establishing a clear objective in landscape management**; different users of landscapes can have different objectives, (for instance while the land manager might focus on production the land planner focuses on community interest).
- In order to be able to maintain both landscapes and the activities formulating them, **it is necessary to understand and accept landscape dynamics.** Landscapes are the result of the interaction of many factors such as climate, human activities and time, and therefore they are constantly changing and evolving.
- Facilitate the creation of viewpoints around the municipality and the protection of the

view from those points.

- Stakeholders' demand for the protection of dry stone walls in the area. It is a task that requires a lot of time and resources, farmers need support and recognition to be able to keep this heritage in good conditions.
- The importance of **taking into account urban landscapes** as well.
- Address the problem of the **noise and light pollution**.
 - Suggestion: consider sound as part of the landscapes.
- **Support traditional (farming) activities that keep maintaining landscape values.**
- **Outcomes of research projects**, such as HERCULES, **should be widely communicated**, for agents active in landscape management such as foresters, scientific results could facilitate their work.
- Importance of **identifying and supporting the new generation** who will create and maintain landscapes as the current activities that sustain our landscapes are decreasing.
- The need for innovation to find new ways of enhancing farming and traditional activities that keep the values of landscape.
- Necessity to **address the increasing water scarcity**.
- **Importance of creating urban planning rules**: such as prohibiting the construction of buildings, towers that are higher than the main church in Colmenar Viejo.