


[Home](#) → [Members details](#) → Inspira Territorio – Sierra de Aracena

MEMBER

Inspira Territorio – Sierra de Aracena

Living Lab IT | Spain





Inspira Territorio (IT) is a motto, an alliance and a process. Our motto is to “inspire” local inhabitants, and visitors of the Sierra de Aracena to value local agrifood products, the knowledge and the landscapes that support our traditional farming system. The alliance is composed of diverse actors including activists for food sovereignty, researchers, farmers, small local companies, the local development group and public administrations, who share a common pathway of collaborations and mutual support to further advance agroecology and food sovereignty in the Sierra de Aracena. The process, resulting from decades of agroecological initiatives in the Sierra de Aracena, catalysed into “Inspira Territorio” in 2019 and has, since then, articulated research, public and technical events, farm visits, trainings and contests and policy incidence to promote a territorialised agroecological agrifood system.

Aim

The aim of Inspira Territorio is to promote a localised and agroecological agrifood system, preserving and valorising traditional ecological knowledge while incorporating innovations to support farmers and other relevant actors of the agrifood system. Our research largely follows a participatory-action-research approach, bottom-up driven and aimed at fulfilling the requirements identified by the alliance step by step.

Background information

Since the 1980s, different collectives had been developing agroecological initiatives such as peasant markets and exhibitions, in the Sierra de Aracena, where small-scale family and subsistence farming is at the core of socio-economic dynamics, cultural heritage and environmental management. The most common landscapes in the Sierra, which is protected as a Natural Park, are holm and cork oak dehesas, chestnut and olive agroforestry systems, and peri-urban cultivated areas formed by small home gardens irrigated through ancient channels and pools. Extensive livestock farming of Iberian pigs, sheep, goats and increasingly cattle, is inherent to the agrosilvopastoral management in the area. However, in the last decades, small scale farming is in decline due to rural abandonment, lack of economic profitability and deep cultural changes in the

relationship to land, work and food. In this context, in 2019 two activists from the association “Los Pies en la Tierra” and two scholar-activists living in the area set up the first Inspira Territorio alliance, together with the local development group (GDR SAYPA), several municipalities and the technical support of Entretantos Foundation. With the aid of a first grant by the Daniel and Nina Carasso Foundation, and despite the impact of COVID 19 pandemic, for two years a social-ecological diagnostic of the agrifood system and a number of public events and campaigns were carried out. In parallel, an initial agroecological network was set up, from which Inspira Territorio’s core alliance expanded. In the second phase (again funded by Carasso Foundation, 2021-2024), in fact, other associations and small companies, as well as the regional agricultural public agency (AGAPA), joined the core team of Inspira Territorio, therefore allowing it to amplify the range of actions and impacts of Inspira Territorio. For instance, a new line of action-research started around small-scale artisanal agrifood transformation, oriented to characterize the need for infrastructures and to support policy incidence towards public engagement in the development of such resources. Since 2022, as Inspira Territorio is also an Innovation Hub within the Agroecology-TRANSECT project, an experimental approach has been set up to test the impacts of agroecological soil management practices for biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and socio-economic resilience.

Funding structure

Inspira Territorio has been mostly funded by the Daniel and Nina Carasso Foundation, through the call for proposals on “Territorialised Food Systems”, which has granted two projects to “Los Pies en la Tierra”. As an Innovation Hub within the action-research project Agroecology-TRANSECT, we are currently benefiting from funding by the European Commission, via the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC). Finally, it has also received indirect funding via research grants of two of its core members (Juan de la Cierva – Incorporación and Ramón Cajal fellows by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities; and Marie Curie Individual Fellowship by the European Commission).

Activities

- Line 1 – We analysed in a diagnosis the regional food system, mapping the main actors and sectors, and characterising the visions of the system in our territory. By identifying strengths and weaknesses, we defined the productive or sectoral potential of the food system.

- Line 2 – We aimed to raise awareness among people, local institutions and actors in the agri-food system via:
 - A photography contest “Portraying Food Work”.
 - A roundtable “Pandemic and Food System. How has COVID-19 affected us in the Sierra de Aracena?”.
 - A “Sustainable Food Week” in Aracena, including a demonstrative process of public purchase in a local high school and the photographic exhibition “Inspira Arte Rural”.
- Line 3 – We strengthened governance by opening spaces for dialogue, building networks among actors throughout the food chain and setting up an agroecological network, including:
 - A Participatory Scenario Planning process.
- Line 4 – We promoted food production and processing, seeking solutions to obstacles in the areas of access to land, seeds and water, as well as economic exchange systems, by:
 - Making a diagnostic of the needs and priorities for agri-food transformation in the Sierra de Aracena.
 - Organizing the agroecological farming contest “Sembrando Territorio” to support agroecological initiatives.
 - Systematizing and characterizing the state of the periurban productive area and ancient irrigation system in Linares de la Sierra, one of the municipalities participating.
- Line 5 – We promote new narratives about the potential of the territory, strengthening networks, raising awareness of the issue of equity and highlighting the value of all knowledge and culture, by:
 - Organising public events such as “The Gardens Day”.
 - Organising farm visits and trainings around olive oil production, traditional threshing, seed preservation and reproduction and autochthonous breeds.
 - Setting up a media campaign (including a monthly radio program) to foster local and agroecological consumption.
 - Creating the open-air museum “Inspira Arte Rural” of large-scale murals depicting agri-food traditions.
- Line 6 – We are stepping towards designing a Regional Food Strategy, addressing the barriers faced by public institutions, proposing cohesion between all stakeholders and strengthening territorial governance, by:
 - Facilitating a debate around water management in the Sierra.
 - Developing a workshop on agrifood transformation.
- We are testing in five chestnut farms, how changes in soil management can contribute to climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation and socio-

contribute to climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation and socio-economic resilience.

Photographs and images of the posters for each activity are available for high quality download from our webpage: <https://www.inspiraterritorio.com/copia-de-qu%C3%A9-hacemos> .

Methods, stakeholder engagements and tools

The main methodological framework we use is that of participatory-action-research, within which different approaches have been used to engage diverse stakeholders in each case. These include:

- Public events to:
 - inform the public about IT, introduce agroecology and gather input (e.g. suggestions for future actions),
 - give back research results and gather feedback,
 - foster public debates around food and farming practices.
- Workshops to:
 - retrieve information,
 - organize data,
 - collectively reflect on results,
 - collectively design experimental field research,
 - give back research results and gather more specific feedback,
 - strategically planned yearly Action Plans of IT,
 - collectively reflect and evaluate our work as IT and its impacts,
 - collectively elaborate yearly Learning Histories.
- In-depth interviews with key stakeholders to:
 - collect specific data,
 - present intermediate results and gather feedback.
- Participant observation: all members of the IT core team, including the two main researchers, live in the area and are part of the local community. Other researchers have visited the area several times to participate in specific action-research activities.

We adapt to stakeholders' needs in terms of:

- Information:
 - We have provided printed copies of research outputs when requested,
 - We collect ecological data requested by farmers

- we collect ecological data requested by farmers.
- Language:
 - We always translate research information from and to English/Spanish,
 - We adapt scientific and technical knowledge to be understood widely,
 - We are using different media languages to communicate results (printed, radio, video...).
- Spaces:
 - We select the best option available in terms of accessibility, media means, sound, temperature, light and adaptability of infrastructures to facilitate dynamics and participatory work,
 - We hold events and workshops in different municipalities to reach more people,
 - We always hold interviews on the farm, at home, at the office or alternatively where the interviewee prefers.
- Timing:
 - We adapt according to the time of the year and the profiles of participants (e.g. livestock farmers, other farmers, elders, young people with children, women...).
- Food:
 - We always prepare or buy food for local agroecological caterers, producers or local small shops.
- Other needs:
 - We always provide food and drinks to participants, which is a common practice in Spain as an acknowledgment for participation, also creates important informal spaces for further exchanges and networking.
 - We have also offered support to take care of children, elders or people with limited mobility upon request.

Achievements

When reflecting on the past 5 years of intensive collaborative work in our LL, we identify the following achievements:

- SCIENCE-POLICY:
 - We have created relationships of trust and a legacy of legitimacy for IT in the eyes of public institutions at different scales (from municipal to regional). Such relationships have driven changes, not only at the discursive level, but also in terms of collaborations in other action

discursive level, but also in terms of collaborations in other action-research projects (such as RAIA, <https://raia-redeinnovarural.eu/>).

- As mentioned, on several occasions by public authorities, the process and outcomes of IT, including the research activities mentioned above, motivated the selection of the Sierra de Aracena by the regional government as the first official “Biodistrict” for the promotion of agroecology in Andalusia. As a result, collaborative strategic agroecological planning has been developed in the past year, with significant participation of multiple and diverse stakeholders. At the moment, several initiatives have gained momentum, such as the renovated farmers market, a proposal for a collective food processing plant and a network of small-scale and public agrifood transformation infrastructures in the Sierra de Aracena. Further research on the governance required to manage these infrastructures has been requested and is currently starting with a doctoral student.
- EDUCATIONAL
 - IT is contributing to the training in research of both young students in local professional schools (on forestry, agriculture, gardening and cooking) and at university Bachelor’s (one BSc Thesis will be presented in September 2025), MSc (two MSc Thesis, at Wageningen University and the International University of Andalusia have been presented) and PhD levels (a new PhD has started in May 2025).
- SCIENTIFIC
 - IT was invited as an Innovation Hub of the European project AgroecologyTRANSECT(<https://www.agroecologytransect.net/innovation-hubs/inspira-territorio-spain/>) and has been, since the beginning of the project, extensively supported and featured as an exemplary process of agroecological participatory-action-research in Europe (e.g. in the project roadshow: <https://www.agroecologytransect.net/resources/agroecology-transect-roadshow/>).
 - Within IT, different interdisciplinary action-oriented research teams have been set up purposively to support locally demanded investigations that aim at supporting agroecological transformations of the agrifood system.
 - The members of the core team of IT have been invited to several national agroecological and farming events to share the case and have also presented the participatory-action-research process and its results in international academic events and conferences.
 - A scientific manuscript, critically reflecting on the application of the conceptual framework of the domains of transformation (Anderson et

al., 2019) in the case of IT is currently under development.

- SOCIETAL
 - IT, through its research and action activities and communication campaigns (e.g., public events such as the Food Week, a radio program and an open-air museum) has opened locally a public debate on food consumption and production, the needs, barriers and opportunities for agroecological development, and on the linkages between food, landscapes, cultural heritage, local identity and pride.

Publications

- Inspira Territorio page as Agroecology-TRANSECT Innovation Hub: <https://www.agroecology-transect.net/innovation-hubs/inspira-territorio-spain/> →
- Report in the local TV: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0xLviUTuMM>
- Presentation video of IT: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etJJxUv4J14>
- “A love history: Inspira Territorio”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsQ32XiRKsY>
- YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@alimentacionsosteniblesier7800>
- Map of agroecological initiatives: <https://view.genially.com/643d199e9743a4001a34e6e8/interactive-image-iniciativas-agroalimentarias-sierra-de-aracena-y-picos-de-aroche>





Source: Natalia Escañp

Contact

Website: <https://www.inspiraterritorio.com>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/InspiraTerritorioSierradeAracena/>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/inspira_territorio/

X: @InspiraTerrito1



agroecology_ps@ilvo.vlaanderen.be

Useful links

Disclaimer and Privacy Policy

[Credits](#)

[Contact](#)

[Subscribe to our newsletter](#)

Follow us



[Manage cookies](#)

Coordinator: Projektträger Jülich (Germany) | Co-coordinator: Agence nationale de la recherche, ANR (France)
