

Transboundary river basin planning: a bigger challenge under water scarcity conditions

Transboundary river basin planning



A bigger challenge under water scarcity conditions

A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a giant panda's face, focusing on its eyes, nose, and mouth. The panda's fur is a mix of light tan and white, with characteristic black patches around its eyes.

WWF

World Wide Fund for Nature is the world's largest independent nature conservation NGO.

It has over 5 million members across the globe and active offices in more than 120 countries.

WWF's mission is to build a future where people and nature can live and thrive in harmony.



A ANP | WWF

ANP (Associação Natureza Portugal) works in association with WWF International, following-up on the work developed since the 1990's by the PT team under WWF Mediterranean.

It operates in 6 major Conservation Practices, and currently leads over 20 conservation projects in the field.

FORESTS



OCEANS



WILDLIFE



FRESHWATER



FOOD



CLIMATE & ENERGY



FRESHWATER CONSERVATION IN PORTUGAL

PRIORITIES

- **Water footprint** reduction and risk management approaches
- **Water Stewardship** initiatives and corporate responsibility
- Dam impact reduction and obsolete **barriers removal**
- **Ecologic restoration** and water cycle improvement

PROJECTS

- *Plantar Água* – restoring post-fire mediterranean forests in the Caldeirão hills (Algarve)
- Reconnecting Iberian Rivers – improving water management and connectivity in transboundary river basins (Douro, Tejo, Guadiana)
- Water Stewardship projects with key water users (Iniciativa Tejo, Coca-Cola, Sumol+Compal, Super Bock Group, Reckitt Benckiser)
- Regional landscape restoration dialogues (Center, Algarve)

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European Political Context



- Transboundary RB's represent 66% of the EU surface

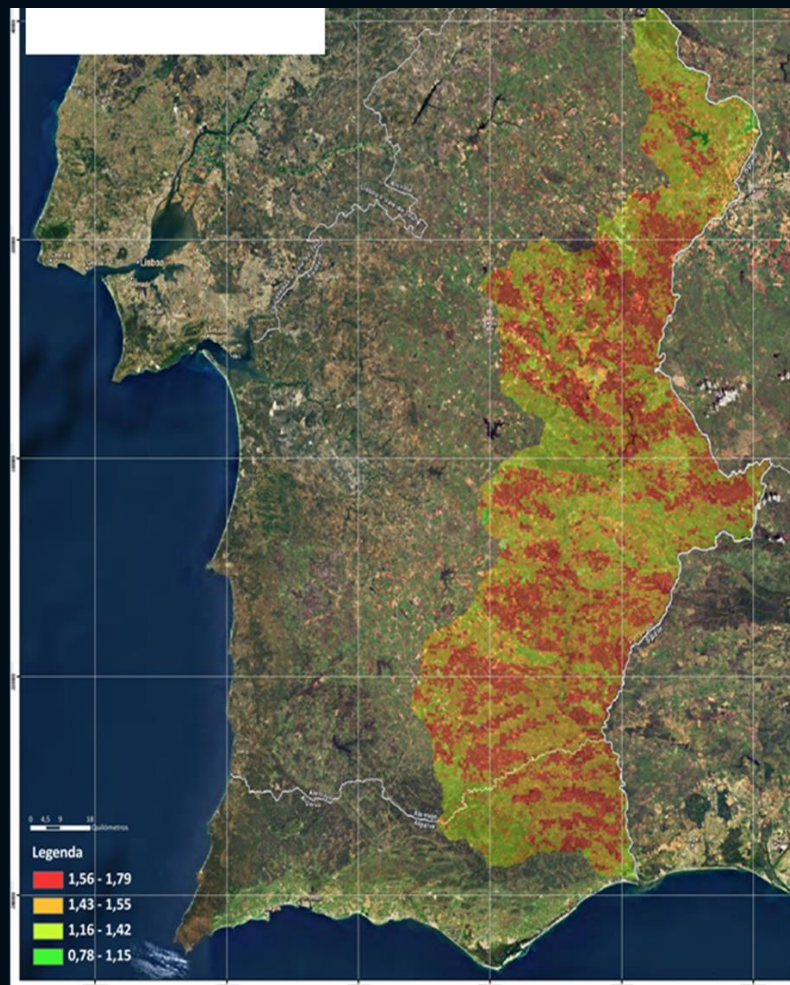
- MS implementing the WFD and its new generation of RBMP's

- MS opting between coordinated or co-managed transboundary RBMP's

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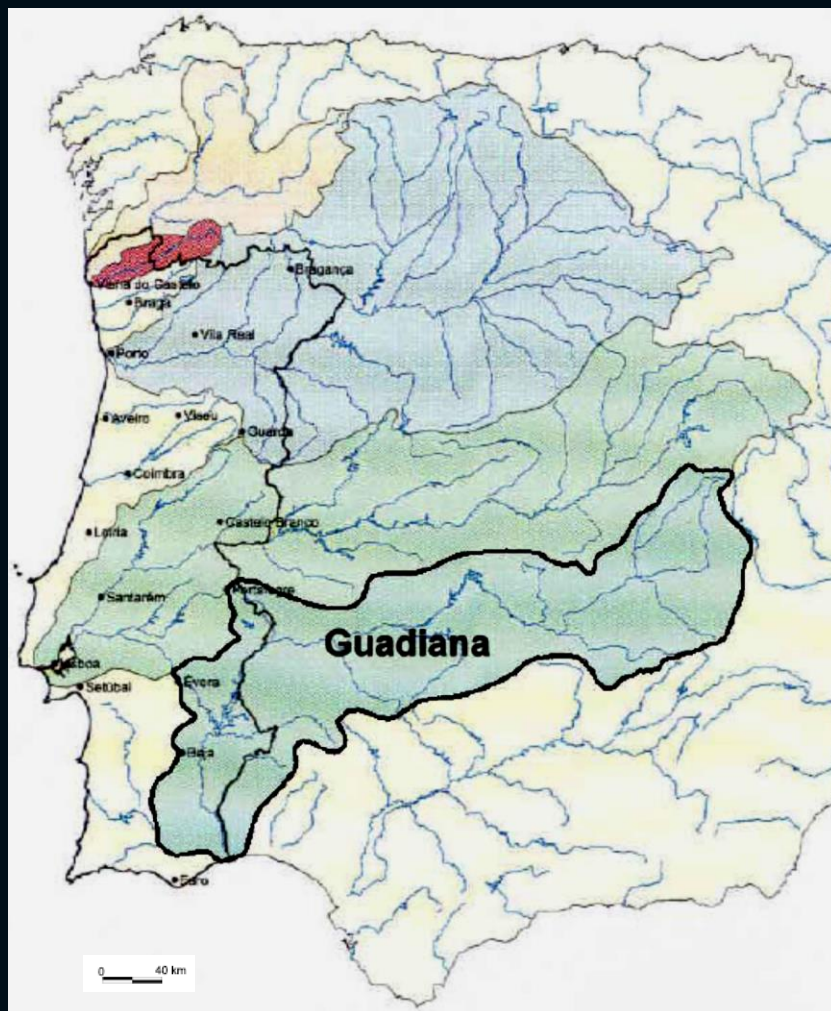
Iberian Political Context

- Excelent diplomatic relations / Poor common resources, political will, and mutual recognition
- Praised Albufeira Convention & flow regime / Exception regime and lack of management tools during severe droughts, exemptions abuse
- Poor coordination between national parts of transboundary RBMP's (focused on cross-border water bodies)



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The importance of shared resources

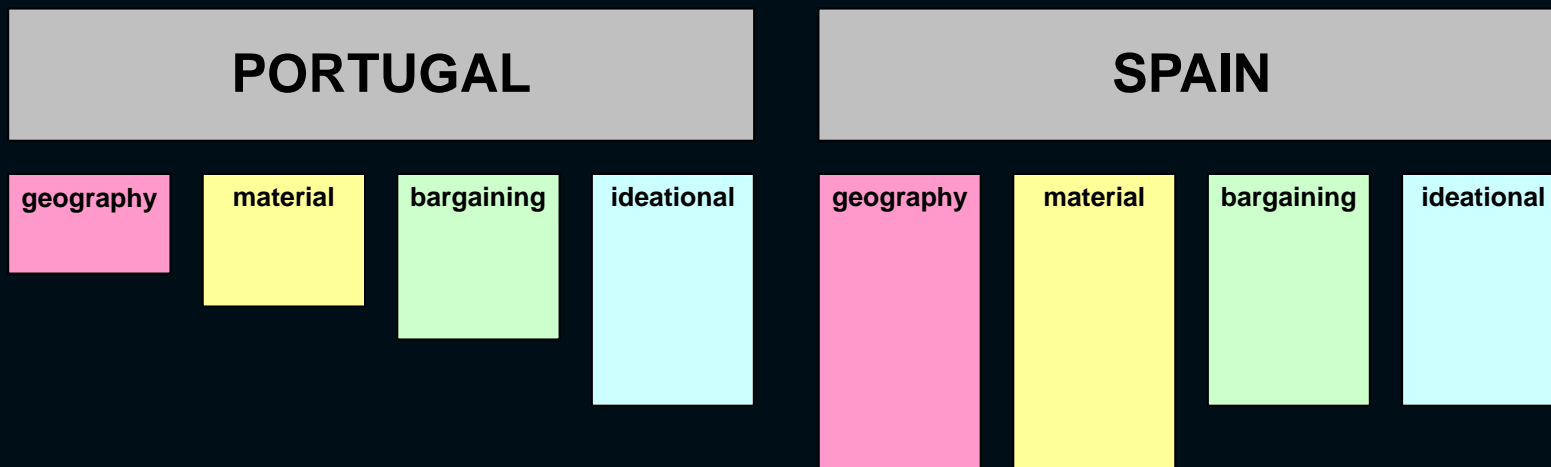


Transboundary Iberian river basins represent:

- 46% of the Peninsula
- 64% of Portugal
- 42% of Spain
- 67% of Portugal's surface
water resources
- 39% of Spain's

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The hydro-hegemonic power of Spain



- Geographic power: upstream/downstream position
- **Material:** financial, economic and human resources
- Bargaining: media exposure, lobbying and advocacy
- **Ideational:** perception biased (who's the victim, who's driest,...)

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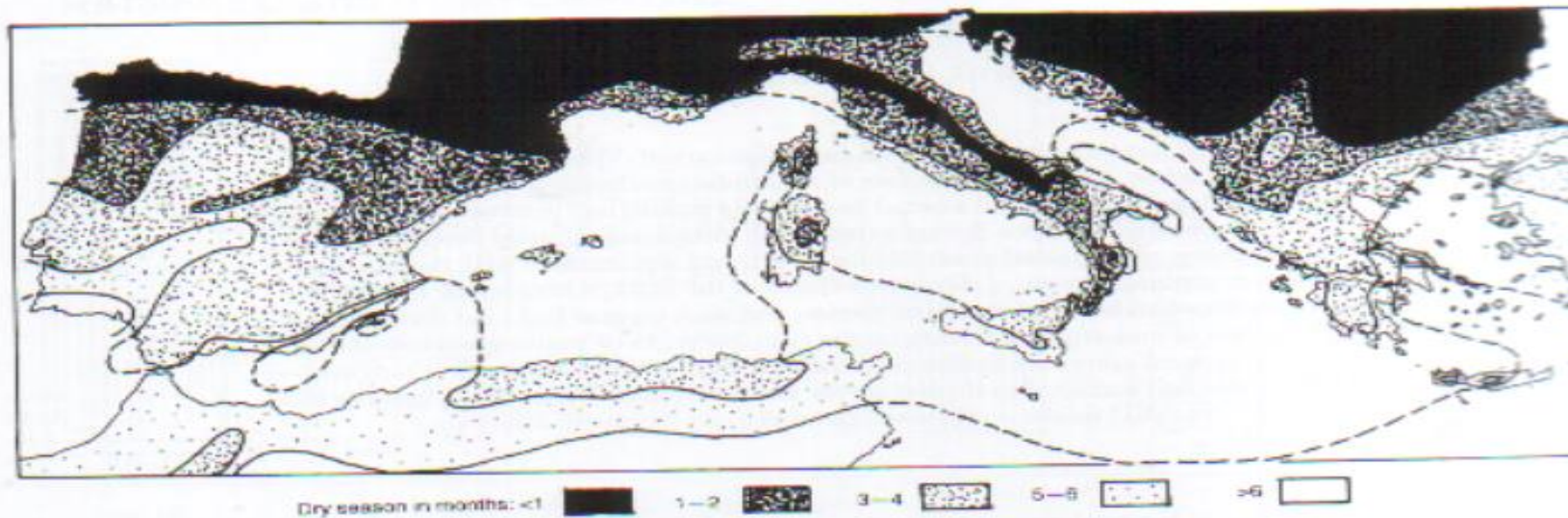


Fig. 2.2. Length of the dry season.

Source: Groove & Rackam, 2004

The hiper-Mediterranean Guadiana:

- The longest dry season (5-6 months)
- The highest summer temperatures (average > 35°C)
- The highest PET and annual solar radiation (>3100 h)
- The strongest inter-annual rainfall variability (CV>.4)

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Social/economic context (Med)



- 💧 Water scarcity due to supply variability and increasing demand (mostly for irrigation and tourism)
- 💧 Flow and runoff reduction due to land use changes and climate change
- 💧 Hydraulic paradigm still dominant among most local and regional decision makers and users

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Incompatible versions of the RBMP

- 💧 Different starting point (Significant Issues): themes PT, problems ES
- 💧 Poor estimation of runoff and inputs from Spain on PT water balance
- 💧 Climate change precautionary approach more developed in ES
- 💧 Water balances by: supply systems ES, virtual geographic units PT
- 💧 Interrupted monitoring series (since 2010) in PT



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Incompatible versions of the RBMP



- 💧 PT lacks water allocation / conflict resolution approach
- 💧 No real cross-border public participation, much higher level in ES
- 💧 Several drought mitigation measures ES, only DMP and relief measures in PT
- 💧 Investment budget (2016-21): 877 M€ ES, 60 M€ PT...

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Institutional shortages for a joint RBMP

- 💧 Albufeira Convention Permanent Secretariat (CADC) never set up
- 💧 Lack of regional / river basin empowerment in PT
- 💧 Regional conflictuality over water competences in ES



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Simply aiming at a single, unified RBMP is not the solution!

Cohen & Davidson (2011): “watersheds may not be appropriate in cases where re-scaling (the governance unit) is being undertaken to address persistent governance challenges, such as lack of monitoring and enforcement, without concomitant attention to the underlying sources of the problem, and may perpetuate rather than solve governance failures”.



Dam Removal Europe international seminar

Connected Rivers: scaling up dam removal as a river restoration tool in Europe

Lisboa, 18-21 May 2022

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BIDDING NATIONS SPAIN & PORTUGAL

Obrigado!

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Afonso do Ó