

# **Iberian Pyrite Belt mining and geological heritage protection and valorization, the ATLANTERRA Project strategy.**

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**ABSTRACT:** The Iberian Pyrite Belt (IPB) is an important European mining region shared by the Alentejo, Algarve and Andalusia and characterized by intense mining of massive sulphide deposits, manganese and iron oxides and Cu, Sb, Pb and Ba veins. These extractive activities promoted a significant mining heritage specially related with the Roman period and from 19<sup>th</sup> century to present. The Portuguese Geological Survey (LNEG) in cooperation with local municipalities and foundations promote an IPB partner network enabling the Pyrite Route (RUMYS Iberoamerican CYTED Project). This thematic cluster is strategically included in the Alentejo touristic policy. The IPB is presently dominated by post mining phase (e.g Lousal, São Domingos and Caveira mines). The IPB present a significant scientific geological heritage represented by the ore deposits and associated hydrothermal systems and by the South Portuguese Zone Upper Palaeozoic volcano-sedimentary stratigraphic sequences. While geological resources are finite, the communities created or developed by mining are not and must be protected from the social and economic decline. To improve their development the project ATLANTERRA (Interreg IVB, Atlantic Space) was created based in a partnership consortium of ten members from Portugal, France, Ireland, UK and Spain. The LNEG activities will include: i) digitalization of the mining archives and consequent better access for educational, historical and genealogical interests; ii) production of geo-mining trails, supported by interpretation panels. To promote the self-guided tours a suite of PDF, MP3 and MP4 web downloadable guides will be created. Key points will have geocache system location; iii) special actions as “a flight over the mines”, “Algares geological garden”, “Lousal open pit trails” and “space Atlantic mining documents”. Project work areas are planned to the Aljustrel, Lousal and São Domingos mines and to the Guadiana Valley, where regional and international trails will be considered.