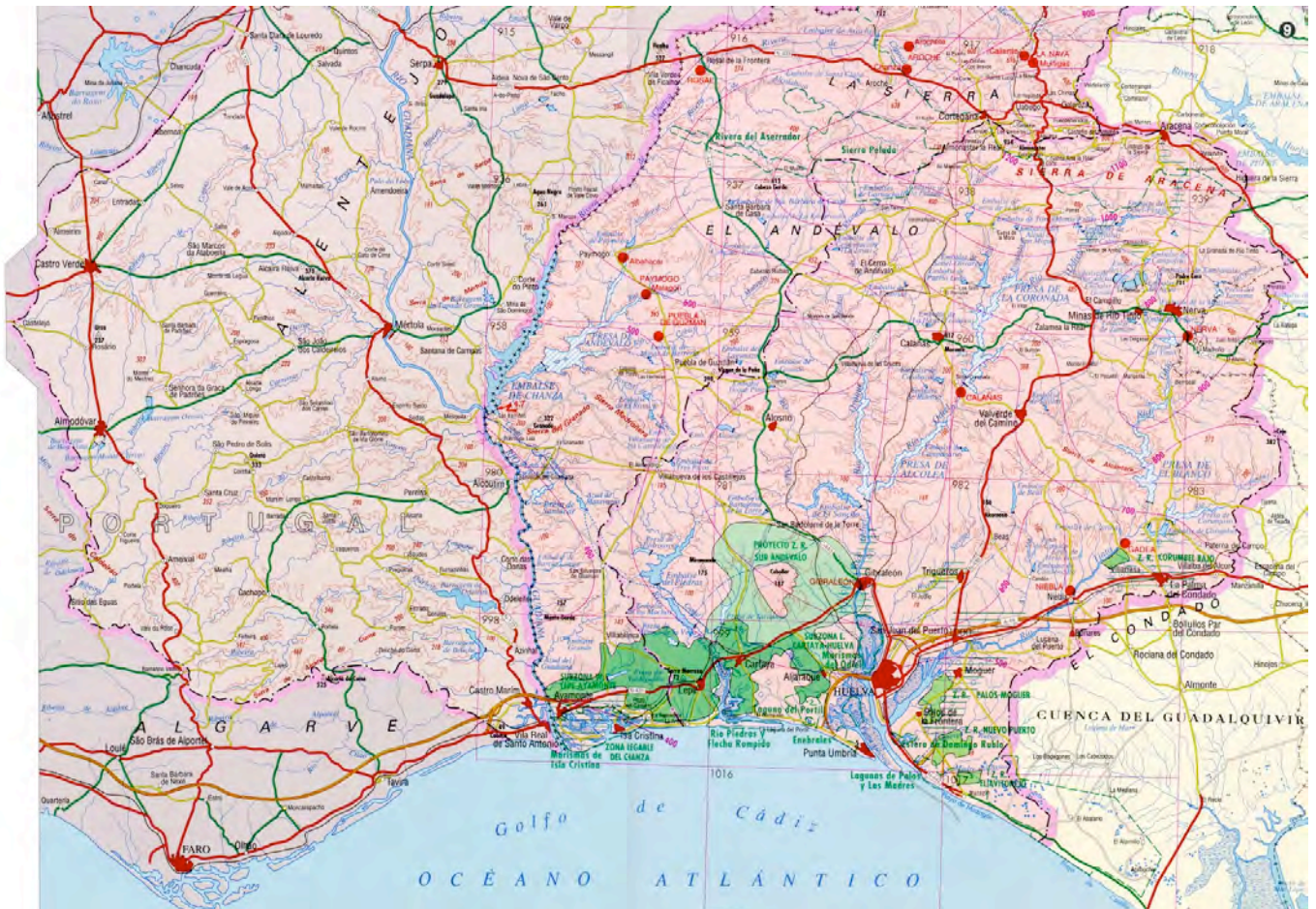


Alentejo Study Site Description

The landscape, at the Portuguese field study site is dominated by a undulating topography (100-200m a.s.l). Soils, are mainly shallow litosols developed over schists. The vegetation comprises mostly of matorral with disperse trees (*Quercus suber* and *rotundifolia*) which is called Montado in portuguese but which is called Dehesa in Spanish. It is a agro silvo pastoral land use type. The main land use changes affecting the landscape in this area are A) The Wheat Campaign, from 1930 until 1974 implemented by the Estado Novo regime and B) The 'Reforma Agraria' from 1974 until late 80-ties, in which changes in culture and farm dimensions were introduced, and C) after 1986 incentives that derived from the Common Agricultural Policies from the European Union.

Often during these different social and physical land use incentives/policies, the Alentejo region has been used for types of agriculture that exceeded the capacity of the ecosystem. Land degradation and desertification processes are common. In a study performed by Roxo and Calvo it is stated that the land use changes in this area are very dynamic in other words responses to the LEDD problems vary from land abandonment to the reclamation of abandoned land into areas for crops or livestock.



Picture 1. Map of the Huelva-Alentejo area.



Picture 2. Landscape in the Alentejo. Photo M.Curfs, July 2009