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This quarter we celebrated moments that reflect who we are and where we are going, guided by our vision of building more and building better.

We started with After Work, gatherings which reinforce our essence: a true family, inside and outside of work. To work is to live and events like this unite us in that purpose.

We also welcomed the 16th edition of the Art & Ingenuity (Arte e Engenho) Programme, a milestone in the integration of new talent, full of energy and ideas that enrich our team. In addition, we launched the + Futuro Programme, which focuses on career management and the development of our employees, thereby boosting our commitment to building successful career paths.

Let's Grow Together, the summer internship programme, brought young students to Casais so thar we could share with them what makes our sector one of the most dynamic and transformative.

CASAIS

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Casais Group

On the partnership front, we signed a protocol with LNEC, consolidating the role of Portuguese engineering on the global stage, and supported the creation of the Construction Foundation, which promises to bring the sector into sharper focus.

We celebrated achievements such as the Golden Lion awarded to Casais Angola and the Topping Out of the Hassan Centenary Terraces, a milestone for us because it is the tallest building ever constructed by our company. We also took important steps towards sustainability with the Valença and Beja student residences and the Tres Cantos B&B concrete proof that we are leading the way in sustainable construction.

Finally, we published our 2023 Sustainability Report and a new essay in book form on the historical legacy of the Porta-da-Loja apple, continuing to value our history while building the future.

Each of these initiatives reflects our core: a commitment to excellence, innovation and sustainability, always with an eye on what unites us.

Let's move ahead together!

EXPERIENCES THAT MARK A CAREER

Nuno Conde Manager – Technical and Sales



I am Nuno Conde, currently Manager,- Technical and Sales at Casais Group, and I would like to share my career path in this group that has played a central role in my professional and personal development. Throughout my career, I have had the opportunity to take part in projects and challenges that have shaped the way I view the construction sector and, more importantly, how I see the impact people have within organisations.

My journey at Casais Group began in a remarkable way with my participation in the 1st Arte e Engenho (Art & Ingenuity) Programme, an innovative programme that I would consider essential for any employee who wants to grow within the group. This programme was not only fundamental to understanding the complexity of the business, but also to developing an integrated vision of how the various companies in the group interact. It was through this programme that I gained an in-depth understanding of the Casais Group's operations, values and organisational culture. It also provided me with practical tools for dealing with day-to-day challenges and built the basis for my network of internal contacts, which I still find indispensable today.

The Art and Ingenuity Programme culminated in my first major project, the Casa das Histórias Paula Rego museum in Cascais, where I started as Assistant Site Manager. This project was a milestone in my career, not only because of its architectural importance and technical specificity, but also because of the team I had the opportunity to work with. The experience of working on such an emblematic project, which combined unusual design and engineering in a unique way, taught me the importance of collaboration and attention to detail. This project was a real learning laboratory, where I developed many of the skills that I still use today. I remember with particular fondness the relationships I built during this initial phase, as it was the starting point for a career that has proved to be so enriching.





After this initial experience, I took on increasing responsibilities and began to work a Site Manager in Portugal. For five years, I led various projects of different sizes and complexity, which allowed me to consolidate my technical knowledge and acquire a strategic vision of the sector. It was during this period that I began to develop a special interest in leadership dynamics, realising that people are the greatest asset of any organisation. Working on significant projects around the country strengthened my ability to manage teams and projects with a focus on efficiency and quality.

In 2013, I was challenged to begin a new chapter in my career: an international assignment in Qatar. Initially, I took on the role of Project Manager, and in that capacity, I led teams on projects of great importance to the country, such as the construction of the metro and infrastructures directly linked to the 2022 Football World Cup. As the challenges became more demanding, I had the privilege of progressing to the position of Country Manager in Qatar, a position that required an even greater commitment to strategic management and multicultural leadership. Working for almost a decade in such a demanding market was a profoundly transformative experience that broadened my view of leadership, management and adapting to highly complex environments.

In addition to my professional experience, I have become deeply integrated into local society. During my visit to Qatar, I had the honour of being elected chairperson of the Portuguese Business Coun**cil**, an organisation that promotes business relations between Portugal and Qatar. This role was an extension of my commitment to building bridges between cultures and creating business opportunities. It was an enriching experience that allowed me to represent the Portuguese community and contribute to strengthening links between the two countries, as well as providing me with an even broader vision of leadership and business diplomacy.



One of the great lessons I take away from this experience is the importance of embracing diversity. Leading teams made up of people from different nationalities, cultures and backgrounds has deeply enriched the way I think and work. I also realised that in a group like ours **there** are global opportunities for those who want to expand their horizons and grow, both personally and professionally. This is something I consider fundamental, especially for young professionals, and I recommend taking advantage of these opportunities whenever possible.

I returned to Portugal in 2022 after almost 10 years in Oatar, bringing with me a wealth of learning and experience that I use every day. I currently have the honour of acting as Manager - Technical and Sales, a position that allows me to work from a global and strategic perspective, coordinating teams and projects that aim to contribute to the success of the Casais Group. Returning to the Casais Group headquarters after so many years away was like coming home. I found an environment that has evolved, but which retains the same values that motivated me from the outset.

I advocate a **positive**, people--centred approach to leadership. I believe that companies are ultimately the people who make



them up, and that a leader's role is to inspire, motivate and create the conditions for each employee to reach their full potential. Positive leadership is not just a strategy, but a commitment to collective success. For me, leading means listening, understanding and giving support. It is creating an environment of trust where every team member feels valued and encouraged to contribute. It is also about promoting a culture of continuous learning, where mistakes are seen as opportunities to grow and innovate.

The Casais Group is an organisation that well known for its long-term vision, combining innovation, sustainability and good ethical standards in all its operations. Every project I have been

involved in has reinforced my belief that we are contributing to something bigger. We are not just building infrastructures, but communities and a more sustainable future too. I believe that the group's success is directly linked to its ability to integrate people, processes and technology harmoniously.

Looking to the future, I see Casais Group as an example of how companies can balance economic growth with positive social and environmental impact. It is this balance that motivates me every day to give my best and to encourage the teams to do the same. Every challenge, whether in Portugal or abroad, is an opportunity to innovate, learn and build a legacy.

To summarise, my career at Casais Group has been marked by experiences that have shaped not only my career, but also my values and the way I see the world. Each stage, from my early beginnings in the Arte e Engenho Programme, to the successive positions I have held, from Assistant Site Manager to Country Manager in Qatar, and now, Manager - Technical and **Sales**, has been an essential part of the journey. Today, I feel honoured to be part of a group that values people and believes in the power of collaboration to achieve great results.

AFTER WORK PORTUGAL

To celebrate the end of summer and bring our teams together, After Work events were organised in Braga, Porto, Lisbon and the Algarve. This Plano Vida (Life Plan) initiative was attended by several of the group's employees and was an opportunity to strengthen bonds, increase co-operation skills, reduce stress and nurture a sense of team cohesion.

Plano Vida brings together a series of initiatives by the Casais Group aimed at promoting a balance between personal and professional life, fostering a culture of well-being in the organisation. Its actions are always centred on the four pillars of physical health, mental health, nutrition and family. The satisfaction rating Plano Vida gets from employees has increased every year. In 2023, we recorded an 85 per cent satisfaction rating with the activities carried out and it has already earned the group distinctions such as the Blue Seal from the Wellbeing Awards in 2023 and the Healthy Workplace seal from Healthy Workplaces in 2024.





Lisbon

Braga

Porto



Algarve







In the third quarter of 2024 we place emphasis on training our on-site **operatives** by providing a series of courses that enabled them to acquire and/or develop technical skills in on-site execution, focusing on the application of tiles, seral, plaster and membrane waterproofing systems. This involved a total of 62 participants and 1,040 hours of training.

We continue to invest in our + Líder Programme, with the start of two new editions in Lisbon, one aimed at Team Leaders and the other at Forepersons. In total, **21 employees**, who will continue the programme until November 2024, participated, together clocking an estimated total of 1117 hours of training.

JULY - SEPTEMBER

3555 Participations

We also focused on aspects of **Cost Control**, with 6 training modules that enabled 129 employees to update their knowledge and internal procedures on the subject, totalling 1032 hours of training.

As part of the career management process, we trained our employees in the use of the new Succession & Development tool. 25 sessions were held, with 499 employees taking part, totalling 754 hours of training.

Lastly, we would like to mention our continued focus on health and safety, with a total of 19 training modules this quarter, involving 130 participants and totalling 1,146 hours of training.

CASAIS GROUP INVESTS IN ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ACADEMIC WORLD

September 2024 Porto, Lisbon and Braga Portugal

On 26 September, the Casais Group awarded seven merit prizes to Master of Engineering students at the OERN Master's Awards ceremony held at the Porto Conservatory of Music.



In addition, it sponsored the Kit for First Year Student in Civil Engineering at the Faculty of Science and Technology of the Nova University of Lisbon and the University of the Algarve.

Further north, it supported the University of Minho's Summer on Campus, a week that allows secondary school students to get to know and experience the various courses and educational areas that the University of Minho has to offer. Blufab is also collaborating with the University of Minho's School of Engineering, through the Master in Industrial Engineering and Management (EGI) course, to implement a teaching-learning methodology for interdisciplinary projects in an industrial context. This initiative consists of promoting a curricular unit that works on Blufab's production system. This project will allow students to take part in a real case study, analyse it and come up with proposals for improvement for the company.







PROGRAMA ARTE 🕂 **& ENGENHO**

September 2024 Braga, Portugal

ARTE & ENGENHO PROGRAMME KICKS OFF A NEW EDITION



On 13 September, the Casais Group welcomed the new trainees for the 16th edition of the Arte & Engenho Programme, a programme that focuses on young professionals, providing them with multidisciplinary experience that opens the door for them to join to the job market. This edition included seven trainees who will be working in various areas of the organisation over the next nine months.

Three days later marked the final day of the 15th Edition, when the six trainees on that programme chose to continue with the Casais Group. This session was marked by an inspiring message from the CEO of the Casais Group, António Carlos Rodrigues, who highlighted the importance of this programme for the organisation, underlining the valuable contribution the young participants make by bringing fresh perspectives and knowledge to the company.



September 2024 _ Braga, Portugal

1ST EDITION OF THE + FUTURO PROGRAMME

The first edition of the Higher Professional Technician in Advanced Construction Technologies course has come to an end. The course was developed in conjunction with the Polytechnic Institute of Cávado and AVE (IPCA) as part of the + Futuro Casais Programme, which aims to invest in attracting and training talent in the construction sector. This edition included 13 students who did internships during the last semester at companies such as Casais Engenharia e Construção, Blufab and Carpin - Casais Wood & Metal. Of these participants, 11 will continue their career with the Casais Group over the next two years, representing a talent retention rate of 73 per cent.

Students are now professionals qualified to prepare and manage construction work, both in terms of techniques and procedures. Some of their duties include analysing projects, specifications and work plans for a construction project and collaborating in the preparation and compatibility of projects for all specialities, as well as making construction drawings, doing BIM modelling and monitoring the execution of works.



July 2024 Braga, Portugal

Over the summer, the Casais Group selected 24 summer interns from more than 300 applicants to follow the day-to-day running of the group's companies and learn about different areas such as engineering, economics and human resources. Whether in the North, Greater Lisbon, or the Algarve, these young people dedicated their summer to acquiring knowledge.



COMPLIANCE AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN BUILDING BUSINESS COLLABORATION

Carolina Maria da Silva Faria

The verb comply, from which we get the word **compliance**, means to fulfil, obey or act in accordance with someone's wishes or request. From a company perspective, this term is used to refer to compliance with the laws, regulations and internal rules in force in a given organisation.

Compliance means compliance with the law, regulations, standards and conduct developed internally and externally, with the aim of ensuring that operations and institutional behaviour are guided by compliance with the law as well as the ethical standards established within the organisation.

Given the growing complexity and rigour of legal requirements, companies are increasingly committed to adopting ethical practices and complying with the legislation applicable to them by adopting and implementing robust and cohesive compliance programmes.

However, we cannot attribute the growing implementation of compliance programmes solely to the legal and regulatory landscape, because stakeholders also play a crucial role since they are now more aware and rigorous in relation to upholding business ethics, viewing ethics and compliance as parameters of responsible and conscious management and efficient corporate governance.

But how does compliance impact business collaboration?

Compliance stimulates business collaboration insofar as it fosters an ethical and honest corporate environment and therefore increases organisational credibility and the ability of departments to communicate with each other and with external partners.

Compliance initially acts as a facilitator of internal collaboration, as it is an instrument that allows various departments to coordinate and synchronise by standardising policies and other internal regulations, which establish rules, standards and procedures

that must be observed by all departments, as well as setting ethical standards of conduct that must be adopted by the organisation's employees.

All of this contributes to defining the organisation's modi operandi and employee responsibilities, making conduct predictable, which encourages active collaboration between departments and employees in order to achieve the desired results, and reduces internal conflicts and the duplication or omission of tasks. Any breach of the company's rules and procedures or disregard for ethical standards can be reported through the whistleblowing channel, which proactively promotes the reporting of irregularities with a view to maintaining ethics and organisational integrity.

The Compliance Department is a true point of interdepartmental liaison, as compliance policies and practices create an efficient communication platform that fosters collaboration and cohesion among the organisation's departments, helping to avoid procrastination at work and strategic misalignment, and ensuring that processes flow efficiently and in a structured manner in line with organisational objectives.

In this way, effective compliance programmes make it easier for departments to work together to achieve common goals, reduce internal conflicts and

consolidate a work environment of integrity, transparency and mutual respect.



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In addition, and in relation to external stakeholders, compliance also plays a vital role in building and consolidating solid links with external partners. This is because the existence and enforcement of compliance programmes and practices not only mitigates potential reputational risks, but also strengthens the organisation's reputation as a reliable and secure partner.

By promoting interactions that meet legal and ethical criteria, compliance protects organisational integrity, generates an ethical and safer business environment, fosters trust and mitigates the risk of conflict and, therefore, reinforces the organisation's image as a trusted partner in the market.

> In an increasingly interactive corporate environment, more and more companies are looking to establish partnerships with organisations that show consistent adherence to rigorous compliance practices and which share common ground as regards corporate ethical values. Such alignment makes it possible to build harmonious, sustainable and long--lasting partnerships.

Therefore, the effective adoption of compliance structures is a key success factor in the market and contributes to the development of external relationships based on high ethical standards, and a high degree of integrity and transparency which, in turn, generate a feeling of trust in customers, suppliers, partners and others with whom we do business.

In conclusion, compliance has a significant impact on boosting business collaboration, both internally and externally. Internally, it strengthens working relationships and the creation of a harmonious operational working environment, which facilitates collaboration between departments and ensures that they are aligned with organisational purposes. Externally, it consolidates the culture of ethics and organisational compliance, providing a crucial framework for the development of more solid, productive and stable partnerships based on shared ethical standards, mutual trust, integrity and transparency.















CEO VISITS THE CONSTRUCTION SITES





August 2024 Portugal

At the end of August, António Carlos Rodrigues, CEO of the Casais Group, visited some of the Casais Construction sites in Portugal. With the aim of promoting continuous improvement in the organisation, the CEO toured the country from north to south, making a point of visiting various work fronts and listening to employees. "Daily work is always intense, and sometimes we stretch the use of our tools to the limit, both physically and mentally. For a saw to keep cutting well, its blades need to be sharpened from time to time. August, with my skip-level visits to construction sites, was one of those moments for me," explained António Carlos Rodrigues.



PRESENTATION AND CONSTITUTION OF THE CONSTRUCTION FOUNDATION

25 July 2024 Lisbon. Portugal

22

The Public Presentation and Constitution Ceremony of the new Construction Foundation, of which Casais Group is a founding member, took place on 25 July. António Carlos Rodrigues, CEO of the Casais Group, represented the Group at the event.

The Construction Foundation's mission is to promote excellence and innovation in the sector, and to provide a space for debate and collaboration between the many different stakeholders. This initiative brings together the Order of Engineers, the Order of Architects, the Order of Economists and 14 leading companies in these sectors, including the Casais Group.







SIGNS

On 10 July, Casais Angola and the Angolan Private Investment and Export Promotion Agency (AIPEX) signed an investment contract, the main aim of which is to strengthen the company's production capacity in Angola, thereby encouraging growth and diversification of the local economy. This partnership also aims to create new jobs, increase the quality and qualifications of the Angolan labour force, share the country's knowledge and technological literacy and increase the competitiveness and efficiency of services provided. As such, this investment contract is set to improve the business environment, improve the living conditions of the population and expand and modernise infrastructures to support for business activity.



CASAIS GROUP AND LNEC SIGN COLLABORATION PROTOCOL



CASAIS ANGOLA CONTRACT WITH AIPEX

July 2024 Angola

The Group has signed a Collaboration Protocol with the National Civil Engineering Laboratory (LNEC), the aim of which is to develop joint studies and research projects. This strategic partnership has as its objective aims to accelerate national development through collaboration in the technical-scientific areas of economics, management, technology and quality as they pertain to construction.

In recognising the importance of strengthening these skills, the Casais Group and LNEC seek to promote innovation and modernisation in the construction sector. This collaboration intends to take advantage of new technologies and industrial methods to improve the efficiency and quality of construction and operational processes. The Protocol not only strengthens research and development, but also aligns with efforts to modernise the AECO (Architecture, Engineering, Construction and Operations) sector to make it more competitive and sustainable.

MCRO-CREDENTIALS AND MGRO-KNOWLEDGE

Ana Dias Ribeiro Casais Academy Manage



According to the European Commission, micro-credentials are qualifications that certify learning outcomes resulting from short--term learning experiences, courses or modules and can therefore be obtained by people in various modalities: face-to-face, online or blended learning.

The EC points out that these new forms of accreditation translate into a form of learning that is "extremely flexible and inclusive" because they allow the acquisition of competences suited to different profiles and needs.

Such short-term qualifications will be useful, for example, for those who want to supplement their knowledge or for those who want to retrain, looking for a new position in the labour market, and therefore facilitates the mobility of professionals.

The philosophy behind this practice is that of lifelong learning, in which people are able to find new opportunities for growth by obtaining these qualifications.

Diversified offers are beginning to emerge from universities to guarantee this support for the labour market and the upskilling and reskilling needs of professionals, with the provision of accredited courses focused on specific skills and competences. To highlight some examples from Portugal, there is the University of Minho's "Postgraduate Alliance – Skills for the Future" project, in which Casais is a partner, along with more than 80 companies. The University of Aveiro and Universidade Aberta (Open University) also offer training in the context of micro-credentials, to bolster the training offered in this area.

As far as technical training is concerned, work is also being done to revise the National Qualifications Catalogue in Portugal with the introduction of units of competence, in response to the challenge to develop and integrate short-term training units into existing qualifications. thus enabling people to accumulate credits throughout their process of lifelong learning, thereby giving them the opportunity to obtain a full qualification at a later date

There has been an effort on the part of both training providers and schools, as well as on the part of companies, to ensure that this does in fact occur. Partnerships have therefore emerged to strengthen and speed up these types of projects, making certifications faster, more effective and more practical, as a means to respond to the rapid changes in the labour market and business sectors.



Casais is a member of the Green Circle project, which aims to:

- Identify, develop, test and evaluate the use of micro-credits in the construction sector to achieve a green transition.
- Act as a catalyst for a wider transformation in which micro-credentials become an accepted part of the employment landscape and a solution to skills upgrading needs.
- Use technology as a way of increasing the skills levels of the workforce, providing appropriate skills for rapidly changing labour markets, and equipping the current and future workforce with the creativity and skills to cope with the growing complexity of environmental and social challenges they face.



We are part of a group of 11 partners from four European Union countries (Portugal, Spain, Germany and Greece), that brings together a range of stakeholders selected from each country, with objective of achieving the following by 2026:

- Producing a report with analysis of a Green Skills micro-credentialing ecosystem.
- Reporting proposing a sustainable model • Green Skills micro-credentialing in the construction sector.
- Producing a report analysing the provision of micro-credentials and quality assurance for a Green Skills micro-credentialing ecosystem in the construction sector.
- Devising eight educational/training modules related to Green Skills development in the construction sector in the form of Open Educational Resources.

More information about the project can be found here:



2024 was the first year of the project, and featured a series of initiatives:

- The project kick-off meeting, organised by the partners in Portugal and held on 1 and 2 February 2024 at the Casais Group headquarters in Braga, was attended by 17 people from the various partners in the four countries.
- Events to disseminate the project, the first of which was part of the programme of Greenfest, the largest sustainability event in Portugal, with a presentation on 27 September 2024 to around 30 participants, and a series of three more online events promoted by the partners in Portugal (Casais, Ciccopn and Tecminho) are planned for the rest of the year.
- Focus group meetings, the first of which was held on 30 September 2024, with the second scheduled for 7 November 2024.

CASAIS ANGOLA AWARDED **GOLDEN LION**

Casais Angola was honoured with the Golden Lion in the category of Best Participation in Construction and Public Works during the 39th edition of the Luanda International Fair (FILDA). This is clear proof of the company's ongoing commitment to excellence and innovation in the Angolan civil construction sector.

Casais Angola, Carpin Angola and Probetão were all represented at FILDA, the largest international trade event in Angola The fair took place from 23 to 28 July in the Special Economic Zone (SEZ). On the second day of the event, the Casais Angola stand was visited by the Prime Minister of Portugal, Luís Montenegro, and the Portuguese delegation.



TOPPING OUT AT THE HASSAN CENTENARY TERRACES









A topping out ceremony was held in celebration of the completion of the reinforced concrete structure of Phase 2 of the Hassan Centenary Terraces (HCT) in Gibraltar. The event marked the end of the works that began in March 2020 and was attended by Chief Minister of the Government of Gibraltar. Mr Fabian Picardo, as well as around 400 guests, including Casais Group employees, local organisations, suppliers and subcontractors.

WEARELEADING THE NEW GENERATION OF CONSTRUCTION READ ABOUT OF LATEST PROJECTS

CONSTRUCTION OF THE BEJA STUDENT RESIDENCE HAS BEGUN

Responding to the housing needs of Beja's student community, the Casais Group has begun the foundations for yet another project using the timber-hybrid construction system. Located next to the School of Technology and Management of the Polytechnic Institute of Beja, this residence has an area of around 11.000 square metres, with an enclosed courtyard for an interior patio and an uncovered green area. In addition to the ground floor, the residence will have three additional storeys, giving it the capacity to accommodate 503 students.

CASAIS ESPAÑA FINALISES CONSTRUCTION OF B&B HOTEL TRES CANTOS

Casais España has completed construction of the Hotel B&B Tres Cantos, the first timber-hybrid construction building in Spain. The project used the CREE system, an industrialised timber-hybrid (wood and concrete) solution involving the prefabrication of the structure and façades.

This project, the result of a partnership with ACR and Tdb Arquitetura, has a type of construction that is more environmentally friendly than usual, which can reduce the carbon footprint as much as more than 60% through the use of engineered wood and only one-third of the concrete of a traditional building.



CASAISLEVS

Casais Group

VALENÇA ACADEMIC RESIDENCE

The Casais Group finished assembling the structure of the new student residence at the Polytechnic Institute of Valença, designed to meet the urgent need for student housing, in a remarkably short nine days. With an investment of two million euros, the residence will be ready to welcome students in the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year.

The rapid assembly is the result of using the CREE Buildings timber-hybrid system, which uses a wood and concrete composite to provide a more sustainable and faster construction compared to traditional methods. The residence is located on Avenida Pinto Mota. Its 1,200 square metres consists of 24 double rooms, eight single bedrooms, study rooms, a kitchen and communal living spaces.

During the assembly phase, the site was visited by organisations such as the Institute for the Financial Management of Social Security in Public Construction, the Directorate-General for Investment in Housing Division and the Sonae group so that they could see this system that has halved development time compared to the traditional construction model.

FROM THE José Carlos Goncalves Peixoto Historian and author of the essay "From SHOP DOOR the Porta da Loja to the Tibães Monastery **AND THE** Consulte o livro "CASALES" **TO THE TIBÃES** MONASTERY



Only a hardened heart cannot be moved by the floods in Chiva and Paiporta, in the Valencia region in Spain. Amid the shock, chaos and disgrace surrounding this natural disaster, the issues of sustainability and climate change have once again come to the fore. In this context, we would like to highlight a few initiatives to mitigate the damage: the partnership between the Mestre Casais Foundation and the University of Minho, which has published a series of publications and essays on sustainability; and COP 29, the United Nations climate summit taking place in Baku, Azerbaijan, which aims to establish a new North-South financial aid programme for the fight against and adaptation to climate change. Speaking of the green economy, we would like to draw attention to the fifth in the "Essays for Sustainability" series, entitled, "From the Porta da Loja to the Tibães Monastery".

Porta da Loja is the name of the apple brought to the fertile soils of Tibães by the Benedictine Monks because an apple tree grew there behind the "door of the shop", or Porta da Loja.

The main aim of this study is to uncover the history of a story that has come down to us through the generations so that historical amnesia does not drown out its origins.

We would like to note the symbiosis between Porta da Loja apple and its provenance, attributed to the Tibães monastery. This fruit has its origins in the parish of Mire de Tibães and in the extended nucleus of the Casais family, faithful custodians of this legendary cultural heritage.

In this epic genealogical saga, supported by reputable sources, the Casais family and Casais (Casales) Group have preserved a legacy from the land once owned by the Benedictine monks of the Tibães Monastery on two sides:



• that of the ancestors of António Fernandes da Silva, known as Mestre Casais, specifically through his great-great-grandmother Maria Rosa da Cunha, born in 1796 (known as Maria Casais), who worked the monastery's farms (casales).

 that of the ancestors of the wife of the founder of the Casais Group, groundskeepers of the enclosed monastery land and the Eira and Ouriçosa farms. As always, we respect the handing down of testimonies, tradition and the legacy of ancestors as a symbol of the identity of the village and its residents. With this in mind, we see that after the monks were plundered and expelled, the monastic property was nationalised and then put up for public auction, being acquired in the 19th century (the enclosure in 1838, the remaining part in 1864) by burghers from Braga who only came to the village during the harvest season and when they were collecting rents. Here are the different generations of groundskeepers, whose hard work and determination was passed down from father to son: José Francisco (b. 1791), who is believed to have been groundskeeper from 1838 to 1864; Manuel Francisco Gomes (b. 1824), from 1864 to 1894; Domingos Gomes (b. 1853), from 1894 to 1906, and his brother, Manuel Gomes (b. 1868), from 1906 to 1930, and Manuel Joaquim Gomes (b. 1899), father of Mestre Casais' wife, from 1919 to 1935. Other brothers followed in this endeavour.

We have learnt that the Porta da Loja variety of apple is something that came down to us from the Benedictine, having been produced in one of the manure heaps or terraces spreading to farms

The name of this variety first appeared in July 1924, on the occasion of the 3rd National Agricultural Congress. Curiously, we are currently celebrating the centenary of the first time the compound word maçã-da-portada-loja, meaning "shop-door apple", was written.

> Until now, the name or designation of the variety was unknown, because the Benedictines, true agronomist monks, implemented the cultivation of many fruit trees, particularly the extensive planting of apple trees, but they did not specify names for the varieties grown. As they had been expelled 90 years earlier, and as the newspapers and documents of the time state, these apples came from one hundred-year-old apple trees, the very tall, mature, gnarled trees located in the inn's orchard, between the Galo fountain and the monastery's west corner. We can only conclude that this variety of apple is of Benedictine origin and has come down to us through the methods of propagation, mutation and reproduction of the apple tree, specifically through the process of divining (burying the divining rod), staking (burying and holding with stakes) and grafting (plant multiplication).

> While the owners of the private part of the monastery held on to what they had acquired, reaping the rewards, it was the groundskeepers who—with a lot of sweat and toil, labouring from sunrise to sunset to the rhythm of the sundial in the bell tower-acquired the land surrounding the cloisters, and so spread this variety of apple to the surrounding farms, thereby preventing it from falling into extinction.

From the above, we are led to conclude that this variety of apple probably had a different name during the time of the Benedictines and that the nomenclature "Porta--da-Loja apple" was given after the expulsion of the monks from the monastery of Tibães, and thereafter used to refer to it by the new owners of the farms or the monastery's former groundskeepers. In view of the above, and given that we cannot find the name of this variety documented in the 19th century, it is our understanding that this attribution took place in the 1920s, during the time of Manuel Gomes, the paternal grandfather of Conceição da Silva Gomes, wife of Mestre Casais.

Master Casais' son, Manuel da Silva Fernandes, an agronomist, played a significant role in the planting of apples trees, initially on a small scale and then later more extensively. He experimented with dwarf rootstocks to introduce this variety, identifying and preserving the genetic profile of the variety, of this centenary treasure, taking into account that the region where it was planted met the required climatic conditions: a temperate climate, a cold winter period and a warm growing season with adequate sunlight.

Today, the family has continued its legacy by increasing the area under cultivation, especially on the Souto estate. in one of the parishes on once free-tenure land in the municipality of Tibães.

The manuscripts left to us by the Benedictines, specifically their books of account, shed light on their innovative propagation and fertilisation techniques. They also reveal that they had the most up--to-date knowledge from the most advanced literature of the time, and knew how to select the best varieties to obtain the best quality and highest yields.

After wandering around various farms where the excellent fruit is grown, we have deduced that the name "Porta-da-Loja" for the apple is the result of two factors: the place where it was grown, and the place where it was kept. Apparently it is a traditional variety of Portuguese apple that ended up becoming popularised with a name Porta-da-Loja now given to it based on the simple fact that it was on the property and in the vicinity of the "shop" near close to the monastery where it grew.

The lively debate surrounding this apple was for us a meeting point between history, the survival of the rural world and depopulation. When produced in natural conditions, preserved in a natural way, classified, standardised and packaged, it achieves the attributes recognised and valued by the market. The truth is that knowing the characteristics, origins, traditions and qualities of this apple, such as the fact that it has stood the test of time-and that all it needs is to be kept in a mild, humid, ventilated place that is equidistant from the north and east-makes this particular variety a fruit of choice.



See the full Sustainability Report



PORTUGUESE PRIME MINISTER VISITS THE CONSTRUCTION SITE IN ANGOLA



As part of his official visit to Angola, Luís Montenegro, the Prime Minister of Portugal, visited the construction site of the new Consulate General of Portugal in Benguela, which is being built by Casais Angola. This project is a significant milestone in the strengthening of diplomatic relations between Portugal and Angola, symbolising cooperation and joint development over the 25 years that Casais has been in Angola.





CASAIS ANGOLA PARTICIPATES IN THE 13TH ENERGY **AND WATER ADVISORY** COUNCIL



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In September, Casais Angola attended the 13th Consultative Council at the Venâncio de Moura Academy in Luanda. Under the theme "Energy and Water -Challenges and Solutions for the Expansion and Sustainability of the Sector", the event brought together the sector's top executives to assess national progress and discuss the next steps. Committed to sustainability and innovation, Casais Angola is closely monitoring solutions for the expansion of these sectors, recognising the challenges faced by Luanda province and Angola as a whole.



FMC TAKES PART AT APCE MEETING

12	
September	
2024	
_	
Lisbon,	
Portugal	

The Mestre Casais Foundation was selected to take part in the Meeting of the Network of Parliamentarians for a Healthy Environment, of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, which is part of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Lisbon (PACE). João Crispim, Head of Corporate ESG, gave a presentation which addressed issues such as the decarbonisation of the transport and construction sectors, which have been studied by the Foundation.



FMC TALKS **ANTÓNIO RAMALHO AND A DISCUSSION ON SUSTAINABILITY IN THE REAL ESTATE SECTOR**

17 September 2024 — Braga, Portugal

On 17 September, the Mestre Casais Foundation organised another lunchtime debate, this time with António Ramalho, former President of Novo Banco and Infraestruturas de Portugal, as its special guest. The event, which took place at the Meliã Hotel in Braga, was attended by around 70 people and centred around the crucial theme of "The Path to Sustainability in the Real Estate Sector". The trends and challenges of this rapidly changing sector were discussed, with a special focus on the importance of balancing economic growth and environmentally responsible practices.











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