



Rome, 23rd June 2011

Parallel Session

Present and future role of forest resources in the socio-economic development of rural areas

Parallel Session 4

Competitiveness of the forest production sector: wood & non-wood products, supply chains, and strategies for a forest-based local governance

RURAL CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR CORK OAK INDUSTRY

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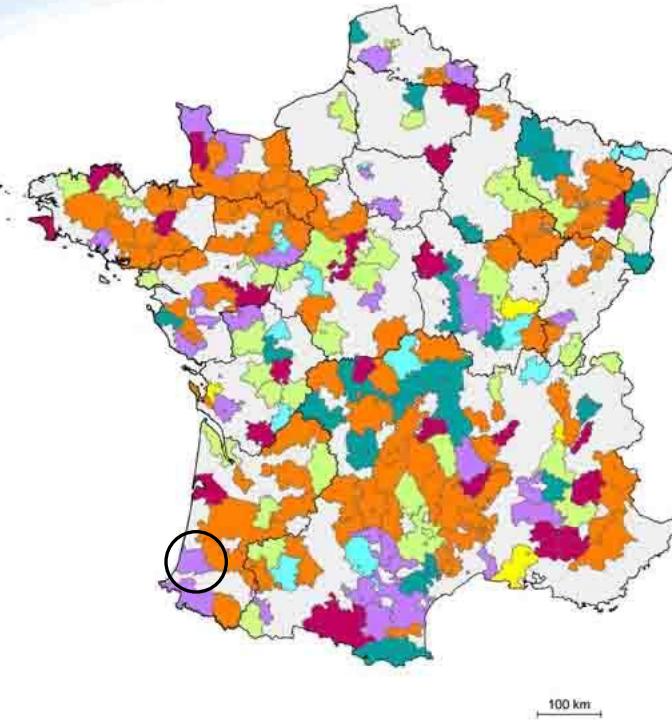
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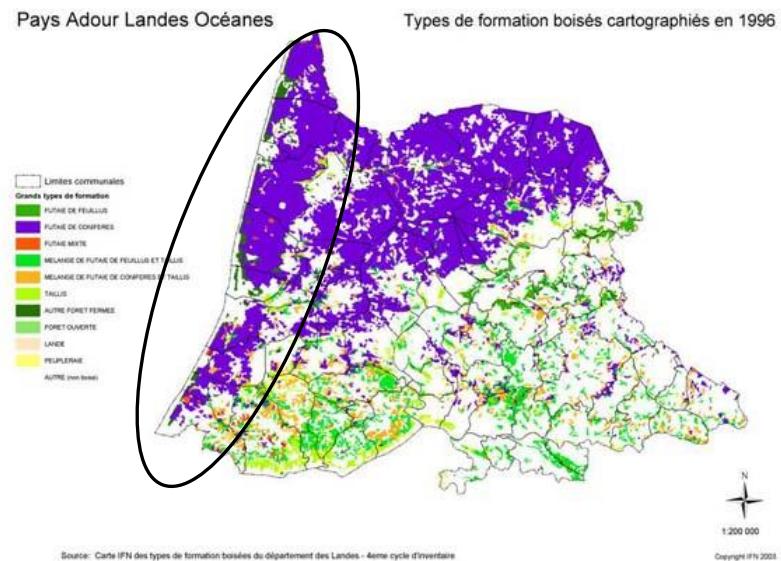
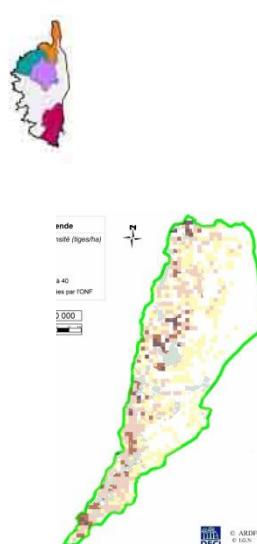
Presentation of Adour Landes Océanes territory



**Forest cover 49%,
73,970 ha
65,000 ha are private forest
13,000 foresters
Public Forests : 17,000 ha
Cork oak 2,300ha**



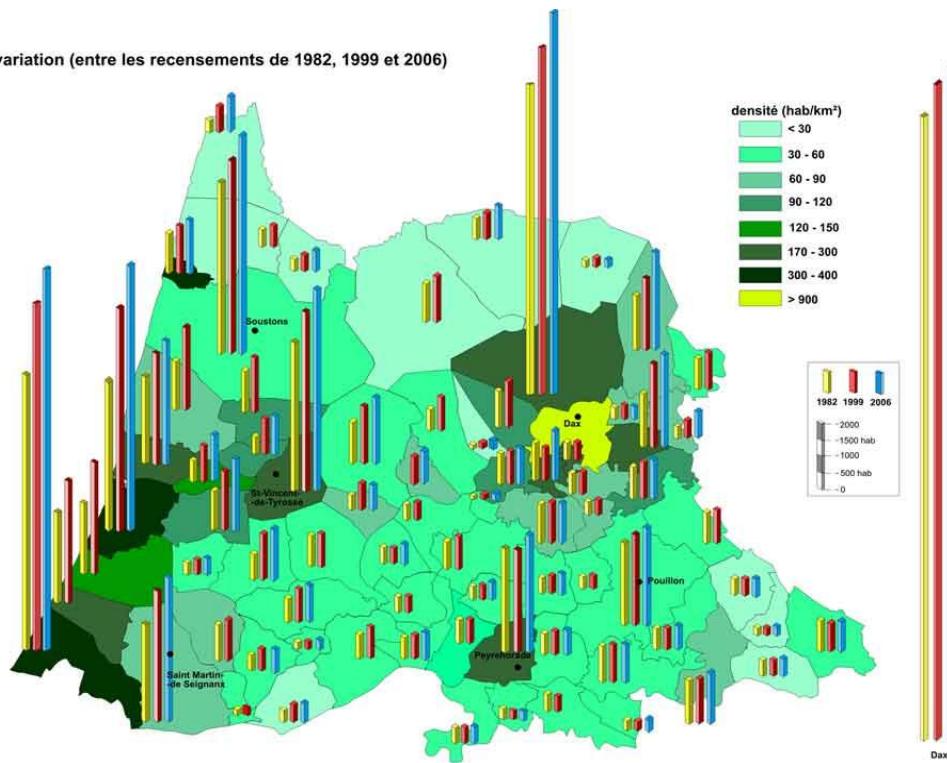
Source: FAO, Silva Mediterranea



Presentation of Adour Landes Oceans territory

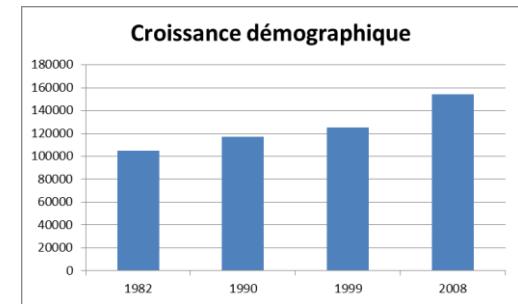
The demographic growth has been shown to be a **destabilizing force**.
Forestry issues need to be placed in the **perspective of local sustainable development**.
Forest must act as the driving force.

Population : variation (entre les recensements de 1982, 1999 et 2006)

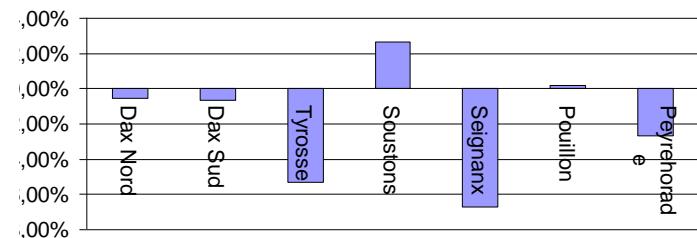


Source : Pays Adour Landes Océanes. Recensements 1999 - 2006

Croissance démographique



Evolution des surfaces boisées 1985/96



The forest is strongly rooted in the realities of the region and the cork industry forms part of those realities.

The rural centres of excellence call for proposal



The “Pôle d’Excellence Rural” (Rural Centres of Excellence) help bringing out a wide range of action proposals adapted to the rural context and encourage the development of “rural excellence”

461 projects have been lodged in 2011, and 150 of these have been labelled, including the one lodged by the LAG Adour Landes Océanes on the theme **of developing the cork industry in liaison with the Regional Forest Charter**



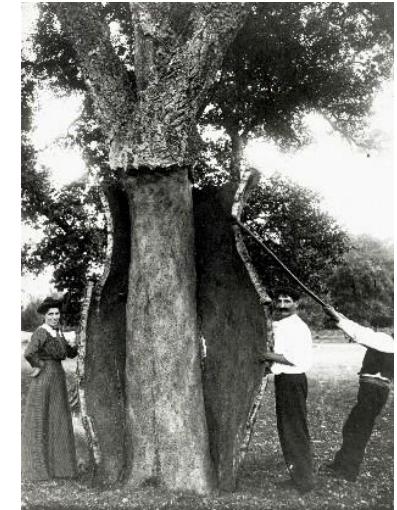
Why do we work on cork industry development?

Cork exploitation began in our territory on an organized basis in the 19th Century linked to the proximity of the Bordeaux vineyards.

This highly flourishing sector **collapsed** because :

- In 1830, a particularly harsh winter caused the **virtually total destruction of the cork oaks**. Manufacturers were forced to import a high proportion of their raw material.
- The problem was exacerbated by the Drainage Act of 1857. **The cork oak found it hard to cope with competition from the maritime pine.**
- The **slump in prices** in the 1950s led to the closure of a number of firms. Local cork was no longer used due to the exploitation costs.

**Local memory has preserved the tradition of cork and stripping.
But the industry has been somewhat marginalized.**



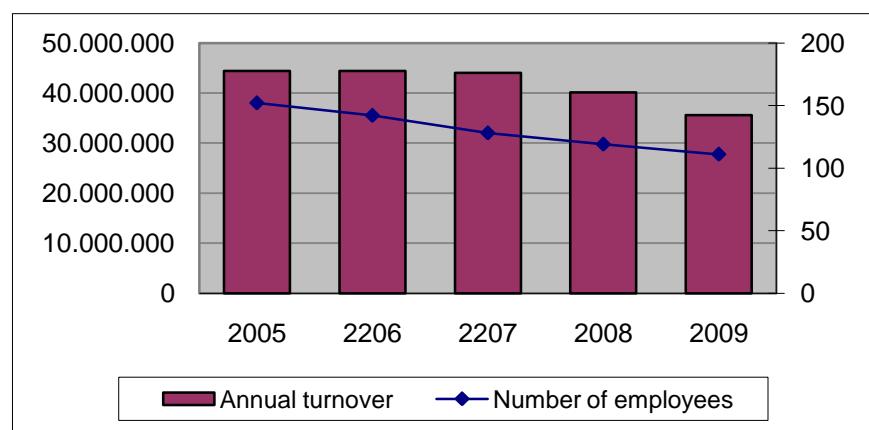
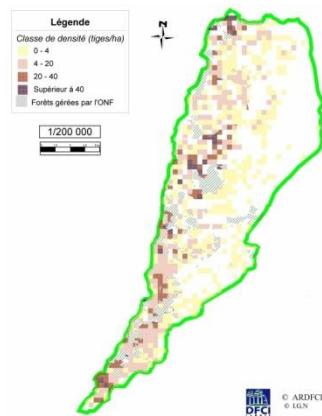
Why do we want a rural centre of excellence label for cork industry development?



In 2000, 6 manufacturers initiated the resumption of cork harvesting.
In 2005, they grouped together in an association – “Gascon Cork” – to discuss their raw material, act together and promote their know-how.

The issues linked to the cork oak and the cork industry were incorporated into the Pays Adour Landes Océanes Forest Charter and LEARD strategy.

The **initiatives** that were carried out were too **specialized** and lacked coherence. Paradoxically, there is a growing interest in cork in some particularly innovative sectors.



It was therefore decided to respond to the Rural Centre of Excellence call for projects in order to introduce a global development strategy and give some clarity to this local industry

The cork industry development Rural Centre of Excellence

A working party made up of public and private organizations (private cork firms situated in the region, local authorities, forest organizations and training organizations) from the network put in place by the RFC, met to respond to the call for proposal.

This group share diagnosis and action plan to develop cork industry on the south of Landes department.



The objectives of rural centre of excellence for cork industry



The first objective is economic

The cork industry represents sales of over 35 million € and 111 jobs. The Rural Centre of Excellence needs to support the modernization of the production facilities, research and development

The second objective is environmental

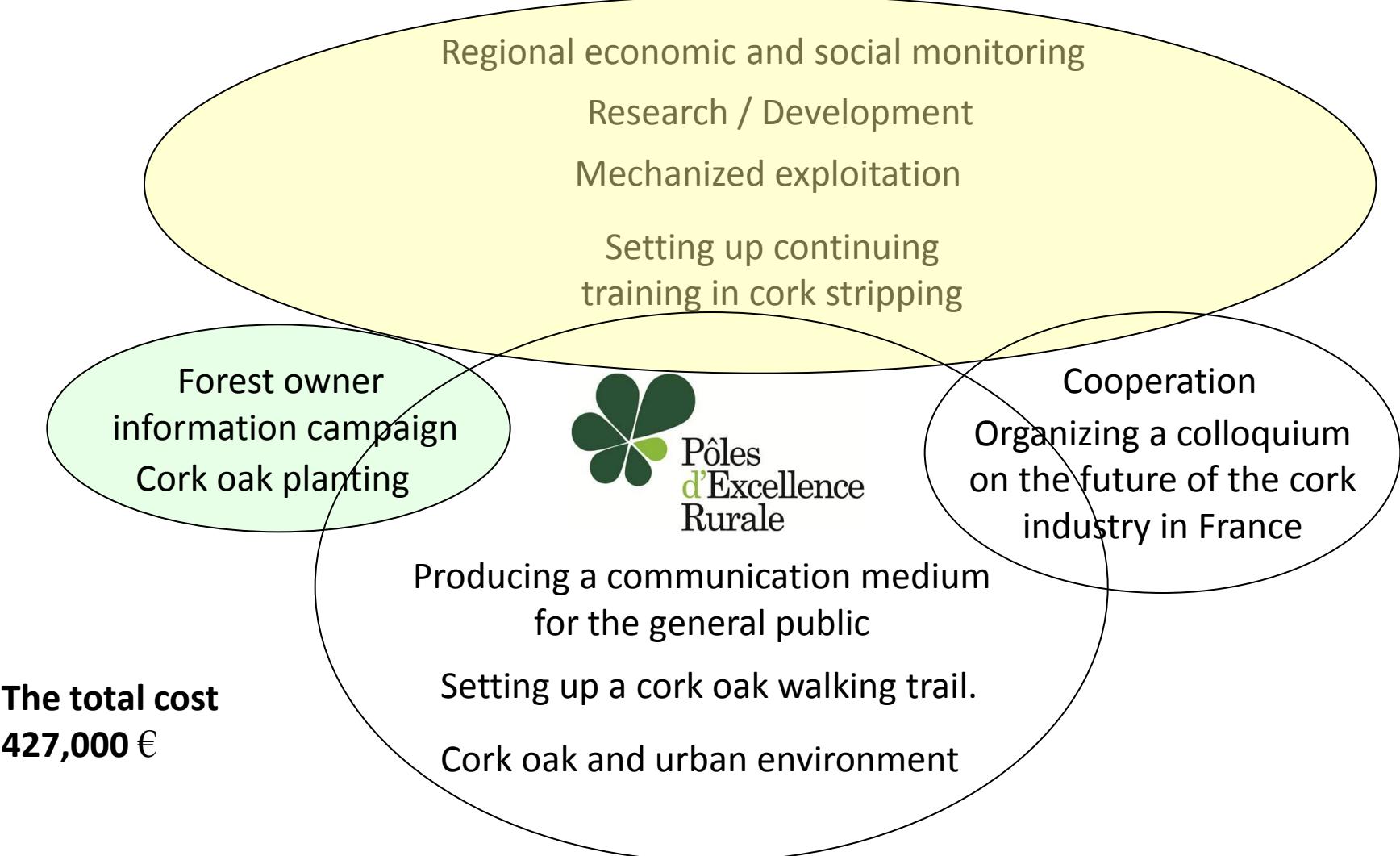
The tree lives in a limited geographical area (2,300 hectares) and is of primary importance to biodiversity. The development of the species would give *a better image of the region* and help to *develop biodiversity in the forest..*



The third objective is related to heritage

Cork oak exploitation forms part of the attraction of the landscape and perpetuates a tradition that is rooted in the collective memory. Against a background of significant cultural and sociological change, this interest in the trees and the materials should be promoted.

The actions program of rural centre of excellence for cork industry



The acknowledgement of the rural centre of excellence

- **innovation** in both the form and content of the project. It is the first time that the industry has been structured around a project that includes a public/private partnership.

-**multifunctionality** (economy, biodiversity, social functions) is approached in a new way.

- The award of the PER Label is already a **sign of recognition**. Industry representatives are looking for project-based initiatives. New ideas are working through.

- The label helps to provide **easier access to finance**, although local representatives have never seen the approach purely from the financial point of view.



The acknowledgement of the rural centre of excellence



- The fact that the project is coordinated and led by a regional structure shows the value of a dialogue between forestry and non-forestry groups.
- The project follows on from the Regional Forest Charter. The work that has been done within this framework – the only inter-branch discussion group available at a local level – has helped representatives to get to know each other better
- Our work also allows us to approach multifunctionality in a different, less antagonistic manner.





Thank you for your attention