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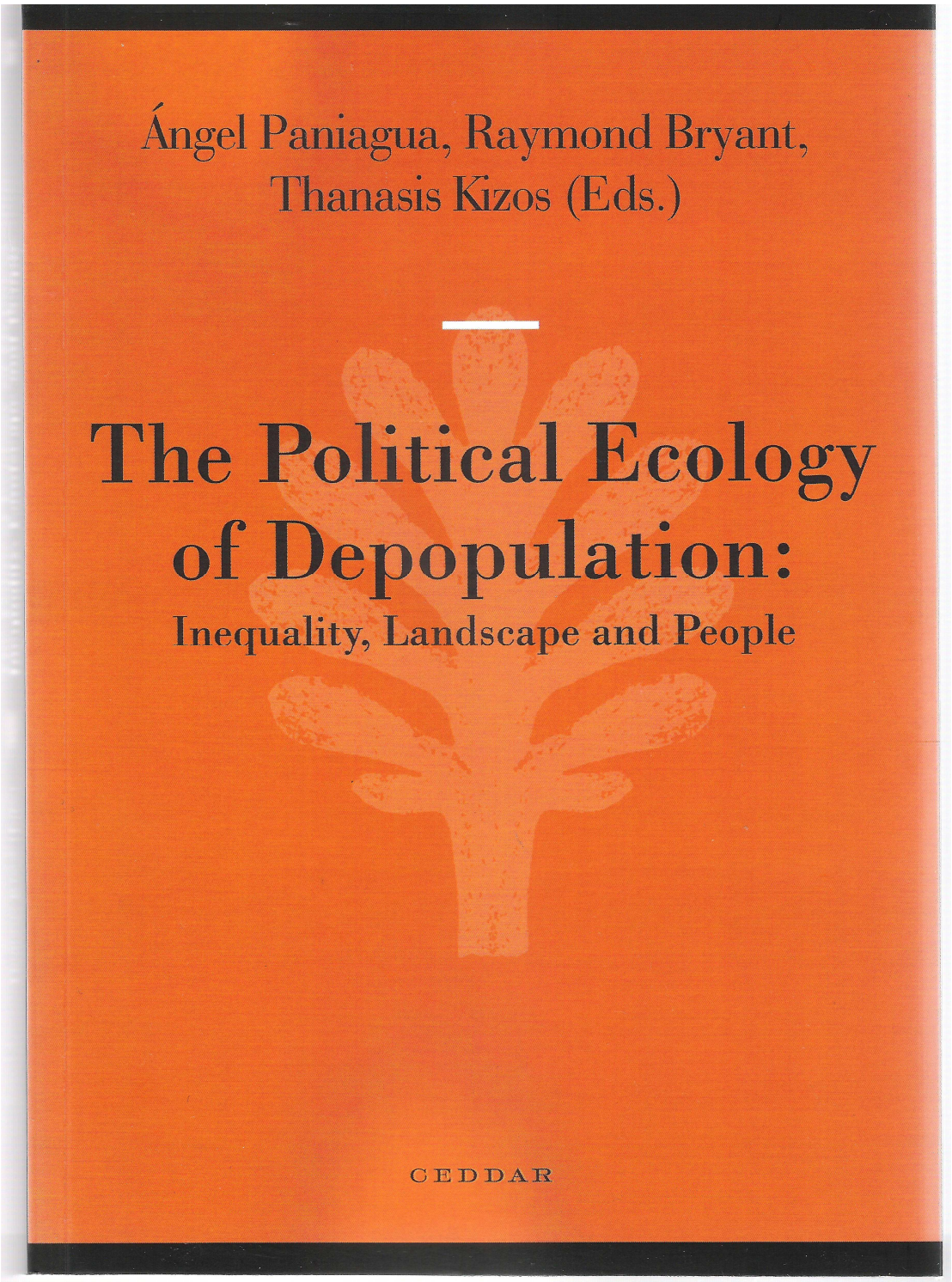

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info@ceddar.org www.ceddar.org

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CONTENTS

THE ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION OF LEADER APPROACH. AN ANALYSIS FROM BEST ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES IN SPAIN

JAVIER ESPARCIA[1]

1. Research Institute of Local Development Department of Geography, University of Valencia. javier.esparcia@uv.es

1. Introduction: Rural development and its environmental dimension

Since the late 80's, and especially during the 90's, environmental issues have been impregnating everything related to agriculture and rural development (Esparcia and Noguera, 1997). The first important step was the last big reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (Agenda 2000), which introduce a clear positive bias in favor of incorporating environmental considerations into agricultural policies (codes of environmental best practices, agro-environmental measures, etc.). But in addition to the growing greening of agricultural policy, environmental policies themselves have had an increasingly greater presence in rural areas (García Pascual, 2001). Thus, issues such as environmental protection (also in rural areas) and landscape conservation have been key elements in environmental policies of the past two decades.

In parallel with this increased greening of the CAP under Agenda 2000, the territorial approach to rural development had into consideration from the beginning the strategic importance of the environment in development strategies in rural areas (Mondéjar *et al.*, 2007). Thus, the presence of environmental issues in rural development within the framework of this territorial approach, has been growing since the early 90's until the mid-2000s, with the completion of LEADER+ and PRODER 2[1]. But besides the interest and presence of environmental issues, in general

1. PRODER has been a twin national program of rural development LEADER, which has been implemented almost in parallel with LEADER. PRODER 1 ran from 1996 to 1999 (LEADER II from 1994 to 1999), and PRODER ran 2 from 2000 to 2006 (same that LEADER+). Its has been implemented in intermediate rural areas; however, in Andalusia PRODER 2 has been applied to the same territories that LEADER+, complementing it.

the environment has been increasingly seen as a resource with significant potential for job creation and wealth, as well as contributing to the diversification of the rural economy (Díez, 2003).

On the other hand, we must consider that under the territorial approach to development initiatives related to the environment are not only interesting and important in themselves, but mainly because they are part of a whole which is the rural development. And in this sense, for many areas the environment has become a key factor for progress in sustainable development.

In the LEADER Community Initiative natural heritage has been part of the intervention measures covered from the beginning. For example, in LEADER II in Spain, the measure B6 (heritage and environment) accounted for 13% of total investments (mostly public investments). Meanwhile, around 20 GAL (15%) had focused its development strategies in this measure, and a significant part of their investment, surpassing others that were so significant and important as rural tourism development, promotion the valorization of local products and support to the creation or consolidation of small and medium rural enterprises (Esparcia, 2003).

For its part, in LEADER+ we can do an analysis of the key elements in development strategies of the various district plans LEADER+ (Actualidad Leader, 2003). Of the 145 district plans (GAL), almost 2/3 incorporates the enhancement of natural and cultural resources as a priority subject in their development strategies. In a quarter of them the development strategy turns entirely around the valorization of the natural and cultural resources, and in the rest we are at shared strategies with other subjects (primarily with the valuation of local products, and to a lesser extent with the improvement of the quality of life and use of new knowledge and technologies). Frequently, in shared strategies, valorization of natural and cultural resources is the main subject.

There are regions in which all strategies are centered around the dominant subject, such as Cantabria and Navarra, in fact responding to the many natural and cultural heritage, but also the strategic decisions taken within their LAG. And the latter is what explains that in regions such as Madrid, Catalonia and Castile and Leon, the proportion of

development strategies that are focused on this key issue is between one quarter and one third of the total. Another case to point out is Andalusia, where half of the GAL strategies have focused exclusively on the LEADER+ valorization of natural and cultural resources.

During the programming period 2007-2013 the rural development is structured and divided into the already known four axis. LEADER is an independent axis, so that is much more difficult to track the importance of actions related to environmental or natural heritage in the territorial perspective of rural development. Axis 2 is the one which concentrated the proceedings in environmental matters in the context of the Second Pillar of the CAP. We may remember that here the EAFRD Regulation posed that 25% of investments should be directed to interventions related to environmental sustainability and rural areas. In the Spanish case, the recommendation of the National Strategic Plan was maintained at 25%, but finally the average of the Spanish regions stood at 33%. Nevertheless, the measures of axis 2 does not respond, in their vast majority, to the territorial development approach to local management, and only in rare cases these measures have been implemented under the LEADER approach.

This explains that the majority of Axes 2 interventions have little to do with the initiatives or environmental projects promoted in LEADER. We have to remember that the Axis 2 is aimed to the implementation of measures to promote sustainable use of agricultural land and forest lands, including environmental measures related to agriculture, measures related to Nature 2000, afforestation of land or measures to improve animal welfare, etc.

Therefore, it is until 2006, when we find the measures proposed under the strictly territorial approach to rural development, which are on which we deal in this work. The period that we have these measures matches the Community Initiatives LEADER I, LEADER II and LEADER+, and also with programs PRODER 1 and 2. Here however we focus only on the period 2000-2006, ie, the period of LEADER+ and PRODER 2.

This study aims to conduct a general approach to interventions related to the environment and landscape within the territorial approach to rural development. The specific objectives intended, first, an approach to the

best practices that have been made under the LEADER approach (2000-2006, Initiative LEADER+ and PRODER 2 Programme), with special emphasis on those focusing on environmental issues.

Second, we design a conceptual model to collect the substance of these best practices, orientation and characteristics. Third, in parallel we will approach to the presence of environmental aspects into other best practices, in order to know if we are moving in the direction of the greening initiatives initially unrelated to the environment as its centerpiece. All this is made from the database of LEADER+ and PRODER 2 best practices and the methodological approach and conceptual-relational analysis for it treatment.

2. Methodological approach: analyzing the database of best practices through content analysis

2.1. The basis of content analysis: conceptual and relational analysis

One possible methodological approach that allows us to work with a lot of information, focusing on key elements of the analyzed information, is content analysis. It can be applied to various documentary sources, from the most common texts to texts from interviews or speeches, including analysis of images or videos, and the exploitation of a database, which is the application that here we will give.

Although there are clear precedents in the s. xix, and even before, the methodology of content analysis became widely used and used consistently in the years 50 (Berelson, 1952), resulting soon in a quantitative approach oriented to lexico-metric studies. Since then it has had refinements (Krippendorff, 1990; Navarro and Diaz, 1994; Pinto and Galvez, 1996; Andreu, 2002), arriving at the 70s and 80s of the last century to the design of software based on these same approaches, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the analysis of information (Bolden and Moscarola, 2000). But around or in combination with the methodology of content analysis other approaches have been developed based on

such principles, such as socio-semantic analysis, focused on the communication structure of certain social groups and the semantic content of that structure (Diaz , 2000); analysis of conceptual categories focus on the organization of knowledge (Moraes and Guarido, 2008); or combinations of structural analysis, relationship, and its projection in concept maps (Nazar *et al.*, 2007; Ifenthaler, 2010).

Content analysis combines observation, production, interpretation and analysis of data; therefore allows the analysis of the text (what is said explicitly) and context (the meaning or hidden meaning that is in a text). Berelson (1952) already defined it as "a research technique for objective, systematic and quantitative description of the communication". Quantification is an important aspect of the content analysis techniques, but also it is essential to deepen analysis of the 'latent' content of the information, and here comes the interpretation that the researcher does about this information. Krippendorff (1990) emphasized the importance of this qualitative dimension, even to the detriment of the quantitative one. Bardin (1996, cited in Andreu, 2002, p. 3), attempts to combine the different definitions and approaches to note that the content analysis is "the set of analysis techniques of communications aimed at obtaining indicators (quantitative or not) through systematic and objective procedures to describe the contents of messages, allowing the inference of knowledge concerning the conditions of production / reception (social context) of these messages".

Content analysis is divided into two main types or methods (Palmquist, 2010), which complement each other: the conceptual analysis and relational analysis (and although there is not a complete agreement in the literature, many authors also referred to as thematic and semantic analysis respectively). Conceptual analysis corresponds to the more generalized approach to content analysis (with which in fact is identified). It focuses on the detection of concepts or explicit and implicit terms in a given document, and subsequent –often quantitative– analysis on the presence and importance that each concept has in that document. In turn, relational or semantic analysis begins, as conceptual analysis, with identification of concepts in a document, but unlike the previous one, it focuses on the relationships between concepts or meanings of concepts (Andreu, 2002, Palmquist *et al.*, 1997).

Content analysis has a number of the typical phases, some common to conceptual and relational analysis, and other that distinguish them (Andreu, 2002; Palmquist, 2010). In the first case we have the definition of the research topic; definition of key concepts (could be explicit, but also latent concepts); formulation of encoding rules for those concepts; design of the system of categories or classification of concepts and allocation of concepts to each category.

Then we have the two complementary analysis. On one hand the conceptual analysis (Palmquist, 2010), based mainly on a studio of frequencies (weighted or not) of the different concepts in each of the categories. On the other hand, the relational analysis (Ifenthaler, 2010), which in turn allows two complementary methods, the method of grouping items (closeness method, using the semantic meanings of word strings) and concept maps, taking into account the intensity, the sign and direction of relationships between concepts. Concept maps are representations that reflect conscious perception (or unconscious) of researcher on the "real world" (Cañas, Novak and Gonzalez, 2004; Cañas *et al.*, 2004). In this regard, there is also an extensive literature on mental maps, more referred to the representation of the perceptions of individuals (Buzan, 1996).

Although in general, content analysis is increasingly used tools (such as programs that we have quoted above), has to be taken in mind that simple procedures often lead to results not simplistic, but useful and adjusted to reality, a clear control of the researcher is always necessary, because only he knows the precise decision-making criteria in each of the different phases.

Content analysis as a method of work presents a number of disadvantages and advantages. Among the former, we can say that is very high the time to prepare all the information and conduct different tests; the method may be too reductive because of the large volume of information with which they work; and it can lead us to misinterpretation when incorporated many relationships or not explicit concepts, or which have been not enough verified by the researcher. Among the advantages, it highlights the fact that it allows to 'isolate' the central aspects of communication, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques; and allow us to define a very good approximation both structural and relational

components of complex models of human thought and the use of language. The conclusion is that, as always happens with the application of methods and techniques in social sciences, the content analysis must be conducted under the close supervision of more powerful method that social scientists have, the common sense.

2.2. *Application of content analysis for the selection of best environmental practices (BEP) in LEADER+ and PRODER 2*

As is well known the LEADER approach is based, largely around a set of specific initiatives both from private entrepreneurs and public actors. It is therefore a source of rural development initiatives in different sectors, more or less connected. In Spain, the Ministry of Environment, Rural and Marine Affairs launched already during LEADER II the collection of information on those initiatives that could be considered of higher quality, that is to say, they that were outstanding initiatives, which we include here into the global concept of best practices[2]. To do this it has been designed a set of criteria, with specific requirements for an initiative or project that could be regarded as best practice[3]. The database has been developed with all these outstanding projects covering the diversity of topics under the LEADER approach (LEADER and PRODER), also

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2. The methodology follows the models of best practices from European LEADER Observatory (LEADER II). The publications on LEADER+ best practices by the –European– Observatory of Rural Areas also follow this scheme (2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2009), although the amount of information on each best practice is bigger than in the electronic database. The Spanish database –electronic– is close to the one by the European LEADER Observatory. However, while those responsible for the implementation of the Spanish database prefer the term of "outstanding practices", here we refer to them as "best practices" since this is a much more widespread concept.

3. The information collection has been done through direct visits by work teams and the information sent by the manager of LAGs to the responsible for the development of the database, which in this case was the *Célula de Animación y Promoción del Desarrollo Rural* [Promotion and Encouragement Unit of Rural Development] (known previously as Spanish Unit of the European Observatory, during the LEADER II). The main purpose of the database was to make available to the rural development actors a set of experiences that could have demonstrative effects helping them in their own initiatives, following the model of the database of best practices made available by the LEADER European Observatory.

measures with very similar performances[5]. After setting up the database we have carried out the two types of content analysis that have been noted above, the conceptual and relational analysis.

First, for conceptual analysis the starting point is the almost 5800 frequency concepts (descriptors)[6] present in the 1058 best practices. Then we have proceeded to select those that are repeated more frequently and thus more present in each measure and subject, thus defining by grouping different categories according to their meaning or specific thematic content (environmental protection, sustainable management, renewable energy, organic farming, etc.). Although some simplification is involved, these clusters provide a much clearer picture of the structure and orientation of the actions contained within each measure and subject. To ensure the robustness of the analysis, although it has been worked with explicit concepts (descriptors), we also analyzed the description of best practices to verify that the concept was included in the most appropriate category or cluster, as that they were properly included some latent concept which has not sufficiently represented by the descriptors. In short, this technique of clustering concepts according to their frequency allows us, by reduction, move from 1058 best practices to a small number of best practice or 'ideal' models, representative of each of the subjects, regions, programmes, or measures, depending on what we want to analyze in each case. In our work we are interested in the environment and landscape as key topic. Therefore, the 'output' we are going to generate is a model of BEP in the framework of territorial rural development in Spain in 2000-2006 (including LEADER+ and PRODER 2), representative of the best practices that have the environment as a central subject.

Second, the categories or clusters resulting from the conceptual analysis are the basis for relational analysis. Basically we try to establish the

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5. For example, we have re-classified the 111 LEADER+ best practices in Andalusia in order to fit them in a more homogeneous system prevalent in most regions (based on the specific issue of each best practice). Similar process was also conducting in order to ensure certain homogeneity among both programs, but keeping the measures that were specific and differentiating each of them.

6. The frequencies are obviously different to the number of concepts (descriptors). Therefore, the nearly 5800 frequencies correspond to a number of concepts significantly much lower.

relationships between different concepts, as well as the direction and intensity of such relationships. If the conceptual analysis were based on explicit concepts, in the relational analysis such relationships are often implicit, which makes of more complex the establishment of relationships. In any case the results are shown in conceptual maps that represent these relationships.

In short, this methodology has great potential, as illustrated by a multitude of jobs in the social sciences, some of them related to rural development (Esparcia, 2010). In our case we did not use any software on lexical or semantic analysis, since the classification work was already largely given by the structure of the database. On the other hand, both the work of grouping of concepts and the relational analysis are not easily to do in an automatically way, beyond the final design of conceptual maps for which we have used the Cmap-Tools software (Cañas *et al.*, 2004). The work presented here is just a small sample of the potential of this methodological approach, despite its relative simplicity, because if it would be possible to build similar conceptual models from a very small number of actions, the value that gives us this methodology is that they are the result of the analysis of a large number of rural development initiatives and, therefore, the resulting models are highly representative of the characteristics of rural development actions or best practices from which the model has been developed.

3. Results and discussion: 'traditional', emergent issues and the greening process.

After deep harmonization and the final setting up of the database of best practices LEADER+ and PRODER 2, we have the first results obtained in Table 1. In the set of best practices of the two programs, the main issues on which are based are local agricultural products and small and medium enterprises (including business services), which account for nearly 40% of the total (Fig. 1). Tourism and related matters, as it is traditional in the LEADER approach, also brings together a significant number of best practices, which usually refer to small initiatives aimed at modernizing the supply and the introduction of innovations.

And in this context, the environment has a relatively modest but nevertheless significant presence, assuming nearly 8% (with a total of 82 BEP, which are those that will form the core of our analysis). Table 2 shows he list of these BEP.

But we should not to forget a more and more important phenomenon, which is the mainstreaming of the environment and therefore its significant presence in other initiatives that are not strictly of environmental nature. And here we have another 69 best practices (6.5% of the total database), in what we call the greening process of rural development initiatives, which have to be included in the context of a more integrated development perspective (integration is especially possible with cross-cutting subjects such as the environment). The latter are also analyzed in the next section.

3.1. Towards a Conceptual model of Best Environmental Practices (BEP) in the LEADER approach in Spain.

BEP have some diversity in the specific subjects they address. For example, two thirds are focused on environmental issues in the strict sense. However, one of 10 tends to have important connections with SMEs and services, and almost a similar figure for the valorization of agricultural products. To a lesser extent, these BEP are seen directly as an instrument of economic diversification and promotion, though no doubt they contribute to this diversification through its connections with the field of SMEs and the enhancement of agricultural products (Esparcia, 2010). In any case, the third environmental practices that are clearly articulated with other activities highlight the advances in the integrated rural development perspective.

But rural development initiatives, in this case best practices, participate only rarely in a single issue (Observatory of Rural Areas, 2008). Often, as noted above, it combines different aspects. Content analysis, in this case through the key concepts or descriptors, allows us to take into account the 5-6 most characteristic features present in each initiative. Therefore, from the methodological point of view, the design of the conceptual model of BEP takes as its starting point key concepts (descriptors) that define and characterize them. We have thus moved from 82 BEP to

TABLE 1: LEADER+ AND PRODER 2 BEST PRACTICES (BY SUBJECT, PROGRAMME AND OFFICIAL MEASURE)

		GENERAL SUBJET																
		Methodology and animation	Training and employment	Publications and communications	New Technologies	Local agricultural products	SMEs	Crafts	Business services	Services to the population	Tourism	Leisure and sports	Culture and heritage	Environment & Landscape	Others	TOTAL	LEADER PROGRAMME	PRODER PROGRAMME
MEASURE	Skills development & technical support	0	0	20,0	20,0	0	0	0	0	40,0	20,0	0	0	0	0	0,5	40	60
	Economic diversification	0	2,1	0	4,2	10,4	29,2	12,5	6,3	4,2	16,7	10,4	0	4,2	0	4,5	0	100
	Socioeconomic dinamization	2,5	12,5	0	10,0	0	25,0	0	15,0	25,0	0	2,5	0	5,0	2,5	3,7	0	100
	Rural tourism	2,5	0	4,9	1,2	4,9	2,5	0	0	1,2	60,5	14,8	3,7	1,2	2,5	7,6	81	19
	Rural tourism and crafts	0	0	0	0	0	5,3	21,1	0	5,3	42,1	10,5	5,3	10,5	0	1,8	0	100
	Tourism, local identity and revitalization	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40,0	40,0	0	0	20,0	0,5	0	100
	SMEs and services	1,0	3,6	1,5	4,1	9,6	55,8	4,6	3,0	8,1	1,5	2,0	0,5	4,1	0,5	18,4	67	33
	Improvement of production structures	0	1,6	0	3,2	38,2	39,7	3,2	3,2	4,8	7,9	3,2	1,6	1,6	0	5,9	97	3
	Valoriz. & commerc. of local agric. Prod.	1,6	1,1	0,5	3,2	73,0	9,5	0,5	1,1	2,1	0,5	0	0,5	3,7	2,6	17,6	55	45
	Agriculture and livestock	0	12,5	0	12,5	25,0	12,5	12,5	0	0	0	0	12,5	12,5	0	0,7	0	100
	Training and employment	6,3	56,3	0	2,1	8,3	0	0	2,1	8,3	0	0	12,5	2,1	2,1	4,5	90	10
	Services to the population	2,2	5,6	2,2	12,4	1,1	1,1	2,2	1,1	56,2	3,4	4,5	4,5	1,1	2,2	6,3	64	36
	Heritage and environment	0	0	1,6	0	0	4,9	3,3	1,6	3,3	14,8	4,9	34,4	31,1	0	5,7	39	61
	Natural heritage	1,8	3,5	3,5	5,3	1,8	1,8	1,8	0	1,8	1,8	14,0	10,5	52,6	0	5,3	65	35
	Cultural and architectural heritage	3,2	0	5,3	0	2,1	1,1	3,2	0	3,2	7,4	2,1	65,3	4,2	3,2	8,9	63	37
	Infrastructure and general equipment	0	5,6	0	5,6	22,2	33,3	0	0	16,7	0	5,6	0	11,1	0	1,7	0	100
	Social actions structuring the territory	36,4	9,1	9,1	0	9,1	0	0	0	9,1	9,1	9,1	9,1	0	0	1,0	100	0
	Cooperation strategies	0	42,9	0	14,3	0	14,3	0	0	0	0	0	14,3	14,3	0	0,7	57	43
	Other investments	0	12,9	0	9,7	6,5	9,7	0	0	3,2	3,2	3,2	9,7	0	41,9	2,9	58	42
	Total	2,0	5,6	1,9	4,2	18,8	18,4	2,9	2,1	9,7	9,2	4,5	10,4	7,6	2,7	100	57,7	42,3

Source: Own elaboration from Database of Best Environmental Practices of LEADER+ and PRODER 2. Ministry of Environment, Rural and Marine Affairs (2011).

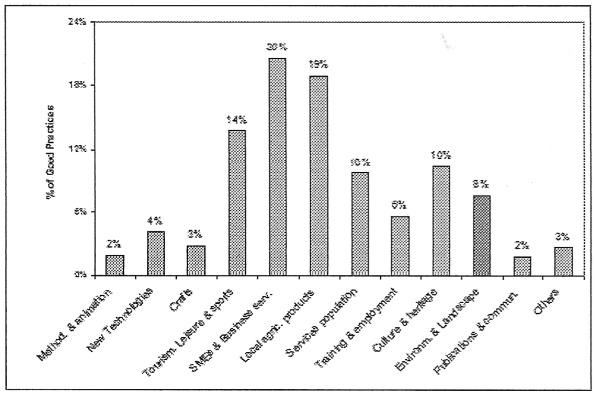

Fig. 1: Best practices by key subject

TABLE 2: BEST ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES FROM THE DATABASE OF LEADER+ AND PRODER 2.

IdAction	Program	Local Action Group	Region	Province	Title of Best Environmental Practice
915	PRODER 2	Filabres Alhamilla	Andalucía	Almería	Spacecraft construction and equipment for processing of organic fertilizers
1000	PRODER 2	Sierra de Cádiz	Andalucía	Cádiz	Construction of a new building for a dormitory and multi-purpose room Farm School
1211	PRODER 2	Comarca de Jerez	Andalucía	Cádiz	Environmental improvement of cattle "Granja Las Pachecas"
1464	PRODER 2	Litoral de la Janda	Andalucía	Cádiz	Purchasing of a fish waste compactor machine
129	PRODER 2	Campiña Sur	Andalucía	Córdoba	Battery recycling company
1153	PRODER 2	Guadajoz y Campiña Este	Andalucía	Córdoba	Setting up of a debris recycling plant
1391	PRODER 2	Subbética Cordobesa	Andalucía	Córdoba	Setting up of an office for issues related to the environment in the area of Natural Park.
975	PRODER 2	Arco Noreste de la Vega	Andalucía	Granada	Environmental awaresness programme
1006	PRODER 2	Alpujarra-Sierra Nevada	Andalucía	Granada	Technical assistance in monitoring the environmental management system
1212	PRODER 2	Valle Lecrín-Temple	Andalucía	Granada	Electric energy saving
1213	PRODER 2	Valle Lecrín-Temple	Andalucía	Granada	"Centre Las Torcas Foundation II Michael Deiss"
1493	PRODER 2	Arco Noreste de la Vega	Andalucía	Granada	Equipment of Hydraena headquarters
1157	PRODER 2	Sierra de Cazorla	Andalucía	Jaén	Manufaturing of biomass steam boilers
1159	PRODER 2	Sierra de Cazorla	Andalucía	Jaén	Collecting point of plant health packaging (town network)
1162	PRODER 2	Comarca Nororiental	Andalucía	Málaga	Supply of automatic irrigation infraestructure in irrigators association
1512	PRODER 2	Serranía de Ronda	Andalucía	Málaga	Promotion of organic agriculture & farming in Serranía de Ronda
1193	PRODER 2	Corredor de la Plata	Andalucía	Sevilla	Action plan in the area "Corredor de la Plata": searching alternatives after the fire
1256	PRODER 2	Sierra Morena Sevillana	Andalucía	Sevilla	Ecologic compost
1372	PRODER 2	Gran Vega de Sevilla	Andalucía	Sevilla	Construction of a recycling warehouse. Purchasing of machinery
1127	PRODER 2	Cuencas Mineras	Aragón	Teruel	Building up of a crab factory
723	PRODER 2	Camín Real de la Mesa	Asturias	Asturias	Organization of mountain routes with the opportunity to discover the bear country
1163	PRODER 2	Bajo Nalón	Asturias	Asturias	Modernization and expansion of small fish plant
126	PRODER 2	Monte Ibérico - Almansa	Cast. La Mancha	Albacete	Environmental interpretation hall
1252	PRODER 2	Mancha Júcar-Centro	Cast. La Mancha	Albacete	Flowmeters for telecontrol system of quality of water
1067	PRODER 2	Cabañeros	Cast. La Mancha	Ciudad Real	Conditioning recreational area of "Tabla Murciana"
700	PRODER 2	Sierra Media y Mancha Alta	Cast. La Mancha	Cuenca	Environmental actions (Laguna de Hito)
1215	PRODER 2	Sierra Media y Mancha Alta	Cast. La Mancha	Cuenca	Plant of filter recycling and centre for the transfer of other industrial waste
1083	PRODER 2	Alcarria y Campiña	Cast. La Mancha	Guadalajara	Basic environmental actions programme in ZEPA area
896	PRODER 2	Castillos del Medio Tajo	Cast. La Mancha	Toledo	Pilot plant production of biodiesel from used vegetable oil
1202	PRODER 2	La Moraña	Cast. y León	Ávila	Plant for the treatment of slurries in a farm
1397	PRODER 2	Ribera del Duero	Cast. y León	Burgos	Water loading point for agricultural use
1229	PRODER 2	Páramo, Órbigo, Esla	Cast. y León	León	Green path bird observatory
662	PRODER 2	Tierra de Pinares	Cast. y León	Segovia	Theme park of ecosystems in Fuentepelayo (Segovia)
1139	PRODER 2	Segovia Sur	Cast. y León	Segovia	Conditioning of a building to use it as a meat preparation hall
1247	PRODER 2	Tierra de Pinares	Cast. y León	Segovia	Setting up of a composting plant of non-dangerous organic waste
1131	PRODER 2	Noreste de Soria	Cast. y León	Soria	New forestry plantation of mycorrhiza plant
86	PRODER 2	Duero-Esgueva	Cast. y León	Valladolid	Installation of a system for treatment of hen droppings
580	PRODER 2	Vega Baja	Com. Valenciana	Alicante	Environmental adaptation of horticultural and fruit growing activity
686	PRODER 2	Hoya de Buñol	Com. Valenciana	Valencia	Green waste valuation station
1028	PRODER 2	La Vall d'Albaida	Com. Valenciana	Valencia	Environmental interpretation centre (Benicadell)
1459	PRODER 2	Sierra Grande-Tierra de Barros	Extremadura	Badajoz	Creation of Mycological & Gastronomy Month
144	PRODER 2	Villuercas, Ibores y Jara	Extremadura	Cáceres	Van for picking up urban waste
1223	PRODER 2	Trasierra- Granadilla	Extremadura	Cáceres	Business of environmental processing services
1478	PRODER 2	Montánchez y Tamuja	Extremadura	Cáceres	Recovery of urban ponds for recreational purposes

IdAction	Program.	Local Action Group	Region	Province	Title of Best Environmental Practice
401	LEADER+	Levante Almeriense	Andalucía	Almería	Recycling vegetable and animal oils and fats
321	LEADER+	Litoral de la Janda	Andalucía	Cádiz	Solar energy installation in Residence for the Mentally Disabled in Barbate
343	LEADER+	Alcornocales	Andalucía	Cádiz	Interventions to favour the activation for tourism of the heritage of the Alcornocales
488	LEADER+	Sierra Morena Cordobesa	Andalucía	Córdoba	Get to know the natural parks of Andalusia
521	LEADER+	Altiplano de Granada	Andalucía	Granada	Creation of a composting plant
599	LEADER+	Serranía de Ronda	Andalucía	Málaga	Agricultural and forest education centre
1371	LEADER+	Aljarafe-Doñana	Andalucía	Sevilla	Excavation of containers in the town of Pilas
1528	LEADER+	Mezquín, Matarraña. B. Aragón	Aragón	Teruel	Restoration of a farm for necrophiliac bird watching
1536	LEADER+	Jiloca-Gallocanta	Aragón	Teruel	Cleaning boat for the karst windows spot
919	LEADER+	Eivissa y Formentera	Baleares	Baleares	Restoration of burned forest area
188	LEADER+	Mallorca	Baleares	Baleares	Creation of a centre for the recovery of animals
212	LEADER+	Eivissa y Formentera	Baleares	Baleares	Installation to take advantage of rainwater in the Des Vedrás school
234	LEADER+	Menorca	Baleares	Baleares	Promotion of sustainable agreements and practices on Menorca
245	LEADER+	Menorca	Baleares	Baleares	Landscape of Menorca
455	LEADER+	Lanzarote	Canarias	Las Palmas	Mist catchers for afforestation and crops
1420	LEADER+	Fuerteventura	Canarias	Las Palmas	Hydroponics growing demonstration and farm sewage treatment
415	LEADER+	La Gomera	Canarias	Santa Cruz Ten.	Green Filter on a Farm
462	LEADER+	Valle de Alcudia	Cast. La Mancha	Ciudad Real	A water treatment station and certifications
464	LEADER+	Valle de Alcudia	Cast. La Mancha	Ciudad Real	Progress of environmental education (Valle de Alcudia)
33	LEADER+	Serranía de Cuenca	Cast. La Mancha	Cuenca	Locations for Containers for urban wastes
471	LEADER+	Montañas del Teleno	Cast. y León	León	Water theme park
591	LEADER+	País Románico	Cast. y León	Palencia	Las Loras Geological Reserve
670	LEADER+	Montaña Palentina	Cast. y León	Palencia	Cantabrian bear house
1462	LEADER+	País Románico	Cast. y León	Palencia	Improvement for White Stork nests (Ciconia Centre)
132	LEADER+	Sta. M. Real de Nieva	Cast. y León	Segovia	Implementation of a system for making use of washing water on a livestock farm
835	LEADER+	Nordeste de Segovia	Cast. y León	Segovia	Waste recycling plant
1395	LEADER+	Pinares - El Valle	Cast. y León	Soria	Bosque de Pinares-El Valle Museum
1396	LEADER+	Pinares - El Valle	Cast. y León	Soria	Study on wood technological characteristics
450	LEADER+	Berguedà	Cataluña	Barcelona	New lines of indust. activity & technological improvement of the process of containers
636	LEADER+	Montsec	Cataluña	Lleida	Building for water treatment
612	LEADER+	Costa da Morte	Galicia	A Coruña	Creation of a recycling centre for construction wastes
367	LEADER+	Os Ancares	Galicia	Lugo	A mountain shelter and nature classroom
1374	LEADER+	Os Ancares	Galicia	Lugo	Recovery of chestnut groves by inoculation of hypovirulent strains
322	LEADER+	Sierra Oeste de Madrid	Madrid	Madrid	Equipment for collecting wastes
40	LEADER+	Nordeste de Murcia	Murcia	Murcia	Adaptation of the area Charco del Zorro (migratory birds)
38	LEADER+	Vega del Segura	Murcia	Murcia	Composting plant from agricultural and livestock wastes
175	LEADER+	Ribera de Navarra	Navarra	Navarra	Adaptation of the right bank of the River Arga in the district of Peralta
314	LEADER+	Prepirineo	Navarra	Navarra	Renewable energies classroom (District of Sangüesa-Valdorba)

nearly 500 key concepts in such best practices (plus other 69 best practices we have included in what we call greening process, with more than 350 additional concepts). And this is the set of concepts that allow us to design the conceptual model of what good practice would be. The methodological treatment has been described in previous sections. In the resulting conceptual model we would have four main groups of concepts, referred also to as many types of BEP (Figs. 2, 3 and 4).

'Traditional' BEP. In this group we have the most common and traditional environmental issues, focusing on environmental protection.

Emergent BEP. In this second group the focus is on emerging issues such as waste recycling, water and renewable energies.

Environment as an organizer of best practices. In the framework of the LEADER approach it has been developed a set of practices whose common feature is that other activities are organized around the environment as central topic, whether they are of a productive or social character. Most often we are facing an environmental activity with a clear secondary subject, but sometimes may appear two or even more secondary subjects. In this large group of practices we have three main type of BEP (Fig. 2).

Environmental practices associated with or linked to productive activities mainly from agriculture, SMEs, the production of local products or rural tourism.

Environmental practices with a social or cultural dimension, such as cultural heritage or different services to the population.

Environmental practices related to what we call support system, such as education, research, training and environmental dissemination.

3.2. Best Environmental Practices: from traditional to emergent issues.

Given that environmental issues are relatively new in the context of rural development, a number of issues that are classics and are very present in this type of initiatives. In this sense we talk about "traditional" aspects. And certainly the greater part of BEP are related (or widely incorporate) the protection and conservation of the environment (and to a

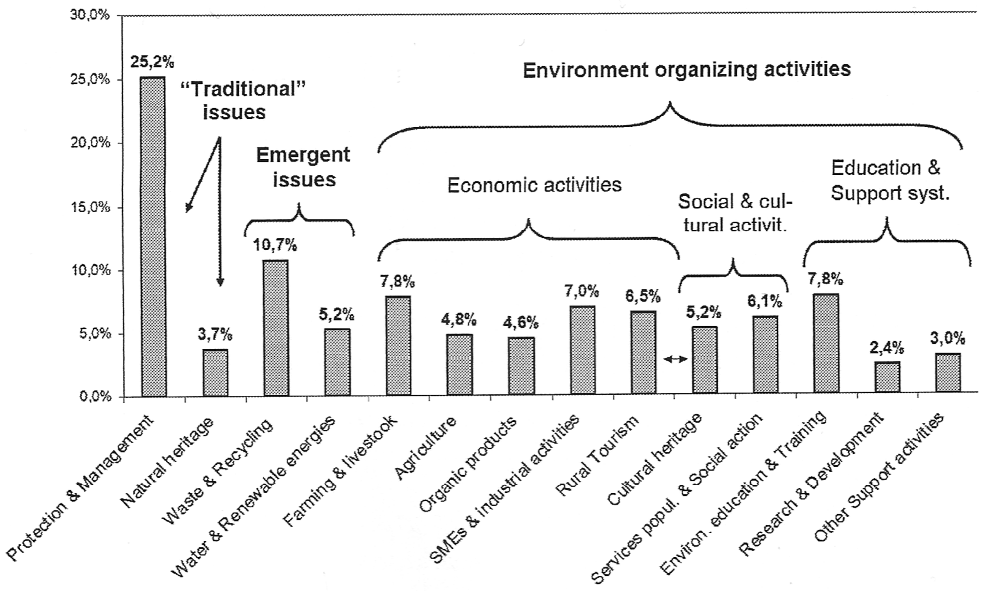

Fig. 2: Issues in the Best Environmental Practices

lesser extent, management), emphasizing the integration of environmental concerns in rural development, all in the context of sustainable development. And this reflects, on one hand, the awareness of the need to recover and protect natural resources, but also on the other hand, the need to valorization of these resources and transform them in an instrument for rural development (Observatory of Rural Areas, 2007). And so, beside the best practices related to protection and environmental conservation in the strict sense (including here those occurring in natural and protected areas, flora and fauna in areas classified as biosphere reserves, or wetlands), we find other targeting afforestation and sustainable forest management, landscape restoration in degraded areas, prevention of disasters, or even other more traditional oriented to the creation or maintenance of parks and public gardens.

If we rely on the presence of key concepts in characterizing the different BEP, at a considerable distance to the previous set, but no doubt also significant, there are three emerging issues in the field of environment in the context of rural development, waste and recycling, water and renewable energies. The first two topics increasingly affect rural areas, as highlights the growing social awareness on them. In this way waste issues are very present

as in many rural areas tend to hold storage facilities and / or oriented to treatment of waste. But also a growing concern is the proper collection and waste treatment in rural areas, services that tend to have comparatively higher costs than in other areas. In this sense, these projects are partly the result, but above all they contribute to improve social awareness of proper treatment and recycling of waste. Many of these best practices show that these initiatives can also generate employment and income (for example in the case of those involved with implementation of composting plants), keeping strict protocols both on quality and environmental respect.

And in the case of water issues it is also evident the strategic role of these issues, taking into account aspects such as the difficulties in the provision of rural water, both drinking water for the population and, above all and in terms of BEP, to ensure water supply for the operation of productive activities, especially agriculture and livestock activities. Another aspect which is also addressed through BEP is the protection of wetlands or that have water as a resource for development.

A final emerging issue, increasingly important, is that of renewable sources of energy. Thus we find initiatives focused on biomass conversion in the transformation of waste for energy purposes, in the implementation of interpretation centers which include exhibitions related to renewable energy (these actions in are connected with rural tourism initiatives), and finally also incorporate solar energy issues (since few companies for the manufacture and marketing of solar panels to solar power installation in public and social buildings).

3.3 The environment as "organizer" of integrated strategies and the greening process.

The above topics were primarily an environmental character. But as mentioned the environment is a crosscutting component in rural development, and hence much of the best practices often incorporate aspects that go beyond strictly environmental issues. From this perspective the environment has become the structuring or organizer element of best practices in which other aspects are very much present (Fig. 4).

We may first point out the strong presence of aspects related to different productive sectors related to the environment. Indeed, many of

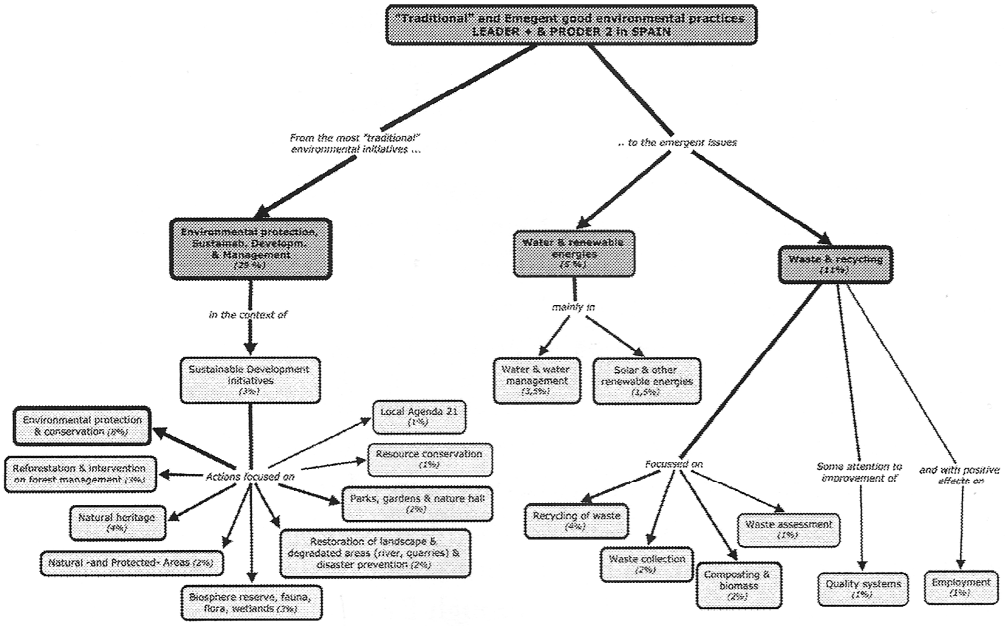

Fig. 3: Conceptual map on traditional and emergent environmental best practices. LEADER+ and PRODER 2 in Spain.

the BEP are designed and put in place within the framework of productive activities. This is the case of environmental practices in SMEs (often family businesses) and associated activities (with actions incorporating aspects such as environmental quality of industrial processes, services and environmental advice for business, environmental concerns in the performance of sectors such as construction, wood, paper, cork, etc.).

Second, in these BEP are present agricultural activities, such as those related to more respectful use of fertilizers (and less chemicals components), agricultural holdings, irrigation (introduction of processes that enable important savings' water). A third area in which BEP have been very present is the livestook and farming, with attention also to animal health as well as recovery processes and / or breeding and preservation of local varieties. Fourthly we have the valorization and production of local and organic products (including organic farming, organic livestock farming, dairy and meat products, vegetables, olive oils, etc.). Almost by definition the majority of initiatives related to these products have had a component of major environmental respect. With a significant presence we also have BEP related to rural tourism, from the creation and / or

renovation of housing supply, to other less traditional forms such as agro-tourism, bird tourism, theme parks, trails, recreational areas, etc.

Along with the productive sectors, in BEP there is also a strong presence of socio-cultural aspects. Thus, we also have different examples of best practices highlighting how the environment is integrated with cultural and social activities. Of particular interest are the BEP associated with cultural heritage, especially interpretive centers, cultural facilities, exhibition centers and to a lesser extent, museums. The dissemination of environmental issues often tends to also incorporate aspects of natural heritage. Other BEP are very innovative since the environment is associated with educational services, with special attention to certain groups such as children, elderly, youth, women, etc., and sometimes being part of the activities of rehabilitation centers, kindergartens or adult day-care centres.

And a final group of aspects in BEP are those related to education, training, research and environmental advice. Indeed, it is also very significant the number of BEP that focus on the development of what we might call support system on environmental matters. So many best practices are focused on the design and delivery of education programs and environmental education, this being one of the areas already classics, which have added value not only in training professionals but also at the level of awareness of the population. Hence the celebration of various events aimed at local population also has a significant presence. But we also have other BEP that focus on (or include) research and development to meet specific needs from rural initiatives (because out of rural areas is often difficult to properly define the problems, needs and methods, or ways to give the best response to such needs). In any case, some BEP also have the participation of top research centres, which seems an optimal way to combine capabilities adapting to local needs. And in this effort some of the best practices aimed at improving business advice and technological adaptation processes with environmental criteria in their companies (sectors of waste recycling, food preservation, etc.).

Therefore, as we may see, the greening process is growing strong and is increasingly part of rural development initiatives. In this sense we may

say that the environment is one area that greatly contributes to the design and implementation of integrated rural development strategies.

And in this same way we also have all those other best practices, while not classified as environmental ones, which have included environmental aspects in some way. Globally the number of these best practices (6.5%) is modest but significant at the same time (which must be added nearly 8% of the proper BEP). Greening in non BEP is a relatively new process in Spain, but we already have some good examples which eventually may have demonstration effects in the close future.

In Figure 5 we have the distribution of these 69 no strictly BEP that highlight the still modest but solid greening process; and in Figure 6 we have the subjects' weight in which environmental issues are present (from the concepts or descriptors). From both figures the greening process is very evident in one third of best practices related to rural tourism, leisure and sports, which directly incorporate environmental issues and therefore they are initiatives that have a clear environmentalist mission. Craft sector also incorporates partly environmental issues, and even we have examples in which several actions combine rural tourism, craft and environment as main issues (usually being the promotion or rural tourism the main focus).

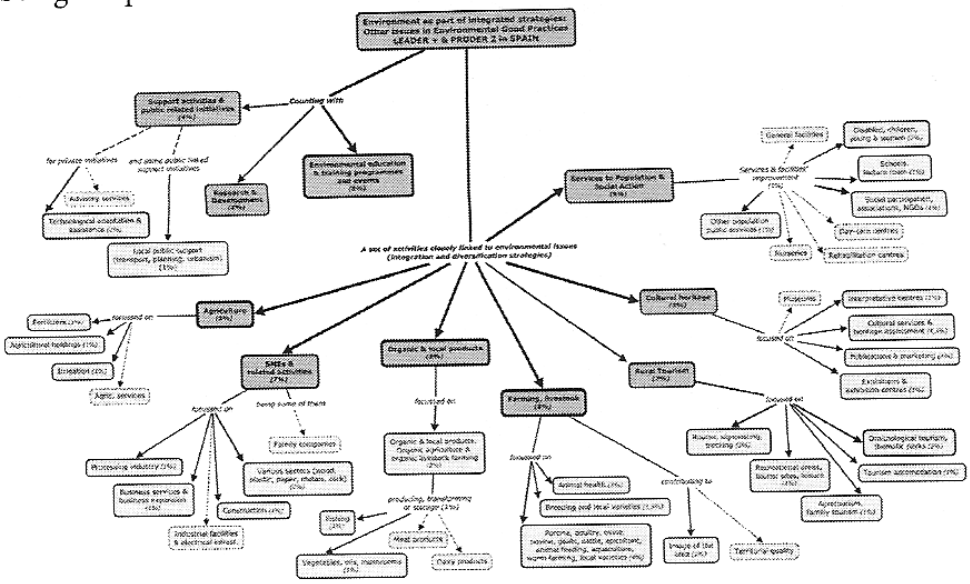

Fig. 4: Conceptual map on issues linked to Best Environmental Practices in LEADER+ and PRODER 2 in Spain: Greening process (1).

Another area in which there is a clear growing greening process is the cultural heritage, as a quarter of these best practices specifically introduce environmental aspects. Thus, there are initiatives oriented to the valorization of resources, combining cultural heritage and natural resources, and therefore they respond to the objectives of coordination and integration of rural development initiatives in the context of the LEADER approach. And too often these practices have good links with rural tourism, creating a virtuous cycle characterized by activities with synergies in the environment, cultural heritage and rural tourism. Also we have to point out that almost 2 out of 10 initiatives focused on marketing, promotion and publications refer or incorporate environmental issues in the context of rural development.

4. Concluding remarks

The LEADER approach has clear objectives since it was conceived in the early 90's, with integrated rural development as one of the basic references. This supposed to encourage initiatives from the local, for local people, adapted to the opportunities, needs and potentialities of the territory and its inhabitants. Along with the important dimension of social cohesion from civil society, the design of a coherent development strategy based on development activities, were the key support points for the territorial approach of rural development.

In the early stages they were initiated many actions, but the environment was not yet a priority in a significant portion of such actions. The measures related to rural tourism, training and support to SMEs agglutinated much attention in the development strategies. However, cultural heritage and natural resources (whose use and enjoyment were the subject of an increasing demand "urban", Esparcia and Buciega, 2005) began gradually to be considered as key elements in development strategies. The awareness of this potential is added to the belief that rural people had of on the strategic importance of its natural heritage, as key issue in their quality of life.

In this way environmental issues were increasingly part of development strategies. Of the many actions that have been launched in the last

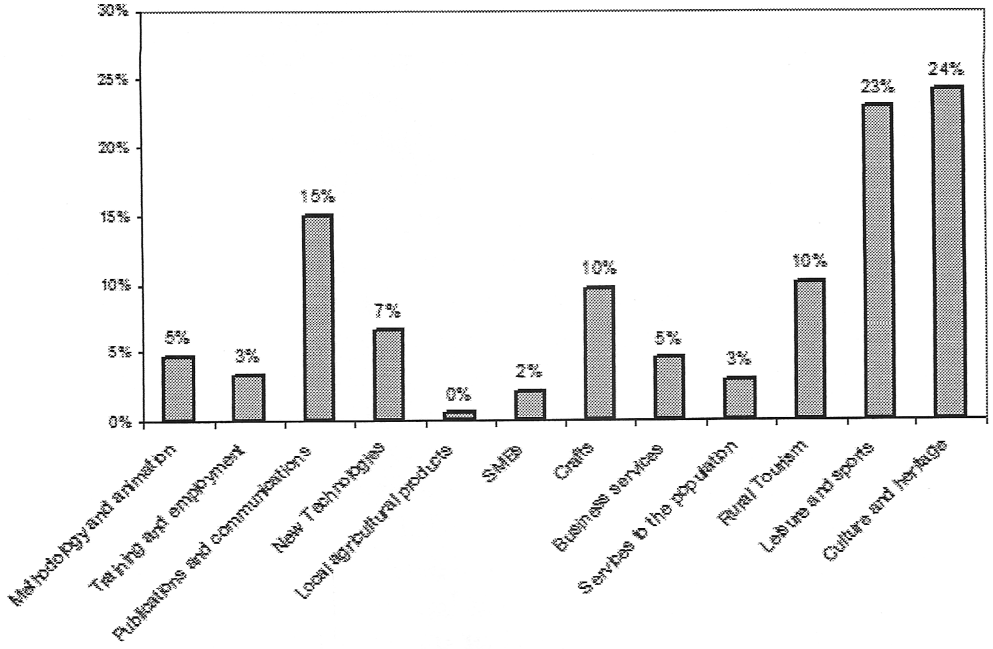

Fig.5: Presence of environmental issues in non Environmental Best Practices (1).

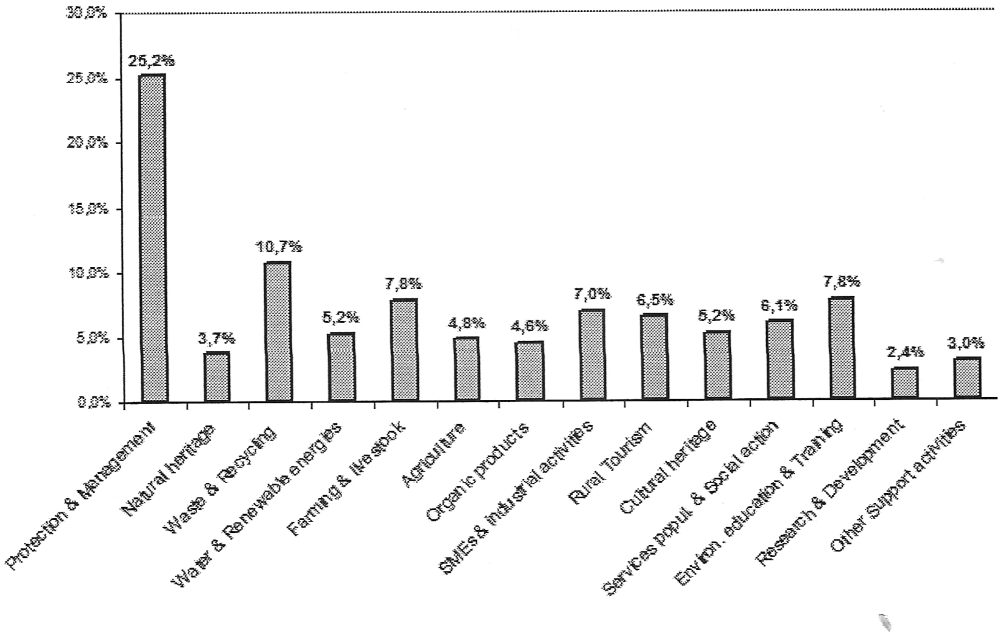

Fig. 6: Main subjects in which environmental issues are present in non EBP.

20 years, the Spanish Ministry of Environment, Rural and Marine Affairs, through the old Spanish Unit of the European Observatory (later Animation and Promotion Unit of Rural Development –*Célula de Animación y Promoción del Desarrollo Rural*–), has led out the arduous task of detecting actions considered most outstanding, those that could have demonstration effects. These actions are included in different databases of best practices, with which we have worked, specifically those relating to the LEADER+ and PRODER 2. From this database here are collected over 80 Best Environmental Practices, plus nearly 70 other practices which also incorporate a clear environmental dimension.

To treat this large amount of information, taking into account also the structure of the database, it has been used the methodology of content analysis. This has allowed us to work with the key concepts that define each of best practice, and from here we have defined the conceptual model for these set of Best Environmental Practices (BEP).

From this conceptual model it is emphasized that BEP are based primarily on issues related to environmental protection and conservation. This result reflects the fact that it has been since recently when environmental issues have begun to be present in local development strategies in rural areas and therefore have had to face the main problem, the deterioration of natural heritage and environmental resources.

But secondly, the conceptual model has allowed us to clearly define the growing presence of a number of emerging issues that are beginning to have an increasingly strategic role and no longer aim at a comprehensive strategy for protection or conservation, but which aims to address and respond to specific problems. These are related to the treatment of different types of waste, water supply and to a lesser extent, the use of renewable energies. We are therefore facing a new area of specific environmental issues that were incorporated more recently into the realm of rural development strategies.

And thirdly, the conceptual model has allowed us to detect that there is a greening process of rural development, or part of it. This process is still modest, but growing and more and more significant.

From this point of view, regardless of some pitfalls that may have had LEADER, it is clear that it has been an effective tool, at least in three ways related to the environmental dimension. First, to implement concrete measures to protect and enhance natural resources in rural areas; secondly, to provide imaginative and innovative solutions for specific environmental problems; and thirdly, to introduce the environmental dimension in other development actions within the framework of strategies more and better articulated and integrated, in which the environment is also often the core around which various activities both of a productive and social character have been articulated.

Therefore, this added value of LEADER, very evident from these best environmental practices should be taken into account and in any case, rural actors should continue working maintaining and strengthening the role of the environment as a point of reference in territorial development strategies.

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		GENERAL SUBJET																
		Methodology and animation	Training and employment	Publications and communications	New Technologies	Local agricultural products	SMEs	Crafts	Business services	Services to the population	Tourism	Leisure and sports	Culture and heritage	Environment & Landscape	Others	TOTAL	LEADER PROGRAMME	PRODER PROGRAMME
MEASURE	Skills development & technical support	0	0	**20,0**	**20,0**	0	0	0	0	**40,0**	**20,0**	0	0	0	0	0,5	40	60
	Economic diversification	0	2,1	0	4,2	**10,4**	**29,2**	**12,5**	6,3	4,2	**16,7**	**10,4**	0	4,2	0	4,5	0	100
	Socioeconomic dinamization	2,5	**12,5**	0	**10,0**	0	**25,0**	0	**15,0**	**25,0**	0	2,5	0	5,0	2,5	3,7	0	100
	Rural tourism	2,5	0	4,9	1,2	4,9	2,5	0	0	1,2	**60,5**	**14,8**	3,7	1,2	2,5	7,6	81	19
	Rural tourism and crafts	0	0	0	0	0	5,3	**21,1**	0	5,3	**42,1**	**10,5**	5,3	**10,5**	0	1,8	0	100
	Tourism, local identity and revitalization	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**40,0**	**40,0**	0	0	**20,0**	0,5	0	100
	SMEs and services	1,0	3,6	1,5	4,1	9,6	**55,8**	4,6	3,0	8,1	1,5	2,0	0,5	4,1	0,5	18,4	67	33
	Improvement of production structures	0	1,6	0	3,2	**30,2**	**39,7**	3,2	3,2	4,8	7,9	**3,2**	1,6	1,6	0	5,9	97	3
	Valoriz. & commerc. of local agric. Prod.	1,6	1,1	0,5	3,2	**73,0**	9,5	0,5	1,1	2,1	0,5	0	0,5	3,7	2,6	17,6	55	45
	Agriculture and livestock	0	**12,5**	0	**12,5**	**25,0**	**12,5**	**12,5**	0	0	0	0	**12,5**	**12,5**	0	0,7	0	100
	Training and employment	6,3	**56,3**	0	2,1	8,3	0	0	2,1	8,3	0	0	**12,5**	2,1	2,1	4,5	90	10
	Services to the population	2,2	5,6	2,2	**12,4**	1,1	1,1	2,2	1,1	**56,2**	**3,4**	4,5	4,5	1,1	2,2	8,3	64	36
	Heritage and environment	0	0	1,6	0	0	4,9	3,3	1,6	3,3	**14,8**	4,9	**34,4**	**31,1**	0	5,7	39	61
	Natural heritage	1,8	3,5	3,5	5,3	1,8	1,8	1,8	0	1,8	1,8	**14,0**	**10,5**	**52,6**	0	5,3	65	35
	Cultural and architectural heritage	3,2	0	5,3	0	2,1	1,1	3,2	0	3,2	7,4	2,1	**65,3**	4,2	3,2	8,9	63	37
	Infrastructure and general equipment	0	5,6	0	5,6	**22,2**	**33,3**	0	0	**16,7**	0	5,6	0	**11,1**	0	1,7	0	100
	Social actions structuring the territory	**36,4**	9,1	9,1	0	9,1	0	0	0	9,1	9,1	9,1	9,1	0	0	1,0	100	0
	Cooperation strategies	0	**42,9**	0	**14,3**	0	**14,3**	0	0	0	0	0	**14,3**	**14,3**	0	0,7	57	43
	Other investments	0	**12,9**	0	9,7	6,5	9,7	0	0	3,2	3,2	3,2	9,7	0	**41,9**	2,9	58	42
	Total	2,0	5,6	1,9	4,2	**18,8**	**18,4**	2,9	2,1	9,7	9,2	4,5	**10,4**	7,6	2,7	100	**57,7**	**42,3**

Source: Own elaboration from Database of Best Environmental Practices of LEADER+ and PRODER 2. Ministry of Environment, Rural and Marine Affairs (2011).

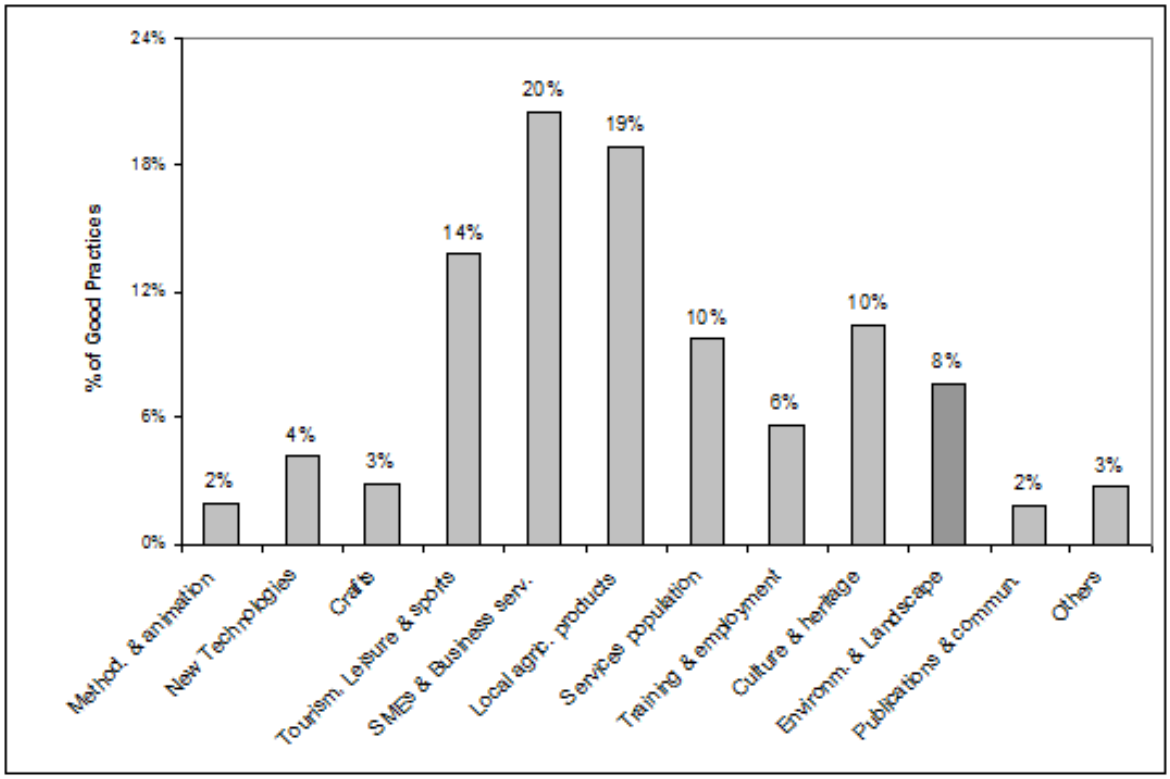

Fig. 1: Best practices by key subject

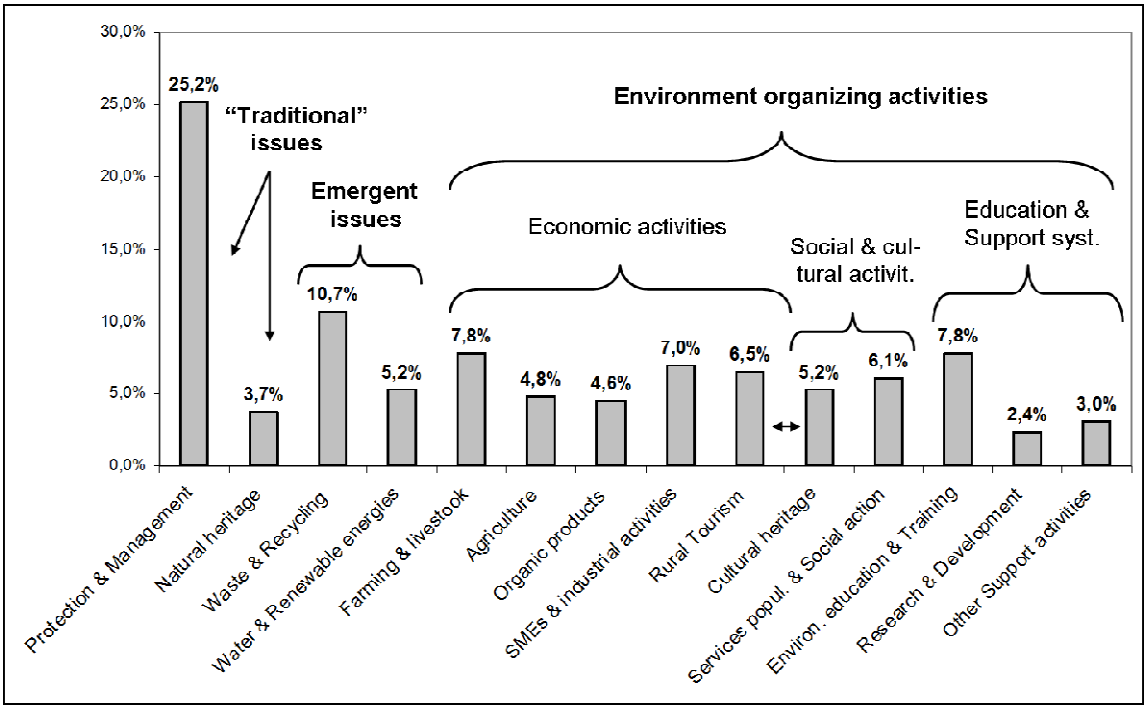

Fig. 2: Issues in the Best Environmental Practices

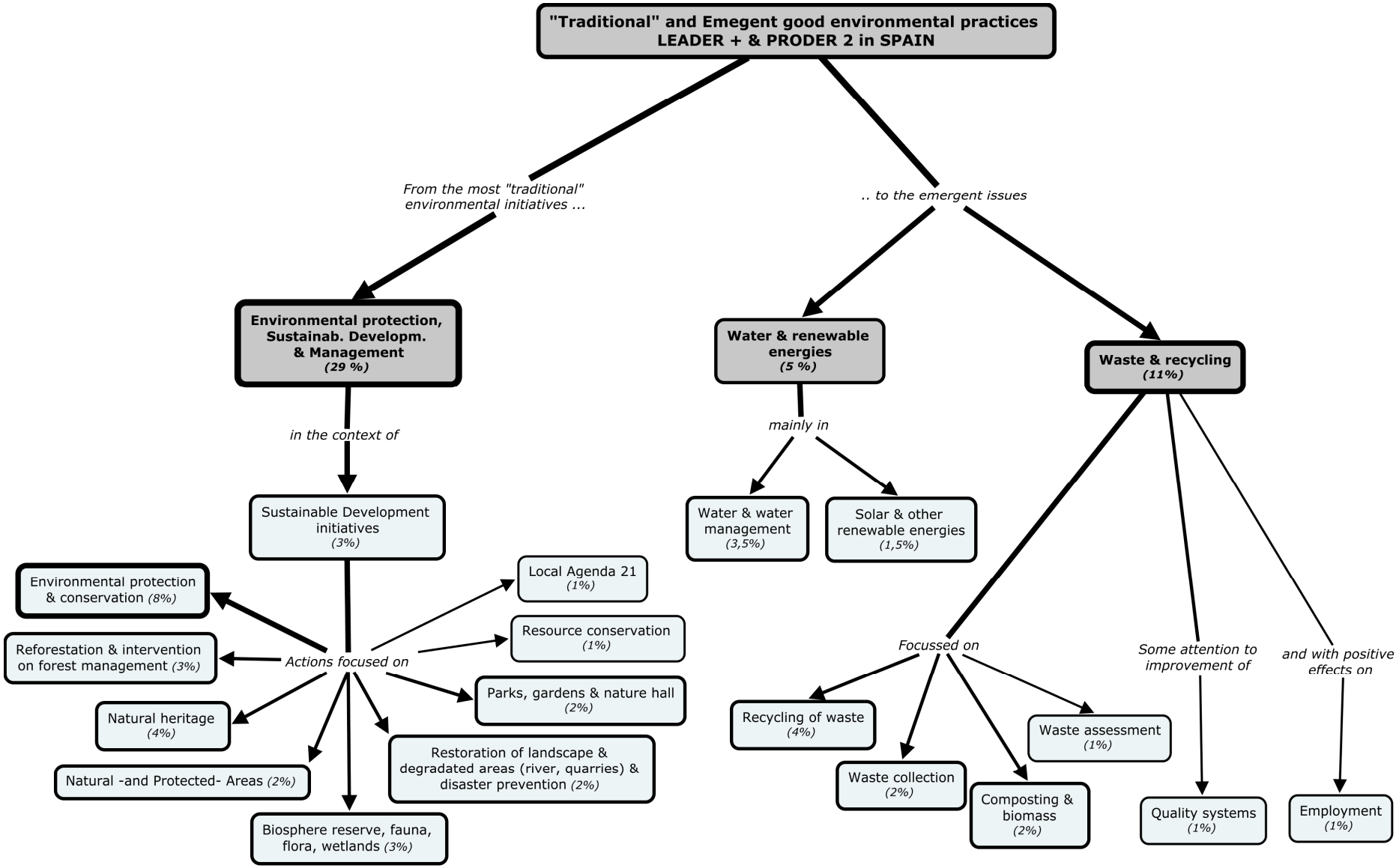

Fig. 3: Conceptual map on traditional and emergent environmental best practices. LEADER + and PRODER 2 in Spain.

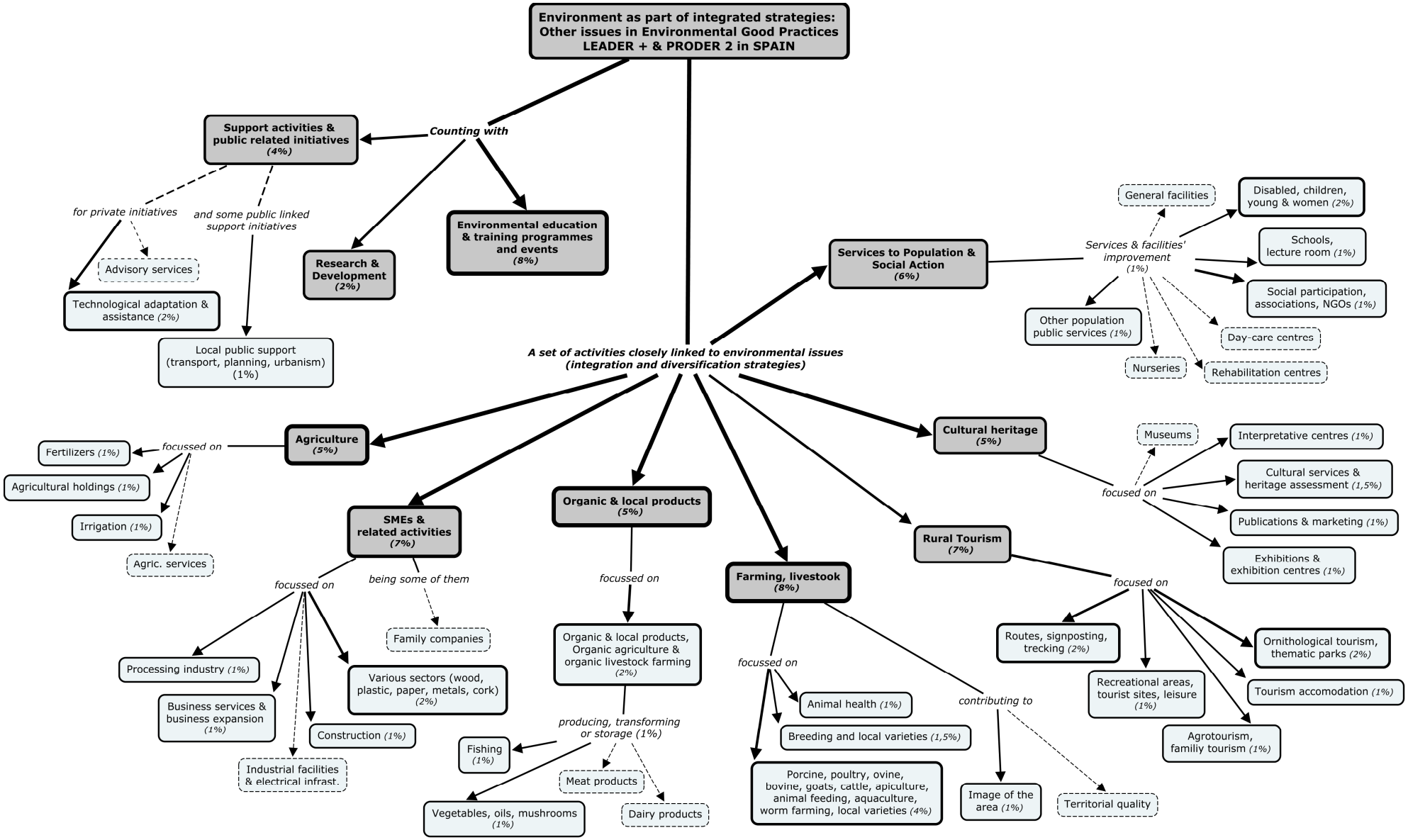

Fig. 4: Conceptual map on issues linked to Best Environmental Practices in LEADER + and PRODER 2 in Spain: Greening process (1)

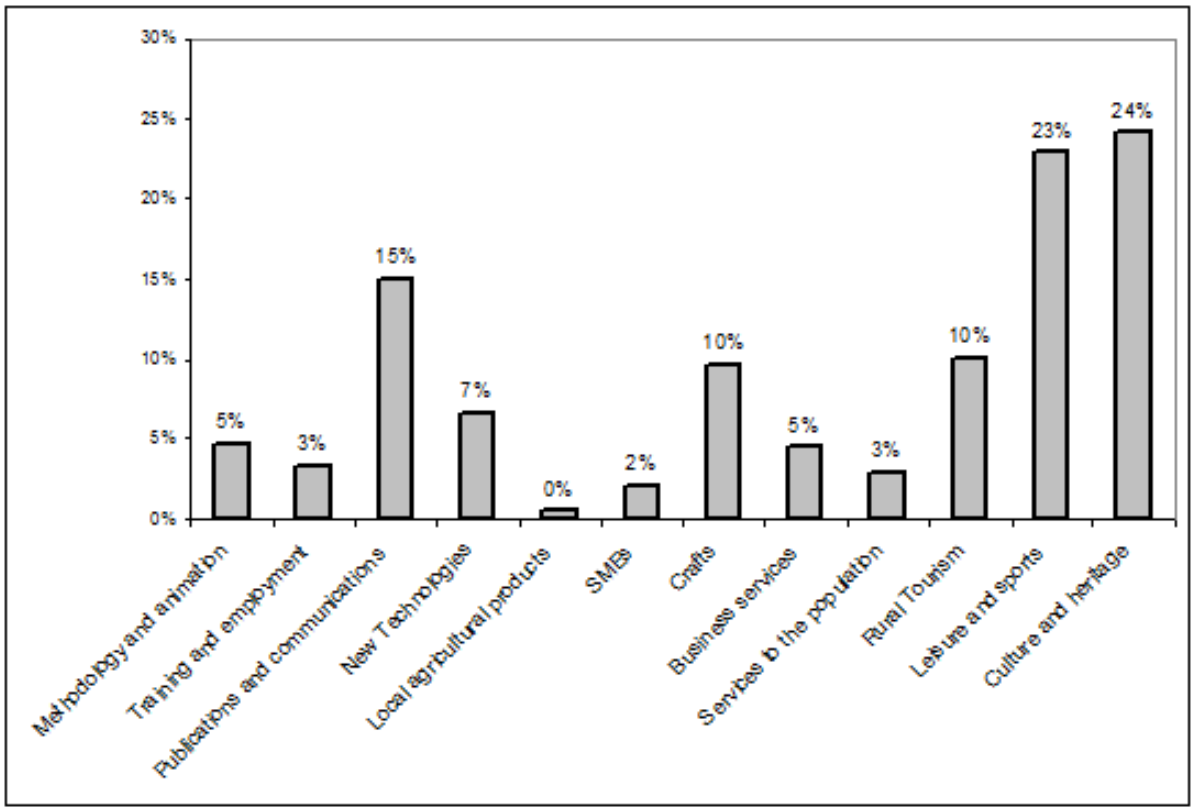

Fig. 5: Presence of environmental issues in non Environmental Best Practices (1).
(1): From the official Measure in which each Good Practice was classified.

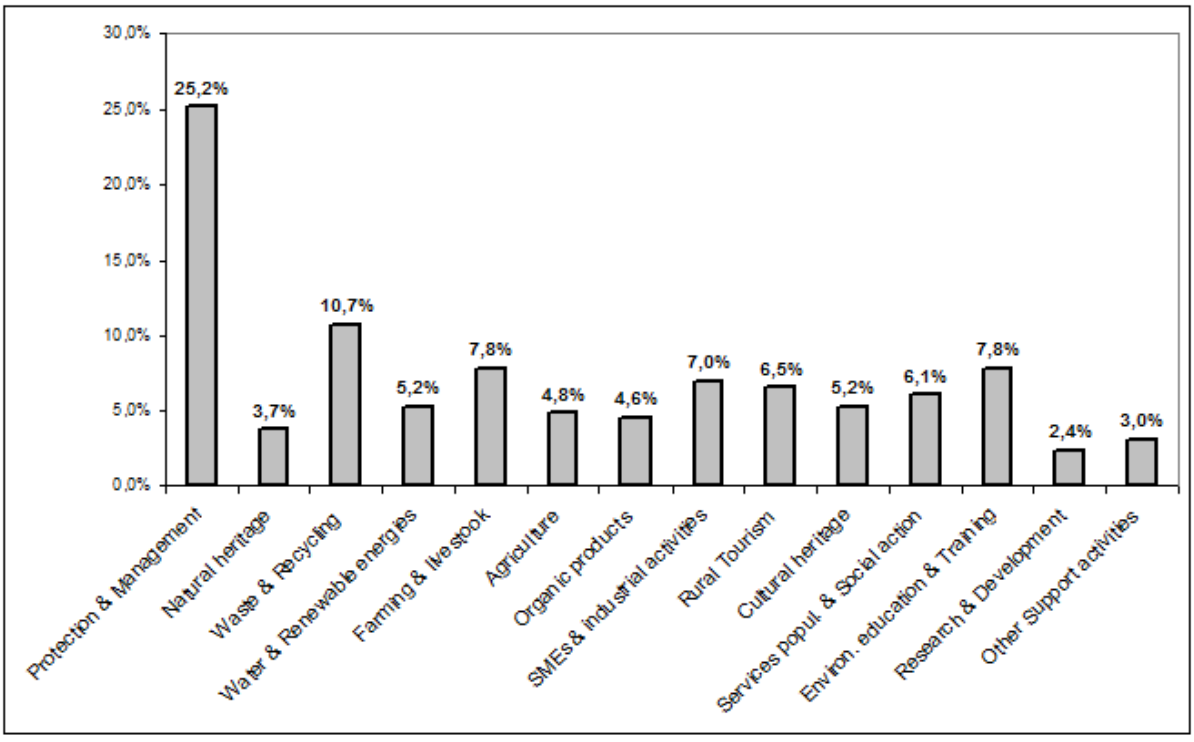

Fig. 6: Main subjects in which environmental issues are present in non EBP.