

Formulate research questions

Exercise

INSTRUCTIONS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Using information about the study area, the commission and its analysis, formulate the main and secondary research questions. For each question, identify the concepts relative to the stakeholders and study topic.

This exercise is worthwhile doing in a group to allow exchanges between students.

PROCEDURE STEP-BY-STEP:

A two-week study was conducted in the *Causses Méridionaux* (Southern *Causses*) region of southern France in 2009 by researchers and students in a training programme (Sibelet *et al.*, 2010; Sibelet *et al.*, 2010a). The study was commissioned by the Permanent Centre of Initiatives for the Environment (CPIE), an association managing three Natura 2000 sites located in two French administrative areas (departments): Gard and Hérault.

The commission statement of the study was as follows: *“Since 1994, the CPIE has been conducting management and environmental education activities on the Causses Méridionaux territory. Often preoccupied with the pressing demands of management activities, usually related to administrative and financial mechanisms (Natura 2000, agri-environmental measures...), the director of CPIE would like to gain some perspective through this study by collecting the impressions of inhabitants and local actors regarding several points:*

- *the word agropastoralism. What meaning is given to this word used regularly now mostly by technicians? Is the notion of sylvopastoralism spontaneously included in this word?*
- *The place and function of rangelands (grass resources, land capital, landscape unit...?)*
- *The future of agropastoralism on the Causses Méridionaux territory.”*

The analysis of the commission enabled the following supplementary information to be produced through an interview with the commissioner.

“The association has now been operating for 15 years. It therefore would be interesting to pause and take stock. You should know that in parallel to your research, we are working on a strategic plan for the next four years. The study will feed the discussion of the association's technical committee and board of directors, composed of elected officials, socio-professionals and associations. The study will serve to discover the views of the people questioned regarding the evolution of the Causses and, in particular, of pastoralism, in order to take them into consideration in the definition of activity programmes to implement on this territory. Our form of extensive agriculture in a Mediterranean climate really is special. We are worried by developments in agriculture financial and regulatory mechanisms that will come under review at the European level in 2013. Furthermore, agropastoralism in the Mediterranean often does not fit into any grant category planned at the national level.”

The Board of Directors (BD) of CPIE is made up of three colleges: elected officials, socio-professionals, and associations. Its 30 member Technical Committee (TC) are drawn from these three colleges. The two departments (Gard 30, Herault 34) are equally represented in each of these two structures (BD and TC). CPIE is working in partnership with the following structures:

- Authorized public sector trade unions (ASA) from Lodève-Larzac and the Gard
- Environment Initiation Centre of Larzac Méridional (CIELM)
- Regional Center of Forest Lands of Languedoc-Roussillon (CRPF L-R)
- Chambers of Agriculture of each department
- Joint Rural Councils of Lodève and Larzac (a grouping of rural councils under a single administrative unit)
- Joint Rural Council of Vigan
- Nature Conservancy of Languedoc-Roussillon (CEN L-R)
- Regional Environment Directorate (DIREN)
- Hunting Federation of the Gard and Hérault
- Game and Fauna Interest Group of Larzac Méridional (GICF LM)
- MEANDRE
- National Forest Office (ONF)
- National Hunting and Wildlife Office (ONCFS)
- Inter-agency network of Chambers of Agriculture « SUAMME » (OIER SUAMME)
- National Water and Wetlands Office (ONEMA).

Based on these elements and the presentation of the study area (Larzac case study), respond to the following questions:

1. Identify the individuals who should be interviewed.
2. What may be their objectives and stakes relative to the study?
3. What main research questions can you formulate?
4. Develop each of these main research questions into 2 or 3 secondary research questions. Put your questions into a hierarchical order according to your topic.
5. What are the main topics of your study? Make a list of the main topics to be studied and highlight them in the questions you listed in step 4.
6. In each of your main and secondary research questions,
 - o 6.1 identify the terms mentioning stakeholders
 - o 6.2 identify the concepts and other terms related to stakeholders' attributes
 - o 6.3 identify the concepts and other terms related to the study topics.
7. Are those terms well defined? If they are polysemous and/or poorly defined, reformulate your questions to eliminate the faults: polysemous words, value judgments.

► **Bibliography cited:**

Sibelet, N., M. Mutel, M. Dulcire, and R. Peltier. 2010. Landscape evolution of Southern Causes: Perceptions of inhabitants and socioprofessional stakeholders. Study report Thematic school CIRAD/Agropolis-Foundation, October 2009: 'Formation to human sciences applied to agroforestry' from the 5th to 17th of October 2009. Montpellier: CIRAD-ES, 25 p.

Sibelet, N., M. Mutel, M. Montzieux, and S. Nguyen Ba. 2010a. Allier attractivité et authenticité du territoire: un défi pour les Causes méridionaux. Etude menée du 5 au 17 octobre 2009. Montpellier: CIRAD, 50 p.