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Name of the Research Unit:	Centro de Estudos de Recursos Naturais, Ambiente e Sociedade - CERNAS uid:681 (L700681)
Coordinator:	Manuel Fernando de Miranda Páscoa
Main Scientific Domain:	Agricultural Sciences
Other subdomains:	Biological Sciences Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology Communication Sciences Economics and Management Environment Forest Resources Sociology, Anthropology, Demography and Geography
The Research Unit resulted from a merge of:	n/a
Host institutions	
Leading Host Institution	Escola Superior Agrária de Coimbra
Other Institutions	Escola Superior Agrária de Castelo Branco
Objectives and Achievements	
Unit Description	
<p>CERNAS is a very recent research unit that begun its activities only in 2004. At the very beginning, it was a group of 18 researchers holding a PhD degree, and about 60 other researchers from three different institutions, hosted by the Escola Superior Agrária de Coimbra (ESAC). In the present, CERNAS integrates 43 researchers holding a PhD degree, and more than 100 other researchers coming from 9 research and teaching institutions in the Centre Region of Portugal. It has a main research pole in Coimbra (hosted by ESAC) and other pole in Castelo Branco, hosted by the Escola Superior Agrária de Castelo Branco (ESACB).</p> <p>Since the beginning CERNAS has structured 5 complementary and transversal research areas – Forest Resources and Sustainable Management; Environment; Chemistry of Natural Resources; Food Science and Technology; Economics and Rural Development – aiming the promotion of sustainable development in the rural areas, with special emphasis in the Centre Region of Portugal.</p> <p>A senior researcher – The Principal Investigator – elected by its pairs among the researchers that integrate the Scientific Board, coordinates CERNAS. The Scientific Board is composed by all the integrated researchers holding a PhD degree, is the main decision maker of the Unit, and is chaired by the Principal Investigator.</p> <p>All the researchers are integrated in the 5 research areas stated earlier, being each one of the areas led by a member of the Scientific Board – the Group Leader - elected by all the researchers in the area. These 5 leaders, together with the principal investigator, form the Executive Board, which ordinarily meets once a month, and every time it is considered necessary to make decisions on the normal development of the works. The Principal Investigator and the Executive Board develop their activities with the support of a management office.</p> <p>Besides this structure, the Independent Advisory Board – that appreciates the activities programmes and reports of the Unit, and integrates 2 referenced scientists in each of the 5 areas, one national and one foreigner – is an important reference and guarantee of the quality of the proposals and of the achievements.</p>	
General Objectives	
<p>The general objectives of CERNAS are: 1) the creation of scientific and technological knowledge in the main and integrative area of the Agricultural Sciences and in other complementary areas, within the 5 transversal groups that constitute the Cernas's research structure; 2) its dissemination and transfer at regional, national and international levels.</p> <p>The creation of scientific and technological knowledge through research and development activities carried by the staff of the Unit in collaboration with other researchers, institutions and enterprises in Portugal and abroad; its dissemination in the scientific community and technology transfer to professionals and companies through the organization of seminars, conferences, courses, workshops, and publication and use of research results in different and appropriate forms, like journals, newspapers, proceedings, monographs, technology transfer agreements, etc.</p> <p>Both general objectives aim the sustainable development of rural areas in a challenging mutating world, which faces and will face overwhelming threats like progressive rural abandonment, increasing pollution and raw materials depletion.</p>	
Main Achievements	
<p>One of the main achievements of CERNAS in the considered period (2004-2006) is with no doubts the consolidation of the Unit, supported by the following indicators: a) the increasing number of members holding a PhD degree: from 18 at the very beginning to 43 in the present; b) the increasing number of members in the unit: from 60 at the very beginning to 124 in the present; c) the increasing number of institutions that contribute with researchers to the unit: from 3 at the very beginning to 9 in the present; d) the increasing area of influence of the unit: from institutions only in Coimbra to institutions all over the Centre Region of Portugal (Castelo Branco, Tomar, Oliveira do Hospital, Coimbra and Lisboa).</p> <p>Other main achievement is the increasing number and quality of publications of the researchers in the unit. From a total of 176 S&T work output in 2004 (thesis, books, chapters; publications, communications, reports, scientific meetings organization, computer applications and pilot instalments) to a total of 342 S&T work output in 2006, represents a huge effort and concentration of the team in the main aims of the unit: creation and dissemination of knowledge. Among them, it serves a special attention the enregistrement of a patent: Castro, A. [Conceição, M. A.,] Silva, E., Costa, J.M.C.. Detecção por intradermoreacção da fasciolose usando o antigénio Fh8 (fasciolina) - Instituto Nacional de Propriedade Industrial - Process nº 1035K (2005).</p> <p>Also a main achievement is the progressive number of MSc and PhD degrees under support in the period in the ambit of the unit, comprising the degrees obtained by the staff and/or advised by the staff: from 2 MSc and 2 PhD in 2004 to 19 MSc and 13 PhD in 2006.</p> <p>As a reference, a significant part of the published works in the period are a result of integrative and multidisciplinary approaches, involving researchers from different areas, institutions and countries, and are directly involved with subjects related to sustainable development of rural areas, the main goal of the unit.</p>	
Activities	

the Universidade de Évora; e) the Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto-Douro; f) the Escola Universitária Vasco da Gama; g) Centro de Estudos Florestais (CEF/ISA); h) Centro de Ecologia Aplicada Baeta Neves (CEABN/ISA).

Several PhD researchers from other research units collaborate with CERNAS works, coming from Química-Física Molecular Research Centre, Ressonância Magnética Nuclear Research Centre, Estação Florestal Nacional, CEF, Centro de Ecologia Aplicada Prof. Baeta Neves, CEER and UF do Paraná, Brazil, and at the same time some CERNAS's researchers collaborate with other research Centres, like CESAM, IAV, INIAP, ICETA/CECA, and CEF, empowering the CERNAS's national and international research and development network fostering innovation.

Mobility of research staff is common among partner units, mainly for short periods of upgrading special and common skills of the research staff of a project.

Equipment that is bought in the ambit of common projects is to be used by the team during the projects, and is integrated at their end in the unit that budgeted their bought, but the use is to be shared among the partners in the future.

Maintain and enhance national and international partnerships, deepen of mutual cooperation (proposals, project staff, mobility and common use of equipment) and networking, are the guidelines of our unit for the next future, working for a better (and sustainable) future in the rural areas.

General Indicators

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Nº of Researchers (FTE)*	18	18	27	41
Masters Completed in the Period	0	2	6	2
PhDs Completed in the Period	0	2	4	4

Research Groups

Group Title	Principal Investigator
1 (2003-2010) Environment	Antonio Jose Dinis Ferreira
2 (2003-2010) Food Science and Engineering	Regina Maria Mendes de Abreu Cabral Nabais Menezes
3 (2003-2010) Economics and Rural Development	Orlando Marcelino de Almeida Simões
4 (2003-2010) Natural Resources Chemistry	Maria da Conceição Cruz Costa
5 (2003-2010) Forest Resources Sustainable Management	Maria do Carmo Felgueiras e Sousa Magalhaes

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