Forgotten lands

A Post-growth perspective on the management of heritage and infrastructure in the Soria region.

AR3U115 - Graduation Lab Urbanism Studio
Planning Complex Cities
MSc Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences
Delft University of Technology

Miriam Schoemakers Modrego
4859014

20-06-2024

P5 presentation

1. Introduction

Problem statement

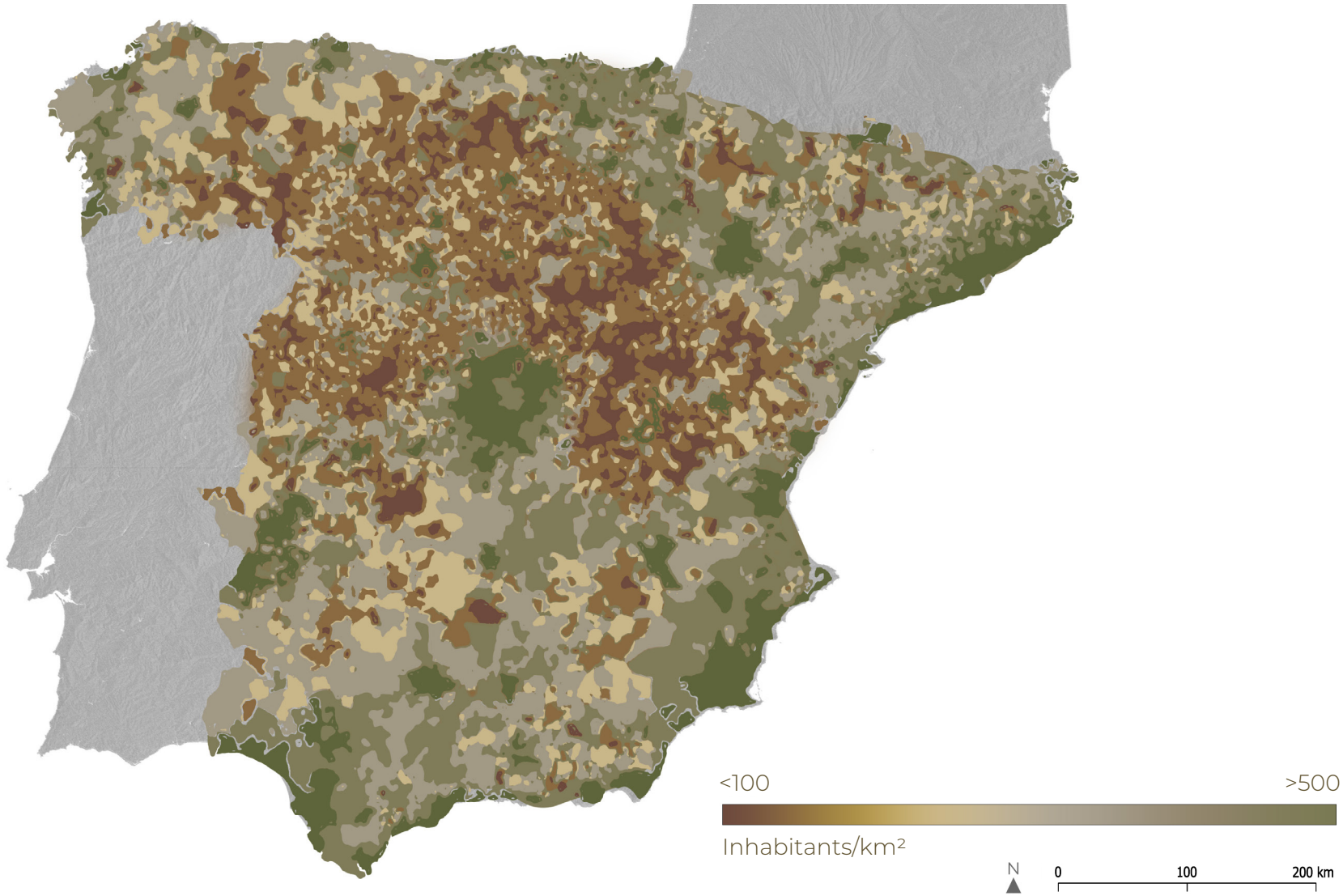
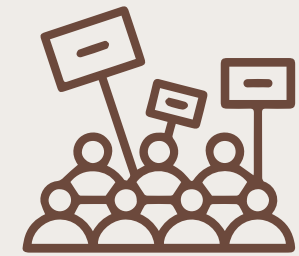


Fig. 1 Population density variations 1961-2019. Based on data and maps by (Barcena Martín et al., 2023).

Problem statement

Shrinkage

Social response



Political response

Spatial Response

Envitonmental Response

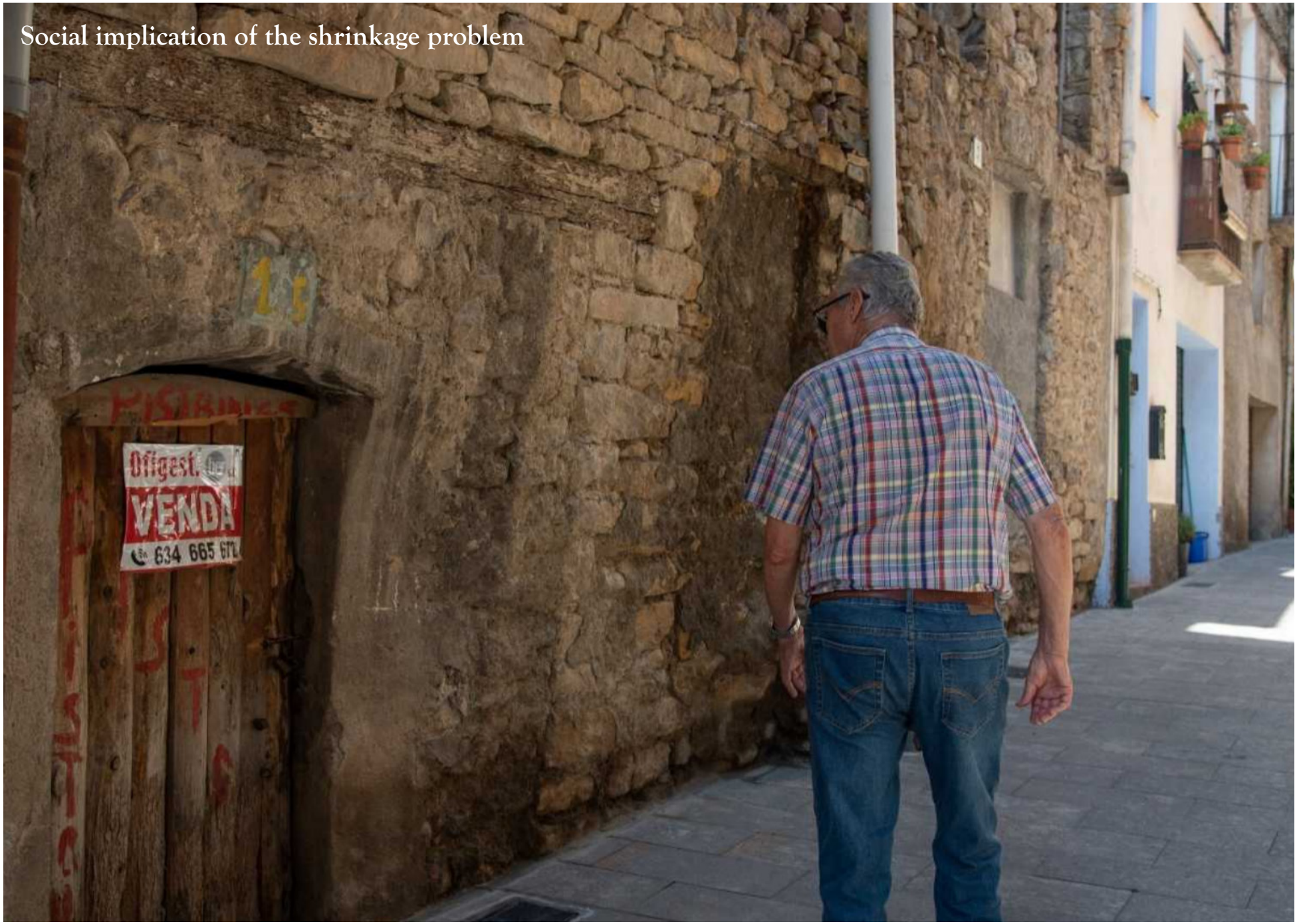


Fig. 2 Abandonement of villages and infrastructure, ageing of population, oblivion of culture

Fig. 4 *Poorly mantained infrastructure, dysfunctional housing, difficult access to services*

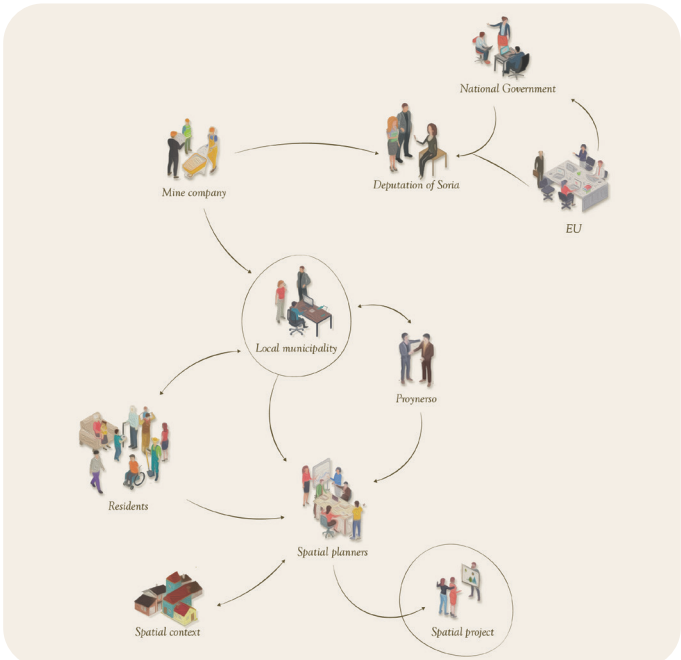
Fig. 5 *Natural disasters, take-over of macro-plants for sustainable energy/land exploitation*

Fig. 3 *Popular unrest because of political neglect*

2. Concepts

Concepts

1. Post-Growth

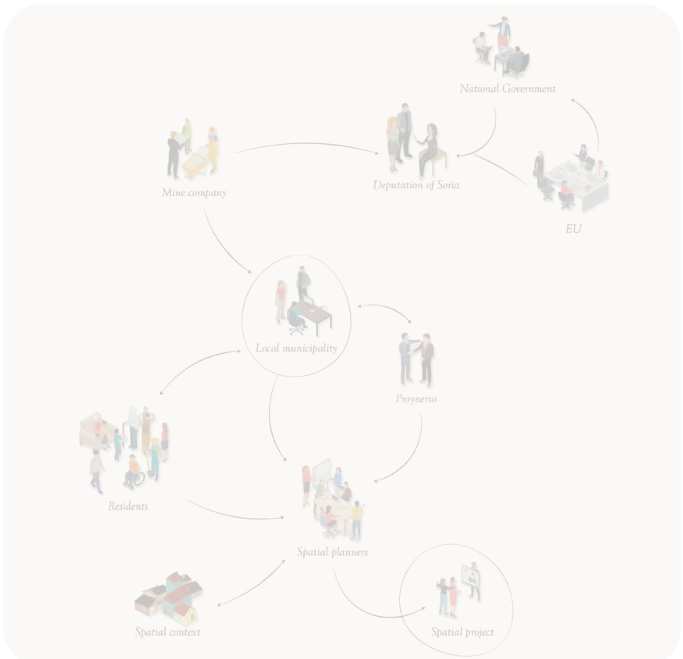


2. Governance

3. Heritage

Concepts

1. Post-Growth



2. Governance

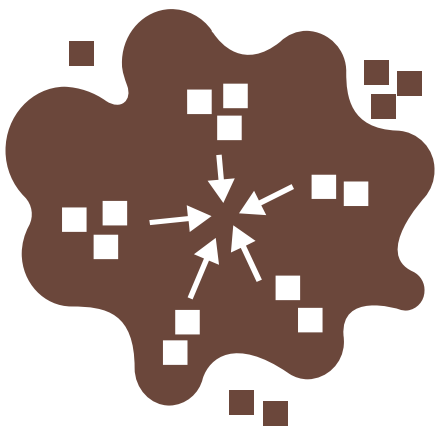
3. Heritage

What is Post-Growth?

Post-growth is a theory that argues that **unrestricted growth** in consumption and production is **not feasible** within planetary boundaries.

The spatial dimension of post-growth theory

Savini (2021) and the **degrowth principles**

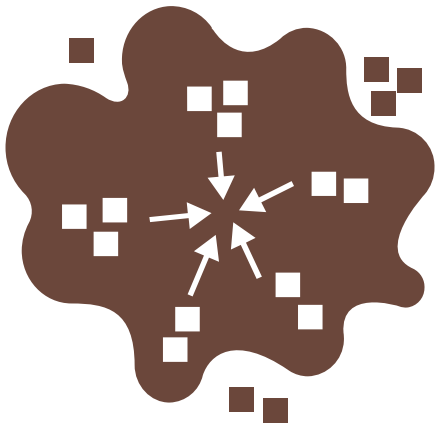


Polycentric autonomism

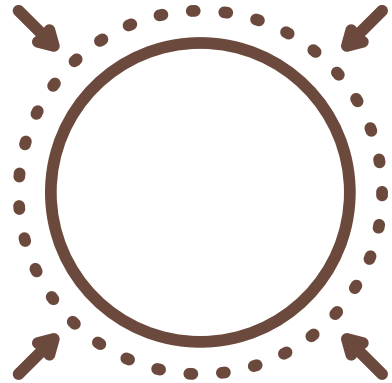
Communities can provide themselves of certain resources

The spatial dimension of post-growth theory

Savini (2021) and the **degrowth principles**



Polycentric autonomism
Communities can provide
themselves of certain resources



Finity
Revaluation of space, put limits
for value in place to avoid excess

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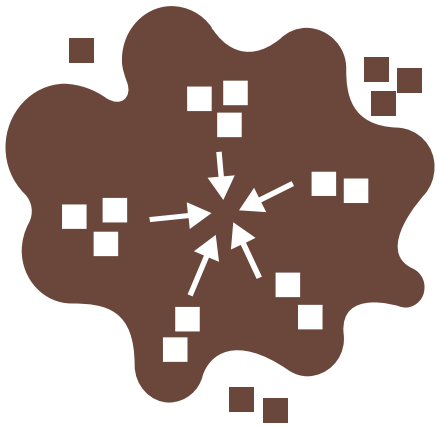
Savini (2021) and the **degrowth principles**



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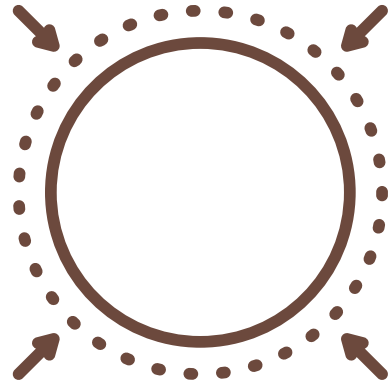

Finity
Revaluation of space, put limits
for value in place to avoid excess

Habitability
New approach to zoning.
Collective management of land.

Post-growth in the rural context

Smaller threshold

Access to essential needs

Ecological land management

Relationship between land and people

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Concepts

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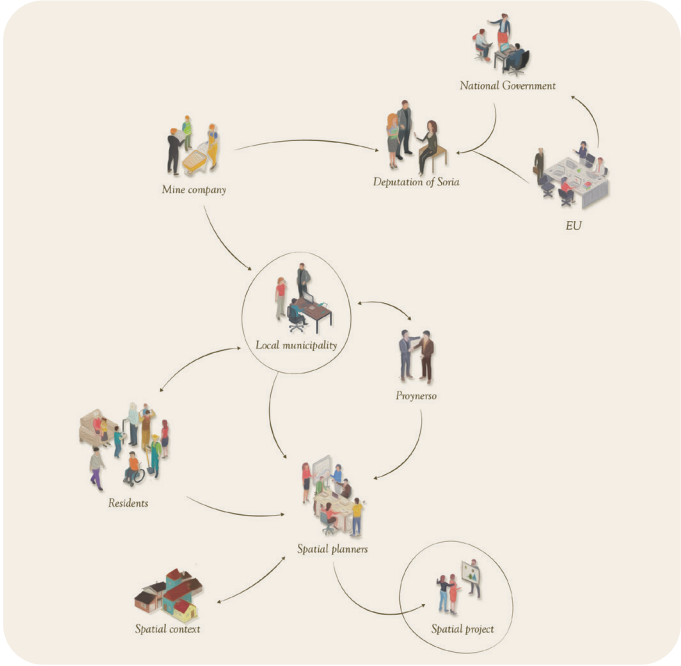

2. Governance

3. Heritage

Governance: how is the territory managed?

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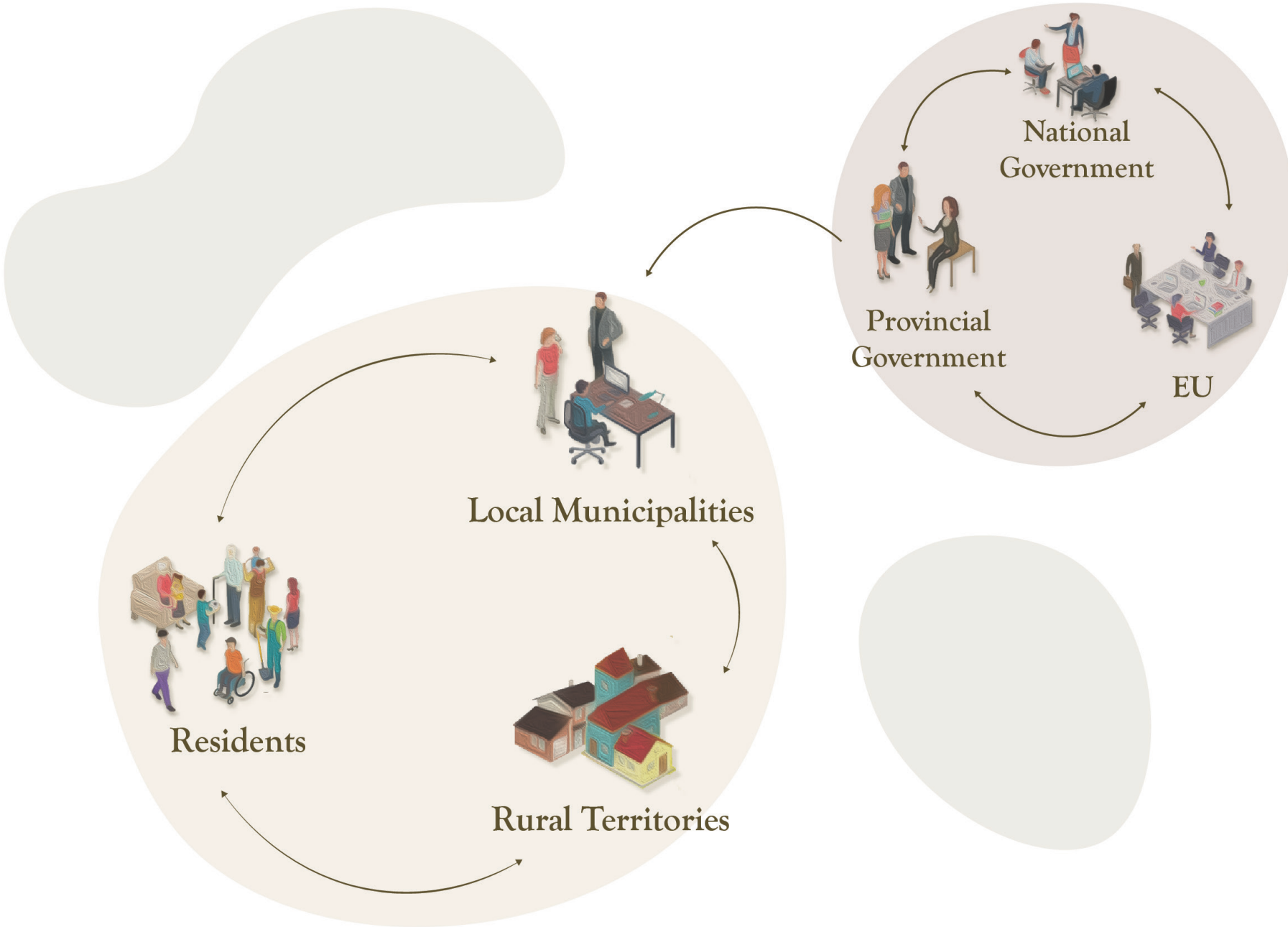
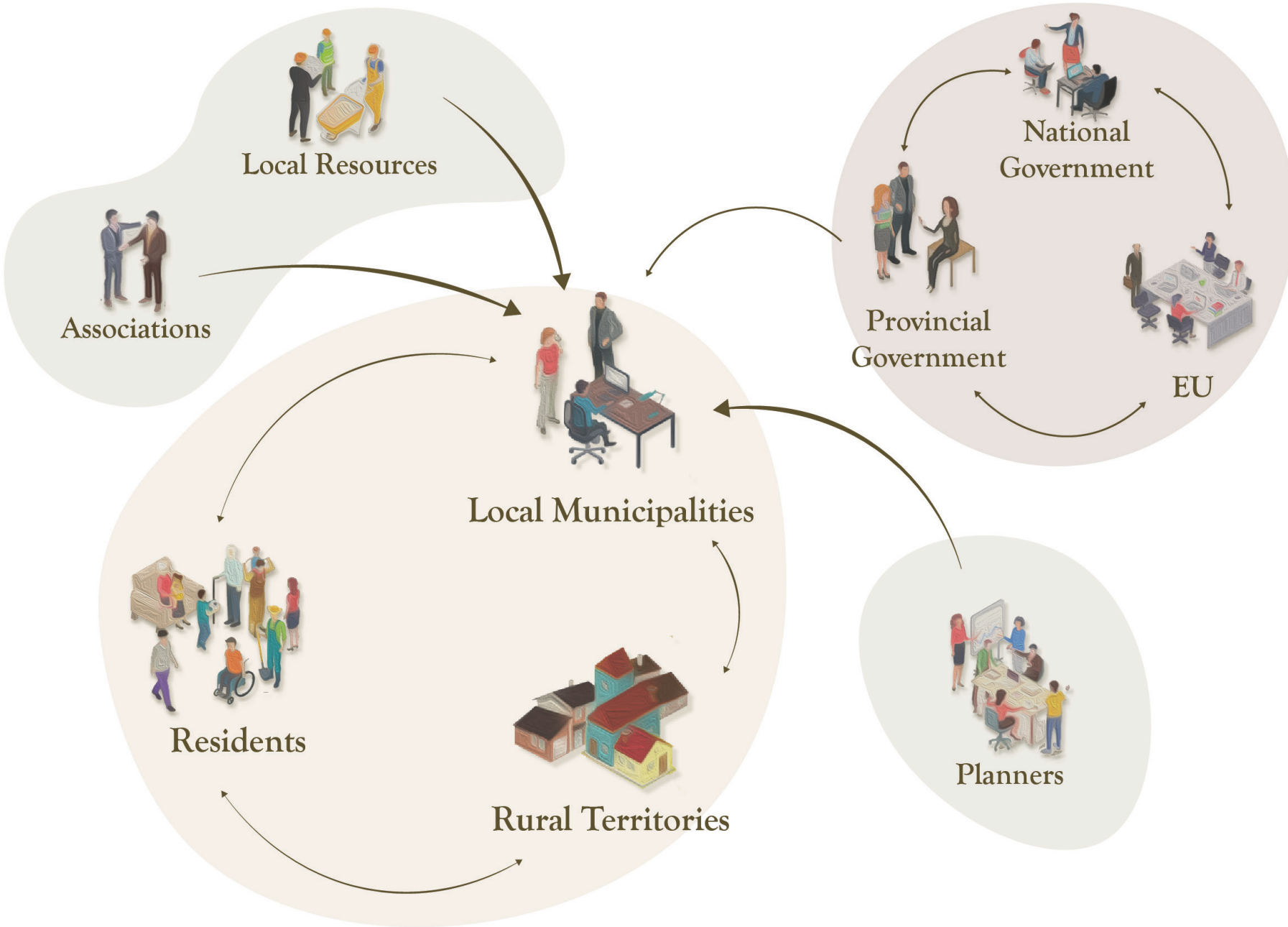
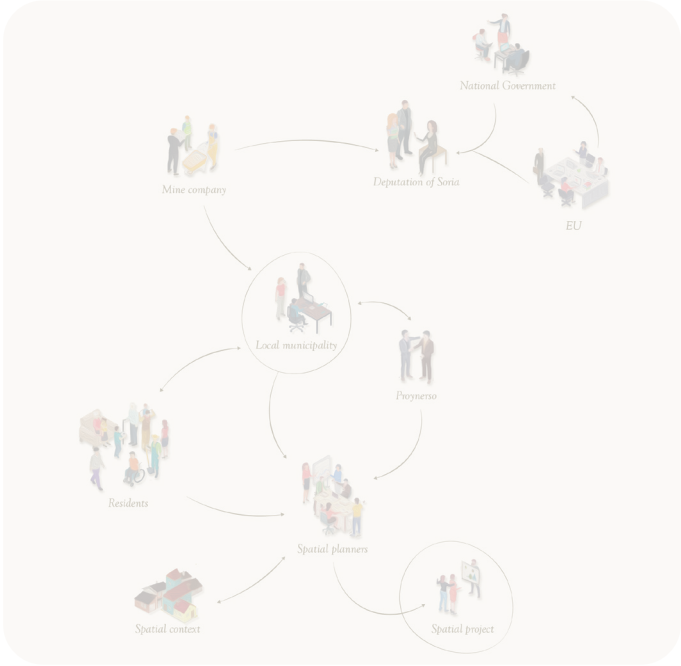


Governance: how is the territory managed?



Concepts

1. Post-Growth



2. Governance

3. Heritage

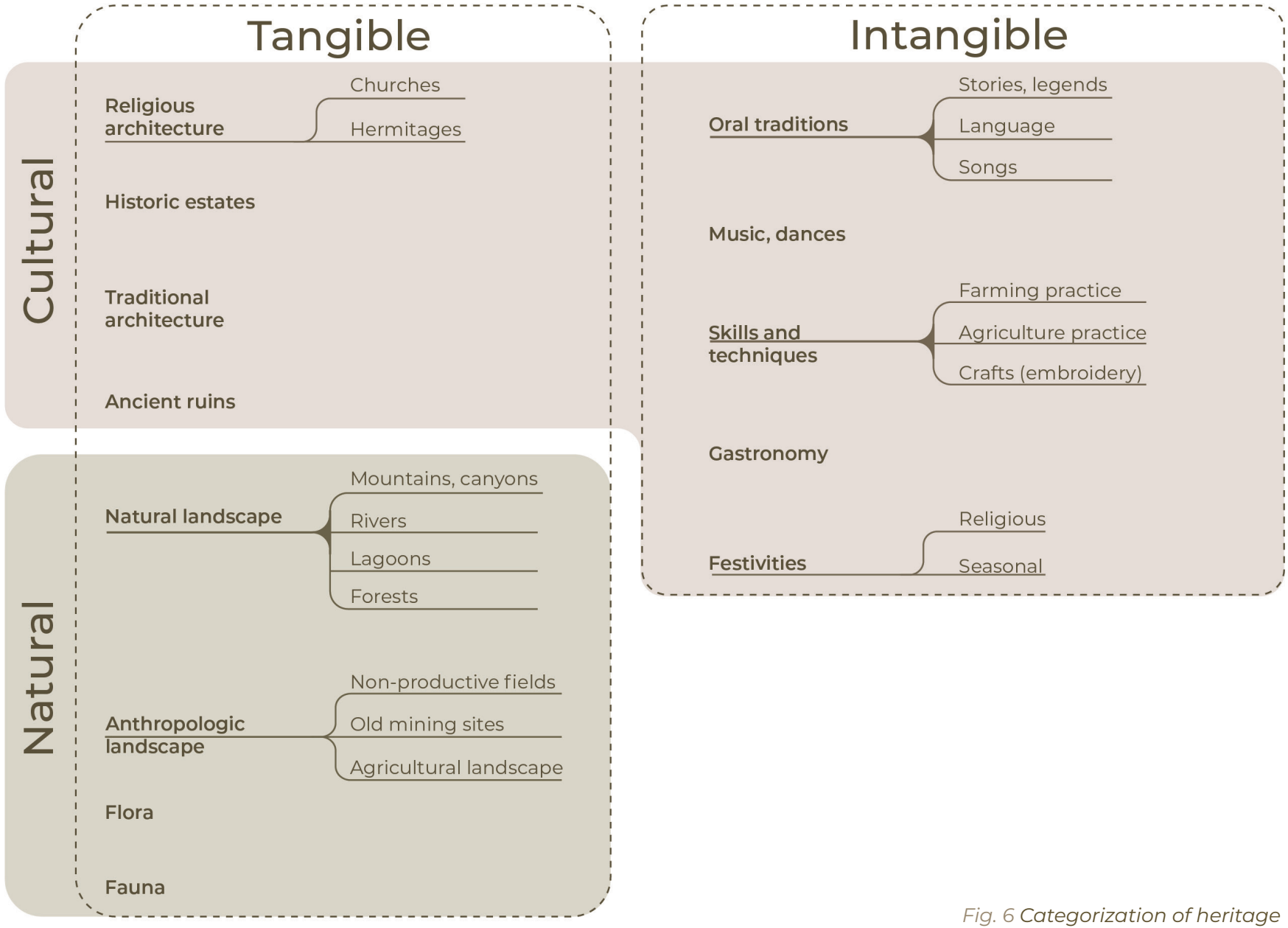


Fig. 6 Categorization of heritage

Tangible, cultural heritage

Tangible, natural heritage

Intangible, cultural heritage

3. Aims and goals

Conceptual framework

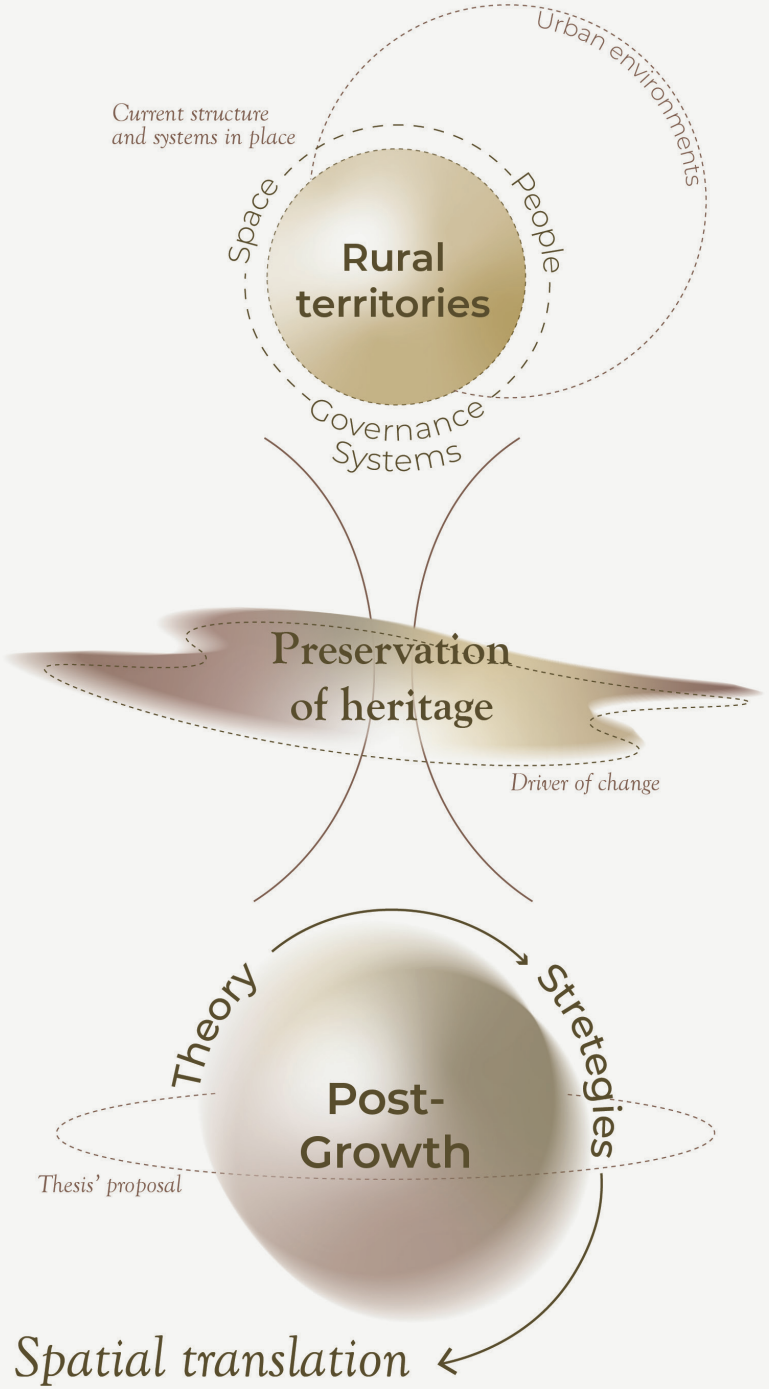


Fig. 7 Conceptual framework diagram

Main research question:

How can a **spatial perspective** on **post-growth planning strategies** contribute to reorganizing **rural territories** through the **preservation** of cultural and ecological **heritage** of shrinking rural communities in the Spanish countryside?

3. Aims and goals

1.

Create knowledge that will lead to better decision-making and create a **new spatial dimension** to decision-making.

2.

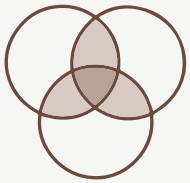
Relate **sustainable post-growth spatial strategies to spatial design** in a concrete context.

3.

Change the narrative of popular imaginery regarding the ‘stagnant’ rural world.

4.

Rethink values and highlight the **importance of rural areas and rural life and culture**.

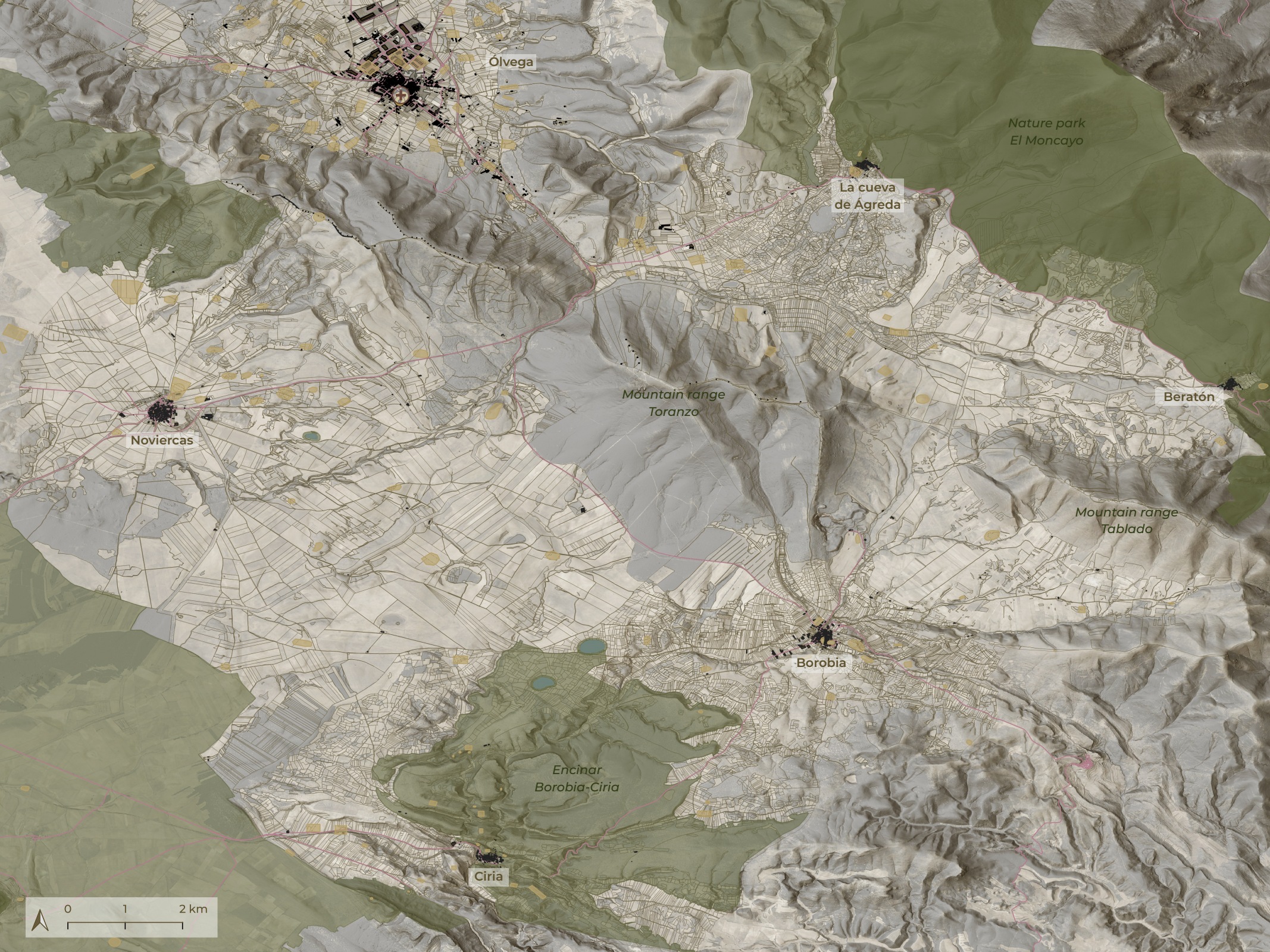


5.

Use **heritage** as a bridge between decision-making practices, people’s needs and (post-growth related) planning practices.

4. Site

Olvega
Nature park
El Moncayo
La cueva
de Ágreda
Beratón
Noviercas
Mountain range
Tablado
Borobia
Borobia-Ciria
Ciria
0
1
2 km


Olvega
Nature park
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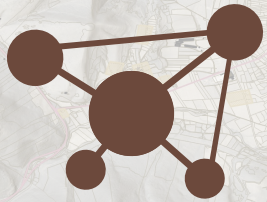
Mountain range
Toranzo
Beratón
Noviercas
Mountain range
Tablado
Borobia
Encinar
Borobia-Ciria
Ciria
0
1
2 km

Site selection
Criteria

1. Shrinking rural area



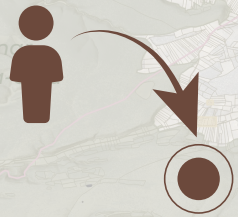
2. Area contains a ***cluster*** of 4 to 5 villages/municipalities

3. Area ***relates to a bigger urban core*** (+- 1 hour away)

4. The villages in the area present ***different stages of shrinkage*** (diverse populations)

5. The area presents a singular identity and ***care for its culture***

6. The area presents ***active population*** cores that want to see change



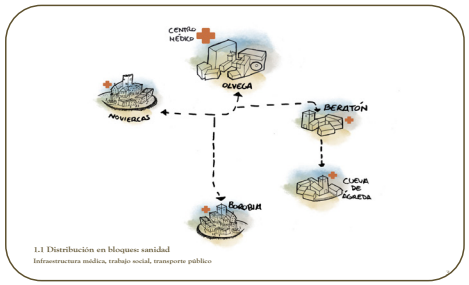
7. Is accessible for fieldwork

5. Research sub-question 1

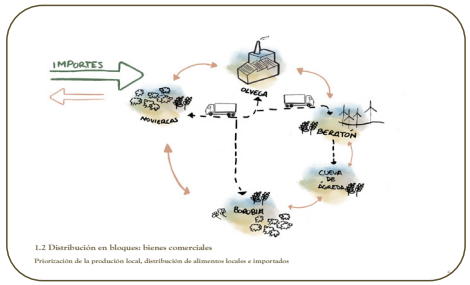
What is the **spatial perspective of post-growth theories**? and
how does this translate to strategies in **planning rural territories**?

Preliminary post-growth toolkit

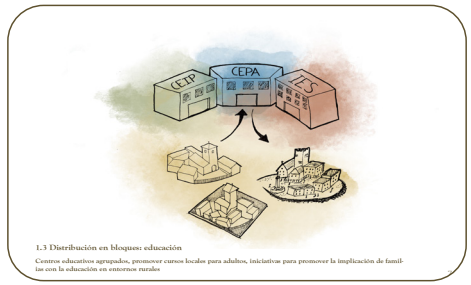
1. Related to the principle of **Polycentric Autonomism**



1.1 Distribución en bloques: sanidad
Infraestructura médica, trabajo social, transporte público



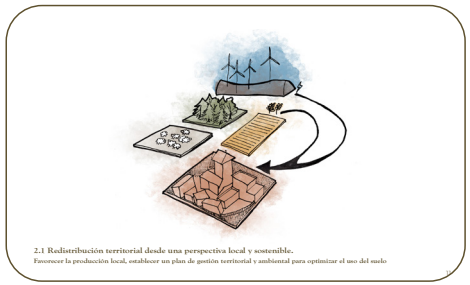
1.2 Distribución en bloques: bienes comerciales
Priorización de la producción local, distribución de alimentos locales e importados



1.3 Distribución en bloques: educación
Centros educativos agrupados, promover cursos locales para adultos, iniciativas para promover la implicación de familias con la educación en entornos rurales

1.4 Gestión policéntrica del patrimonio cultural
Protección del patrimonio cultural y la memoria histórica con un enfoque colectivo

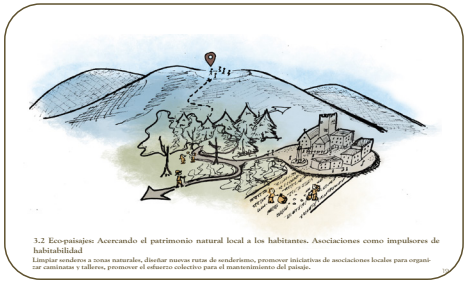
2. Related to the principle of **Finity**



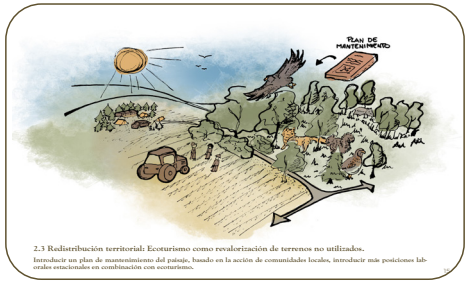
2.1 Redistribución territorial desde una perspectiva local y sostenible.
Favorecer la producción local, establecer un plan de gestión territorial y ambiental para optimizar el uso del suelo

2.2 Mejora de las condiciones de vivienda e infraestructura en suelo urbano.
Mejorar el estado de calles y viviendas, con la prioridad de la seguridad de los mayores; introducir vivienda social en edificios abandonados existentes.

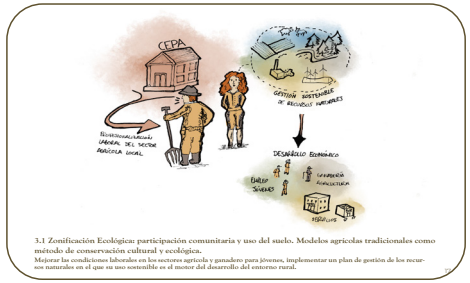
3. Related to the principle of **Habitability**



3.2 Eco-paisajes: Acercando el patrimonio natural local a los habitantes. Asociaciones como impulsores de habitabilidad
Limpiar senderos a zonas naturales, diseñar nuevas rutas de senderismo, promover iniciativas de asociaciones locales para organizar caminatas y talleres, promover el esfuerzo colectivo para el mantenimiento del paisaje.



2.3 Redistribución territorial: Ecoturismo como revalorización de terrenos no utilizados.
Introducir un plan de mantenimiento del paisaje, basado en la acción de comunidades locales, introducir más posiciones laborales estacionales en combinación con ecoturismo.



3.1 Zonificación Ecológica: participación comunitaria y uso del suelo. Modelos agrícolas tradicionales como método de conservación cultural y ecológica.
Mejorar las condiciones laborales en los sectores agrícola y ganadero para jóvenes, implementar un plan de gestión de los recursos naturales en el que su uso sostenible es el motor del desarrollo del entorno rural.

Example: Polycentric management of cultural heritage

Related to the theory of: Polycentric Authonomism

1.4 Polycentric management of cultural heritage

Strategy description:

This strategy answers to the need for revitalization of a sense of place and identity of shrinking rural environments. It is important to emphasize the cultural and environmental importance of rural settlements among the inhabitants of these localities.
This strategy presents the following proposals:

· Collective efforts to obtain the mains to maintain heritage sites. The protection and maintenance of this site has to be a political priority nationally, regionally but also locally, to ensure the proper completion of projects.

· Facilitate resources to existing local (cultural) associations, municipalities to promote cultural initiatives such as: hikes in the direct natural environment, themed festivities related to historical events, other events related to the acknowledgement of history and historical monuments, seasonal fairs related to traditional economic activities.

· Events with a collective approach, about common history/heritage of all villages. Public transport between villages is provided.

Aims:

· Make knowledge of the historical importance of rural environments accessible.

· Emphasize the sense of place, identity and community of inhabitants.

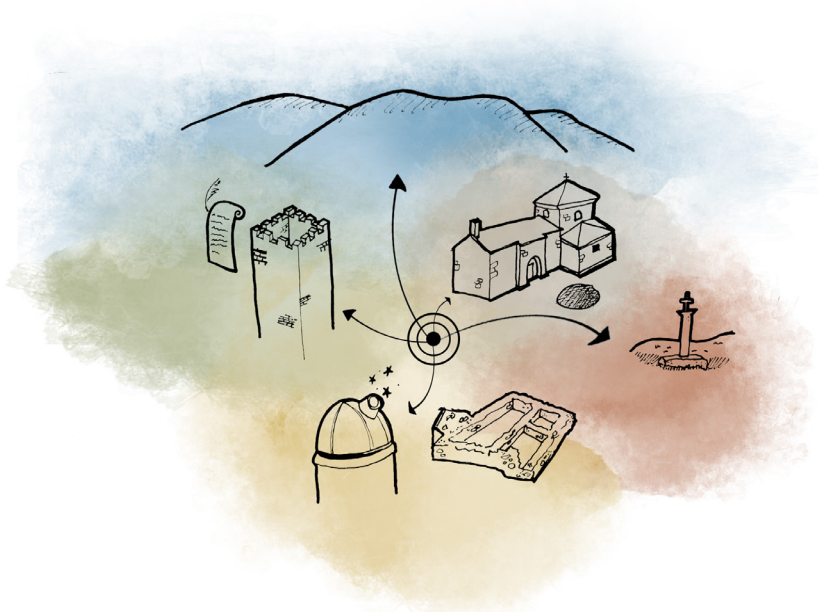
· Improve the state of historical sites

Keywords:

Maintanance, innitiatives, events, accessibility

Main stakeholders:

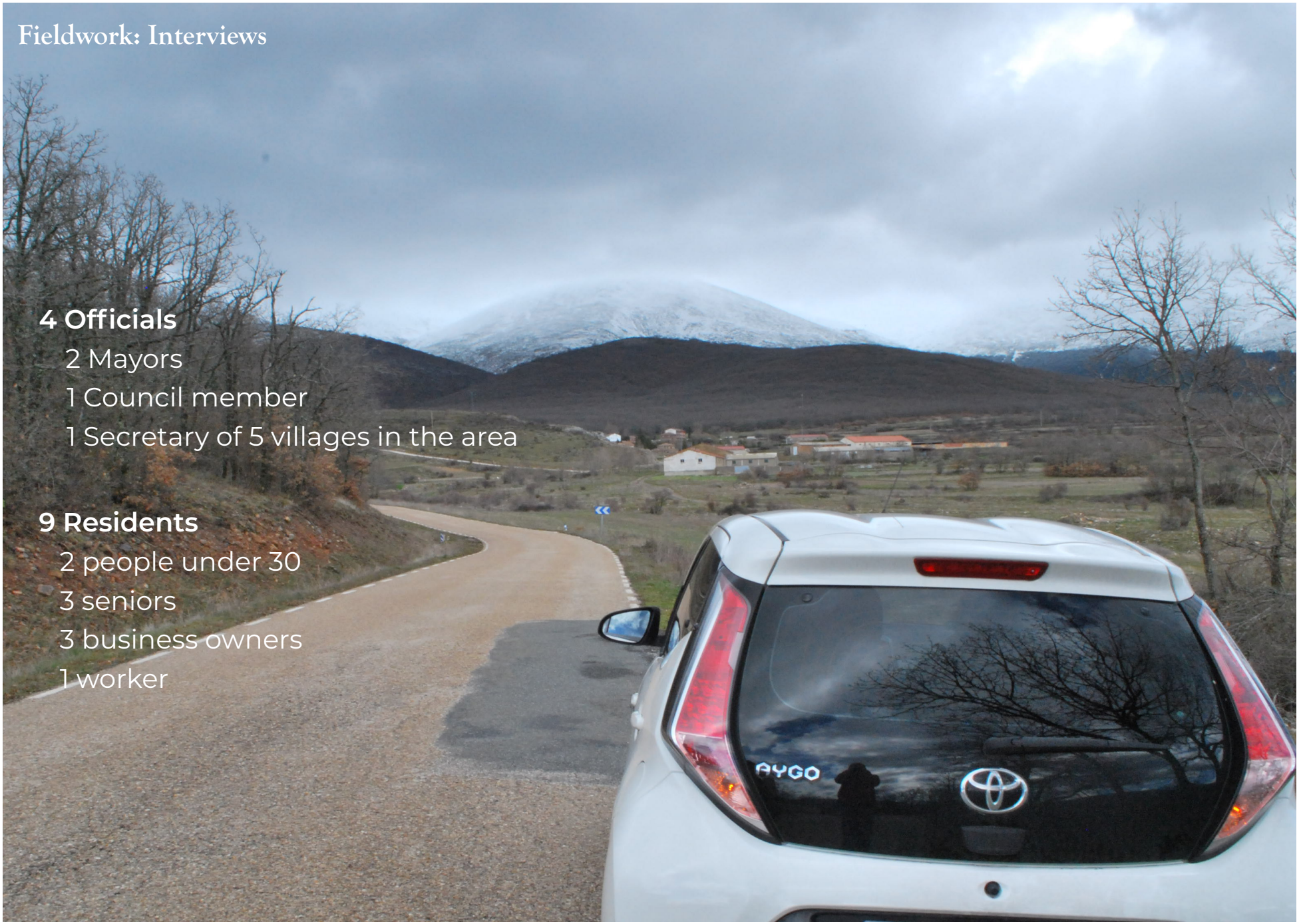
· Local municipalities
· Provincial government
· Cultural associations
· Inhabitants



Protection of cultural heritage and historical memory with a collective approach

5. Testing the toolkit

Fieldwork: Interviews



4 Officials

2 Mayors
1 Council member
1 Secretary of 5 villages in the area

9 Residents

2 people under 30
3 seniors
3 business owners
1 worker

Research sub-question 2

How can **policies** contribute to the implementation of **post-growth principles in space** management in Spanish rural territories?

Interview analysis: on problems

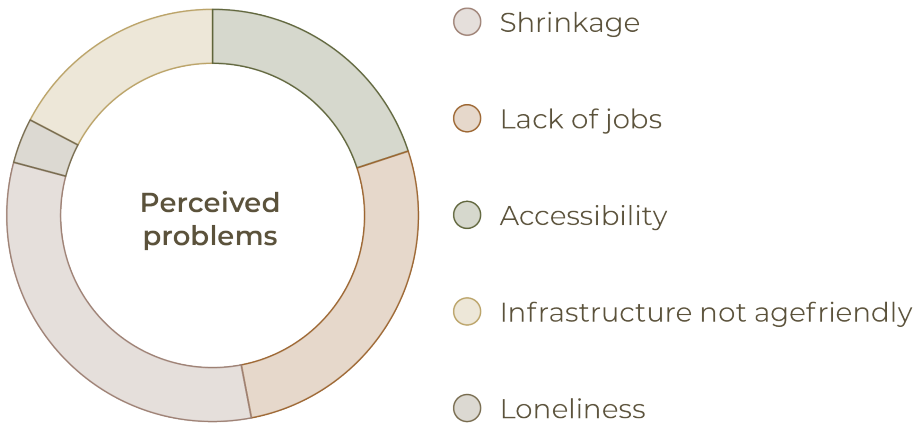


Table 1 Perceived problems by residents, based on the coded information from interviews.

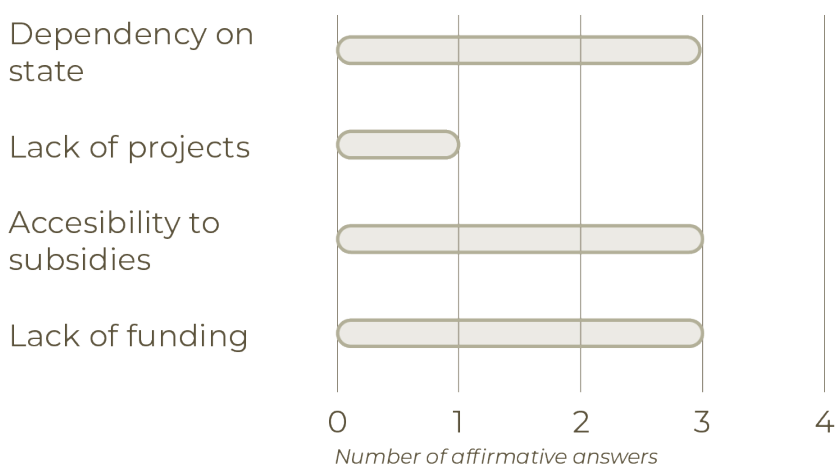


Table 1. Perceived problems within the villages' governance by officials.

Interview analysis: on heritage sites

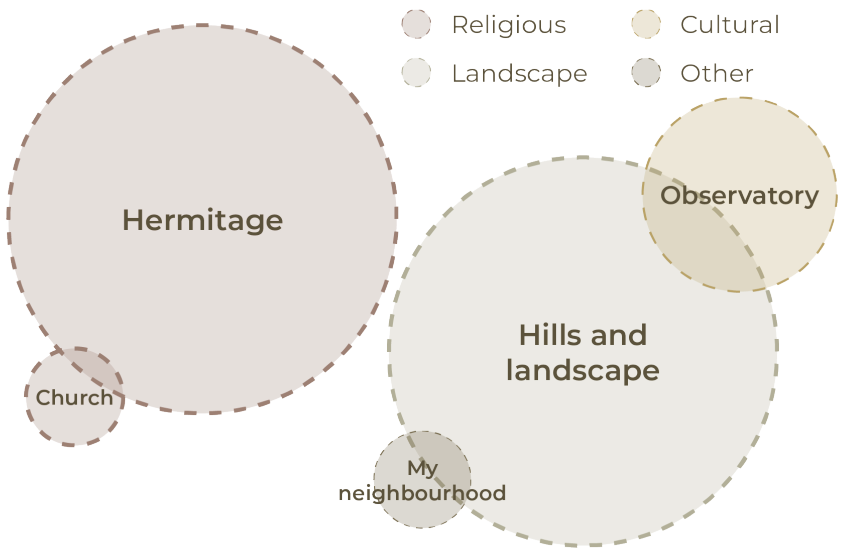


Table 3. Important heritage sites, based on the coded information from interviews.

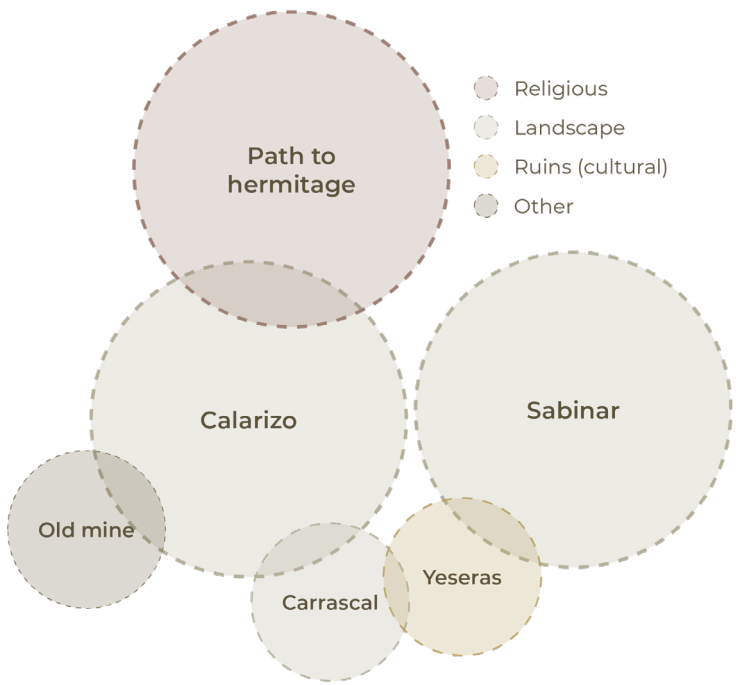
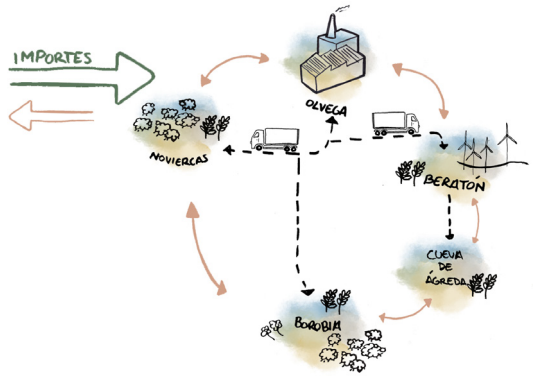


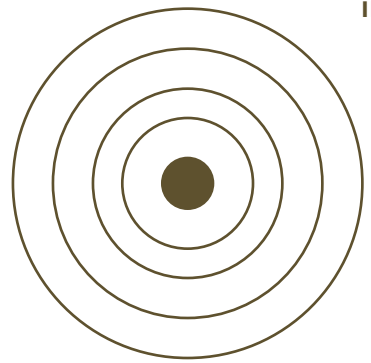
Table 4. Important natural heritage sites, based on the coded information from interviews.

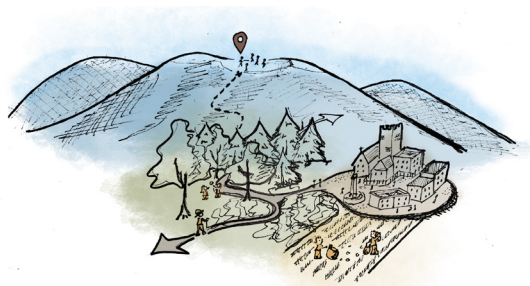
Toolkit for the explored location



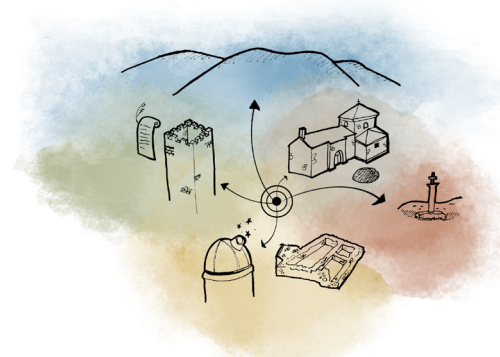
Polycentric distribution of commercial goods

Improving housing and infrastructure conditions

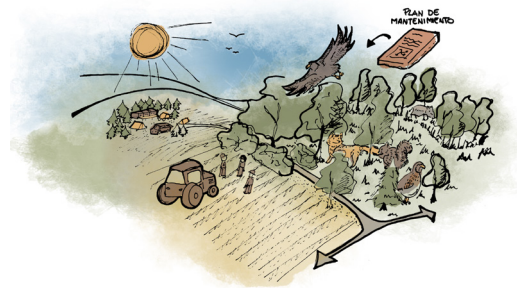




Bringing the natural heritage closer to the residents

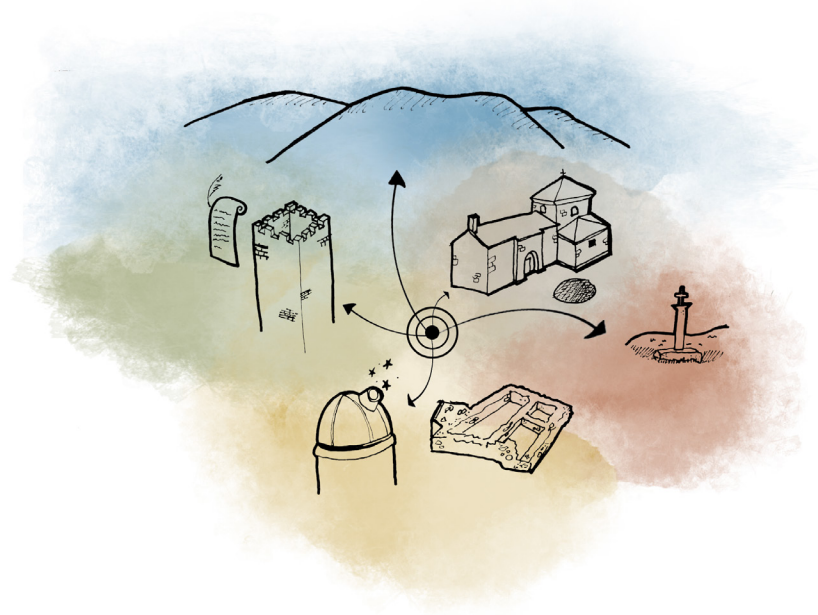


Polycentric management of cultural heritage



Ecotourism as revalorisation of resources

Fieldwork cocnlusion: Actions per strategy, applied in Borobia.



POLYCENTRIC MANAGEMENT OF **CULTURAL HERITAGE** (1.4)

Concrete (design) actions:

△●□ Local municipality association for preservation and management of local heritage sites (common efforts, local heritage is not only part of 1 municipality)

▲○■ 'Innitiatives that stay' (for non tangible heritage): bring old traditions back, focus on:

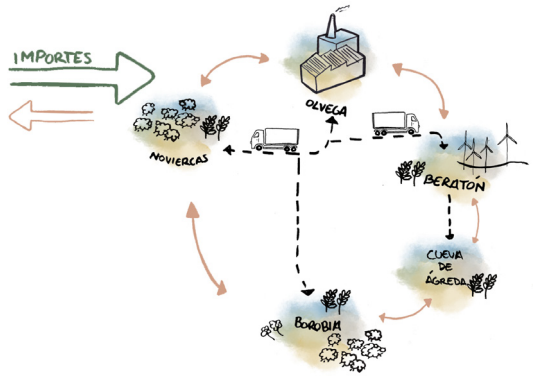
- Traditional music (festivities, contests, exibitions)
- Traditional practices (fairs, planned activities and exhibitions)
- Language (writing in murals, journals)
- History (fairs, festivals, photography exhibitions)
- Customs (festivities, fairs)

Type of intervention:

- ■ Spatial intervention
- ● Strategic planning/logistics
- ▲ Community action

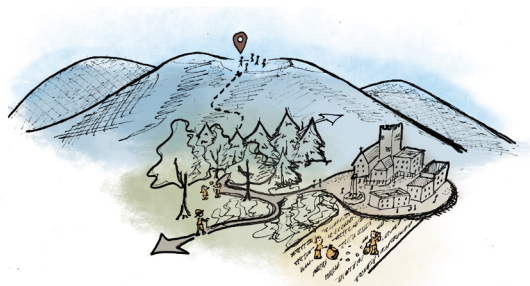
6. Strategy and design

Toolkit for the explored location

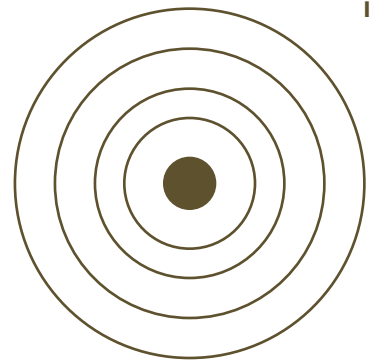


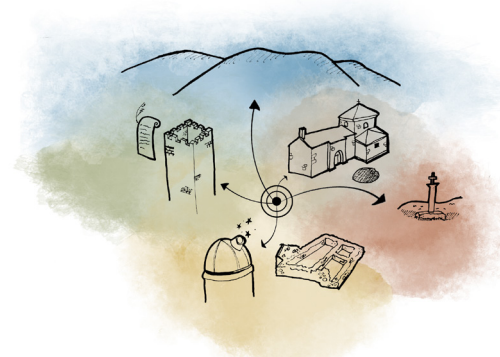
Polycentric distribution of commercial goods

Improving housing and infrastructure conditions

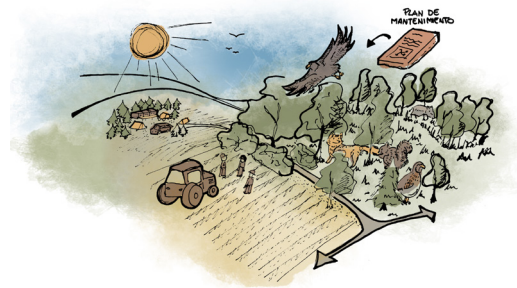


Bringing the natural heritage closer to the residents



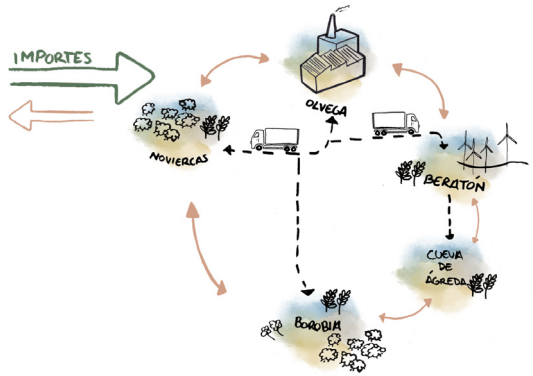


Polycentric management of cultural heritage



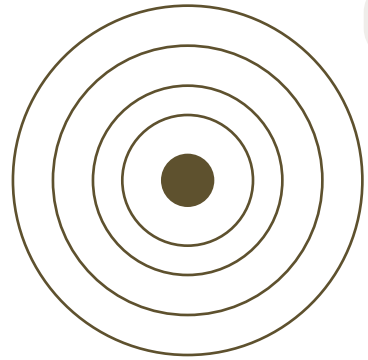
Ecotourism as revalorisation of resources

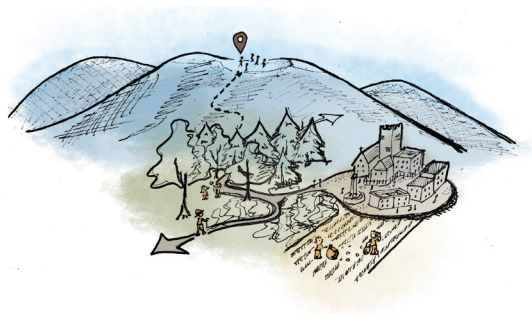
Toolkit for the explored location



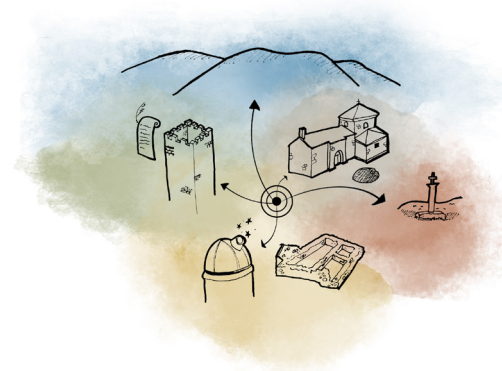
Commercial goods

Housing and infrastructure

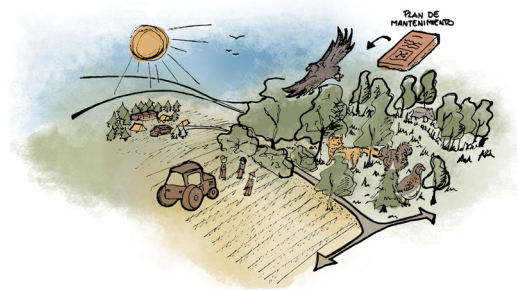




Natural heritage



Cultural heritage

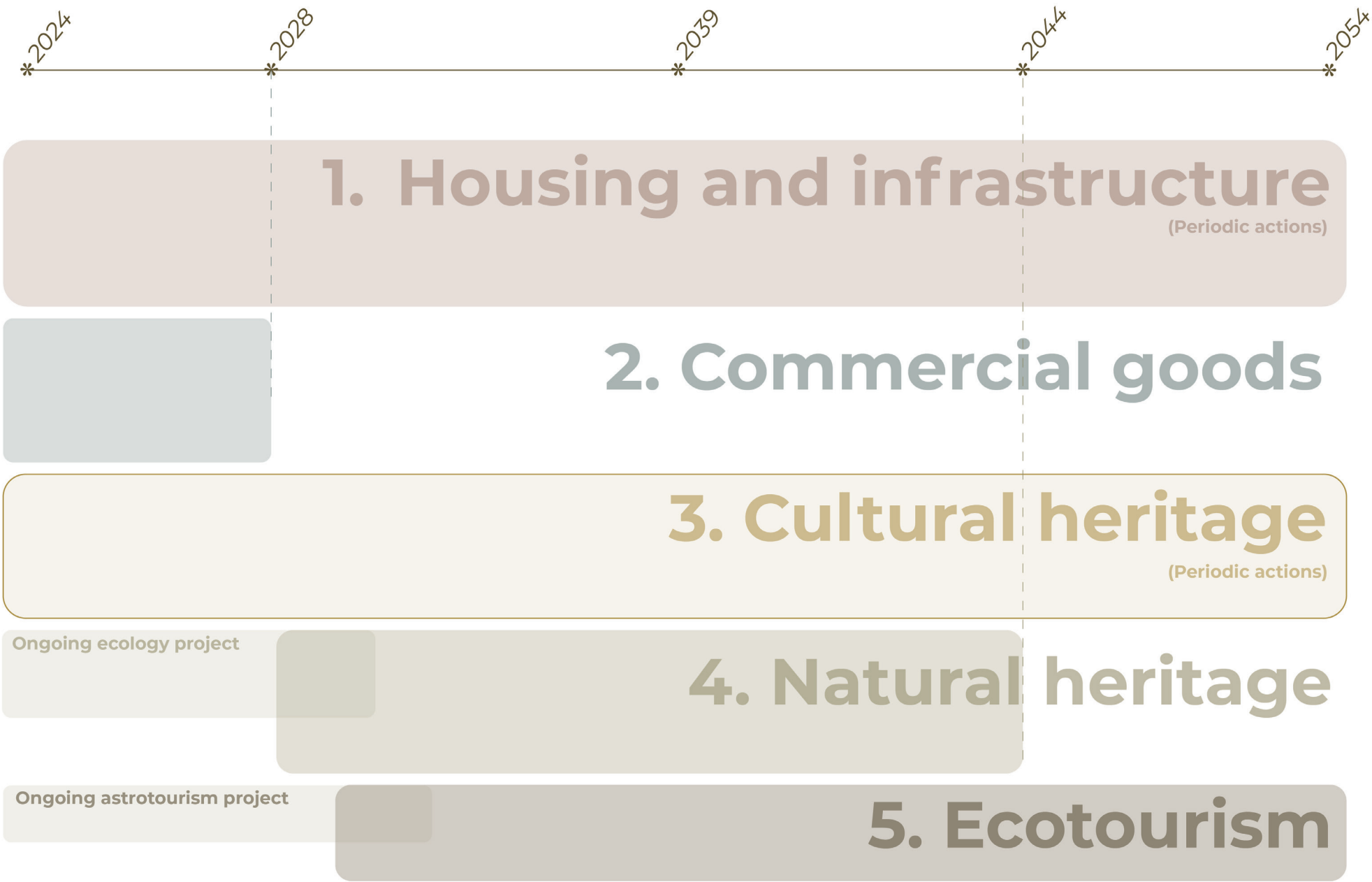


Ecotourism

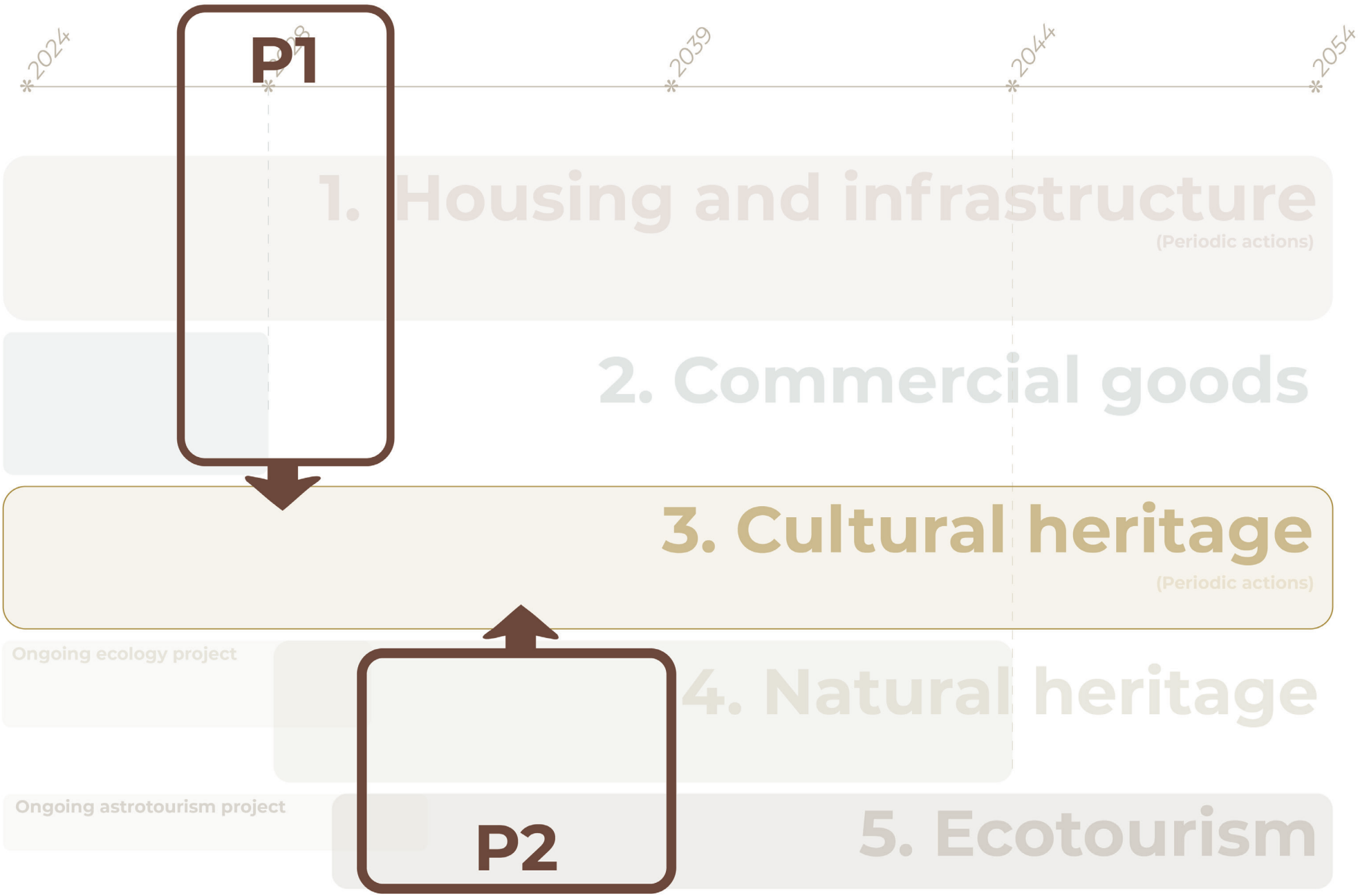
Research sub-question 3

How can the preservation of **cultural and ecological heritage** work as a **driver** for a post-growth economy in the Spanish rural context?

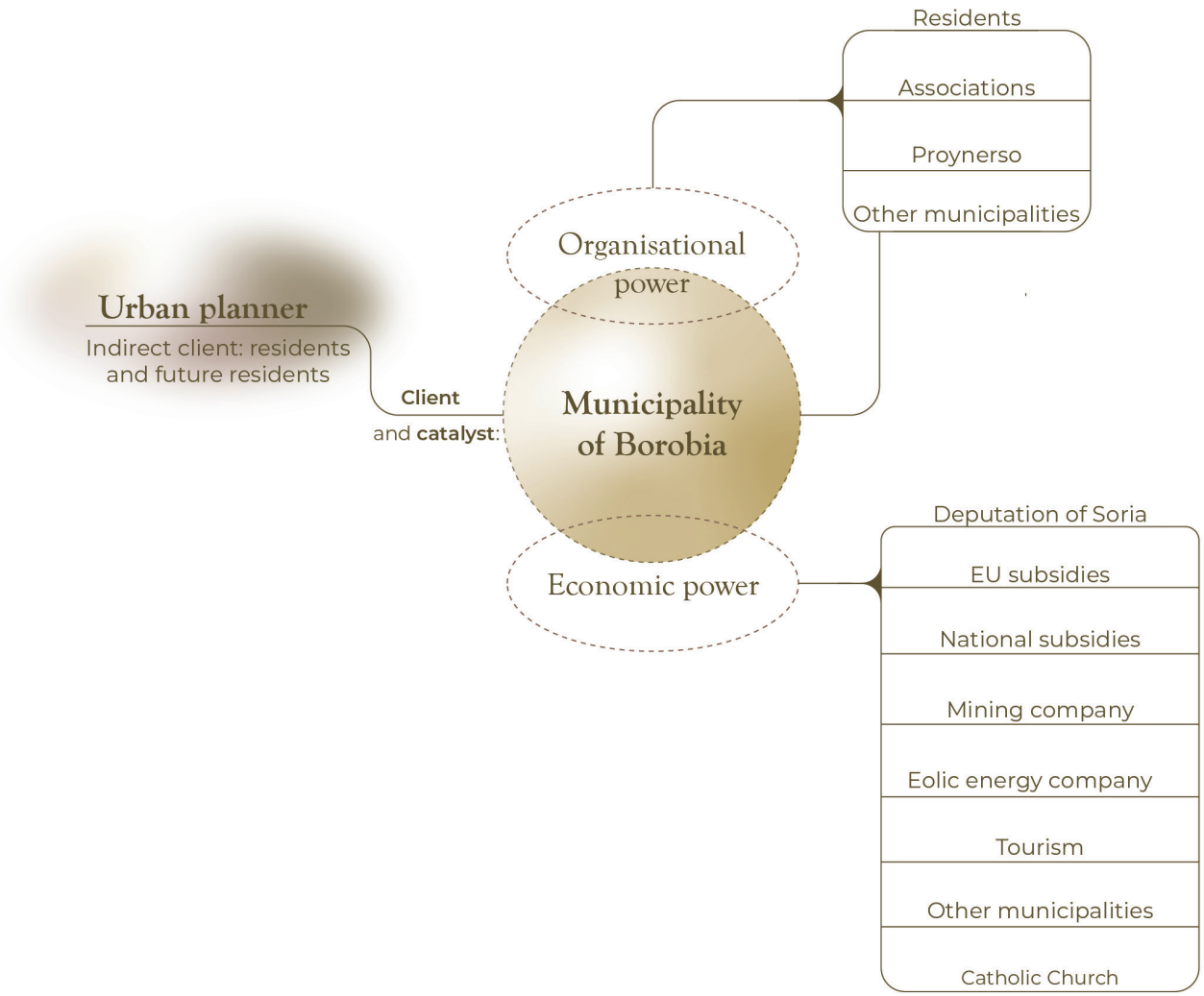
Timeline of strategies



Projects


2024
2039
2044
2054
P1
1. Housing and infrastructure
(Periodic actions)
2. Commercial goods
3. Cultural heritage
(Periodic actions)
Ongoing ecology project
4. Natural heritage
Ongoing astrotourism project
5. Ecotourism
P2

Stakeholders



Project 1: Housing, infrastructue and commercial goods

Fig. 9 Plan view of the village of Borobia with interventions

Fig. 10 *Socializing in the village.*

Project 1: Guidelines

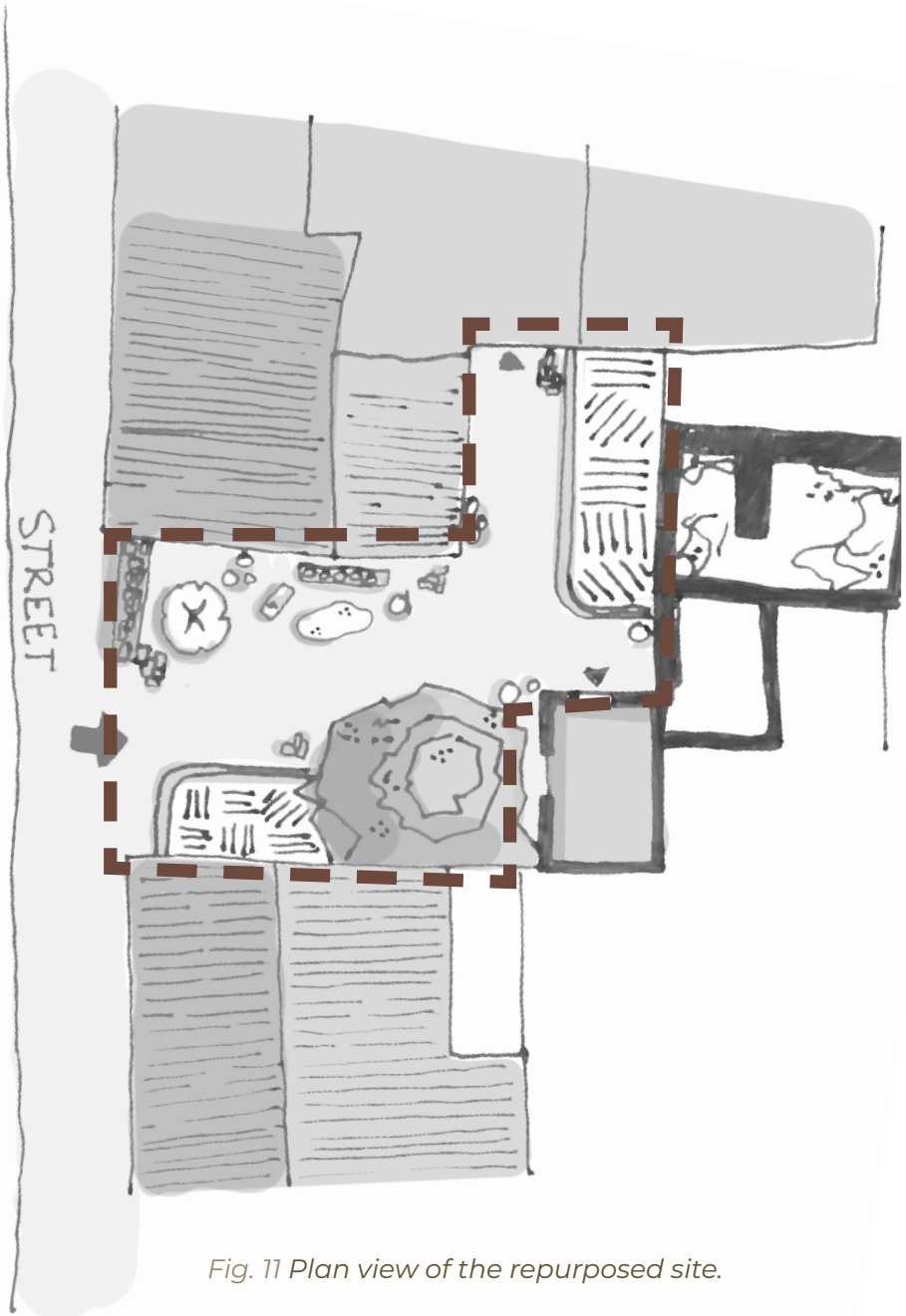


Fig. 11 Plan view of the repurposed site.

Fig. 12 Existing unused ruin site in the village of Borobia.

Project 1: Guidelines

Fig. 13 Space to place plants or introduce orchards for the neighbours..

Project 1: Guidelines

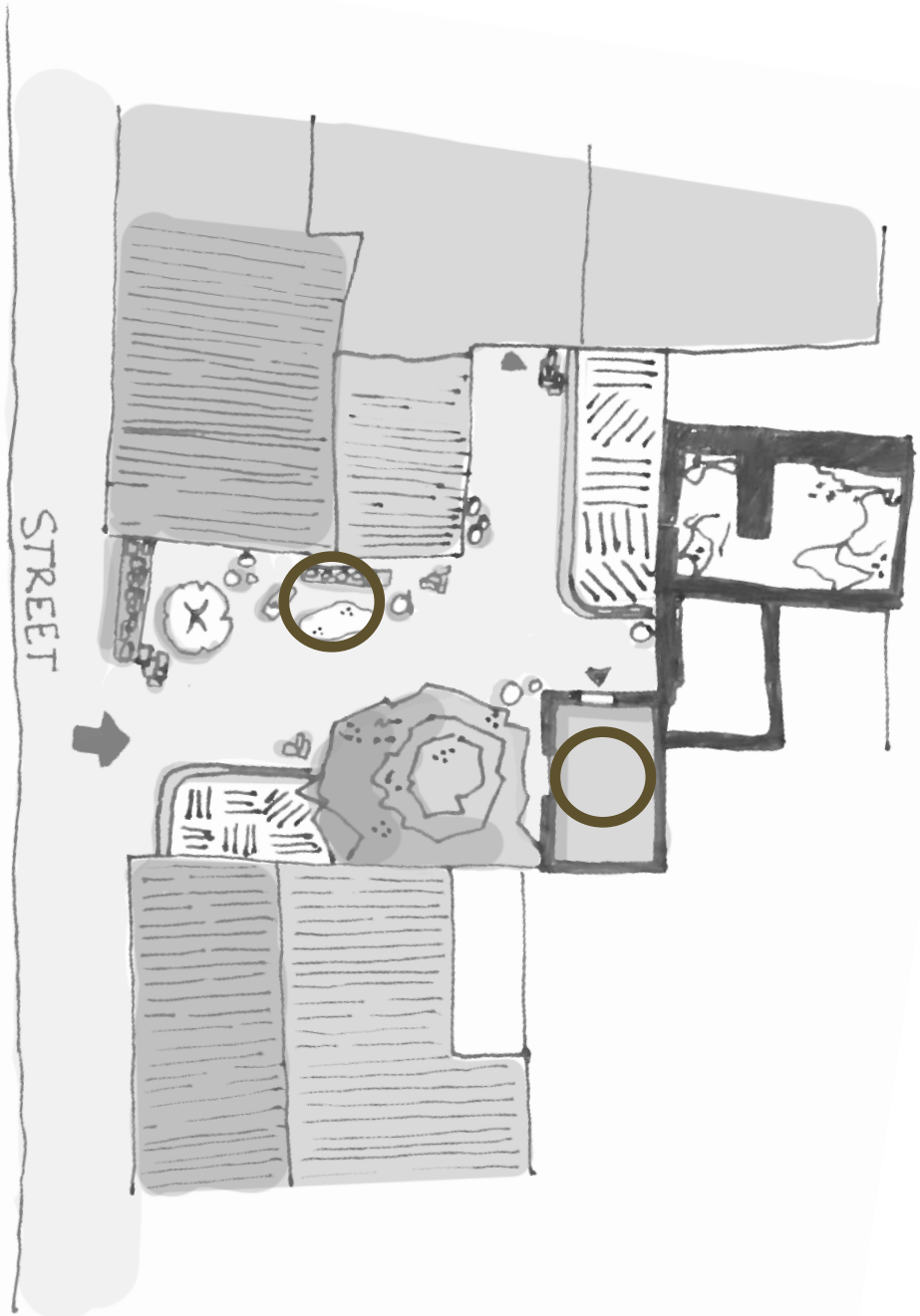
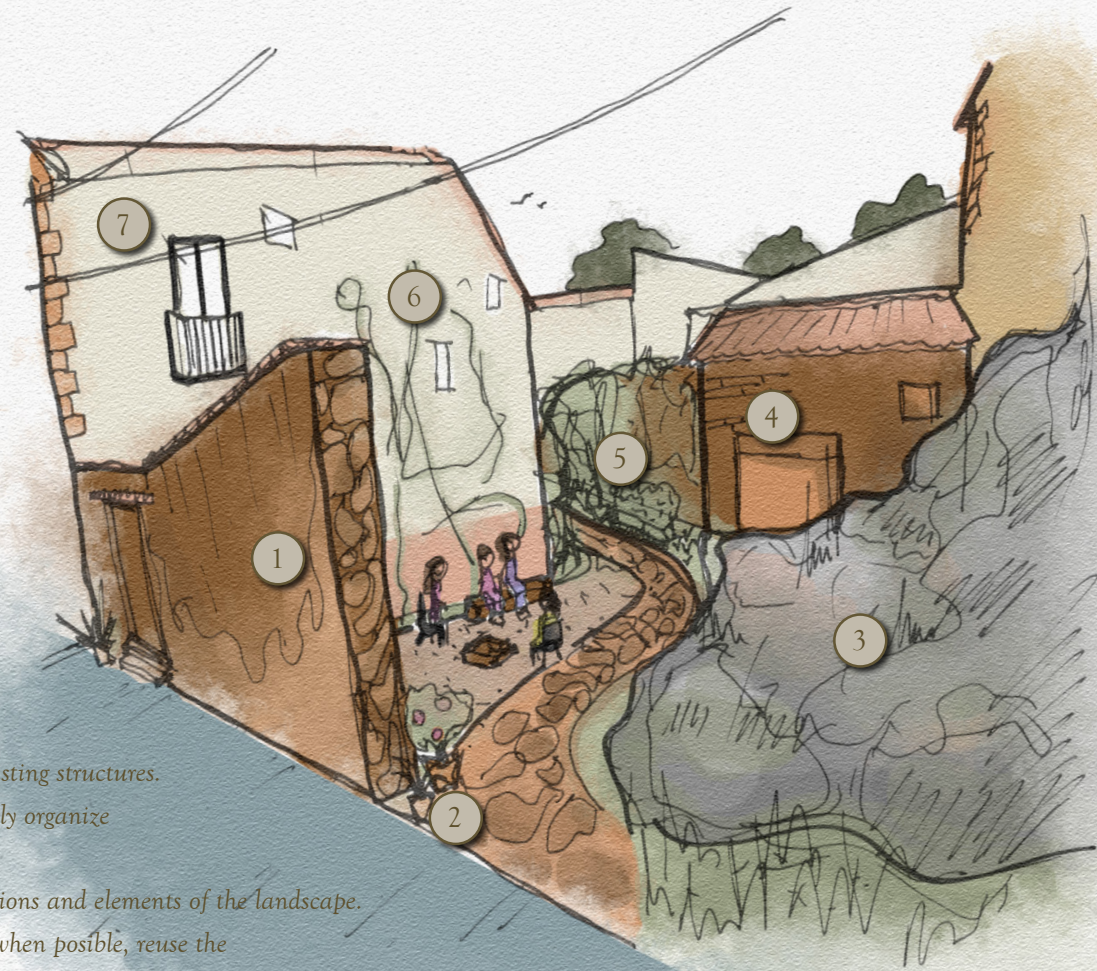


Fig. 14 Reuse materials from ruins to make furniture, remodel façades or rebuild structures.

Project 1: Illustration

Fig. 15 *Existing ruin site, on sale.*

Project 1: Illustration



1. Remaining wall from ruin: reusing existing structures.
2. Space for the residents to spontaneously organize the space with plants, seats etc.
3. Existing boulders: keep original elevations and elements of the landscape.
4. Remodelled building for community: when posible, reuse the debris from the ruins for other constructions/elements.
5. Community garden: space managed by the residents to place plants, orchards...
6. Green façade.
7. Remodelled façade, entrances of the building facing the community space when possible.
8. Furniture made out of reused materials for residents to gather and socialize

Project 1: Guidelines

Fig. 16 Existing old façade in the village of Borobia

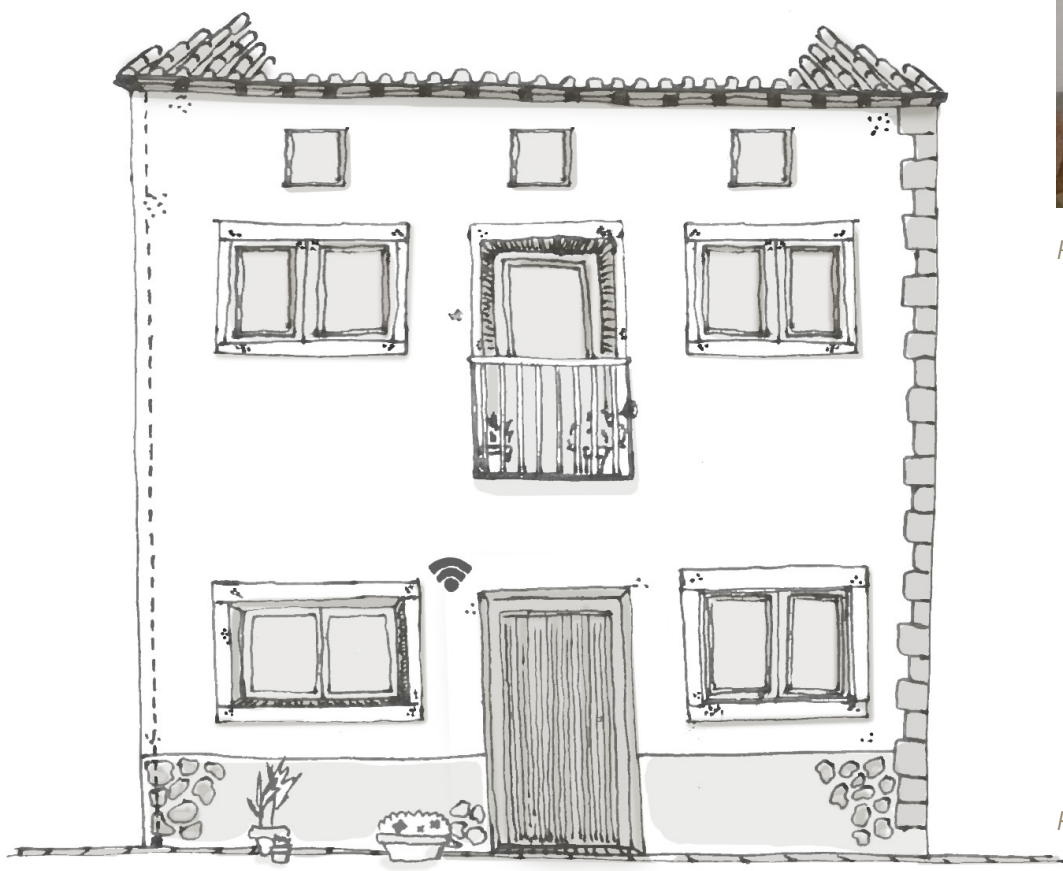


Fig. 17 Illustration of renovated façade

Project 1: Guidelines

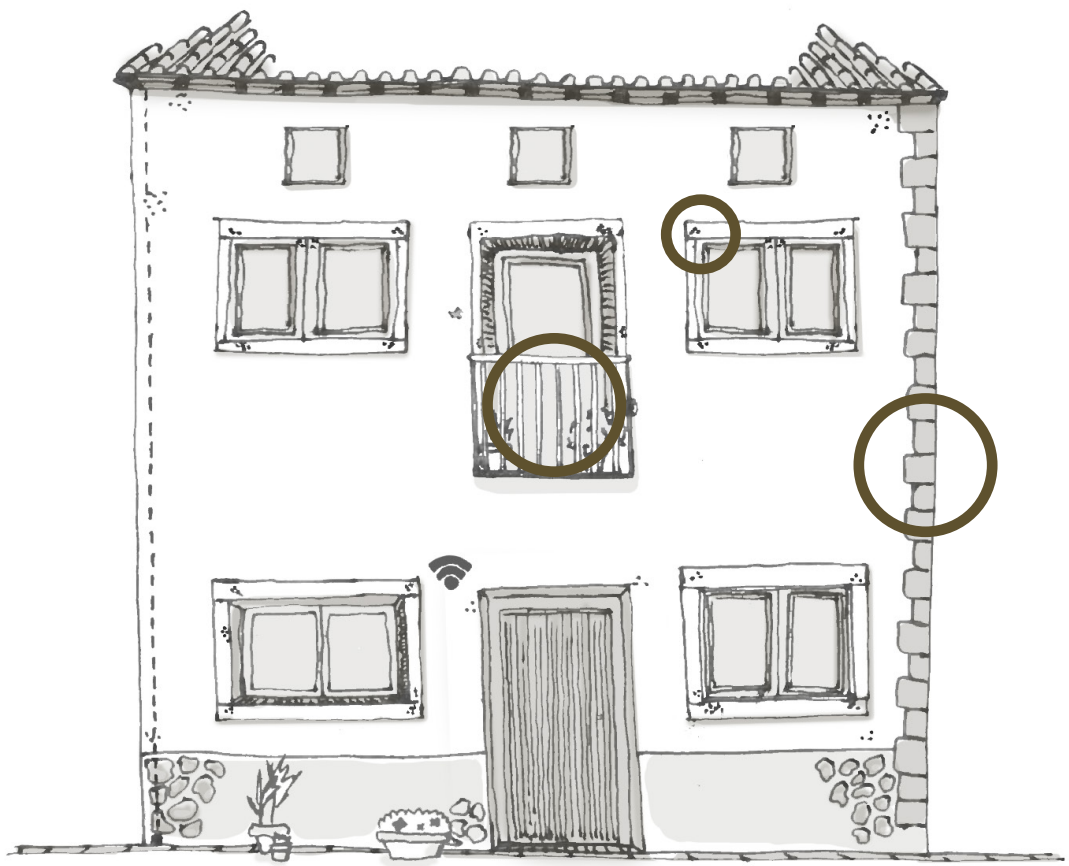


Fig. 18 Traditional balconies and details around the windows.

Fig. 19 Materiality of window casing, roof and edges.

Project 1: Guidelines

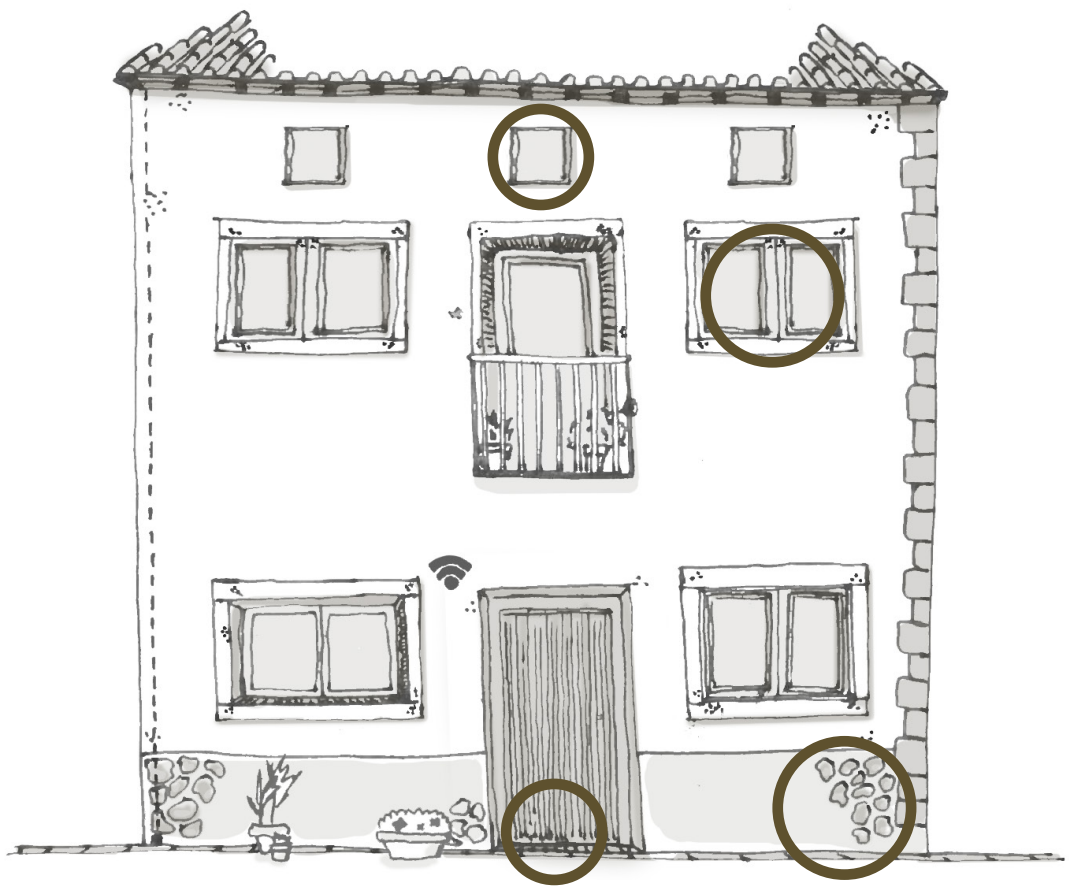


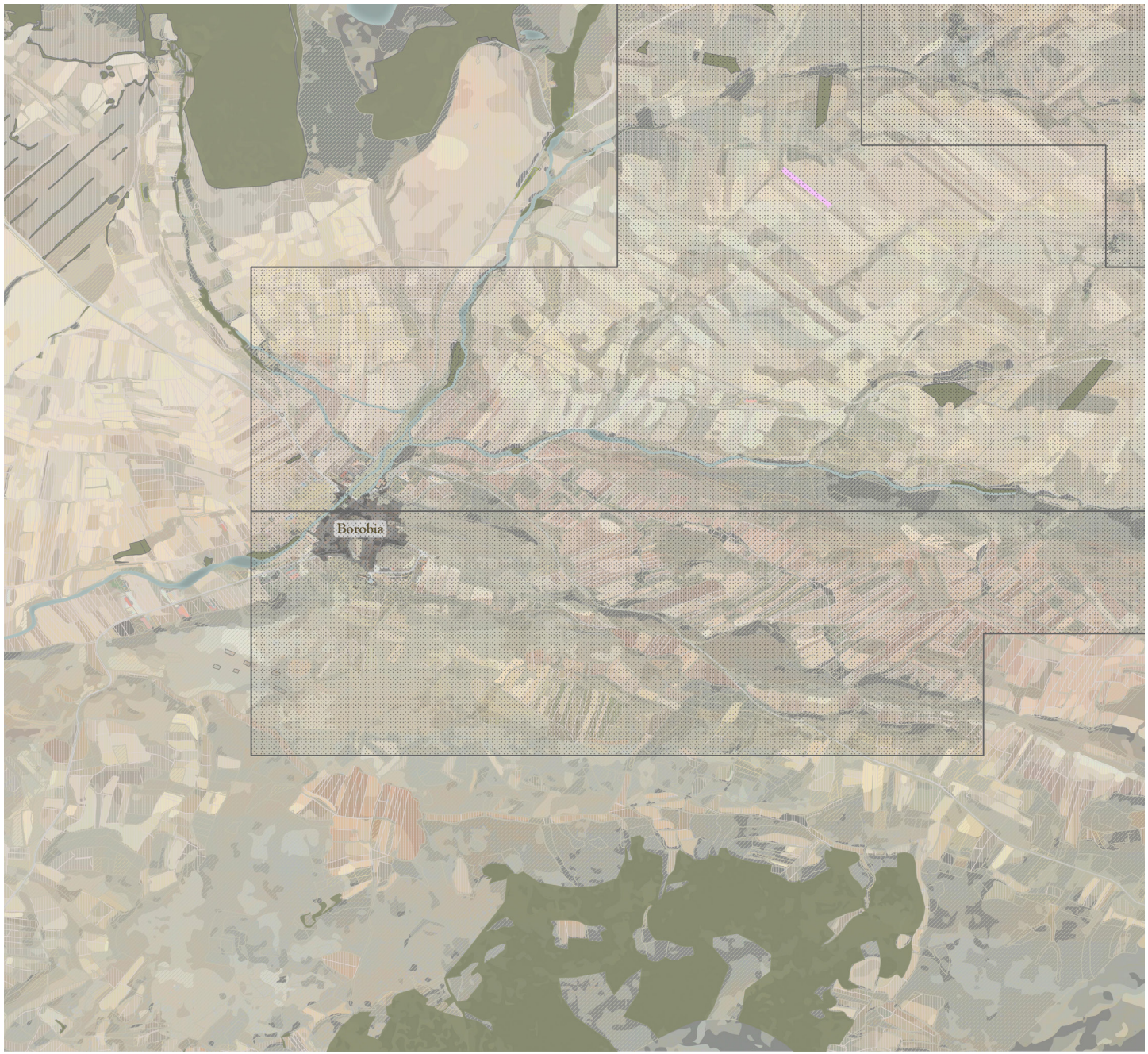
Fig. 20 Materiality of plinth

WFig. 21 Avoid stairs, window size.

Project 2: Nature and Ecotourism

Fig. 21 Plan of Borobia with river basin project.

Project 2: Mining activity as resource



Area with mining rights

Fig. 22 Areas with mining rights around the village of Borobia.

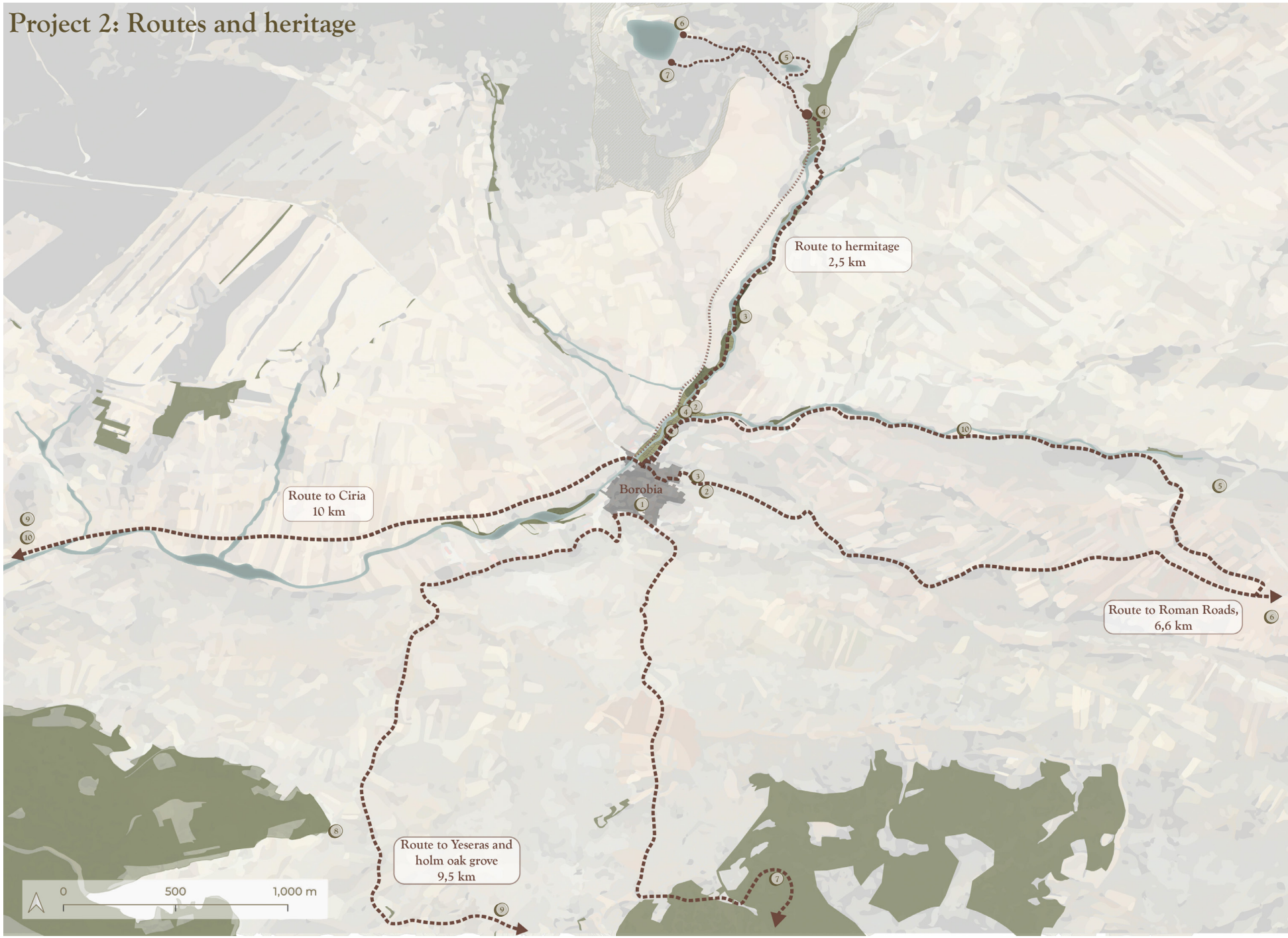


Fig. 23 *Hiking routes that highlight heritage sites around the village of Borobia.*

Project 2: Routes and heritage

Fig. 24 Lagoon

Fig. 25 Old mine site, now a lagoon for leisure

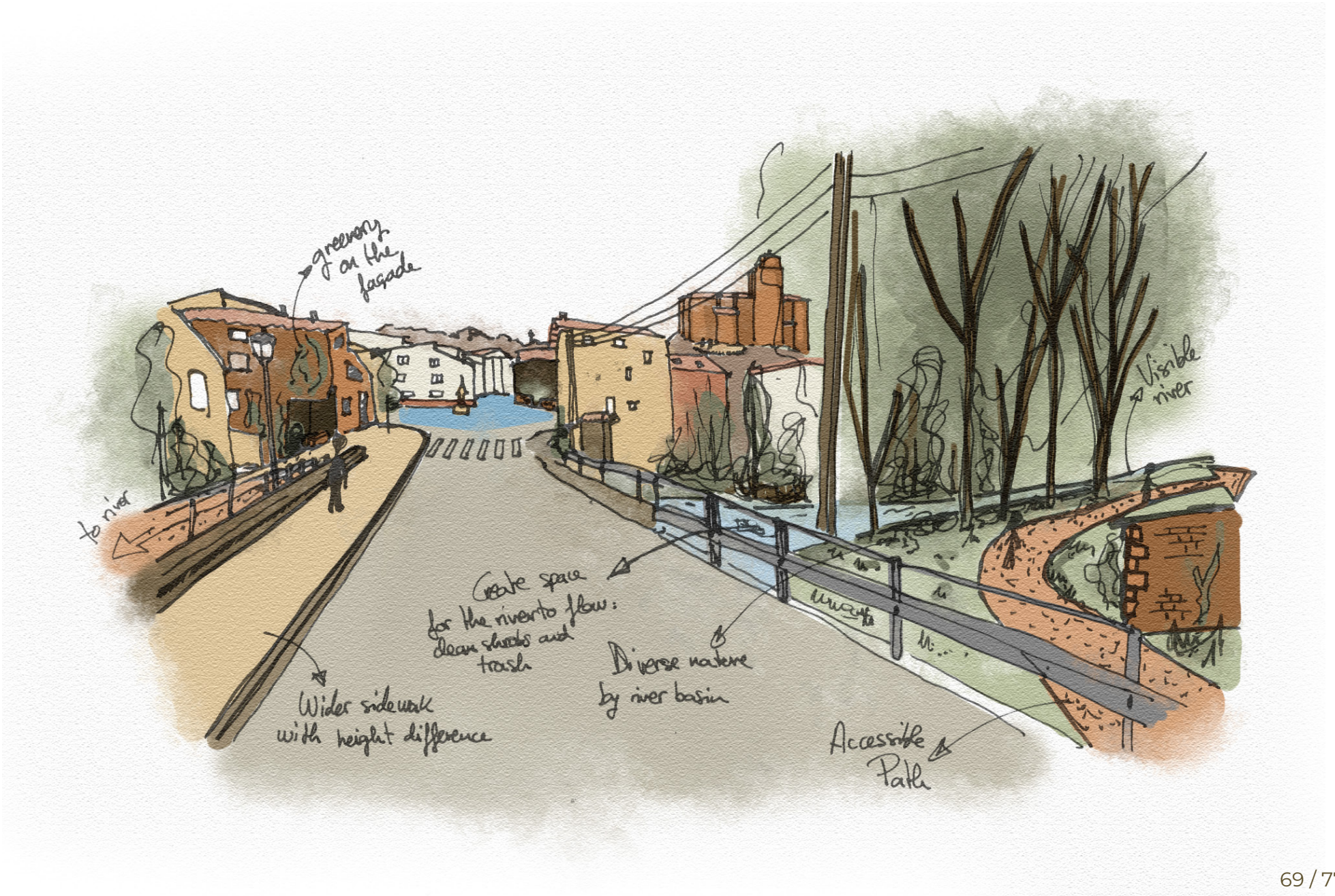
Fig. 26 River canyon

Fig. 27 Hoak tree grove

Project 2: Illustration

Fig. 28 *Entrance to the village, through a bridge over the river.*

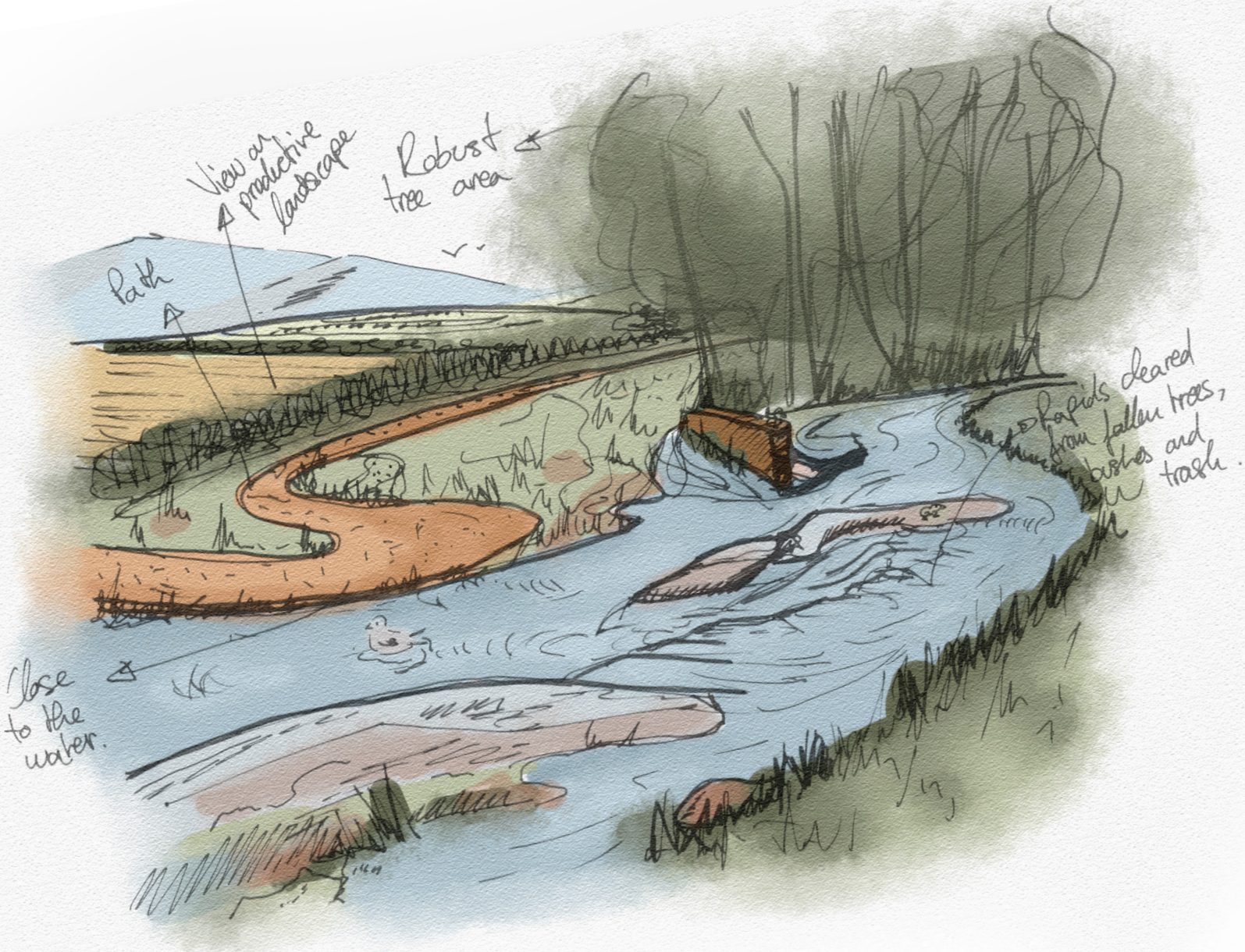
Project 2: Illustration



Project 2: Illustration

Fig. 29 River basin area, used for recreation in the past.

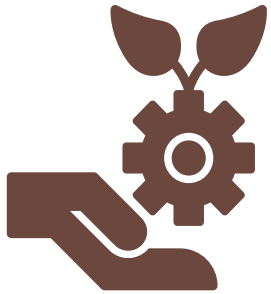
Project 2: Illustration



Both projects relate to the heritage of Borobia through stregthening its identity (rebellishing and refurbishing public space through traditional architecture) and increasing the value and accessiblity of its nature and ecology.

7. Conclusion

Conclusions



1. Sustainable development, community action and ecology management.

2. Involve provincial and national institutions.

3. Collaborative approach in planning and abottom-up approach in governance.

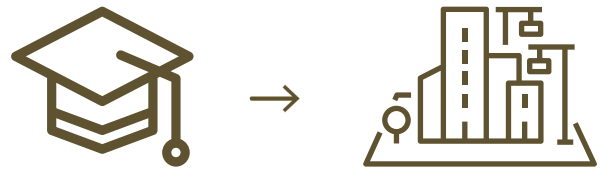
4. Balance heritage protection with broader community needs.

5. Applicability and inspiration

Thank you!

Transferability

1. Research methods: theory into practice



2. Systematic approach

literature review → testing with on-site interviews → concluding → apply through design

3. Applications elsewhere

4. Inspiration for planners

Next steps

1. BK Exhibition

2. Present to the municipality and residents of Borobia