

HANDOUT

# MONITORING BIODIVERSITY ON FARMS

INNOVATION  
IN ACTION  
SERIES

Visit at Lumigny Farm © JR - TDL

Terre de Liens





## CONTEXT

Terre de Liens (TDL) is a non-profit organisation working to preserve agricultural lands and support a new generation of farmers. It owns over 250 farms, over 6000 ha, across France. TDL favours the settlement of new entrants practicing organic agriculture on these farms, renting the land through a special type of long-term farm tenancy contracts called "Environmental Rural Leases" (ERLs). These include clauses to promote environmentally friendly agricultural practices. Most often, TDL includes organic practices and the maintenance of existing agroecological infrastructures (hedges, ponds...) in the ERLs. Other clauses may be included in concertation with farmers and in compliance with the law (out of 16 possible clauses pre-defined by law).

## WHAT'S AT STAKE?

TDL does not yet have an integrated approach to protect and promote on-farm biodiversity. Key challenges are to:

- design ERL clauses that are adapted for each farm, support farmers in implementing them, and assess the initial state of biodiversity and progress over time.
- support farmers to include naturalist approaches at the heart of their agricultural practices, through assessment, pilot actions, local dynamics, training, etc.
- assess the overall situation to report to our members who expect the sound ecological management of TDL-owned land and rally people around the TDL project.

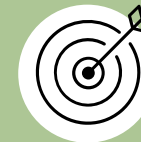
This action research aimed at analysing the co-existing representations and expectations, and designing a global "à la carte" approach to progress on these objectives.

*"Innovation in Action". In 2020-21, six RURALIZATION partners conducted eight-month-long participatory action research projects to explore new solutions to leverage farmland in favour of agroecological transition, generational renewal, and rural regeneration. The results of their actions are presented in this series.*



## INNOVATIVE

- ✓ Find ways to sustain farm biodiversity monitoring in the long term
- ✓ Take into account co-existing representations and expectations to determine the most suitable approach
- ✓ Propose an approach based on the situation and motivation of local actors (farmers, associations...)



## IMPACTFUL

- ✓ Raising awareness among farmers and the broader public about environmental issues
- ✓ Promoting a multi-functional agriculture that preserves landscapes and eco-systems
- ✓ Working to combine economic and environmental performance by improving functional biodiversity on TDL farms

## OBJECTIVE

Designing a multilayered approach to assess, monitor and improve biodiversity on TDL farms

## ACTION PLAN

### Task 1: Survey biodiversity representations and objectives

- Build a questionnaire and interview internal actors on farm biodiversity (13 TDL staff and volunteers with a special interest in biodiversity issues, plus by interviews with all 19 TDL regional associations)
- Analyse responses to understand goals and representations of actors, points of consensus and disagreement, and learn about concrete biodiversity monitoring efforts already existing in TDL

### Task 2: Document concrete biodiversity projects

- Realise case studies on outstanding farms, including 1. Descriptions of site and history, 2. Environmental approach 3. Results 4. Limits and perspectives (2 studies validated together with stakeholders)
- Analysing actor interplay in successful projects to understand how human and social capital plays a role in the success of biodiversity monitoring projects

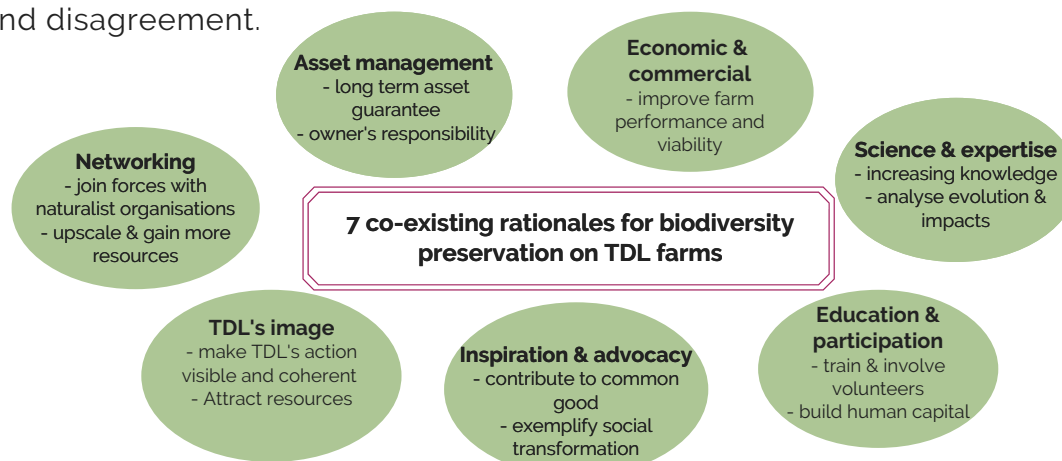
### Task 3: Create a multilayered and adaptable approach to on-farm biodiversity

- Use inputs from previous tasks to devise an approach to guide TDL's future work on monitoring biodiversity
- Finalise the approach through an iterative process involving volunteers, staff, and farmers in providing feedback on draft versions



# RESULTS

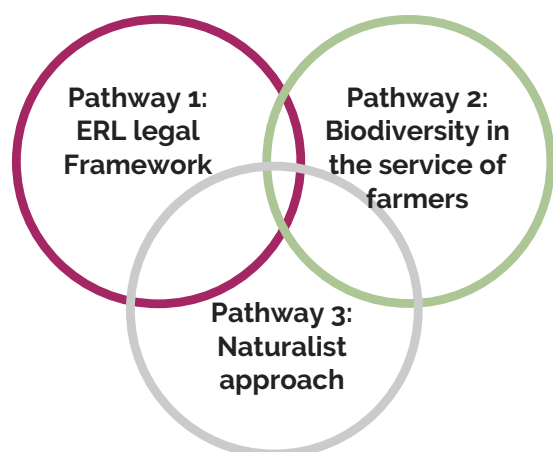
The **survey of representations** highlighted 7 types of rationales or motivations for biodiversity monitoring, highlighted in the graph below. The survey further helped map areas of actor consensus and disagreement.



The case studies on successful projects helped identify key levers of action, e.g. obtaining dedicated funding to organise dialogue and achieving a convergence of views between partners.

**The final result of this action is an approach tailored to the needs of TDL to monitor biodiversity on farms.** This approach needed to be simple and low cost, while maintaining legitimacy and validity. Three pathways are proposed to meet different biodiversity objectives:

- **Making the best of the ERL contractual framework:** agreeing on lease clauses, organising annual meetings with farmers to update land assessments.
- **Developing "functional biodiversity" projects:** supporting farmers in managing biodiversity in the service of both their farms' and territorial needs
- **Realising biodiversity inventories:** monitor biodiversity through naturalist surveys



**The three pathways of the approach are not mutually exclusive.** However, pathways 2 and 3 require more significant involvement of local TDL associations and farmers. Pathway 1, on the other hand, can be handled more easily by TDL's national land-owning organisations, in partnership with local associations. Together, they could establish a more comprehensive initial farm diagnosis and annual data update.

## TIPS FOR PRACTICE!

### BUILDING LEGITIMACY

- A wide-encompassing biodiversity approach within TDL can only be legitimate if it is **adaptable to territorial contexts** (location, possible partnerships, resources...).
- **Patient and sustained local dialogue** is key to bringing together perspectives of farmers, conservation and agricultural organisations, landowners, officials, and so on. This requires money and time, both resources which can be difficult to obtain.
- **Acquiring public subsidies for biodiversity monitoring** can legitimise the work locally.

### LEVERS & OBSTACLES FOR ACTION

- **"Go-between actors"**—who are inserted in more than one local network (agricultural, conservationist, political...)—can play a key role to **access certain resources, facilitate territorial dialogue, and lift obstacles.**
- **Involving farmers** and assessing their needs and desires is central to running successful biodiversity projects.
- **Mobilising the expertise and resources available among TDL volunteer and external partners** can effectively sustain long-term biodiversity actions.

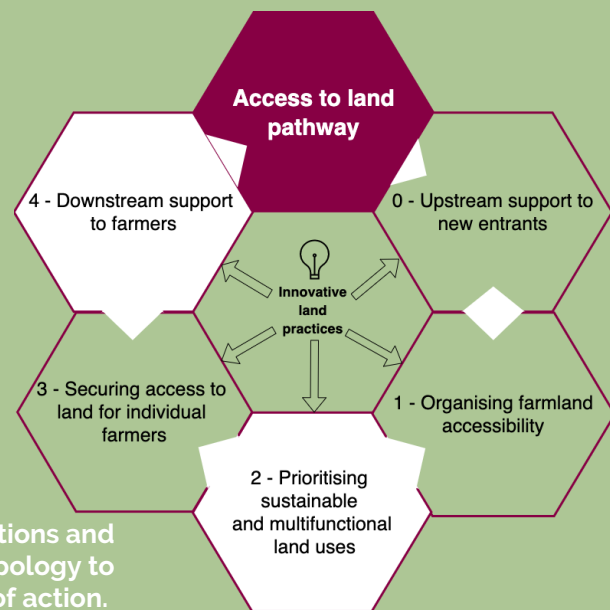




## AN ADAPTED RESPONSE TO LOCAL LAND CHALLENGES

This action relates firstly to the issue of prioritising sustainable and multifunctional land uses. By creating approaches and tools to assess biodiversity, it adapts lease clauses and on-farm actions to support farmers committing to and acting for improved environmental preservation.

Secondly, it can support farmers in the long term (downstream support) by implementing diagnoses and recommendations for biodiversity management that will improve farm viability. Thirdly, the approach devised by TDL for monitoring biodiversity can help secure potential funding or in-kind help (volunteer workcamps for instance) to support the implementation of recommended biodiversity actions (planting hedges, maintaining ponds, etc.).



What is the "Access to land pathway"? Innovations use a wide range of actions and strategies to provide effective access to land. The pathway provides a typology to categorise innovative practices' different modes of action.

## WHO WE ARE

### TERRE DE LIENS

Terre de Liens is a civic organisation which promotes land preservation and facilitates access to farmland for organic and peasant farmers in France. One of TDL's modes of action consists of collecting citizen investment to purchase farms and make them accessible to farmers through long-term leases.

Learn more at: [www.terredeliens.org](http://www.terredeliens.org)

### ACCESS TO LAND NETWORK

The Access to land network brings together grassroots organisations from across Europe to share experiences and promote the significance of access to land for agroecological transition and generational renewal. Established in 2012, it functions as an informal network of about 15 organisations.

Learn more at: [www.accesstoland.eu](http://www.accesstoland.eu)



Toussacq farm © Valérie Rosenwald

## CONTACT

For more information on this innovative practice please contact: [v.rioufol@terredeliens.org](mailto:v.rioufol@terredeliens.org).

Learn more at : [ruralization.eu](http://ruralization.eu)

The RURALIZATION project received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under the Grant Agreement N°817642. The publication content is the sole responsibility of authors and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the EU Commission.