



RURALIZATION

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The opening of rural areas to renew rural generations, jobs and farms

## D6.6 – Report on focus group discussions in 10 other areas

*Version 1.0*

RURALIZATION GRANT AGREEMENT No 817642



"The project RURALIZATION has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement N° 817642."

## Version history

Ver.	Date	Comments/Changes	Author/Reviewer
0.1	04-03-2022	First working draft	TdL/Consortium
0.2	29-04-2022	First full draft with revisions based on Consortium feedback	TdL/Consortium
1	06-05-2022	Final version validated by Consortium	TdL/Consortium

<b>Project Acronym</b>	RURALIZATION
<b>Project Title</b>	The opening of rural areas to renew rural generations, jobs and farms
<b>Project Number</b>	817642
<b>Instrument</b>	Research and Innovation Action (RIA)
<b>Topic</b>	RUR-01-2018-2019 Building modern rural policies on long-term visions and societal engagement
<b>Project Start Date</b>	01/05/2019
<b>Project Duration</b>	48 months
<b>Work Package</b>	WP6 Access to Land
<b>Task</b>	T6.5 Focus group discussions in at least 10 other areas where these practices may provide solutions
<b>Deliverable</b>	D6.6 Report on focus group discussions in 10 other areas
<b>Due Date</b>	31/03/2022
<b>Submission Date</b>	06/05/2022
<b>Dissemination Level <sup>1</sup></b>	PU
<b>Deliverable Responsible</b>	Terre de Liens (TdL)
<b>Version</b>	1.0
<b>Status</b>	Final
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<sup>1</sup> PU= Public, CO=Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services), CL=Classified, as referred to in Commission Decision 2001/844/EC

### ***Acknowledgements***

We would like to express our deepest appreciation for all the people and organisations involved in the 10 focus groups that we organised on emerging land issues, documented in report D6.5 and the results of which were discussed in the present report. Participants came from a wide array of organisations: farmers' unions, rural development associations, nature conservation associations and agencies, agricultural institutions, training organisations, local authorities, etc. In total, more than 200 people took part in these focus groups and their contributions enabled us to enrich our analyses concerning all the themes and issues addressed. More broadly, they helped us to define the relevant conditions and strategies for the transfer of land innovations, both mature and emerging practices.

Finally, we would like to extend our gratitude to all the organisations we met with in the framework of the RURALIZATION project and the Access to Land network activities in general, whose vision, dedication and innovations have inspired and fed this report.

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>A2L</b>	Access to Land
<b>ADEAR</b>	Association pour le développement de l'emploi agricole et rural (Association for the development of agricultural and rural employment)
<b>AFOCG</b>	Associations de Formation collective à la Gestion (Collective Management Training Associations)
<b>ALPA</b>	Acces la Pământ pentru Agroecologie
<b>BCR</b>	Brussels Capital Region
<b>BRE</b>	Bail Rural Environnemental (Environmental lease)
<b>CAP</b>	Common Agricultural Policy
<b>CEN</b>	Conservatoire d'Espaces Naturels (Conservatory for natural areas)
<b>CIAP</b>	Coopérative d'Installation en Agriculture Paysanne (Cooperative for setting-up in peasant agriculture)
<b>CIVAM</b>	Centres d'initiatives pour valoriser l'agriculture et le milieu rural (Centres of initiatives promoting agriculture and rural areas)
<b>CFLT</b>	Community Farmland Trust
<b>CPRE</b>	Campaign to Protect Rural England
<b>CSA</b>	Community-Supported Agriculture
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>DLg</b>	De Landgenoten ("land comrades")
<b>EIP-AGRI</b>	The European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural productivity and Sustainability
<b>ER</b>	EcoRuralis
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FN CEN</b>	Fédération Nationale des Conservatoires d'Espaces Naturels
<b>FR</b>	France
<b>GRAAP</b>	Groupe de recherche-action sur l'agroécologie paysanne (Action research group on peasant agroecology)
<b>KL</b>	Kulturland
<b>LEADER</b>	Liaison entre actions de développement de l'économie rurale (=Links between actions for the development of the rural economy)
<b>LIFE</b>	L'Instrument Financier pour l'Environnement (EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action)

<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>NUIG</b>	National University of Ireland, Galway
<b>NUTS</b>	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>RGS</b>	Resilient Green Spaces
<b>SA</b>	Shared Assets
<b>SAFER</b>	Société d'aménagement foncier et d'établissement rural (Organism for rural land design and rural settlement)
<b>SE</b>	Social enterprise
<b>SI</b>	Social innovation
<b>SOC-SAT</b>	Sindicato de Obreros del Campo - Sindicato Andaluz de Trabajadores (Andalusian Workers and Rural Workers Union)
<b>SUAS</b>	Sustainable Uplands Agri-environment Scheme
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDROP</b>	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas
<b>TDL</b>	Terre de Liens
<b>WP</b>	Work Package
<b>XCN</b>	Xarxa per a la Conservació de la Natura (Nature Conservation Network, in Catalonia)



## Executive Summary

This is a report of 10 focus groups held across Europe in 2022, which discussed in detail innovative approaches to accessing land, and considered how these approaches might be applied in various local contexts. These focus groups were part of work package 6 of the RURALIZATION project, which began with a broad look at “land innovations” across Europe, and then looked more in-depth at the trajectories and strategies of 10 of these innovations.

This report seeks to answer two questions. First, what can an in-depth look at cutting-edge land solutions teach us about the mechanisms that truly work to provide access to land for new generations and rural transition? Second, what do we learn from attempts at adapting these solutions in other contexts about the opportunities and barriers to repeat successes, and these practices’ potential for a wider impact?

The report starts with an **introduction** that sets out the aims of the work. It explores why this research provides unique insights, being developed by innovative, forward thinking and reflexive access to land practitioners. It then goes on to define the main concepts used in the report, notably that land innovation, or innovative land practices are “*processes aimed at the emergence of new modes of management of agricultural land and at their appropriation by stakeholders and society*” (Martin-Prével et al. 2019).

It explains that the analysis in the report draws on two main factors:

- The idea of “neo-endogenous” development, which draws both on place-based resources but also on wider external resources and networks
- The multi-faceted nature of the change in scale of innovations - scaling out, scaling up and scaling deep (Moore et al. 2015)

It then goes on to situate this report within the context of previous reports from the RURALIZATION project. It particularly highlights the fact that access to land is a complex process, and refers to the Access to Land pathway as a typology of interconnected steps or measures that innovative practices use to gain and maintain access to land. It also lists the overarching common features that many innovative land practices have, despite the considerable variation between them.

It then summarises the 10 innovative land practices, which fell into 5 topics, which partners explored more deeply: land stewardship, commons and public farmland, farm restructuring, new models to fundraise for land, and farm succession. It highlights that many of these innovations were in the way that land is framed, or talked about, in order to build legitimacy, and change the way land is considered in the dominant system.

Section 2 sets out the **methodology** used in the research. Five of the 10 innovative land practices were discussed in focus groups in other regions (or among different stakeholders at the national scale), where it was thought that they might provide solutions. Areas for focus groups were chosen based on the presence of local actors with an interest, a favourable local context, and with attention to including a diversity of areas and topics for discussion. The practices discussed were Shared Assets’ action on County Farms, De Landgenoten’s actions on farm succession, Kulturland’s action on farm buildings, and Terre de Liens and XCN’s actions on land stewardship.

The focus groups broadly assessed conditions for innovation transfer from 3 perspectives : a) exogenous perspective (local and national contextual features that can support or hamper the development of the innovation), b) endogenous perspective (the characteristics of the ecosystem of partners interested in developing the innovation, their existing resources, and other levers or weaknesses for innovation development), c) strategic perspective (i.e. ideas on how to adapt and develop locally the innovation).

This section goes on to summarise each of the focus groups, where they were held, and the topics discussed (see table below). It notes that the results of the focus groups are deeply contextualised by previous work and research both within and beyond the RURALIZATION project.

n°	Responsible partner	Context	Action presented
1	Shared Assets	NUTS1 Wales (regional - local)	Shared Assets' action on County Farms
2	Shared Assets	National	De Landgenoten action on farm succession
3	De Landgenoten	NUTS1 Flanders (regional - local)	Kulturland's action on buildings ownership
4	De Landgenoten	NUTS1 Flanders (regional - local)	Terre de Liens' action on assessing biodiversity on farms
5	Eco Ruralis	NUTS3 Huedin (regional - local)	Terre de Liens' action on assessing biodiversity on farms
6	Eco Ruralis	NUTS3 Sibiu (local, village of Hosman)	Shared Assets' action on County Farms
7	XCN	NUTS3 Lleida and Tarragona (local, area of Vall del Corb)	De Landgenoten's action on farm succession
8	Kulturland	NUTS3 Lüchow-Dannenberg (regional - local)	XCN's action on hay meadows
9	Terre de Liens	NUTS1 Occitanie (regional) and national dimension	Terre de Liens' action on assessing biodiversity on farms
10	Terre de Liens	National	Shared Assets' action on County Farms

Section 3 sets out the **Analysis Part One - highlights on solutions for access to land for new generations**. Due to the insufficiency of national or EU-wide policies supporting access to land for new farmers, a wide range of grassroots solutions have emerged to support new generations onto the land. It outlines four main categories of these grassroots solutions:

- "Acting on the land": where new practices focus on specific types of land that are easier to access than land on the open market.
- "Supporting specific profiles": where practices support specific groups of people, often those underrepresented in mainstream farming.

- "Prioritizing specific uses": where practices support farmers contributing to social benefits or public goods of some kind.
- "Addressing the knots": where practices recognise that new generations of farmers are increasingly different from previous generations and offer solutions to specific problems such as lowering the costs of entry or supporting non-family farm succession.

It then goes on to explore each of these, and a number of sub-categories, in more detail, and describes illustrative practices for each one.

Section 4 outlines the ***Analysis Part 2 - main conclusions on transferring and upscaling social innovation on land***. It proposes that stakeholders need to use all three levels of scaling (scaling up, scaling out, and scaling deep) to effect change, especially when land is often ineffectively shared, inappropriately used and where institutions promote a model which is different from the model new entrants often want to see – in other words, in an adverse context. It outlines the different approaches stakeholders might take to achieving change and identifies that the innovative land practices discussed in the focus groups tended to focus on self-organisation and networking as a way of taking forward their actions on land.

When thinking about applying innovations in adverse contexts, the focus groups identified the importance of rooting and anchoring projects locally, while connecting and diversifying across sectors and contexts.

This section examines systemic change through the lens of ecosystem growth strategy (Islam 2021), and proposes that the social innovations are combining elements of ecosystem growth strategy in considering, for example, how they build legitimacy through both research and advocacy work. It also recognises that it is important to consider how an innovation will spread outside of the core initiating group of that innovation, and that focus groups talked about how this might be achieved.

Section 5 covers the ***discussion and recommendations***. It begins by considering networks and communities of practice for land innovation. In particular it highlights the need to reverse the logics of “who” transfers innovation, and to reverse the linear conception of the transfer of innovation. Innovations are not directly transferred from the innovating organisation into new contexts, rather local actors take inspiration and innovation from elsewhere and “cobble it together” within their local contexts, at a time that suits their contexts.

This holds implications for public policy, in that it is important to fund long term communities of actors and multi-stakeholder systems to foster this communication and transfer of innovations, rather than funding one-off knowledge transfer projects. This funding should cross regional and national boundaries.

This section also outlines some general recommendations:

1. That policy processes should take into account the voices of a wider range of stakeholders than they normally do: civil society organisations should be supported to engage with policy processes.
2. Given that even when civil society organisations do propose legislative changes, there can be differences between the initial proposal and the final law, or challenges in the way the law is implemented, stakeholders should consider how they can influence the

whole process and make the laws evolve on the basis of their field experiments (concrete establishment of cooperatives, use of environmental leases, etc.).

3. Policy makers should take care to create an enabling environment that takes into account the different dimensions of scaling out, scaling up and scaling deep, in particular by supporting the creation of the political and sectoral connections necessary for structural change.

It also proposes some thematic recommendations:

1. Public land should be used as a way of meeting multiple social and environmental objectives. Underpinned by a strong national framework, local authorities should work with stakeholders on co-creating and implementing a vision for public land in their areas.
2. Community owned land is not suitable in all regions, especially where access to land is mainly through leases. However collaborative approaches such as collective services, and collective approaches to dialogue with landowners can still create community-led approaches.
3. Good land stewardship and biodiversity management can be a good way of engaging farmers, but these need to be raised at the landscape, or territorial scale, alongside work directly on farms. Improving biodiversity at the larger scale may require the transformation of national and/or European frameworks.
4. Farm succession should not just be thought of as a farmer looks to retire, but also in the middle of the economic cycle of a farm. Further research is needed on the links between the scale of farms and nature conservation possibilities and other links to generational renewal.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Aim of the D6.6 report

The RURALIZATION work package on Access to Land articulates the study of three key dimensions: **land policies**, **land markets** and **land innovations**. This work package examines legal, economic, and social mechanisms that can improve access to agricultural land for new generations of farmers and trigger a broader process of rural. The work on the topic of land innovations specifically has followed a progressive, “zooming-in” logic with:

- **the study of a broad panel of 64 land innovations** (to understand areas where solutions are well or less well developed and more largely draw lessons on the features of land innovations and their modes of action) *[task 6.4, phase 1]*;
- **the development and in-depth analysis of 10 innovative actions on emerging land topics** (to create new land solutions and more broadly gather insights on the strategies and resources necessary to develop novel land practice) *[task 6.4, phase 2]*;
- **discussing innovative actions in 10 focus groups** (to draw and sharpen lessons learnt from the new practices and understand the conditions that affect transfer and upscale of land innovations) *[task 6.5]*.

This report documents the third and last stage of work carried out (i.e. task 6.5). The consortium partners organised 10 focus groups to concretely engage local actors in discussion groups around possible solutions for improving access to land for new generations and rural regeneration. The focus groups were centred on one of the 10 innovative actions on emerging land topics, but they also referred to or drew from other practices and innovations. They discussed achievements, potential and areas where progress is still required. They also offered insights on the underlying processes that support or hinder land innovations (in particular their transfer to other contexts and scaling to extensive uptake). In addition to the results of the focus groups, we revisited the previous reports, as well as previous productions of the Access to Land Network which also described and analysed innovative access to land solutions (see RURALIZATION reports D6.1 on current land innovations, Loveluck et al. 2021a, and D6.5 on novel land practices, Loveluck et al. 2021b), so as to construct an analytical overview of concrete land innovations for new generations.

The study of land innovations throughout the work package shows a progression from a broad overview of existing land solutions to more specific, creative solutions on emerging land topics. This progression also moved from a general understanding of the modes of actions of land innovations to a more in-depth analysis of their trajectories and strategies. In the current and last stage of work on this RURALIZATION topic, this progression leads us to:

- a) further sharpen learnings on the specific practices that provide and improve access to land for new generations (through discussions in focus groups and additional research);
- b) take a closer look at the question of how land innovations can achieve broader and systemic change (through testing relevance, transferability, and brainstorming replication or new ideas with stakeholders).

In other words, this report examines two different research and innovation challenges. First, what can an in-depth look at cutting-edge land solutions teach us about **the mechanisms that**

**truly work to provide access to land for new generations and rural transition?** Second, what do we learn from attempts at adapting these solutions in other contexts about **the opportunities and barriers to repeat successes, and the potential of these practices for a wider impact?**

From our point of view, this report provides unique contributions to these challenges. This is because it is based on observation and analysis of practices which are among the most advanced in the field of community land acquisitions and farmer- and citizen-led land governance. The organisations that have developed them have **long experience of work on land issues** and **combine rare sets of skills**, including an important background knowledge on local land situations; technical know-how on financing and managing land, implementing enabling territorial actions and developing and carrying out participative or popular education around land projects, as well as a wide experience in carrying out advocacy, counselling and awareness raising on land issues. They have also learned to apply self-reflexive and forward-thinking methods to identify gaps, develop fixes, and improve or upscale land strategies in time. Additionally, this report results from a process of sharpening lessons learned in different ways: through the focus groups, but also through cross-fertilisation of inputs from field work with research and prior deliverables of the RURALIZATION project, and through using practitioner self-reflexivity and exchange in the Access to land community of practice. This latter aspect is crucial to the realisation of this deliverable as well as previous deliverables of this work package (RURALIZATION D6.1 and D6.5 reports). Indeed, the rich grassroots experience of RURALIZATION partners, combined with their habit of working with diverse other members of the Access to Land Network and other stakeholders – rural development organisations, environmental organisations, consumer groups, local authorities, etc. – have been decisive to quickly identify and analyse innovative practices as well as to develop novel ones on emerging topics. This is based on a ten-year habit of cross-fertilising practices and exploring novel solutions through experience sharing and joint analysis, as well as on strong levels of trust and collaboration.

## 1.2 Overarching concepts

The terms “land innovation” or “innovative land practices” are used interchangeably in this report, as in prior RURALIZATION deliverables, to designate “*processes aimed at the emergence of new modes of management of agricultural land and at their appropriation by stakeholders and society*” (Martin-Prével et al. 2019). These processes respond to social issues — in particular the lack of access to land for new farmers and sustainable farming — and put forward visions for economically-, socially- and environmentally-fair rural transitions and farming models.

Besides “land innovations”, the following table (table 1) presents a simplified definition of the key concepts (developed in WP3) that are mobilised in this deliverable. This table is based on an adapted and expanded glossary of terms originally developed for the RURALIZATION Conceptual Guidelines Guide for Practitioners (Murtagh et al. 2020).



Term	Explanation
<b>Access to land</b>	A key issue impacting access of new generations to the farming sector that is hugely complex and impacted by a range of factors such as law, policy and markets. It is also a dynamic, multi-faceted concept that is about gaining physical access, but also using the land, maintaining access and how access is controlled.
<b>Capital frameworks</b>	An integrated framework for analysis based on different forms of capital, assets or resources. There are different types of capital frameworks that conceptualise capital differently, such as community capital and territorial capital.
<b>Capital</b>	A diverse range of tangible and intangible resources or assets. Different forms of capital may act as drivers of regeneration or be created because of regeneration. Having certain capital and using it can impact capacities (e.g., for innovation, entrepreneurship, to enter the farming profession).
<b>Community capital</b>	A range of different capitals (e.g., social, cultural, financial) that interact and can be possessed by particular geographic communities or groups of people.
<b>Innovation</b>	New or improved or adaptation/transfer of products and processes that solves problems and/or creates new opportunities.
<b>New entrants</b>	A difficult term to define where there is much debate. New entrants can be understood strictly as those who enter farming without a farming background. RURALIZATION aligns with the EIP-AGRI Focus Group (EIP-AGRI 2016) approach to acknowledge there are many types of new entrants to farming and grey areas exist in between complete new entrants and direct farm successors.
<b>Rural regeneration</b>	A response to decline and a process of transition and more positive reinvention or revival. Regeneration should do more than just reverse decline but enable transformation, be it on a smaller or larger scale that allows places to reach their potential.
<b>Social innovation</b>	Works to address specific social problems and wider social challenges with innovation outcomes focused firstly on creating social benefits but also may have wider value (e.g., economic, cultural). Westley and Antadze (2010) also define it as “any initiative, product, programme, platform or design that challenges, and over time changes, the defining routines, resource and authority flows, or beliefs of the social system in which the innovation occurs”.
<b>Enabling environment</b>	Innovation occurs in an interconnected complex system. Innovation is not a solitary activity. It can involve networks made up of for example individuals, businesses, researchers, government and non-government organisations. Beyond the actors involved, policy can create a supportive environment.
<b>Innovation entrepreneurs</b>	Individual entrepreneurs or collective enterprises can be important drivers of innovation and are thought to be a particularly important part of the rural innovation system, such as being sources of new ideas or creating new connections and information flows.
<b>Innovation networks</b>	Innovation is a social process where networks of people come together, develop and exchange ideas that are realised as innovation. Also important is connecting the disconnected so the familiar and non-familiar come together where innovation can germinate.
<b>Legitimacy</b>	A practice/organisation is or becomes legitimate through its evidence base, its specific governance approach or its wider social base. There should be an identified need for the practice, such as through local knowledge, anecdotal evidence, more formal needs assessment or research base. In relation to governance, the practice is developed/implemented by or promotes engagement and inclusion of relevant actors. e.g., through participative, bottom-up governance or implementation.

Table 1 - Simplified definition of the key concepts mobilised

As this deliverable focuses more specifically on emerging innovations on land issues and transfers of these innovations (discussed in the focus groups), our analysis draws on two main aspects:

- the idea of neo-endogenous development capitalising on place-based resources, but in connection with multi-scalar networks and resources;
- the multi-faceted nature of the change in scale of innovations, based on Moore's categories (scaling out, scaling up and scaling deep), which we will further detail (Moore et al. 2015).

As explained in report D3.2 (Murtagh et al. 2021b), **capitalising on place-based resources** (new and existing) is an important aspect of the OECD's 'new rural paradigm' of rural development (OECD, 2006). This approach places emphasis on the distinctiveness of places, the goods and services they produce and diversification of the rural economy into multiple sectors (rather than development focused predominantly on the agricultural sector) with a focus on 'multi-functional' agriculture (OECD, 2006; Horlings and Marsden, 2014; Gkartzios and Lowe, 2019). This shift in paradigm is described as **endogenous development**, involving valuing and harnessing 'bottom-up' local resources, in opposition to an 'exogenous' or 'top-down' approach which sees the drivers of development originating outside of rural areas, with food production as the main function of rural areas (Gkartzios and Lowe, 2019). This idea was further developed with the idea of **neo-endogenous** development, stating that local resources should be the starting point for development, but with a consciousness that development is also influenced by non-local forces. This concept allows for greater descriptive fidelity to the way in which the land innovations we described in reports on current land innovations (Loveluck et al. 2021a) and on novel land practices (Loveluck et al. 2021b) unfold, in positive interactions between local needs and resources and external ideas and resources, more or less supported by public policies depending on the case.

Moore et al. (2015) insist on the fact that "scaling social innovations to effect large-scale change will necessarily involve a more complex and diverse process than simply 'diffusing' a product or model." They therefore differentiate three processes:

- **'Scaling out'**, where a social innovation or an organisation attempts to "affect more people and cover a larger geographic area through replication and diffusion" (geographical dissemination in different niche contexts);
- **'Scaling up'**, where a social innovation or an organisation aims to "affect everybody who is in need of the social innovation they offer, or [...] to address the broader institutional or systemic roots of a problem" (dissemination among different social groups, institutionalisation of the innovation and/or changes in the political framework, potentially leading to a different social regime);
- And finally, **'scaling deep'** related "to the notion that durable change has been achieved only when people's hearts and minds, their values and cultural practices, and the quality of relationships they have, are transformed" (deeper cultural shifts and changes in the way an issue is perceived, adoption of new narratives).

We have to point out that these categories of analysis should not be understood as chronological categories, intervening at different successive moments in the unfolding of a social innovation. This would correspond to first having a geographical development or new social targets, then a political institutionalisation transforming the laws, then an influence on the ways of thinking in general. Even if certain stages often occur in a certain order, it is



important to insist on the intertwined character of these three dimensions of change in scale. For example, the geographical development of an innovation can become a basis for legitimating the implementation of new laws or regulations. But in the same way, transformations in ways of thinking can make it possible to reach new geographical areas or new target groups, or can legitimise a law that would not have been accepted previously. In some cases, only one dimension can be followed.

Similarly, the networks, alliances and partnerships that need to be developed at the strategic level may be different depending on the emphasis placed on one of these three dimensions of change in scale, or may overlap depending on the case. Moore et al. (2015) therefore consider that the consolidation of partnerships, as well as the identification of new resources, is to be considered as a cross-cutting strategy. Broadening the problem frame, a dimension we highlighted in the RURALIZATION report on novel practices (Loveluck et al. 2021b) as part of a central approach of land organisations, can also be considered as a cross-cutting approach, influencing all dimensions of the change in scale.

In the context of this report, the practices discussed, being still emerging, are more at the transfer stage than at the scaling up stage. However, in all focus groups, the different dimensions or issues related to the change in scale (scaling out, scaling up and scaling deep) were implicitly discussed<sup>2</sup>, meaning that these aspects represent a concern for the actors in their first questioning regarding the transfer of land innovations. Therefore, the analytical framework developed by Moore proved to be an interesting framework to organise the results of these discussions (see section 3). Furthermore, it is important to indicate that the 10 emerging actions documented were at different stages of maturity, and some were sometimes "very emerging", which means that they were still in an exploratory phase or at the stage of consolidation (but not scaling up). Therefore, some of the focus groups were more an opportunity for inspiration (which could feed into the ongoing reflections of other partners or even modify their medium-term agenda) than for discussions on transfer or scaling up.

The analysis also drew on the European project reviews carried out for RURALIZATION as part work package 3 (Murtagh et al. 2021c). This involved producing 50 factsheets based on a review of European projects with relevance to rural regeneration and generational renewal. In light of arising questions relating to upscale and transfer of innovation emerging from this task, we took a second look at the project reviews. Insights emerging from this process have fed into the cross-cutting analysis (see section 4).

## 1.3 Contextualising land innovations within prior research results

### 1.3.1 From the access to land pathway...

To understand the results of the RURALIZATION focus groups on land innovations and overview of land solutions for new generations, it is essential to review key findings from prior tasks (T6.4 phase 1 and 2).

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<sup>2</sup> These three dimensions have not been topics of discussion as such, but we can identify them a posteriori in most of the exchanges.

To begin with, in 2020, the study of 64 existing innovative land practices from 14 European countries highlighted key conclusions regarding existing land challenges, the solutions that exist, and their modes of action (Loveluck et al. 2021a).

a. The study introduces the fact that **access to land is a complex and multi-faceted notion**, which starts before and continues after physical access to a plot or farm is gained (Ribot and Lee Peluso 2013, Murtagh et al. 2021a). Concerning the issue of gaining access, the main difficulties for new entrants relate to land **availability** (due to land concentration, urbanisation, market exclusion), **affordability**, and **quality** (land fragmentation, degradation...). Concerning the maintenance of land access over the long term, some main challenges cited in the report include **insecure land tenure frameworks**, the difficulty to maintain **viability of small and sustainable farms** in the face of increasing domination of larger ones, and the **lack of infrastructures to support organic agriculture** (e.g. adapted marketing infrastructure, life-long trainings, subsidies and insurance schemes, low-tech and self-construction farm machines or farm buildings solutions, and so on) (Loveluck et al. 2021a).

b. In order to face complex land issues and multi-fold challenges, **the report shows that innovations deploy a wide range of actions**. It proposes to categorise these modes of action along the “**access to land pathway**”, a typology regrouping five separate, yet interconnected, “blocks” of measures that innovative practices use (figure 1). *These concern:*

(0) **Supporting new entrants before they farm (upstream support)**, e.g. providing training; counselling in business planning; support in accessing capital, housing or other infrastructures; offering professional experience or setting up farm incubators...

(1) **Organising land accessibility**, e.g. by preventing land take or abandonment, improving access to information about land opportunities, increasing the possibility of land transfers (anticipating farm transmission, mobilising landowners), etc.

(2) **Prioritising sustainable and multifunctional agricultural projects**. This consists for instance of practices conditioning access to land to specific uses, prioritising users with sustainable or diversified practices, or developing land projects that render environmental, educational, or social services to the community.

(3) **Acquiring farms or helping secure land for identified farmers**, e.g. community land trusts which provide financial capital for farmland and buildings and/or offer secure leases or

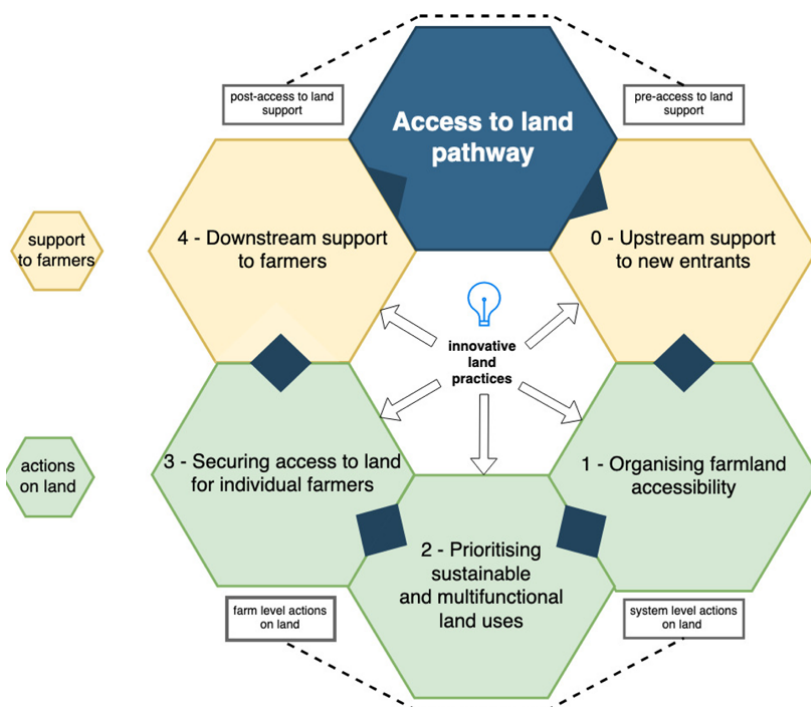


Figure 1 - One representation of the access to land pathway

temporary land purchase by public and private actors for later resale to new entrants or sustainable farmers.

(4) **Providing downstream support to farmers.** This block concerns all actions helping maintain small-scale and agroecological farms on the long run, e.g. supporting marketing, diversification, the creation of short food supply chains, or providing lifelong training opportunities to farmers.

c. The report shows it is difficult and perhaps ill-advised to compare land innovations. Each practice indeed combines diverse measures from the different access to land pathway blocks depending on its context, resources, and goals. While the report insists there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution to work on land, it nevertheless found **some overarching common features regarding these practices** (which are only valid for the relatively small and geographically-limited sample studied). These include the fact that:

- **Innovations act differently depending on the type of land considered.** In particular, they develop more easily on land already used for sustainable agriculture and managed by actors socially ‘close’ to innovators. Reaching industrially-cultivated or larger land estates requires more means and effort. This implies that the perimeter of innovative land practices can remain relatively limited, especially as the wider policy and economic environment does not support a shift to agroecology.

- **Innovations both rely heavily on and generate human and social capital.** They develop many partnerships, and place emphasis on training, network-building, and awareness-raising. This responds, in part, to the need to involve new people in farming, who may lack agricultural backgrounds and thus require further skill-building and support networks. It is also a strategy of land innovations to widen the community of people informed and involved in land issues, so as to challenge dominant trends of opacity and exclusivity on land markets.

- **Land innovations have a systemic impact, which goes beyond agriculture.** In addition to working access to land, our research shows that innovations very seriously tackle other goals such as improving local food supply, providing quality job opportunities, and maintaining healthy landscapes and lively communities. As a result, they improve the broader rural environment, making it more attractive for new generations, with more chances to succeed. These practices therefore have the potential to become springboards for broader ruralisation trends, but necessitate more supportive policy and funding environments to fully exploit this potential.

### 1.3.2 ...To studying the pathway of land innovations

During the second phase of work on innovative land practices the RURALIZATION partners De Landgenoten (DLg), Shared Assets (SA), Eco Ruralis (ER), Xarxa per a la Conservació de la Natura (XCN), Kulturland (KL), and Terre de Liens (TDL), also members and close partners in the Access to Land network, **developed eight-months long field projects geared to addressing emerging land issues** in their respective countries (Belgium, United-Kingdom, Romania, Spain, Germany and France). The in-depth analysis of these innovations made it possible to describe a) new and specific solutions to address rising land topics and b) how these innovations become structured, worked out, and evolve to meet their goals (RURALIZATION Report on novel land practices, Loveluck et al. 2021b).

a. The 10 innovative actions selected were grouped to work as duos **on a series of five emerging land topics** (see table 2): (1) land stewardship (TDL and XCN), (2) commons and public farmland (SA and ER), (3) farm restructuring (TDL and KL), (4) new models to fundraise for land (ER and KL), (5) farm succession (DLg and XCN). Solutions and lessons brought forward for each approach include:

Emerging land topic	Action 1	Action 2
<b>Land stewardship</b>	<i>TDL worked on better assessing and supporting the protection of biodiversity by its tenant farmers, in particular working on ways to make the best use of existing legal provisions and to mobilise funding, local partners, and volunteers to support such work.</i>	<i>XCN worked on identifying sustainable and resilient strategies to support extensive forms of farming which preserve the biodiversity-rich hay meadows of Catalonia.</i>
<b>Commons and public farmland</b>	<i>SA worked on co-creating a clear vision for the future of council farmland in England, including concrete guidelines to manage this land for the common good and efforts to rally influential stakeholders to carry out this vision.</i>	<i>ER worked on ways to transform old land structures (commons) to facilitate entry into farming and agroecology, particularly identifying forms of shared governance and possible alliances with local authorities to change how this land is perceived and used.</i>
<b>Farm restructuring</b>	<i>TDL supported the restructuring of a large peri-urban mono-culture estate into a diversified and locally-embedded farm, where services are developed for new entrants (creation of a farm incubator) and the community (local food marketing, actions to sustain biodiversity...)</i>	<i>KL studied and experimented on ways to restructure farm ownership models to facilitate extra family farm succession, particularly focusing on the issue of alleviating the entry costs for new farmers while enabling them to acquire and manage farm buildings.</i>
<b>New models to fundraise for land</b>	<i>ER led a local effort to structure a community-based land ownership organisation in Romania, developing studies on local needs and legal ways to realise this, and rallying a coalition of partners to support the work.</i>	<i>KL investigated how to gradually shift land ownership from old to new generations by using retirement savings to finance land access for new entrants, followed by repayment schemes that ensure decent pension levels for former farmers.</i>
<b>Farm succession</b>	<i>DLg worked on proactively facilitating extra-family farm succession, via understanding different components of succession processes, engaging with ageing/retiring farmers, and inventing financial ways to facilitate farm transfers (notably using community land acquisition).</i>	<i>XCN supported a local effort to develop sustainable agriculture in a declining rural area, by evaluating and supporting the potential to transfer farms to new generations of sustainable farmers (mapping and engaging with retiring farmers, acting as intermediary between generations, etc.).</i>

Table 2 - The 10 innovative actions grouped into five emerging land topics

b. Beyond specific land solutions described in this report, **common lessons were drawn in the frame of report D6.5 relating to the strategies and trajectories of these practices** to achieve their goals. Some of the key principles are synthesised in the following figure (figure 2):

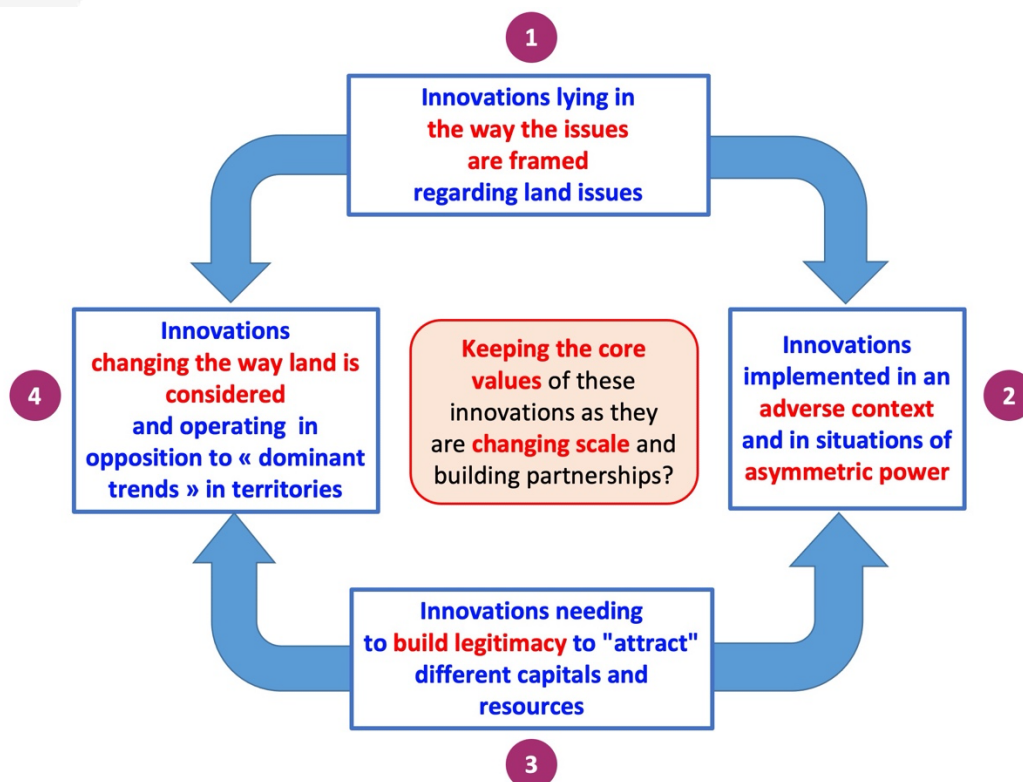


Figure 2 - Key strategies and trajectories of land innovations

- The report showed that a common first step in how these innovations trigger change lies in **reframing land issues**. For instance, SA and ER promoted new approaches to publicly-owned farmland, changing the dominant perception that it is merely an economic asset to be managed in a cost-effective way (which can lead to sales or intensive use of public land) to recognising its value in fulfilling many local policy goals (e.g. preserving the environment, providing access to local food, improving citizen's health and well-being, creating jobs, etc....).
- The necessity to "reframe" issues manifests in an environment where supporting agroecology and land governance reform is not a mainstream view. To work in this **adverse environment**, land innovations need to combine strategies to **gain legitimacy and attract capital** (both being mutually reinforcing resources). Ways to increase legitimacy include: building knowledge and analysis, developing concrete actions and independent ways to secure resources, positioning oneself as a network facilitator (bringing together coalitions of actors or acting as an intermediary between different social worlds), building strategic partnerships (with expert or influential organisations), or promoting strong societal values. Legitimacy is both fuelled by and fuelling innovation research for additional capital. **Human and social capital**, in particular, are key drivers of change. Within this, **innovative practices give a central place to involving local communities** (through encounters, dialogue, training and skill-building). Communities may be intrinsically motivated by social, economic and environmental values upheld by changemakers and may sustain innovative work through many in-kind resources (volunteering, canvassing, providing land and other assets...).



- In the process of securing resources and bringing reframed land issues to the forefront, innovative practices experience successes as well as failures. **“Learning-by-doing” and self-reflexive methods** come into play in their trajectories allowing innovations to refine their analysis, message, or models until reaching some success regarding uptake of their stakes on institutional agendas and/or harness larger support for their actions (human, financial, etc.). This work of adjusting strategies often becomes a gateway into developing **a broader perspective on the overarching land system** flaws, as well as obstacles and levers to trigger change that these practices face. To generate **wider system change** it is ultimately a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for innovations to achieve a higher level of analysis and reflection: extracting key principles of action and strengthening narratives, understanding cultural and political roots of blockages, anchoring ones’ action in local needs but also considering more global dynamics.

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Selecting practices and areas where they may provide solutions

In line with the RURALIZATION grant agreement, the focus groups were carried out in 10 other areas where it was expected that the innovative practices analysed in the previous task (T6.4) may provide solutions. The main criteria retained for selection of areas were:

1. The presence of **local actors with an interest** in discussing the transfer and replicability of innovative land practices and in adopting/developing innovative solutions for local land issues.
2. A **local context favourable for innovation transfer**, i.e. with issues comparable to the context in which the original innovative action was developed and some resources/capital present locally to develop the innovation.
3. An attention to **including a diversity of areas and topics of discussion**, to ensure a mix of social, cultural and geographic situations and various strategies for adaptations of land innovations.

Based on this, DLg, SA, ER, KL, XCN and TDL—as the partners with first-hand knowledge of the novel practices developed in T6.4—took responsibility to select at least 10 focus group areas, though other members of the consortium could propose focus groups in their own countries. A template to assess and select contexts was distributed, updated from the template proposed in the RURALIZATION Assessment Framework report (Murtagh et al. 2021a). Ultimately, 10 focus group proposals were selected from a longer list. They extend across very local to more regional or national contexts. National level focus groups were proposed in cases where the original practice was already developed on a large scale or where partners deemed that the original practice could better be adapted at regional/national level (see table 3).

In terms of topics, five out of the total of ten T6.4 innovative land actions were discussed: Shared Assets' action on County Farms, De Landgenoten's actions on farm succession, Kulturland's action on farm building, and Terre de Liens and XCN's actions on land stewardship. Only one of the five emerging land topics identified in T6.4 was left aside: *"new models to fundraise for land"*. This may be due to the technicality and context-specificity of the actions that addressed this topic, which rested much on analysing national legal frameworks in Romania and Germany and researching sophisticated financial or juridical solutions available to fundraise for land in innovative and community-based ways.

n°	Responsible partner	Context	Action presented
1	Shared Assets	NUTS1 Wales (regional - local)	Shared Assets' action on County Farms
2	Shared Assets	National	De Landgenoten action on farm succession
3	De Landgenoten	NUTS1 Flanders (regional - local)	Kulturland's action on buildings ownership
4	De Landgenoten	NUTS1 Flanders (regional - local)	Terre de Liens' action on assessing biodiversity on farms
5	Eco Ruralis	NUTS3 Huedin (regional - local)	Terre de Liens' action on assessing biodiversity on farms
6	Eco Ruralis	NUTS3 Sibiu (local, village of Hosman)	Shared Assets' action on County Farms
7	XCN	NUTS3 Lleida and Tarragona (local, area of Vall del Corb)	De Landgenoten's action on farm succession
8	Kulturland	NUTS3 Lüchow-Dannenberg (regional - local)	XCN's action on hay meadows
9	Terre de Liens	NUTS1 Occitanie (regional) and national dimension	Terre de Liens' action on assessing biodiversity on farms
10	Terre de Liens	National	Shared Assets' action on County Farms

Table 3 - List of regions and actions selected for T6.5 focus groups

## 2.2 Engaging actors and devising solutions adapted to local contexts

The format proposed for the focus groups included some key principles for stakeholder engagement. In particular, in line with previous findings that showed land solutions must be adapted to local contexts, resources, and goals, it was important that focus groups would **not be seen as discussions promoting “copy-pasting” of a land innovation developed elsewhere**. Rather, these groups aimed at providing inspiration from good practices and devising appropriate local strategies based on co-constructed assessments of context, levers and barriers to act on land issues.

Thus, focus groups broadly assessed conditions for innovation transfer from 3 perspectives : a) **exogenous perspective** (local and national contextual features that can support or hamper the development of the innovation), b) **endogenous perspective** (the characteristics of the ecosystem of partners interested in developing the innovation, their existing resources, and other levers or weaknesses for innovation development), c) **strategic perspective** (i.e. ideas on how to adapt and develop locally the innovation). Focus groups had to be guided by the facilitator to obtain this information, but the degree of guidance and the format was open for better adaptation to local needs. For instance, the focus groups could be embedded in larger



events, associated with interactive activities such as a field visit or a screening, co-organised with stakeholders, organised face-to-face or online (particularly in case of COVID-related difficulties), etc. Finally, facilitators were asked as much as possible to use methods to promote open discussions and to be aware of possible power dynamics among stakeholders that could influence their results.

In total, the focus groups gathered 224 participants, including 121 women (see annex I). Among the participants represented, we can cite:

- staff, boards and volunteers of land organisations;
- new entrants, experienced farmers, as well as representatives from farmer groups or unions;
- organisations or partners working on rural development, nature conservation, agricultural counselling, and other closely related domains;
- Local authorities and other policy-makers;
- Researchers.

Below, we offer a short summary of the contexts in which the focus groups were carried out.

### **Focus groups on farm succession**

**1. XCN presented DLg's action on farm succession in the area of Vall del Corb.** Vall del Corb, province of Lleida and Tarragona, is a rural area facing demographic decline, abandonment or intensification of farming activities, a lack of new entrants, and little farm diversification. Similar trends exist in the Flemish context, in terms of trends of land concentration, rising land prices and ageing of farmers. However, the land and farms in Vall del Corb present some specificities with the predominance of cereal and pig farming, an important attachment to the land by older Catalan farmers, and a contrast between areas of very intensive agriculture and others that are being abandoned. A key reason for choosing this context was the presence of local actors getting organised to reverse these tendencies and revitalise Vall del Corb through a long-term project named "Territori de Vincles". Work on succession issues had already started in collaboration between XCN and these actors in 2021, yet the specific model developed by DLg consisting of using collective land acquisition to facilitate farm succession had never been examined as a possible solution to be adapted locally.

**2. SA presented DLg's actions on farm succession to English and Irish partners.** England is facing similar challenges to Belgium, including few opportunities for new entrants, high land prices, and ageing farming populations (who may not have succession plans). Some English groups are currently reflecting on the issue of farm succession, especially as the government here may soon be offering lump sum payouts for retiring farmers. Being able to hear about DLg's experiences, as well as those of some colleagues from Teagasc and NUIG who joined the focus group, was a valuable learning session for the new project group which has come together to investigate new models of farm succession between landowners and community groups in England. Key lessons included the length of time some of these processes of succession take, and ways to deal sensitively with the emotional ties to the land of the current occupant. Participants in the English context thought a few changes might need to be made compared to DLg's approach, such as having more of a focus on acquiring farm buildings as well as land, a shift from working on individual-to-individual owner transfers (as in DLg's case)

to individual-to-community group transfers, and fitting into post-Brexit English agricultural schemes. However, on the whole, participants felt there was a lot to draw on from DLg's experience, and are likely to continue consulting with them for advice as necessary as the farm succession project in England progresses.

### **Focus groups on land stewardship**

**3. DLg presented TDL's work on monitoring and promoting farm biodiversity.** Concerning the wider contexts of these innovations, France and Belgium, as the rest of Europe, are facing growing issues of land degradation, pollution, and erosion and the disappearance of flora and fauna species due to intensive agricultural practices. Concerning the specific TDL and DLg contexts, both these community land acquisition organisations have interest in knowing how their land actions affect local biodiversity, for instance to measure environmental impacts of their work, federate more supporters and volunteers, and secure additional funds (subsidies available for sustainable farming practices, or donations from environmentally-motivated funders for instance). Nevertheless, TDL is a larger and older organisation compared to DLg, with important regional networks which can support local farm biodiversity projects. DLg is still in a process of building its core activity of purchasing farmland and renting it to farmers with sustainable projects, and has many competing priorities, which can make it difficult to adapt the practice at its regional, Flemish scale. In addition, DLg is still busy investing in public engagement, which is crucial to develop activities to both analyse biodiversity on the land they own as to further improve biodiversity with farmers. Developing this practice depends largely on having sufficient financial means to ensure interactions with volunteers, contacts with environmental organisations and to guarantee a respectful dialogue with the farmers.

**4. ER also chose TDL's action on biodiversity to be presented in the local region of Huedin.** The goal was to engage with farmers and local authorities interested in enhancing environmentally-friendly farming practices, especially to counteract some industrial approaches in a region which is characterised by its rich biodiversity. The focus group gathered farmers, community facilitators, local and regional civil society representatives, and local authority representatives. The discussion came at the right time, when local civil society around agroecology development, agri-tourism, peasant farmers, some local decision makers and active civic groups were seeking a channel to discuss openly with more large-scale industrial farmers on the importance of biodiversity in a non-confrontative and constructive way. Through the format of the focus group this was well tackled, as the official approach was the presentation of the Terre de Liens' work in order to give inspiration, alternative ideas and open up through this also the confronting visions in the local scene. Participants were receptive to TDL's multi-layered and adaptable approach to on-farm biodiversity. The event did not manage to provide solutions to large-scale farmers on how, in a long-term planning, biodiversity care and farm objectives could enhance their viability and relations with their smaller farming peers and civil society. Large farmers and small farmers thought that a middle way between pure economic rationality and the ecologic need of diversification was possible with some coordinated effort – and local authorities were identified as mediators, especially through local councils that know the complex rural-local reality better.

**5. KL's focus group focused on XCN's action regarding the preservation of hay meadows.** KL invited XCN to present their innovation to a group of activists in Wendland region, situated in North of Germany. Similar to Catalonia, this region has a high diversity of natural landscape and is rich in flora and fauna, some labelled for conservation schemes (biosphere and nature

reserves, Natura 2000, etc.). In both contexts, it is essential to articulate farming and conservation efforts and extensive cattle breeding, in particular, can help protect the specific habitats of some species. However, there are obstacles such as the presence of predators on sheep flocks (bears in Spain, wolves in Germany), high economic pressures and a “productive mindset” of farmers leading to intensification, and strict EU environmental subsidy regulations that constrain farmers and make them fear sanctions. Beyond these similarities, Wendland was an auspicious area to carry out the focus group due to the presence of a local citizen group (Wilde Wiese Wendland) aiming to revive the effort to conserve meadows. This group was interested in the exchange on the work carried out by XCN and its partners in Catalonia, and could lead to some efforts to adapt some of the strategies studied in the Spanish context.

**6. TDL realised a focus group to share its approach of monitoring on-farm biodiversity with stakeholders in the region of Occitanie, France.** In its novel action, TDL indeed explored different approaches and scenarios for better protecting biodiversity on its farms, through improved contractualisation with farmers, monitoring tools, pilot projects, etc. Some of the conclusions pointed to the need to engage with environmental organisations, to learn from their approaches and tools, as well as to share questioning and difficulties and jointly explore possible solutions. The focus group was therefore conceived as a joint event between TDL and the Conservatoire d’espaces naturels (CEN) Occitanie, a major regional nature conservation organisation, which is part of a national network (FN CEN). The event was therefore also part of a starting Life project, coordinated by CEN Occitanie, which focuses on Biodiversity conservation on farms practicing peasant agriculture (project title: Biodiv’ paysanne). Representatives of both TDL and CEN (from both regional and national organisations) participated in the focus group, together with a few more environmental and rural development organisations. The focus group was an opportunity to share and enrich TDL’s approach, through presentations and workshops. Interestingly, TDL members felt they needed to better include environmental perspectives and tools in their own approach, while CEN members highlighted their desire to better include farming perspectives and considerations in their own processes and tools. Rather than fostering transfer, the focus group led to cross-fertilisation of both networks, which participants wish to continue both on the regional level (as part of the LIFE) and national level.

### **Focus groups on public land**

**7. Terre de Liens presented SA’s action on council farmland** to a large audience of local authorities, rural and agriculture organisations, researchers, and citizens (national-level focus group). This aimed to engage public and private organisations in learning about how to improve local authorities’ land management and land policies, in particular discussing SA’s work to create a 2040 Vision for council farmland in England, echoing with the obligation for French local authorities to create “territorial food plans”. In both countries, indeed, national frameworks create injunctions for local governments to meet climate and environmental targets, as well as socio-economic goals (such as increasing the supply of local food, or improving the health and eating habits of inhabitants). Publicly-owned farmland was thus discussed as a potential resource to help meet these goals, which relies on building integrated and sound land planning policies.

**8. One of Eco Ruralis’ focus groups also looked at SA’s council farmland innovative practice.** The context concerned, Sibiu County, is one where local farmers, NGOs and some local

authorities are collectively organising to both safeguard commons and to use them in a more agroecological and socially inclusive way. In addition to SA and ER, the focus group gathered farmers, community facilitators, local and regional civil society representatives and local authority representatives from Sibiu. Some statements were made by both English and Romanian stakeholders concerning the fact that public farmland was under threat, due to speculation and use for industrial purposes, leading to land concentration on public land, as it happens on private land, and no specific concern regarding social, economic and environmental issues on that land. Some obstacles were identified during the focus groups regarding the use of commons in Romania: the fact that the ageing farming population induced a decrease in the use of commons, that younger generations often migrated to urban areas or abroad (especially western Europe), that corruption issues led to the fact that decisions over land were often taken for the benefit of large investors and that most local authorities lacked a vision on the future of agriculture and its potential social and environmental vocation. Various avenues were mentioned, such as relying on the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants* (UNDROP) to amend Romania's land policy, especially around safeguarding local customary tenure or creating more transparency over land tenure (possibly involving regional public authorities in keeping track and record on land investments) as well as on mapping the commons and holding more regional exchanges with commons users to identify and integrate their needs in local/regional authority plans and strategies.

**9. SA chose to discuss its England-based action in Wales,** where local authorities also manage council farm estates currently and supportive groups (e.g. Social Farms & Gardens Wales) could back the implementation of a new vision for council farmland. The legislative frameworks for council farmland are similar between England and Wales, and challenges of council budgetary pressures (resulting in sell-off of farms), and lack of staff capacity, are shared by each context. Given how important small-scale farming is to rural Welsh communities, and its close ties to Welsh culture and language, we thought there would also be interest in rejuvenating the purpose of and vision for council farmland there, so that future generations also have the opportunity to access land locally to farm in their own right. There are also additional supportive policies in Wales, such as the Well-Being of Future Generations Act, which a more holistic approach to council farmland could help achieve the objectives of. The participants in the event seemed enthusiastic about the potential to use a similar approach to that in England to co-create a new vision for Welsh council farmland with farmers, prospective new entrants, communities and local authorities.

### **Focus groups on farm restructuring**

**10. DLg discussed KL's action regarding farm buildings in Flanders.** In Belgium as in Germany, new entrants face great challenges to access increasingly expensive land. Beyond land, farm buildings which are essential to sustaining agricultural businesses represent an additional and often greater financial burden for new generations. Like KL, DLg is a cooperative purchasing land with citizen investment, with the goal to rent it to sustainable farmers and new entrants. Due to the fact that DLg focuses only on land acquisition and not on buildings, there are limitations. Therefore, farmers with whom DLg contracts need enough capital to purchase or rent farm buildings separately from the land they lease to the cooperative. The fact that the ownership of the land and buildings stay separate can also become an issue on the long run. In case of farm transfer, DLg cannot guarantee the new tenant will be able to take over buildings from the previous owner. The KL action consisted in developing an innovative

ownership model, where farmers finance and manage buildings on KL land but where building use rights stay tied to the farming activity. This model also involves controlling prices so that buildings can be sold under fair conditions in case of transfer (both compensating for the previous owners' investment but avoiding speculation and too high prices for new owners). This therefore may be of interest to improve the way DLg deals with this question, even if adaptations are needed in the legal and economic context of Flanders. Since the German model largely depends on the willingness of the retiring farmer to be satisfied with a lower sales price, the participants questioned the possibility of transferring this model in Flanders. On the other hand, the participants were very enthusiastic about it and inspired by the built-in mechanisms to avoid speculation and to ensure a fair relationship between the different actors.

The results of focus groups discussions were reported in a template (see annex II) and further discussed among leading partners as well as with consortium members. Some research partners of RURALIZATION were also solicited to bring inputs and get involved in focus groups, some of them were able to join as participants and observers.

## 2.3 Contextualising focus group results with previous RURALIZATION reports and work of the Access to Land network

Once all results of the focus groups had been gathered, these were analysed to review and categorise the solutions identified throughout the group discussions, in the light of other solutions for access to land for new generations studied for the RURALIZATION report on current land initiatives (64 initiatives in Loveluck et al. 2021a), and the report on novel land practices (Loveluck et al. 2020b), as well as previous reports and experience-sharing activities (workshops, field visits) of the Access to land Network. The experience-sharing, documentation of good practices, and cross-analysis of issues and solutions which have taken place prior to or in parallel to the RURALIZATION project have indeed been key to identify additional ideas and solutions. This directly connects this work with our daily operational work and thereby ensures a better rootedness and relevance of the work conducted in RURALIZATION. As noted above and in the RURALIZATION report on novel land practices (Loveluck et al. 2021b), it rests on a strong self-reflectivity of these organisations and their capacity to learn by doing and continuously improve and adapt their practice by drawing from experiences in their own context but also inspiration and ideas coming from other members and partners in the Access to Land network. Thus, the European network published in 2017 a report on the role of local authorities in access to land (Rodrigo and Rioufol 2017) which included a simplified version of the access to land pathway at the core of the RURALIZATION report on current land initiatives (Loveluck et al. 2021a). Over the last years, several RURALIZATION partners have explored some of the issues that emerged as their novel actions for report D6.5. For instance, as part of an Erasmus + partnership, De Landgenoten and the Catalan organisation Rurbans were mentored by Terre de Liens for a year about different ways to approach the issue of farm succession and define locally-adapted solutions and their role in implementing them. In both cases, it included mapping other local actors already involved or those that could be invited as part of a coalition to address the issue, as well as a review of local and European practical resources existing on supporting extra-family farm succession (van Boxtel et al. 2016). Formal and informal exchanges took place with other organisations

which had worked on the topic – e.g. EcoRuralis or Terre-en-Vue Belgium. In the UK, Shared Assets had already conducted previous work with the CPRE and the New Economic Foundation, following a CPRE initial report on the future of County Farms. The contacts and level of understanding of the issues reached through this initial work were key to develop not only the handout but to organise rich and grounded focus groups.

More specifically for the present report, the results from the focus group discussions, and findings of the RURALIZATION reports D6.1 and D6.5 were combined with prior studies and experience-sharing activities conducted by the Access to land Network. In particular, the Network had published in 2018 a report on Europe's New farmers (Rioufol and Diaz de Quijano, 2018), which analysed issues and solutions for new entrants access to land in six selected countries, and provided a first typology of solutions, coming from the 15 member organisations but also from a wide array of other practitioners with whom Network members regularly exchange. Contextualising RURALIZATION findings with this rich and diverse knowledge of grassroots innovations covering a wide scope of solutions from the upstream to the downstream of entry into farming has enabled us to produce the analysis presented in part 3 of this report.



### 3 ANALYSIS PART 1: highlights on solutions for access to land for new generations

European farmers are an ageing population. More than half of European farmers will retire within 10 years, while only 7% are under the age of 35<sup>3</sup>. Many senior farmers have no successors in their family, and have no identified successor outside of it. On the other hand, a growing number of people are seeking to enter farming, without a family farm and sometimes without prior experience with farming. These new farmers may be defined as ex novo new entrants (EIP-AGRI 2016; Loveluck et al. 2021a). Many of them turn towards agroecological forms of farming and favour innovation — organic farming, short supply chains, community-supported agriculture, and on-farm food processing — which increase on-farm added value, while contributing to local quality food, jobs and environmental protection. The exact number and potential of these new farmers are not well-known, as only a few countries have collected data and analyses about them. Rather than supposing a 'strict' separation between farmers with an agricultural background and farmers without such background, we could say that there is more of a continuum between continuers and new entrants (EIP-AGRI 2016). Many new farmers indeed have some connection with farming, through relatives, a rural background, on-farm experience, etc., while some continuers may decide to continue farming but not take on the family farm, or to transform it radically (e.g. from a specialised farm to mixed farming, or from conventional to organic), involving some specific support they might find in the same networks than the new entrants.

Supporting entry into farming has officially become one of the key objectives of national agricultural policies in many European countries, as well as at EU level. It can take the form of public subsidies (e.g. CAP start-up aid for young farmers), as well as many other mechanisms (training, enhanced access to credit, advisory services, etc.). With regard to access to land, various policy instruments are also available to support initial or continued access to land for the new generation, including for new entrants: publicity of land offers, tax rebates for renting to new entrants, regulatory bodies (e.g. SAFER) prioritising entry into farming, etc. However, these solutions remain limited, and insufficiently implemented. Instead of or in complement to these policy solutions, a wide array of grassroots solutions have therefore emerged to facilitate access to land for new generations.

The following tables (table 4a and 4b) offers an overview of the multiplicity of these practical solutions. It is based on practices studied in RURALIZATION reports on current and novel land practices (Loveluck et al. 2021a; Loveluck et al. 2021b), as well as in previous publications of the Access to Land network (Volz et al. 2015; Rodrigo and Rioufol 2017; Rioufol and Diaz de Quijano 2018; Hart 2019; Krcilkova and Janovska 2019; Nyeleni Europe 2020; Tas and Rioufol 2021; R Urbans 2021)<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, it is based on practices developed by members of the

<sup>3</sup> Source: Eurostat, Farm Structure Survey, 2013, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Farm\\_structure\\_survey\\_2013\\_-\\_main\\_results&oldid=271613#Farm\\_managers\\_by\\_age](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Farm_structure_survey_2013_-_main_results&oldid=271613#Farm_managers_by_age)

<sup>4</sup> Online resources can also be added to all the publications mentioned:

- Access to land case study series, 2012 and 2014: <https://www.accesstoland.eu/-Case-studies->
- Access to land network, Land matching platform video series, 2021, <https://www.accesstoland.eu/land-matching-4-videos>

Access to Land network, or conducted by other actors in our ecosystems, which have been a source of inspiration and lessons learnt. This table groups them into 4 main categories:

- "Acting on the land": as land markets have become very competitive, it is increasingly difficult for new farmers to be able to acquire or rent farmland. They can more easily access certain types of land, which are at the margin of the conventional land markets: public land, community-owned land, commons and under-used land.
- "Supporting specific profiles": certain practices are aimed at facilitating access to land for certain groups in particular, which differ from the majority profile and are therefore often not prioritised by land owners and/ or left out of public support. These practices can target new entrants to farming, or specific disadvantaged categories (e.g. women, collectives, persons who are older than 40 years, minorities).
- "Prioritizing specific uses": these solutions are geared towards providing access to land to any farmer who commits to fulfil objectives that contribute to public benefits, such as providing quality food for local markets or implementing measures that protect the environment. As such practices are more widespread among new generations of farmers (Monllor 2012), they indirectly benefit new entrants.
- "Addressing the knots": the new generations of farmers increasingly differ from conventional generations of farmers: increasing numbers are new entrants to farming who may lack not only access to land but also have limited practical experience and social and professional networks. Increasing numbers of both new entrants and continuers also have agroecological projects geared towards local food chains and smaller areas. Some may approach farming as a temporary profession rather than a career-long calling. These new features change the way they can and want to have access to land. A number of solutions are therefore aimed at addressing some of these knots: organising extra-family farm succession, lowering the costs of entering the farming profession, enabling progressive entry into farming over a few months or years, or bridging the discrepancy between offers and demands of farmland.



Approaches	Types of solutions	Highlights	Other good practices	Actions led*
Acting on land	Mobilising public land	County and municipal farms	Public land acquisition Tenders favouring new entrants Direct public farm management	SA: action on County farms
	Offering community-owned land	Community farmland trusts	CSAs supporting land acquisition, Renting land owned from charities or environmental organisations, Renting church land	ER: ALPA KL: retirement savings TDL: Farm restructuring
	Reviving commons	Mobilising commons for entry into farming	Using commons to complement the viability of the farms Rewarding farmers for managing commons with environmental benefits	ER: Commons
	Recovering under-used land	Recultivating fallow land	Mapping underused land Developing a multi-stakeholders' vision for farmland Occupying abandoned land	
Supporting specific profiles	Supporting new entrants	Farm incubators	County "start-up" farms Community farmland trusts Land partnerships Land intermediation with (public or private) landowners (land banks, on-line matching platforms...) Land portage Unions and associations for self-education and support	
	Helping disadvantaged and "atypical" groups**	Bursaries with priority criteria	Priority criteria in land banks or tenders for public land Community farmland trusts Farm projects and farm incubators aiming at social inclusion	
Prioritising specific uses	Mobilising land for local food	Local food strategy and plan	Renting public land to food producers Direct municipal farm management Mapping local land use and potential	TDL: Farm restructuring
	Ensuring good land stewardship	Setting-up new entrants on sensitive natural areas	Conditioning access to public land to environmental criteria Community farmland trusts Providing support to new entrants	TDL & XCN: Biodiversity and land stewardship
<p>* See table 2</p> <p>** Women, above 40, ethnic minorities, migrants, farmworkers, landless farmers, collectives...</p>				

Table 4a - Overview of the multiplicity of practical solutions fostering access to land (Part I)

Approaches	Types of solutions	Highlights	Other good practices	Actions led*
Addressing the knots	Organising extra-family farm succession	Land matching platforms	Progressive farm transfer Preparing ageing farmers for succession Having a community land trust buy the farm and rent it to a new entrant Matchmaking between transferors and successors	DLg & XCN: Farm Succession KL: building ownership
	Lowering entry costs	Land partnerships	Renting on public or CFLTs land Hire-to-purchase arrangements Setting up a collective of farmers to share the costs Starting small before expanding	KL: building ownership
	Enabling progressive entry	Temporary land portage <sup>5</sup>	Farm incubators Matchmaking between transferors and successors Land partnerships	CFLTs TDL: Farm restructuring
	Bridging the gaps between land offer and demand (time, size, type)	Cutting out a large farm to recreate smaller farms	Temporary land portage Setting up a collective of farmers Land partnerships Farm incubators	TDL: Farm restructuring
	* See table 2			

Table 5b - Overview of the multiplicity of practical solutions fostering access to land (Part II)

<sup>5</sup> Legal and financial arrangement consisting in having an institution “holding” the land until the new entrant is ready to set-up his/her farm. This implies that the institution holding the land will acquire the land and/or manage it for the landowner for a certain time.

All these types of solutions can be located along the blocks of the access to land pathway presented previously, as presented on figure 3. As can be seen, some of these solutions are in connection with different blocks of the pathway while some others are only connected to one block.

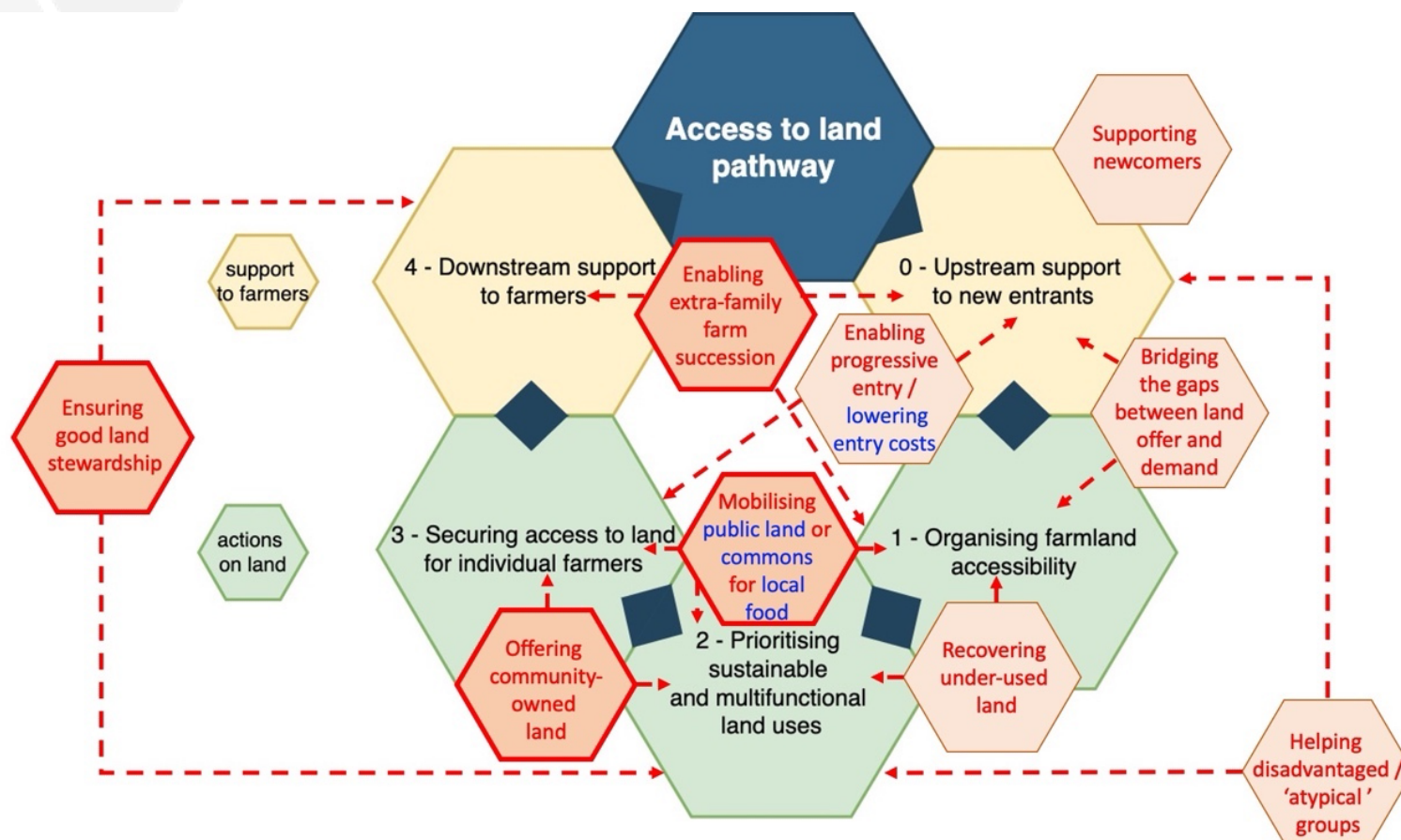


Figure 3 – Situation of the different solutions studied along the access to land pathway

The solutions listed in the tables 4a and 4b go beyond those which were at the centre of the focus groups, which are mentioned in blue in the table and appearing in darker red in Figure 3. Indeed, according to the grant agreement, we wanted to include the multiplicity of these solutions in the report for several reasons:

- all these solutions are now part of the "universe of solutions" which the practitioners of the *Access to land* network draw from when addressing a specific issue or planning a new line of work. As an illustration, most of the focus group discussions examined not just one practice but several good practices and solutions favouring access to land for new generations;
- these solutions have been developed by a wide range of stakeholders, in different countries, at different governance levels, as practical solutions to context-specific issues. To our knowledge, there is no existing overview so far bringing together this array of solutions and their underlying objectives and strategies.

In this chapter, we will describe and analyse these 12 groups of solutions and propose, for each of them, to:

- give some frequent contextual elements which explain the need for these solutions;
- specify the stakes they generally address and the usual objectives they aim at;
- expose the main levers allowing them to be implemented;
- briefly illustrate these solutions through highlighting a good practice and providing a few other examples.

In addition, for those solutions that have been at the centre of the focus groups, we analyse the possibilities of transfer and changes in scale, based on the categories developed by Moore and al. (2015), detailed in section 1.2, that allowed “classification” of the different elements that emerged from the focus groups (notably for the solutions that were the most discussed in these focus groups).

## 3.1 Acting on land

### 3.1.1 Mobilising public land

#### Context:

- Many prospective farmers are facing difficulties to find and acquire land on the open land market. Difficulties are even higher for new entrants who often lack access to information, social capital, funding and public support.
- Many public bodies, in particular local authorities, own farmland, which they usually rent out to farmers. But only a few local authorities have developed a vision and strategy of how to best use the land they own.
- Since the 2008 financial crisis, an increasing number of local authorities are selling farmland they own to balance their budget.

**What's at stake?**

- New entrants to farming can find an easier access to land through being given priority access to public land.
- Public bodies can potentially offer better conditions in terms of rent or contract duration. They can also give priority access to disadvantaged categories of farmers (women, collectives, etc.).
- Farming can help to yield many social, economic and environmental benefits for local communities: local quality food provision, ecosystems preservation, job and activity creation, maintaining landscapes, etc. This is particularly true of agroecological, locally embedded forms of farming. Local authorities can therefore fulfil many of their goals through supporting the maintenance of local farmers and the development of agroecological forms of farming.

**Objectives:**

- Giving priority access to new entrants on public land and offering favourable conditions of tenancy;
- Preserving and expanding public-owned farmland and using it to fulfil community benefits;
- Developing new forms of public land ownership and management, to address rising challenges (e.g. environment protection, food resilience) and/ or match the needs of the new generations of farmers.

**Key levers:**

- Renting publicly-owned farms to new entrants
- Tendering out public land with criteria to prioritise:
  - new entrants and/or agroecological farmers;
  - disadvantaged groups (women, minorities, migrants...) or community uses (e.g., pedagogical farm or local food production) (see below).
- Acquiring more land to ensure that it remains agricultural land, and facilitate entry of a new generation, as part of a broader sustainable development strategy, local food plan, or to preserve the environment.
- Developing municipality-operated farms to develop local food production and support new farmers.
- Co-acquiring land with community farmland trusts, to share the costs and get support to facilitate the development of a local vision for agriculture as well as to engage with farmers.

**Highlight: Municipal or county farms**

County farms (UK) or municipal farms (FR) have historically been used to facilitate the entry of new farmers. Usually, after a start-up phase, new entrants move to a farm of their own. Although the UK county farms have been massively reduced over the past decades, there are still a few counties which carefully manage their farms to enable entry into farming and fulfil a wide array of public objectives. Cambridgeshire's County Farm Estate is the largest remaining estate in England and Wales. As of 2017 it consists of 13,400 hectares providing a living to 197 tenant farmers with farm sizes ranging from 2.5 to over 200 hectares, including horticulture, livestock, arable and vegetable producers. The county's focus is on offering farm business tenancies to new entrants with "good business plans and strong ideas who are also able to pay a competitive rent". Their criteria for selection of tenants states the preferred age range to be 23-40; applicants need to have five years' full-time practical farm work; and anyone who is already an established farmer who just wants to add a County Farm to extend his/her business need not apply. This approach has led to 92 new tenants from 2000 to 2017. Farmers are encouraged to "expand their businesses and plan for moving on" as shorter business tenancies have replaced retirement and lifetime tenancies (Rodrigo and Rioufol 2017).

**Other good practices:**

An increasing number of public bodies are carefully managing farmland they own and making it available for new entrants. Some are even acquiring new farmland to further fulfil their objectives: constituting a green belt, developing local food production, establishing a farm incubator, etc. Among these:

Good practices	Examples of case studies
Entrusting public land to (agroecological) new entrants	Hamburg City Estates (Bahner 2011) Dorset County Farms (Rodrigo and Rioufol 2017) Franches Terres farm on land owned by Amiens municipality (Rioufol and Diaz de Quijano 2018)
Adapting public tenders to give priority to new entrants	Rome municipality tendering out to Coraggio cooperative <sup>6</sup> ; Walloon Department of Nature and forests (Rodrigo and Rioufol 2017)
Acquiring more land to ensure local food production and channel land use towards public benefits	Mouans-Sartoux municipality (Rodrigo and Rioufol 2017) Ceinture alimen-terre liégeoise <sup>7</sup>
Directly managing farmland to produce food for public institutions (e.g. school)	Mouans-Sartoux municipality
Setting up a farm incubator on public land to facilitate entry of new entrants to farming	El viver de Rufeá: municipal farm incubator in Lleida, Catalonia, Le début des Haricots, on land owned by the municipality of Anderlecht, Belgium (Rioufol and Diaz de Quijano, 2018)

Table 6 – Good practices aimed at mobilising public land

<sup>6</sup> In the D6.1 report (Loveluck et al. 2021a) and Molina, 2016, The land for our food, film by the Access to Land Network, <https://www.accesstoland.eu/-Our-film-The-Land-for-our-Food->

<sup>7</sup> One of the 64 unpublished questionnaires relating to the D6.1 report initiatives (Loveluck et al. 2021a)



## Issues and challenges for transfer or scaling up:

### *Scaling out:*

- Need to inform and support many local authorities about how to engage with farmers and manage farmland (including identifying and selecting potential farmers, establishing tenancy contracts, etc.).
- Members of the focus group emphasised the fact that England and Wales shared the same context regarding county farmland, and could therefore share their experience.
- County farms represent a strong lever for new entrants: despite making up around 1% of the farmed area, in 2019 they offered more than one in ten of all new Farm Business Tenancies, one in six of all lettings to new entrants, and two-fifths of all equipped farms with buildings and/or homes (CPRE, Shared Assets and New Economics Foundation, forthcoming)
- In France, a rather large ecosystem of organisations working on sustainable agriculture and much available counselling/human capacity as well as “good practices” models for carrying out sound projects on public farmland. More human capacity/staff positions on agricultural issues were hired by local authorities in recent years and prospective diagnosis tools (e.g., PARCEL<sup>8</sup>, CRATER<sup>9</sup>) were recently developed to evaluate under which conditions the local food system could fulfil local needs: those tools can serve as a basis to trigger debate or orient action on public land.
- However, there is a need to improve the availability of data from local authorities on their land holdings. In France, local authorities often own land, but contrary to England, they rarely own a whole farm. The issue of buildings and accommodations therefore needs to be solved in most cases.
- On the farmer’s side: settling on public land often means making adaptations to meet demands which can be imposed by the local authorities: e.g., visits from the public, respecting environmental clauses, adapting the production so that it meets the need of public procurement, etc. These aspects need to be well discussed in the preliminary stages and during the life of the farm to ensure the sustainability of operations.

### *Scaling up:*

- Building on a strong national framework which would give a clear mandate for local authorities to act on land.
- In France, some local authority representatives consider that there are increasing responsibilities devoted to local authorities to achieve national targets but reduced budgets though. Some elected representatives and some land organisations imagine a pre-emption right on farmland for the benefit of the local authorities, similar to what exists for urban development today, in order to help them fulfil their missions on local agriculture.
- In general, local authorities perceive the need to work on the upstream level to act on their own land (finding adequately trained farmers, developing an attractive environment – e.g., public services, internet connection...) and at the downstream level (commercialisation, etc.). See section 3.3.1.

<sup>8</sup> <https://parcel-app.org/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://crater.resiliencealimentaire.org/>

*Scaling deep:*

- Need to develop the vision and strategy of local authorities on using farmland they own. Including changing their vision from owning an asset/managing a burden, to having a resource for the common good.
- Main aims that can be achieved through the use of public land: providing employment opportunities, increasing local food supply, improving the health and well-being of citizens, and preserving the environment.

*Cross-cutting strategies:*

- Different strategies in terms of coalition and engagement were mentioned during the focus group between English and Welsh stakeholders: deepen engagement with all partners of the Resilient Green Spaces (RGS) project; deepen the links between the RGS and farmers' organisations and local authorities, engage with professional associations of land agents/surveyors who help local authorities manage land.
- In France, the pre-existing "community" of local authorities and practitioners engaged in discussing ways to support public action on land should be reinforced. Some of them are producing resources and sharing experience around the RECOLTE<sup>10</sup> project.

### 3.1.2 Offering community-owned land

**Context:**

- Many new farmers, especially those with no agricultural background, have difficulties in buying farmland and farm buildings, due to high prices and to the potential economic risks that high debts for land purchase could entail.
- New farmers, particularly new entrants, also meet other difficulties than high land prices and economic competition in their access to land<sup>11</sup>: the lack of tenure security (short-term leases, uncertain renewal), the lack of public information about land offers, the preference of owners and transferors for established farmers or people from the local community, or the discrepancy between their farm plans and available plots (see below 3.4.4).
- Many citizens, in some EU contexts, are eager to participate in the redirection of agriculture and to support new entrants, leading them to donate money or to put their savings into land trusts or community schemes allowing the acquisition of land in order to make it available for farmers and preserve its use.

Over the past decades, a number of civil society organisations have developed with a mission of renting out their land on good conditions to farmers:

- Community farmland trusts (CFLT) whose main mission is to raise capital to acquire land which is then rented out to farmers. Most have a strong focus on agroecological forms of farming, new entrants and food production.

<sup>10</sup> <https://ressources.terredeliens.org/recolte>

<sup>11</sup> On the obstacles faced by new entrants in accessing land, see Rioufol and Diaz de Quijano 2018; Loveluck et al. 2021a and EIP Focus Group 2016.



- Community-supported agriculture groups where consumers extend their solidarity with their local producers by constituting a collective ownership structure to acquire and secure their land<sup>12</sup>;
- Charitable trusts (e.g. the UK National Trust) whose purpose is to preserve the environment, maintain historic or natural heritage or develop the local area.

### What's at stake?

- To foster entry of a new generations of farmers, through providing them priority access and community support to find and access land
- To focus support to those new entrants who will contribute to the maintenance or the expansion of forms of agriculture that preserve ecological resources and are involved in short supply chains, thereby combining generational renewal and model transitioning
- To facilitate farm successions, especially extra-family successions, that would not be an option without such solutions for land acquisition.
- To create new solidarities between food producers and consumers or 'eaters', through community funding and volunteering, be it locally, between town and country or between different geographic areas
- To experiment forms of collective ownership that overcome the limits of private property through: the social connections that they allow and the collective dialogue on the long-term use of the land that they enable.

### Objectives:

- To allow farmers who do not have the necessary financial means, nor in most cases the local networks, to access land through renting under lasting and affordable conditions (fair rent, long term lease, investment in buildings).
- To allow new farmers to get started with a smaller or even no bank loan, and to focus their investment on business development (seeds, machinery, processing facilities, livestock, etc.) rather than on land and buildings.
- To preserve farmland in farming use and gear it towards specific uses (local food production, environment protection, job and activity creation...)
- To create the conditions, through concrete legal, financial and educational tools, to build solidarity between people pursuing the same objectives (new entrants and 'eaters' in particular, but also local communities or local councils).

### Key levers

- A legal framework that makes it possible to include the agroecological feature of the farming practices within the lease between the (collective) owner and the farmer(s), or, in other cases, a social arrangement that makes it possible to ensure trust between the farmers and the money providers regarding the farming practices implemented.
- Facilitating political and legal frameworks to facilitate crowdfunding as investment or donations (public announcement for share issues, tax rebates for community donors/ investors, etc.).

<sup>12</sup> See Volz and Rioufol, 2015, Access to Land and Community Agriculture in Europe: Stories from Europe, Access to Land Network: [www.accesstoland.eu/Access-to-land-and-Community-Supported-Agriculture](http://www.accesstoland.eu/Access-to-land-and-Community-Supported-Agriculture)

- Public support to community farmland trusts and charitable trusts to help them cover their costs (particularly where rents are low) and fulfil their activities of general interest
- Institutional or social conditions which favour community-based land acquisition by CFLTs and rental to farmers, for instance:
  - priority right to buy for community buyers and/ or rent to new entrants (e.g SAFER)
  - temporary land carrying to bridge the gap between the land sale and the purchase to facilitate the possibility for new entrants to complete the different steps needed before starting their activity (see 3.4.4)
  - a strong vision for local farming and food production – promoted by a local council, a farmers' group, a multi-stakeholders dynamic – which prioritises farming use of the land and generational renewal

### Highlight: Community farmland trusts

Community farmland trusts have developed over the past decades in Europe, mostly but not only in Western European countries. They vary in size, activities and functioning but have many commonalities. Their main mission is to preserve farmland in farming use, protect the environment and make land available to agroecological farmers. Most have set up a foundation and / or an ethical company (cooperative, company limited by shares) to collect capital (investment, donations, bequests). They acquire farmland (and buildings), manage them and rent them out to selected farmers. They usually commit to holding land in perpetuity to protect farmland and curb speculation. They provide opportunities for new entrants, prevent annexing by larger farms (concentration), and promote sustainable farming practices, thereby addressing issues of soil and ecosystem degradation. Many of them also engage in public mobilisation and educational activities to build concrete solidarity around land, as well as awareness raising and advocacy to influence the broader public debate. Some European CFLTs: Terre-en-Vue and De Landgenoten (Belgium), Nadace Pro Pudu (Czech Republic), Kulturland and Bioboden (Germany), Terre de Liens, Lurzaindia, or Passeurs de Terres (France), the Soil Association Land Trust, Ecological Land Coop or Biodynamic Land Trust (UK).

### Other good practices

Good practices	Examples of case studies
Community-supported agriculture groups acquiring farmland for their producers	Terres de Rebaix: a fruitful collaboration between a public land agency and citizen groups (Rodrigo and Rioufol 2017) A CSA mobilising to preserve fertile land in the vicinity of Vienna – the GeLa Ochsenherz CSA, Austria (Nyeleni Europe 2020) Les Champs des possibles: Supporting new CSA growers in the Paris area (Rioufol and Diaz de Quijano, 2018) Dottenfelder Hof, Germany <sup>13</sup> Fordhall Farm, UK (Volz et al, 2016)
Charitable trusts (heritage, environment...) offering some land to new entrants	National Trust, UK
Churches making their land available in priority to agroecological new entrants	German Northern Evangelical Church (Loccumer Appeal) <sup>14</sup>

Table 7 - Good practices aimed at providing community-owned land

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.accesstoland.eu/Dottenfelder-Hof>

<sup>14</sup> See: <https://www.accesstoland.eu/The-landlord-of-the-Lord-s-land-guidelines-for-renting-church-land-in-Germany>

## Issues and challenges for transfer or scaling up:

### *Scaling out:*

- In most cases around EU, organisations involved in collective land acquisition need to improve their legitimacy and relationship towards local farmers and local farmers' unions in order to multiply purchasing operations. Indeed, local farmers are often sensitive to the fact that land used by "exogenous actors" is used in favour of a project that runs in the long term (otherwise, the organisation may be discredited). In the same way, as these organisations generally claim to be struggling against speculation, it is important that they carry out acquisitions at prices that are not above the market prices. Here again, in order not to be discredited and to avoid carrying out actions that are in contradiction with the values they put forward.
- When starting their activity, the community land trusts, with generally limited resources, will also have to arbitrate the use of their resources between expensive and less expensive land, or between farmland and farm buildings. Moreover, crowdfunding requires time and effort, and might not be as efficient in every territory. Therefore, mechanisms allowing redistribution of resources among territories and/or projects can be set up, but this requires a minimum level of initial resources and a "minimum area" of intervention on a territorial level.
- In England, while debating on the possibility for developing a model such as DLg in Flanders, members of the focus group thought using community models for farming could also be a way to avoid capital gains tax liabilities. This would involve working on the transfer of land to a community (organisation) rather than to an individual (as it is the case for DLg for half of its farms), a way of farming which should suit new entrants looking for land.
- In Vall del Corb, in Catalonia, most farms in the western part of the region are cereal farms while the ones in the eastern part grow mainly dry fruit trees. Land organisations might have difficulties targeting these large farms for at least two reasons: because of their size, which involve high levels of financial resources, and because of the sociological profiles of the farmers and/or landowners, often involved in productivist approaches, who are therefore less open to selling their farm to organisations aiming at the development of agroecology. The structure of the land market of Vall del Corb is another obstacle: indeed, farmers mainly lease land (and are not owning it) and farmers owning their land are often reluctant to sell it after they retire. Areas where leases predominate make operations relying on land purchase particularly complicated or even impossible in some cases, and other approaches for land use transfers, facilitating the rental process rather than the acquisition, need to be developed. Stakeholders of the focus groups also stated that the scale of Vall del Corb would possibly be too small for the practice of collective land acquisition, with few land plots available for sale and few possible new entrants in the area. If such practice was to be implemented in Vall del Corb area, it should be targeted to land plots of high agronomic potential, as low agronomic potential land is already being gathered (or will be gathered) through land banks.
- In Flanders, DLg often buy their land from individuals who are not farmers, and who just own farmland but do not use it. Their purchasing operations therefore often rely on landowners who are sensitive to organic farming.
- Regarding new models of ownership for farm building, as developed by KL, members of DLg consider they should first need to check if the practice developed by KL could interest the

farmers they work with. And, contrary to KL, DLg still has difficulty to finance its activity of renting out farmland. Therefore, DLg would consider changing the model of Kulturland, in such a way that the farmer gets a right of building (building lease right) on the common land that DLg would own. DLg would keep the principle they were sensitive to, consisting of having both the CFLT and the farmer having a pre-emption right, with the right to use the farm building given to the farmer who is using the land (in case inhabitants of the house buildings combine farmers and non-farmers).

#### *Scaling up:*

In England, different recent legal frameworks appeared to be potentially interesting frameworks to foster the development of collective land trusts. The new Environmental Land Management scheme is one of them. In Flanders, DLg evokes the fact that the Flemish government is sometimes reluctant to give building permits, and might be even more reluctant to give permit on “common land” (just as it was the case in Germany for Kulturland), an aspect which can hinder operations when buildings are not part of the purchasing operation or when new buildings are required for the project. Farmers wishing to keep CAP payments after they retire is another obstacle to land transfer already mentioned in previous reports.

#### *Scaling deep:*

Regarding strategies aiming at ‘scaling deep’, we can distinguish at least two aspects: 1) partnerships aiming at reinforcing and building common cultural values among broad networks pushing for an agricultural transition, with the need to overcome the problem of competing agendas among partners of these networks; 2) cultural values these land organisations put to the fore and that often have low popularity among dominant stakeholders: especially the principles of opening land governance and favouring small-scale and organic farming.

#### *Cross-cutting strategies:*

- During focus groups, English stakeholders discussed the ideal network that should be developed to reinforce the development of community land trusts. It appeared that the following kinds of human and social capital (represented by different partners or potential partners) should be gathered: experience in building community benefit societies and co-operatives, experience in developing business models and forms of governance for a wide range of land-based ventures, technical knowledge on growing food commercially, a network of community-based organisations and experience in the identification and recruitment of community-led growers. Therefore, a highly professional network on a local level is necessary to work towards rural regeneration.
- In Vall del Corb, stakeholders who attended the focus group also mentioned the fact that other elements than the land could be purchased and managed collectively, especially to allow new entrants to access larger farms. However, depending on the elements of the farm in which collective investments are made, specific economic models have to be found for each case. Indeed, land is not depreciated in farm accounts and does not (at least in the current period) lose its value over time. This is not the case for equipment for example, which loses its value over time, and for which the model consisting in having shareholders leaving their investment within an acquisition cooperative would not work. Pooled acquisition of equipment acquisition may therefore need to rely more heavily on joint investments among

farmers (combined with other kinds of financial support and guarantee schemes) or on farms established as cooperatives with salaried farmers for example.

### 3.1.3 Reviving commons

#### Context

- ‘Commons’ correspond to forms of land management that exist throughout Europe, and which can refer to very varied forms of land management depending on the context and the (more or less extensive) definition that one gives to the concept. We are referring here to the historical model based on community-based logics and social arrangements aimed at collectively sharing the use and/ or fruits of the land, and managing its use and preservation (with the advantages and disadvantages that such a model implies).
- Commons are mostly pastures and forests. They tend to be more frequent in mountains and remote areas.
- No exact figures on the distribution of commons are available, and their extent varies from country to country. A rough approximation suggests that over half of the 3.4 million hectares of permanent pasture in Romania can be considered ‘common land’, i.e. over 12.6% of the country’s utilised agricultural area.
- Commons are not set in stone, like other social arrangements they have evolved over time to adapt to new contexts and needs.

#### What’s at stake?

- Commons often are a crucial component in the fragile balance to sustain small-scale agriculture, as they enable farmers to sustain their herd with limited land of their own. They provide fodder (and sometimes wood or other produce) and reduce production costs, while enabling extensive breeding, which can be associated with a designation of origin which may provide better income.
- Common pastures often have high nature value. Actively using and protecting the commons yields environmental benefits for the local community and at large. Farmers can get additional income from stewarding the commons, limiting risks (e.g. bush fires) and increasing environmental benefits. Commons can also be an important feature of local culture and identity, and a strong point for tourism<sup>15</sup>.
- Commons can offer a space for farmers to work together and develop cooperation habits.
- Commons are managed by the local community (with or without an ad hoc legal status), sometimes in association with local councils. Rights of use are usually reserved to community members, which can be a major obstacle for new entrants. On the other hand, if young and prospective farmers are given access rights as local community members, accessing commons can be their entry point into farming.
- Commons often have only a moderate degree of formalisation due to which they are more vulnerable to non-transparent management, commodification or even land grabbing.

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<sup>15</sup> These findings are based on the Handout of EcoRuralis on commons in the frame of the D6.5 report (Loveluck et al. 2021b) and on one of the 64 unpublished questionnaires relating to the D6.1 report initiatives (Loveluck et al. 2021a) on Sustainable Uplands Agri-environment Scheme (SUAS).

Increasingly, commons are transforming into leased or ‘concessioned’ lands that are privately managed. This is due to lack of successors, industrial approaches to farming, but also to abusive management by certain local communities or councils.

### Objectives

- Mobilising commons to:
  - facilitate entry into farming of new entrants
  - consolidate the viability of new entrants’ farming practices and farm business
- Protecting commons from over-exploitation, abandonment, or commodification.

### Key levers

- Promote better knowledge about and inventory of the commons, taking into consideration the different formal and informal tenure and customary rights and agreements
- Engage commons management bodies and local councils to favour access for new entrants (by providing rights of access and diverse forms of community support).
- Measure biodiversity indicators on the different uses of the commons—benchmarking the results of local farming communities jointly using the commons in comparison with industrially-managed and privatised uses.
- Formalise local groups of producers that steward the same commons. Foster cooperation habits and collective planning. Consolidate their bargaining power regarding land management and access in front of local authorities.
- Increase the participatory process in the development of grazing plans and other planned uses as a way to tackle the issue of low succession and depopulation (i.e. find community alternatives instead of letting abandonment progress or going for swift privatisation processes).
- Provide public aids to reward beneficial management of the commons (e.g. biodiversity, risk management). Ensure through transparency and local authority involvement that public subsidies are directed towards the stewards of the commons.

#### Highlight: Getting started through access to commons

Pascalau Adrian Nicusor is a young Romania Shepherd, coming from a family of shepherds. His farm is located in Rogojel, a small village of 700 inhabitants in northwest Transylvania. He started on 10 hectares and over time managed to buy another 20 hectares and rent another 30 hectares, which has enabled him to grow his flock to 600 sheep. From the start, he has also been using common land, to graze his sheep in the summer. These commons, which represent nearly 70 hectares, belong to a nearby village, Alunisu, and he rents them from the people of Alunisu. The lease has to be renegotiated every year, which creates insecurity, as these common pastures are an essential component of his farm system (see full study case in Rioufol and Diaz de Quijano 2018).



### Other good practices

Good practices	Examples of case studies
Consolidating a new entrants' farm through access to the commons	Story of Anna Plana, Catalonia <sup>16</sup>
Rewarding farmers for managing the commons with environmental benefits	Sustainable Uplands Agri-environment Scheme, Ireland <sup>17</sup> Consorti de Lluçanès, Catalonia: grazing in forests to prevent fire and to facilitate access to land (Rodrigo and Rioufol, 2017)

Table 8 - Good practices aimed at reviving commons

### 3.1.4 Recovering under-used land

#### Context

While agricultural land is often in high demand and can be the centre of fierce competition, a parallel phenomenon is that of land being under-used or even abandoned. This may result from diverse situations:

- Some landowners are waiting for their land to change use (usually from agricultural to urban use), especially in areas of high urban expansion, as it will multiply the value of their land. They therefore do not sell or rent their land to farmers, resulting in land becoming fallow.
- In some cases, major public or private infrastructure projects (an airport, a leisure park, a shopping centre, etc.) are socially questioned, sometimes generating local legal and social conflicts and the rise of alternative projects. Here again, the land may be left unused or with partial or temporary uses.
- Some areas, for instance in mountains, are no longer suitable for most modern production techniques (with large machines, etc.). Ageing farmers may progressively stop using them, or do not find successors. This is also true of many commons (3.1.3 above). In some cases, the identity of the owners may not be easy to trace.
- High land fragmentation (diversity of landowners and of land plots) often makes it difficult to constitute viable farming systems, which may lead to the abandonment of certain less accessible or productive plots.

#### What's at stake?

- Mobilising under-used or abandoned farmland to enable entry of new farmers or consolidate the viability of their farm.
- Making the best of available farmland to contribute to local food production, environmental benefits and sustainable rural development.

<sup>16</sup> Anna's story is presented in Nyeleni Europe 2020, pp 115-6, as well as in the film "The Land for our food", mentioned in footnote n°6.

<sup>17</sup> One of the 64 unpublished questionnaires relating to the D6.1 report initiatives (Loveluck et al. 2021a)



## Objectives

- To bring private landowners who are leaving their plots under-used or unused to rent or sell them to new entrants or established farmers – through multistakeholders’ dynamics, financial incentives, regulations or occupations.
- To limit or even prevent speculation on the change of land use and land retention when these expectations cause land abandonment, through taxes and regulations.
- To provide public funding for farmers in areas that are steep, uneven, too dry or too wet, either because they are considered areas with ‘permanent natural handicaps’ and/or areas which should benefit from agri-environmental measures. Ensure that payments for environmental services are incentive enough to encourage farmers to use land with low agronomic potential, while addressing environmental issues. Additional support can be brought through promoting appropriate techniques, or supporting local supply chains.
- To reorganise and improve land plots, through plot exchanges, constituting collectives of owners, or infrastructure development (road or water access).

### Highlight: Recultivating fallow land for an agroecological transition

Since 2013, the commune of Moëlan-sur-Mer, France, has been working on reclaiming fallow land along the coastline to encourage the development of environmentally friendly agricultural activities. Using a “rehabilitation of uncultivated land” procedure from the Rural Code, a local Committee for Land Planning was able to identify an area of 120 ha of fallow land (23 parcels of between 0.8 and 12 ha). The municipality then drafted a report on the parcels and their potential for agricultural, pastoral or forestry use.

In parallel, dialogue was launched with the owners of the uncultivated parcels. They were called to decide on the future of the parcels, choosing between selling them, recultivating the land themselves, or allowing a farming candidate to recultivate them (the last option automatically applies if no response is received). The municipality received support from Terre de Liens Brittany and the local Organic Farmers Group (GAB 29) to moderate and streamline this procedure. They worked to identify and contact the landowners and ran a series of workshops to provide information, reflect collectively on the options for recultivation, and collaborate in setting up agricultural projects. In 2018, six uncultivated parcels (15% of the area identified) were subject to a joint call for applications. They were attributed to a vegetable producer (around 5 ha) and an association for socio-professional integration through agriculture (18 ha). A new set of parcels are open to more projects being set up in 2020-2021. See the full case study in one of the 64 unpublished questionnaires relating to the D6.1 report initiatives (Loveluck et al. 2021a).

**Other good practices:**

Good practices	Examples of case studies
Developing a participatory governance or vision for farmland to reclaim fallow land	Palou Granollers, Spain (Rodrigo and Rioufol 2017) Ile d'Yeu, France (Rodrigo and Rioufol 2017) Red Terrae, Spain (Rodrigo and Rioufol 2017) Walloon Department of Rural Land Planning – Terres de Rebaix, Belgium (Rodrigo and Rioufol 2017)
Developing/ maintaining farming instead of contested infrastructure projects	Notre Dame des Landes, France (Nyeleni Europe 2020)
Organising farmers' and farmworkers' occupation of unused land	SOC-SAT, Spain <sup>18</sup>
Mapping under-used or fallow land to enable its use	Boeren Brussels Paysans, Belgium <sup>19</sup> Moëllan-sur-Mer, France (above)

Table 9 - Good practices aimed at recovering under-used land

**Issues and challenges for transfer or scaling up:***Scaling out*

- The combination of tools (dialogue with landowners, partnerships, subsidies, supply chains fostered, etc.) will always strongly rely on the specificities of local contexts: configuration of land markets and specificities of land laws, environmental policies, potential partnerships with institutions and/or local actors, organisations of local supply chains, etc.
- In Vall del Corb: the municipality of Llorac values the possibility of starting to identify abandoned lands, and to evaluate what interventions are needed to re-activate them (e.g., drainage) through a future possible land bank. In Catalonia though, most of the land banks do not offer enough support in the leasing process or in the transfer of ownership/tenancy that come about with the generational renewal, this aspect should therefore be improved.

*Scaling up*

- Urban areas and natural, agricultural and forest areas should be well delineated, and ideally, areas "planned to be urbanised" could be reconsidered as farmland or natural areas while the reconstruction of "the city over the city" (urban densification) could be fostered.
- Farmland should be protected in the long-term in planning documents, in order to prevent any form of speculation. Taxes on the added value obtained (difference of prices between the agricultural and the urban uses) can also be implemented to hinder speculation.
- It is also possible to establish a constraint for professional agricultural use of farm buildings, in order to maintain the agricultural use of such buildings (and to prevent other uses) and to allow new entrants to set up in agriculture.

<sup>18</sup> See full case study in one of the 64 unpublished questionnaires relating to the D6.1 report initiatives (Loveluck et al. 2021a). See also Nyeleni Europe 2020 and Allagnat 2012.

<sup>19</sup> See full case study in one of the 64 unpublished questionnaires relating to the D6.1 report initiatives (Loveluck et al. 2021a) and in Nyeleni Europe 2020

- As specified, the struggle against the abandonment of farmland can ideally be carried out by a combination of tools and approaches: e.g., dialogue with the landowners, protection of farmland and support to local supply chains and/or certain agri-environmental practices.

#### *Scaling deep*

- Agricultural land should no longer be seen as a "land reserve for urban development", but as a point of support for virtuous local development.
- Specific agricultural practices must be developed according to the local agronomic, ecological and geographical situations, with public policies in support of these practices and the induced agricultural supply chains.

## 3.2 Supporting specific profiles

### 3.2.1 Supporting new entrants

#### **Context**

- Access to land in Europe mainly happens through family transfers. Access to land (gaining and maintaining access, securing lasting and affordable access, etc.) is recognised as the n°1 obstacle for new entrants to enter farming (EIP-AGRI 2016). It is a particularly complex issue for them as they are not only faced with the issue of prices, but also of access to information about land offers; lack of available land; social and professional acceptance by the local community; adequacy of available land with their farm plans (see 3.3.4 below); accessibility of housing on the farm or near it, etc.
- Apart from accessing land, new entrants often have needs and difficulties to: gain practical experience (as most of the small farms do not propose wage labour), gather financial means to make investments and handle start-up costs, define and test their farming and business plans, develop local social and professional networks, etc.
- New and aspiring farmers often have to go against the social tide as:
  - Agricultural activity is rarely socially valued and small-scale farmers themselves can be pessimistic about the future of their farms
  - Agroecology and small-scale farming are mostly marginalised in agricultural schools, public policies and access to credit.

#### **What's at stake?**

Enabling new entrants to gain access to land to start their farming activities, which will also contribute to:

- ensuring the renewal of farming generations and the continuation of a dense network of small- and medium-scale farms, at the core of European rural areas;
- seizing the opportunity of this generational renewal to gear European food and farming systems towards sustainable and fair forms of farming

For this to happen, much evolution is required:

- New entrants need to acquire numerous skills and knowledge, including very practical ones, through vocational training, lifelong education and advisory services.
- New entrants coming from urban areas or another region need to get acquainted and integrate into the rural social fabric.

- New entrants need to receive support and advice for their farming and business plans, even when these seem atypical, as it will contribute to unlocking their potential to transform European food and farming systems.
- Public institutions and agricultural bodies need to allow progressive entry into farming and limit the risks for new entrants – e.g. limit the levels of start-up investment, support farm incubation, offer lighter legal registration and protective welfare, etc. (see sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.3).
- The future of small farms must be secured to make them attractive to new entrants and to ensure that established farmers are willing to hand them over.
- Public institutions, agricultural bodies and civil society institutions need to change the image of the farming profession and encourage new vocations. Beyond supporting current aspiring farmers, there is a need to attract new farmers in the coming decades. There is already a lack of trained farmers or a lack of individuals who would be ready to start farming in some regions.

### Objectives

- Developing social, legal and institutional arrangements which facilitate access to land for new entrants to farming by:
  - giving them priority access - based on their being new entrants and/or features of their farm plans which have social, environmental or economic benefits;
  - addressing their specific difficulties and needs concerning access to land – e.g. finding land offers, learning about tenancy options and land prices, lowering entry costs, experimenting with farming or developing local integration.
- Securing their entry into farming, by combining action on access to land with other aspects for which they may need support or advice – e.g. technical skills (e.g. for agricultural production, processing, mechanics); marketing skills; managing skills; or specific knowledge regarding the links between agriculture and ecosystems. This usually requires the mobilisation and articulation of a plurality of (public and civil society) actors.

### Highlight: Farm incubators

In ways similar to business incubators, farm incubators are a first step that allows new farmers to access land while also providing them with business support and technical assistance. Some also offer machinery and routes to markets. There are many different forms and scopes of farm incubators across Europe.<sup>20</sup> Most are meant for aspiring farmers who already have training and some practical experience in farming, seeking to gain more practical experience and test their agronomic approach and business ideas in a real-life setting and a secure environment.

A key component of farm incubators is to provide farmers with access to land, usually a small plot, that they can farm autonomously, making their own decisions and bearing the gains and losses from their activity. They often have access to land for a limited time period, typically one to three years, until they move to their own farm, join a farmers' cooperative, or stop farming. For those who choose to start their own farm, having gone through a farm incubation is often a considerable help in finding land, as it allows them to grow a local social and professional network. This means they have better chances of not only knowing about available land, but also having the trust of landowners with land to sell or rent. In some instances, farm incubators help farmers to get started on their own farm, which enables them to start and expand their business step by step, while continuing to receive advice and support, and not yet acting as an independent business. In these instances, new farmers may have accessed land through purchase, on a family property, on public land, or with the support of a community farmland trust.

Network of farm incubators exist in the UK with the FarmStart network (Sivini et al. 2022), in France with the RENETA network (Rioufol and Quijano 2018), in Spain with the RETA<sup>21</sup>, and in Belgium with the Walloon network of farm incubators. Case studies about specific farm incubators such as Kindling Trust FarmStart UK, Champs des Possibles in France, Point Vert and Graines de Paysans in Belgium detail the scope, ways of working and results of these practices which help address a large array of issues faced by new entrants (Rioufol and Quijano 2018; Sivini et al. 2021; Sivini et al. 2022, Loveluck et al. 2021a).

### Other good practices

All practices described in section 3 are either specifically meant for new entrants, or can be put at the service of facilitating entry of new entrants, in particular:

- County farms and municipal “start-up” farms
- Community farmland trusts and support of CSA groups
- Land partnerships
- Acting as go-between with (public or private) landowners (i.e. land intermediation), through social mediation and/ or on-line matching platforms
- Land banks
- Land portage
- Self-education and support through associations or unions of new farmers – e.g. Toekomstboeren, Netherlands<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> See many different examples of farm incubators in Diaz and Quijano 2018 and among the case studies presented in the D5.2 report (Sivini et al. 2021) and the D6.1 report (Loveluck et al. 2021a) as well as in the comparative analysis of case studies on farm incubators in report D5.4 (Sivini et al. 2022).

<sup>21</sup> See <https://espaciostestagrarios.org/> and a presentation in English on: <https://www.accesstoland.eu/Farm-incubators-emerging-in-Spain>

<sup>22</sup> An initiative documented in one of the 64 unpublished questionnaires relating to the D6.1 report initiatives (Loveluck et al. 2021a)

## Issues and challenges for transfer or scaling up:

### *Scaling out*

Many challenges limit the possibilities to have numerous farmers setting up in agriculture:

- the low income of farmers in many contexts,
- the high farmland prices in many places (e.g., Belgium),
- the tendency of established farmers to expand their farms and the intensive use of farmland,
- the small plots where new entrants sometimes start their business on.

### *Scaling up*

- Reinforce public support to integrate training and technical assistance on agroecology and small-scale farming in agricultural schools and agricultural extension services.
- Agricultural education targeted to new entrants to include more time for professional experience on farms (to build a network, test the reality of farm work over the long term, acquire experience in dealing with specific soil and climate conditions...).
- Coherent and long-term strategy of funding towards rural networks supporting future farmers participating to the transition of farming models.
- Foster social and economic trust between new entrants and retiring farmers, agricultural institutions and landowners.
- Taking into account the diversity of profiles of new entrants (different backgrounds and types of projects) in setting-up support policies and land policies (e.g., in France, land agencies and agricultural chambers mainly support more conventional types of agriculture).
- All political, institutional and social levers mentioned in section 3.4 ('addressing the knots')

### *Scaling deep*

- Agricultural activity should be given more social value and programmes for small-scale farmers should be set up to show them under what conditions their farms could be taken over.
- In Wales, members of the focus groups pointed out that opportunities to access agriculture could be closely tied to the survival of Welsh language and culture.

### *Cross-cutting strategies*

The obstacles limiting access to farming for new entrants must be well analysed in each specific context, and the support provided to them requires good coordination between rural actors involved in the support to new entrants and clarification, for new entrants as well as for the actors among themselves, on the specific type of support they can provide to new entrants.

## 3.2.2 Helping disadvantaged and 'atypical' groups

### **Context:**

- Within new entrants and aspiring farmers, some people have additional difficulties to access land and enter farming. Because they belong to socially marginalised or discriminated categories, and/or because they are considered atypical farmers, women, people over 40,



individuals wishing to set up as a collective of farmers<sup>23</sup>, people with low educational level, minorities, and migrants are often faced with more obstacles. Besides, most public support and existing (agricultural, civil society and public) mechanisms either ignore them or do not take into account their specific needs.

- Eurostat data show that, on average, about 30% of farms in the EU are managed by women: the differences between Member States are remarkable though, with just over 5% women in the Netherlands and around 47% in Lithuania (Michalopoulos 2019).
- The Eurostat figures on land holdings in Europe mention that only 14% of the EU's farmland was held by women in 2016, giving them lower access to land (Korthals Altes 2021)
- In France, more women are setting up in organic farming (44%) than men (25%) (Bertagnolio 2020) and more women are involved in short supply chains (ADEAR and GRAAP 2019).
- New farmers in Europe are mainly farmers from a farming family, while new entrants with no agricultural background are mostly people with a high level of education; less-educated people with no agricultural background have fewer opportunities to start farming.
- Many migrants, sometimes undocumented, are in situations of exploitation as farmworkers on certain European farms, while others, living in urban areas, would like to be able to experiment farming (in good conditions) or even set up a farm, but may face various obstacles.

### **Stakes and objectives:**

The key objective is to develop mechanisms and support which, at the very least, do not complicate entry into farming for these categories, or actively promote their entry into farming. As seen above for new entrants, action towards facilitating their access to land needs to be combined with a series of other aspects securing farmers in the start-up phase: access to funding, skills, etc. Most practices which are already focusing their effort on supporting access to land for new entrants, could develop specific actions or programmes to specifically help some of these groups – eg. land banks with priority criteria or CFLTs.

- Regarding women, some studies show that they tend to engage in less mechanised farming projects or to organise their physical efforts in different ways than men on the farm, which sometimes leads them to strengthen original modes of organisation based on close solidarity with consumer associations. All these dimensions may be subject to discrimination by some institutions that provide access to land and finance. Similarly, during their careers, women farmers are often confronted with a patriarchal environment (neighbouring farmers, people in charge of sanitary and veterinary controls, technicians, etc.), which, in some cases, may not consider them legitimate. On these aspects, awareness raising at all levels must be carried out so that these relationships can change.
- In the case of migrants, there may be a series of issues that need to be addressed in parallel to the general support they receive for entering farming. Some of the obstacles they face include: few connections in the countryside, mobility constraints, few financial resources, difficulties in accessing training, discrimination by farmers or by members of extension

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<sup>23</sup> Indeed, collectives of farmers are developing as a way to enter farming, and share the risks, burdens and benefits of farming. They are particularly adapted to taking over a large and/or complex farm, with multiple activities. But they face many obstacles: continuity of the group and capacity to take-in a new person when somebody leaves the project/farm; difficulties to access existing public support for farming which is rarely adapted to collectives; need for internal regulation to ensure the group agrees on ways of working and living on the farm, as well as task distribution and economic balance.



services, etc. Providing specific solutions therefore may involve a combination of forms of support on: rural mobility, interculturality, training, the need to send financial resources to the family in the country of origin (limiting the possibilities of unpaid tests) or the regularisation of their administrative situation in the territory.

#### **Highlight: Offering bursaries to redress inequalities**

The Ecological Land Cooperative (ELC – see Loveluck et al. 2021a) is a UK-based cooperative focused on developing affordable, low impact, smallholdings for ecological agriculture. Its solution and core business is the creation of small clusters of three or more affordable residential smallholdings. In addition to land, ELC provides smallholders with permission to build their own sustainable home, including off-grid utilities and road access. Its model makes it possible to keep costs low, both through buying larger sites at a lower price per acre, and through distributing the cost of infrastructure, planning applications and subsequent site monitoring across a number of smallholdings. The model also allows the smallholders to work and learn together and to provide mutual support. The cooperative retains the freehold on each smallholding in order to protect it for affordable agricultural and ecological use in perpetuity.

Thanks to a small pot of funding from a charitable foundation, the ELC has been able to offer additional support to their new entrant farmers from the UK's minority communities, women, and/or those with limited access to financial capital. Aspiring farmers from these groups are under-represented in farming in England and Wales and often find it difficult to gain access to land and the capital needed to get started with a new land-based enterprise. The bursaries aim to help redress these inequalities for new entrants on the small farms of ELC. They can be used for any purpose related to the farm business, for example, equipment, polytunnels, sheds and food preparation facilities, seeds, sets, etc. If required, the bursary can also be used to support the living expenses for new entrant farmers whilst they develop their farm business.

## **3.3 Prioritising specific uses**

### **3.3.1 Mobilising land for local food**

#### **Context:**

- Europe has seen a rise of social demands for local quality food, which have been further increased by the impacts of the covid crisis on the functioning of food and farming systems. Short-supply food chains have developed through different mechanisms: farmers' cooperatives for production and processing, redevelopment of farmers' markets, small-scale infrastructure (e.g. abattoirs for local food scale), etc. But for local food production to expand, land needs to be available for it.
- Local authorities are used to planning and developing land uses but mostly for urban projects, services, industries and infrastructures; very few strategically plan and use their public land for agricultural projects.
- Local authorities rarely act on food issues but an increasing number of local authorities are implementing policies to promote local agricultural production over the last decade: local food councils, local brands of food production, local food plans, public provisioning, etc.
- Accessing local market outlets, and getting support for it, is often key for many new entrants into farming.

- Agriculture is not always perceived as a potential "solution" concerning environmental issues, but some local authorities have demonstrated that agroecology can be a lever to maintain water quality or to address certain ecosystem or landscape issues, besides producing local food.
- Local authorities have to act within the framework set by national and EU agricultural and land policies, which, in certain countries, may leave them little room for manoeuvre.

### **Main stakes and objectives**

- Developing a collective vision for local food and farming systems, including the role of local authorities and other stakeholders (farmers, CSOs, etc.).
- Preserving enough farmland in farmland use so as to support local food production.
- Steering available farmland use towards local food production by enabling farmers who produce for local markets and short supply chains to gain and maintain access to land.

### **Key levers:**

Within the framework of national and EU agricultural policies, local authorities do have the ability to<sup>24</sup>:

- Steer the use of the land they own towards local food production - e.g. rent to food producers on favourable renting conditions, organise call for tenders including socio-economic criteria;
- Preserve farmland for agricultural use in the long term either through planning instruments (e.g. maintaining green belts), or through public acquisition;
- Recover under-used and abandoned land (from public and private landowners) (see section 3.1.4 above);
- Directly manage farmland to produce for local public institutions (e.g. school canteens, old age homes, etc.);
- Act as facilitators to define a vision and common objectives and help coordinate local actors to steer local agricultural land towards agroecological food production. This often includes making a diagnosis of the land and farming context including:
  - Analysing the structure of public and private land (localisation, type of use, size, etc.);
  - Identifying ageing farmers without successors and potential new entrants in the area;
  - Analysing key obstacles faced by new entrants interested in setting-up locally.
- Implement local policies favouring an agricultural transition: support to local food producers through public aid, tax rebates, public provision, awareness-raising on local food production, farm incubators, etc.

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<sup>24</sup> This section is largely based on Rodrigo and Rioufol 2017, as well as D6.1 report (Loveluck et al. 2021a). An updated handbook for local authorities is under preparation within RURALIZATION (task 7.1).

**Highlight: Boeren Brussels Paysans and Good Food Strategy<sup>25</sup>**

Brussels' Good Food strategy is a multi-stakeholder initiative and strategy, fostered by the Brussels Capital Region (BCR). One of its objectives is to reach 30% self-sufficiency in terms of local production by 2035. Currently, only a small minority of food production from the BCR is for local consumption. This observation led the BCR to prioritise work on the issue of access to land for production projects aimed at the Brussels population. Terre-en-vue, a citizen's movement created in 2011 to facilitate access to land for agroecology, carried out this work. It implemented a research methodology based on two pillars: 1) the mapping of land suitable for establishing an agricultural project; 2) research to ensure thorough knowledge of legislation on the provision of land.

Terre-en-vue then organised meetings with the public and private owners of the most suitable land identified through the mapping process. When owners were open to changing the agricultural use of their land, and this land was unused or intermittently occupied, that land was opened up to agroecological initiatives through the framework of a call for projects.

In addition, the project demonstrated the key role of public land policy in aiding the transition. Through the project, the BCR realised the need to establish long-term land policies and started driving some changes. In 2019, for the first time, the BCR bought agricultural land with the aim of developing local food production. The BCR also has a firm commitment to maintaining the agricultural use of all agricultural land.

**Other good practices:**

Good practices	Examples of case studies
Choosing to rent land to local (agroecological) food producers	Hamburg City Estates (Bahner, 2011) Bourgoin Jallieu, France (Rodrigo and Rioufol, 2017) Managing public land for the benefit of the community - Simms Hill Shared Harvest, UK (Volz and Rioufol, 2015)
Developing a strong vision for local food and farming	Promoting sustainable Urban Food Chains : the Good Food strategy in Brussels (Rodrigo and Rioufol, 2017) Balancing farming, the protected environment and people: Brighton and Hove City Council (Rodrigo and Rioufol, 2017)
Direct municipal management of food production	Case study on Mouans Sartoux, France (Rodrigo and Rioufol, 2017) Video on Moissy-Cramayel, France <sup>26</sup>
Making a local diagnosis of land use, succession and the potential for food production	Feeding ourselves - Identifying local capacities for food production with local authorities in Euskal Herria (Nyeleni Europe, 2020) Parcel: What if your area managed its farmland sustainably? (Nyeleni Europe, 2020)
Supporting local food producers, through aids, access to markets, awareness raising, etc.	Strengthening traditional farming activities in Gallecs, Spain (Rodrigo and Rioufol, 2017)
Recovering under-used land	See above

Table 10 - Good practices aimed at mobilising land for local food

<sup>25</sup> For more information on this practice, see "Making land policy the cornerstone of local agricultural and food policy – Boeren Brussel Paysans", in Nyeleni Europe 2020 and "Belgium: Promoting sustainable Urban Food Chains: the "Good Food" strategy in Brussels" in Rodrigo and Rioufol 2017

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.terredeliens-iledefrance.org/collectivites/>

### 3.3.2 Ensuring good land stewardship

#### Context:

- The degradation of land and ecosystems is taking place all over Europe, with a 30% drop in farmland birds since 1990, the pollution of 30 to 50% of European rivers and lakes and high proportions of land affected by erosion and excessive use of nitrates or pesticides<sup>27</sup>.
- Rising social expectations with regard to nature conservation and climate urgency.
- In principle, there is a great convergence between agroecology and land stewardship, but in practice some agroecological farmers cannot or do not know how to implement advanced conservation practices. There can be tensions between farmers (including agroecological farmers) and conservationists due to the urgency of environmental preservation and the long-standing negative impacts of agriculture.
- Steering the use of land towards good land stewardship can be implemented in areas where specific environmental legal frameworks exist (like Natura 2000, the Water Framework Directive or environmental specifications within the land planning documents) or in any farming area. Most institutional measures or subsidies are targeted at land with high environmental interests or specific landscape interests.
- In several countries, national regulations and/or contractual arrangements have developed over the past two decades to enable landowners and farmers to agree on specific environmental objectives or practice in the farm contract (rural environmental lease in France and Belgium<sup>28</sup>) or through land stewardship contracts (e.g., Germany, Spain, UK).

#### What's at stake:

- Many new entrants set-up farms which put environmental issues at the core of their farm project and practices. They can address a wide diversity of issues: the preservation of certain animal or plant species or habitats, the preservation of a certain type of landscape (e.g.: hedges of a bocage landscape), the preservation of water next to a water catchment, the prevention of fire risks (e.g., by avoiding the expansion of bushland), etc.
- Promoting biodiversity conservation not only on areas of high natural value but everywhere through a deep transformation of agricultural systems. Conservation approaches increasingly focus on territorial approach and ecosystems protection, rather than a mere focus on rare species. A better articulation between farming and conservation is therefore needed and should be incentivised through public support (as highlighted in the focus group organised by Terre de Liens on the assessment of biodiversity on farms).
- It is important to distinguish between functional biodiversity, which the farmer can rely on to improve their production system (e.g., maintenance of pollinators), and ordinary or remarkable biodiversity that has no specific function for the farmer. The farmers will often pay more attention to functional biodiversity. Specific financial support may be key to developing practices aimed at preserving other forms of biodiversity, as they may reduce income (e.g., late hay mowing to promote bird nesting).

<sup>27</sup> See data on the impact of intensive agriculture on erosion, soil and water pollution and biodiversity loss: <https://www.accesstoland.eu/-/Infographics-Access-to-land-in-Europe->

<sup>28</sup> On the French 'Bail Rural environnemental' (BRE), see: <https://www.accesstoland.eu/Environmental-rural-lease>, on the reform of the Walloon 'Bail à ferme', see: <https://www.accesstoland.eu/Farm-tenancy-reform-in-Wallonia-Belgium>

- Land innovations acting to steer the control and use of land towards agroecology may do so by conditioning land access to specific uses (e.g., by selecting specific candidates for farming) or by supporting existing farmers to change their practice (through training, multi-stakeholders dialogue, public or private financial support).
- All parties agree that farmers need to be at the centre of the changes towards better articulating farming and conservation<sup>29</sup>. However, this entails to:
  - find the right balance between the essential autonomy and agency of the farmers, who have local knowledge and directly act on the farm which is their business and living place, with the expectations and forms of control put in place by the (public or private) landowner (or third party). This balance should be reflected in the way public support and incentives are provided to all concerned parties;
  - find ways to move beyond farmers who are already sympathetic to conservation issues, or engaged in adequate farming practices so as to reach out to a broader number of farmers (through training, public aid, CSO advice and support, etc.).

### **Objectives:**

- Most of the time: an analysis of the initial state of the land is undertaken (e.g., a listing of the specific species/habitats which are to be preserved through new practices); based on this first diagnosis, some long-term objectives are set; then measures are designed, with a plan (training, financial support, partnerships, etc.) to reach them. These measures can concern both changes in farming practices and improvements of plots (tree planting, wetland management, etc.). In some cases, when financial measures for farmers are possible, an analysis of the possible income decrease linked to a change in farming practices can be conducted and compensated by agri-environmental measures if they exist (usually for several years). Ideally, a specific monitoring of the practices and the evolution of the state of the land is set up.
- These practices, to reach their objectives, often combine a plurality of tools and approach, mixing legal tools (like environmental leases or land stewardship contracts), financial incentives, farmer training and support to change of practices, volunteer support, awareness raising or even the setting up of new supply chains promoting the practices allowing nature conservation or promoting specific territories.

### **Key levers:**

- Making land accessible in priority to new entrants with environmental practices through access to public land (see section 3.1.1 above), community farmland trusts and land owned by nature conservation organisations (see section 3.1.2 above).
- Developing contractual or social arrangements wherein the environmental practices or objectives are agreed between farmers, landowners and, in some instances, a third party representing the general interest (nature conservation group, environmental agency, local authority, etc.).
- Providing additional public support to new entrants who engage in qualitative environmental practices.

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<sup>29</sup> See Handout of Terre de Liens: “Monitoring biodiversity on farms” (see Annex III of the RURALIZATION report on novel land practices (Loveluck et al. 2021b).

- Developing processes and tools to help new entrants know and monitor the environmental state of their farm, and progressively improve their practices (see section on biodiversity assessment in the RURALIZATION report on novel land practices, Loveluck et al. 2021b). This usually entails:
  - an analysis of the initial state of the land and ecosystem<sup>30</sup>;
  - recommendations which often take the form of an environmental management plan. Recommendations can concern both changes in farming practices and improvements of plots (tree planting, wetland management, etc.);
  - subsequent monitoring and update of recommendations.
- In order to be impactful, these processes often combine a plurality of approaches and tools, mixing legal tools (like environmental leases or land stewardship contracts), financial incentives, farmer training and support to change of practices, volunteer support, awareness raising or even the setting up of new supply chains promoting the practices allowing nature conservation or specific territories. Where financial measures are possible, an analysis of the possible income decrease linked to a change in farming practices can be conducted and compensated by agri-environmental measures if they exist (usually for several years).
- Apart from specifically supporting “environment-friendly” new entrants, many more levers can contribute to shifting practices of all farmers, including:
  - Developing knowledge of the economic and non-economic conditions for the involvement of farmers in biodiversity issues and creating the conditions to meet their expectations;
  - Financing territorial dialogue prior to actions: private and public funders should not focus only on financing actions that are directly "visible" (planting a hedge, digging a pond, etc.) but should also enable the creating of a common culture among local stakeholders;
  - Assessing current practices, the effects (or lack of effects) of certain legal tools (environmental leases, etc.) and certain technical approaches (diagnosis, inventories) regarding their efficiency to maintain or foster on-farm biodiversity.

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<sup>30</sup> On different methods to evaluate and improve a farm’s environmental, social and economic outcomes, see Ercilla and Diaz de Quijano 2021.



**Highlight: Setting up agroecological new entrants on sensitive environmental areas<sup>31</sup>**

Lluçanès is a small area in the Catalan pre-Pyrenees, with a population of about 7800 inhabitants. It is characterised by an agro-silvopastoral mosaic landscape and has a strong historical, natural and social identity. The Lluçanès consortium, which gathers the municipal councils of 13 villages, together with the local association of forest landowners, have developed the project “Bosc de Pastura” (Grazing forests).

Starting in 2013, the project enabled land stewardship agreements to be concluded between private forest owners, ranchers, the Consortium and the owners association. The main aim was to redevelop the use of forests, in particular the forest understory as a way to minimise the risk of fire as well as to provide free land access to ranchers. This project made it possible to consolidate the productivity of established ranchers, but was also mobilised to enable the entry of a new rancher. Bosc de pastura also helps with commercialisation and contributes to improving land used for grazing: recovery of fountains, ponds, installation of water tanks, fences.

**Other practices:**

Good practices	Examples of case studies
Conditioning access to public land to specific environmental practices	Brighton and Hove City Council (Rodrigo and Rioufol 2017) Franches Terres farm, near Amiens (Rioufol and Quijano 2018) Walloon department of nature and forest (Rodrigo and Rioufol 2017) Protected Agricultural area of Velaux <sup>32</sup>
Mobilising community land for new entrants committing to environmental practices	Most community farmland trusts (see section 3.1.2 above) focus on supporting new entrants whose practices are beneficial for the environment – in some instances environmental practices or objectives are embedded in the lease <sup>33</sup> . The same is true of nature conservation organisations owning farmland or facilitating land stewardship agreements <sup>34</sup> .
Providing specific support (public aid, technical advice, training, etc.) to new entrants to help them develop/expand their environmental practices	Sustainable Uplands Agri-environmental Scheme (among the 64 initiatives documented in Loveluck et al. 2021a) Municipality of Fabrègues (among the 64 initiatives documented in Loveluck et al. 2021a) Handout of Terre de Liens: “Monitoring biodiversity on farms” (see Annex III of the RURALIZATION report on novel land practices (Loveluck et al. 2021b))

Table 11 - Good practices aimed at ensuring good land stewardship

<sup>31</sup> See the RURALIZATION report on 64 land initiatives (Loveluck et al. 2021a), and the section “Grazing in forests, a way to prevent fires and to facilitate access to land. Lluçanès consortium”, in Rodrigo and Rioufol 2017.

<sup>32</sup> Source: Le PAEN de Velaux: Préserver un potentiel agronomique et relancer une dynamique agricole vertueuse en zone périurbaine, <https://ressources.terredeliens.org/les-ressources/le-paen-de-velaux-13>

<sup>33</sup> See Environmental Rural Lease, <https://www.accesstoland.eu/Environmental-rural-lease> and the specific example of Pre Tord Farm: <https://www.accesstoland.eu/A-new-farmer-contributing-to-local-development-and-environment-protection>

<sup>34</sup> See Strategising access to land as a tool for land stewardship, <https://www.accesstoland.eu/Strategising-access-to-land-as-a-tool-for-land-stewardship>; Fundació Emys: bringing food production, rural development and nature conservation together (Catalonia), in Tas and Rioufol 2021 and the Foundation Adept, in Romania (among the 64 initiatives documented in Loveluck et al. 2021a).



### Issues and challenges for transfer or scaling up:

#### *Scaling out:*

- The idea of developing a more in-depth approach to assess the biodiversity of farms and its monitoring seems to be an easy target to reach within the A2L network, as most of the farmers of the network are already making efforts to get more biodiversity on their farmland, but skills and specific funding to coordinate such approaches are still needed.
- Environmental leases are interesting tools, but should include technical/social support to be interesting (and they can be combined with agri-environmental measures).
- Diagnoses do not lead to changes in practices "by themselves", and are just tools to be included in a broader approach, involving specific funding/partnerships to finance/ensure global approaches.
- Assessing biodiversity is a way to stimulate more people to invest with CSOs in common farmland and a good way to mobilise volunteers.
- While visiting farms to assess biodiversity, it can be interesting to have a third-party farmer, to show that the approach does not consist in having experts/urban dwellers compelling the farmers.
- In France, both TDL and the CEN made the statement that there is a need to go beyond the circle of convinced farmers and to improve the mobilisation and support of farmers in the long run.
- Crowdfunding can be an interesting way of getting financial resources for trees, hedges, ponds and other biodiversity elements, but as part of a broader strategy.
- In Flanders, farmers present at the focus group were looking for as little extra work as possible and as much return for the farmers as possible, illustrating one of the main tensions to deal with, between nature protection and productivity/profitability, an aspect which must be taken into consideration to propose measures/processes which have a chance of being adopted.
- In Wendland (Germany) there have been initiatives in the past developing products from high natural value grassland in order to incentivise conservation-friendly management that were not successful in the long run. The development of such supply chains is still to be determined in many contexts.

#### *Scaling up:*

- Regarding hay meadows specifically: farmers' consultants (chamber of agriculture) should be qualified in meadow protection (Wendland) and should advise both professional farmers and land owners.
- More generally, there is a challenge to politically facilitate the possibility of operating in areas that may not be considered a priority by public schemes (e.g., Natura 2000 areas) but which can be considered a priority regarding the concrete state of their biodiversity (e.g., cereal plain with low biodiversity, etc.). This would foster the need for mixed landscape structure (no monocultures) with high basic biodiversity.
- An ambitious policy should combine legal tools to protect biodiversity (environmental leases, etc.), public subsidies targeting nature preservation and incentive tools based on market recognition (labels, etc.).
- The new subsidy schemes in England are meant to be giving more weight to wider public benefits, such as public access to the countryside, or protection of soil, than the previous

scheme, and could therefore constitute an interesting leverage to promote and fund approaches on good land stewardship.

*Scaling deep:*

- Regarding hay meadows specifically: private new entrants and some land owners are intrinsically motivated to protect their meadows and can play a key role with an enabling environment. One problem is that some local farmers no longer have knowledge on meadow protection.
- These initiatives can rely on the fact that there is high social appreciation of biodiversity conservation.
- It is important to show in which situations the preservation of biodiversity also contributes to the effort to reduce global warming.
- In France, the triptych proposed by the "Dialogue for Nature", involving farmers (visited and visitors), naturalists and eaters/inhabitants, appeared as a good way to "anchor" the approach in the territory and to mix technical and social issues around biodiversity
- At the territorial level, some members of the focus group in France considered there was a "paradigm shift" to be made, from a focus on preservation/conservation to a focus on interaction of natural and agricultural areas.

*Cross-cutting strategies:*

- Potential partnerships, in Flanders, France or Germany, where these strategies were discussed, can involve partners working on support of good practices on farms, farmers' networks, partners involved in participatory guarantee systems (sometimes incorporating biodiversity issues), naturalists' networks, soil science services or agricultural research institutes. Farmers, engaged in their farms, are not always easy to involve in some exchanges though, especially at the national level.
- For CSOs focusing on land acquisition, it is not always easy to have this subject "at the heart of their agenda", with many subjects to deal with already regarding the support to new entrants, the need to raise financial resources for land acquisition, farm building management in some cases, etc. Human capital is needed to discuss possible collaborations with several partners or volunteers, to get informed on current developments that might favour this practice — combining different forms of knowledge (ecology, agronomy, law and even social sciences) — and to understand the funding mechanisms which could represent opportunities (either at the farm level or at the organisation level).

## 3.4 Addressing the knots

### 3.4.1 Enabling extra-family farm succession

**Context:**

- An ageing farming population, many of whom have no successor, neither from their family or outside of it, as a result of a lack of planning for succession and/or difficulty to find a suitable successor.
- In this context, in the coming two decades, millions of hectares will change hands in Europe. To whom this land will be transferred and how it will be used is decisive for the future of European food and farming. It can lead to further land concentration and intensification of

the farming systems, or be an opportunity not only for generational renewal but also model transitioning towards locally-embedded agroecological farms.

- Lack of attractiveness of certain rural areas (remote or mountain areas) or certain types of farms (e.g., highly homogenised and capital-intensive production systems). In certain cases, ageing farmers themselves do not believe in the possibility of maintaining and transferring their farm, and are not working towards it (e.g., maintaining buildings, seeking a successor...).
- Conventional farming and intensive livestock breeding are often considered as « the only viable activity » for many stakeholders (for example in Vall del Corb), including for retiring farmers.
- Land concentration is a general tendency in Europe, leading to tensions on land markets, which results in withholding of information (non-transparent markets), social closure of the land market (by institutionally and socially limiting the contenders who can enter this market) or the circumvention of land transfer regulations.
- Neighbours or big corporate farms can be ready to propose high prices for land to retiring farmers (who will often get low pensions after they retire) in a context where land prices are already rapidly rising (e.g., a 28.7% increase between 2015 and 2019 in Flanders according to the Notarisbarometer 2019). They also have a better capacity to pay immediately, as opposed to new entrants (see 3.4.3 below).
- In some instances, retiring farmers continue to be eligible to CAP payments, which may suspend or delay farm transfer.

#### **What's at stake:**

- Some farmers might be reluctant to transfer their farm outside of the family or might have very precise ideas regarding the profile of their potential successor. They therefore need to be reassured on the skills, capacity, motivation, and viability of the project of new entrants. They also need to understand and accept that changes are inherent to having successors, particularly those coming from outside the family.
- Farming is considered a way of life, and the business is intertwined with family and other emotional connections. This makes it difficult to transfer the farm and the activity, with delicate family discussions associated with succession (heritage, distribution among children, etc.) and with some transferors wanting to stay in the farm house, meaning that the successor has to find housing, a difficult task in some rural areas.
- Some transferors might want to sell the farm property with discretion (with the fear that the local community will think the transferor is in need of money, the shame about the farmers' kids not following in the transferor's footsteps, etc.), making it difficult to promote extra-family successions and crowdfunding for collective land acquisition (when it can help the farm transfer).
- There is often a gap between the size and type of farms open for succession and the projects and capacities of new entrants. In some cases, there is also a time discrepancy between the time of the sale or retirement and the time when new entrants can enter the farm. These discrepancies are a major obstacle to extra-family farm succession and need to be addressed in priority (see 3.4.4 below).

**Objectives:**

- Maintaining existing small to medium scale farms to make them available to new entrants, including through maintaining buildings and infrastructures throughout the farm's life and sensitising ageing farmers to the possibility of transferring and the need to prepare for it (as opposed to selling to neighbours).
- Matchmaking between ageing farmers with no successors and prospective new entrants, through a range of institutional and social arrangements aimed at transferors (public aid for retirement, notifying farms open for succession on a public register, etc) and new entrants (publicity of information on farm offers, on-farm incubators, etc.) or organising dialogue and matchmaking between them.

**Key levers and opportunities**

Preparing ageing farmers for farm succession through:

- Getting them to think about their succession plans, through awareness raising campaigns, reading guides; engaging in coffee talks with other ageing farmers who have already retired or are thinking about their farm transfer; training and role play; coaching, etc.
- Creating different scenarios for the future of the farm: tools to imagine different scenarios of the farming practices and business models in the future, to open up potential uses and successors; tool to establish different “prices” of the farm, based on market value, family expectations, emotional attachment and desire to maintain the farm and transfer it.
- Improving the understanding of the social and emotional aspects that come into play in farm transfers.

Enabling transferors and new entrants to meet and get acquainted, through:

- Public information on farms open for succession;
- land matching platforms;
- direct engagement, during farm tours, “speed dating”, coffee talks, etc.

Directly organising an extra-family farm transfer through:

- Selling the farm to a community land trust which will rent it to a new entrant;
- Progressively transferring the farm through an on-farm incubator or land partnership.

In the longer run or in territorial approaches to farm succession, action is also needed to:

- Make a diagnosis of the local situation: improve knowledge of the local farming sector and of the amount, state and expectations of retiring farmers and potential new entrants willing to enter the farming sector within a certain area;
- Develop existing public data on farming, to include the age of farmers and their use of land;
- Turn farm succession into a territorial issue involving all stakeholders and favour cooperation among actors in touch with retiring farmers to reach them. For instance, building partnerships with actors such as veterinarians, suppliers, farm advisors, consultants, or financial advisors;
- Change the vision of what is a viable farm and the image of new entrants among farmers, farmers organisations, and agricultural institutions;
- Develop mechanisms (and adequate funding) for progressive entry into farming and progressive farm transfer (see section 3.4.3);
- Develop solutions to provide (off-farm) affordable housing to retiring farmers.

### Highlight: Land matching platforms

Land Matching Platforms are tools to match (new) farmers with retiring farmers or private landowners who have land to rent or sale. There are different approaches existing across Europe, from on-line tools to a combination of on-line and direct interactions.

In the Netherlands, Landgilde works as a matching platform to inform farmers about land offers and work opportunities on a farm<sup>35</sup>. Its primary aim is to facilitate the farm succession process for organic and multifunctional farms, mostly extra-family succession and sometimes in-family succession. Landgilde provides support in creating an advertisement with all essential information and then publishes it on its on-line Platform (landgilde.nl). Both established farmers seeking successors and young or new farmers can post an ad. Advertisements for farm succession are subject to a selection process by a farm advisor, to guarantee ads that give clarity on what the farmer really has to offer. Placing an advertisement is free of charge, if help is required in selecting an appropriate candidate, a fee is charged. Farmers seeking a successor are asked to complete an in-depth checklist of questions including their core values, living arrangements during and after succession, farm management (how to run it and make money during and after succession), capital needed to transfer the farm, etc. Landgilde consultants do not take over the role and agency of successors and transferees, but can provide support at different stages of the process, by involving external experts if required (notaries, land agents, etc.).

Land matching platforms, promoted by farmers' unions, NGOs or public bodies, have developed over the past decades, including: Hof sucht Bauer<sup>36</sup> and Nachhaltige Landwirtschaft (Brandenburg), Germany; Objectifs Terres, France; Perspektive Landwirtschaft, Austria; Banc de Terres del Baix Camp, Spain; Venture - Farming Connect (Wales)<sup>37</sup> and others in the UK<sup>38</sup>. Some of them specifically focus on farm succession, but most will look at all forms and needs of matching land offers and demands (see also section 3.4.4).

### Other practices:

Good practices	Examples of case studies
Progressively transferring the farm through an on-farm incubator or land partnership	When a farm incubator and a community land trust cooperate to organise farm succession (Rioufol and Diaz de Quijano 2018) Land partnerships (see below, section 3.4.2)
Preparing ageing farmers for farm succession (1): getting them to think about their succession plans	Guides to farm transfer (van Boxtel et al. 2016) Training and mentoring on farm succession (van Boxtel et al. 2016) Cafés transmission, France (van Boxtel et al. 2016)
Preparing ageing farmers for farm succession (2): creating different scenarios for the future of the farm	CIVAM diagnosis of the farm potential (van Boxtel et al. 2016) AFOCG economic valuation tool (van Boxtel et al. 2016)
Selling the farm to a community land trust which will rent it to a new entrant	See community farmland trusts (above) See temporary land portage (section 3.4.3)
Enabling transferors and new entrants to meet and get acquainted: land matching platforms; “speed dating” and coffee talks, role play, etc.	Land matching platforms (above) Role play (van Boxtel et al. 2016)

Table 12 - Good practices aimed at enabling extra-family farm succession

<sup>35</sup> This presentation is based on van Boxtel et al. 2016 and one of the 64 unpublished questionnaires relating to the D6.1 report initiatives (Loveluck et al. 2021a)

<sup>36</sup> Documented in one of the 64 unpublished questionnaires relating to the D6.1 report initiatives (Loveluck et al. 2021a). See also their website: <https://www.hofsuchtbauer.de/>

<sup>37</sup> See: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/news-and-events/news/venture-farming-connect-initiative-successfully-matching-landowners-those-seeking-route-farming>

<sup>38</sup> Several of these are featured in the series “4 documentaries on Land Matching Platforms”: <https://www.accesstoland.eu/land-matching-4-videos>

## Issues and challenges for transfer or scaling up:

### *Scaling out*

- There are strong difficulties to reach retiring farmers directly, because information is held by the stakeholders with whom farmers are used to work with. Partnerships with such stakeholders are therefore key to tackle this issue.
- In the UK currently, 40% of family business owners have no succession plan in place, so there are a large number of farmers to be sensitised.
- Early succession planning can help safeguard farmers' wishes
- In Vall del Corb: actors working on this issue considered they needed to develop a map portraying all the actors involved in the generational renewal, to build a pool of open resources (transfer manuals, administrative advice, etc.) and to increase the diffusion and outreach of the online platforms that are used for selling or purchasing farming estates

### *Scaling up*

- Information on land transfer intentions could be mandatory several years before retiring and farmers could systematically attend training on farm succession before they retire.
- During the discussion of some focus groups, the idea of having older farmers receiving a lump sum of money from the government for them to retire was discussed, even though stakeholders mentioned that, depending on the other actions led in favour of farm succession, it could lead to contradictory results, from opening up opportunities for new entrants to accelerating the loss of small farms.
- In Catalonia, farmers are not sufficiently represented in Territori de Vincles initiative (working on farm succession), especially conventional farmers, and the regional office of the Ministry of Agriculture should be involved on generational renewal (which is not the case presently).
- In order to foster agroecological generational renewal in the cerealistic area of Vall del Corb, the strategy should go beyond collective land acquisition. Services, infrastructures and machinery should also be shared or used collectively, and this process should be facilitated by the practice leaders.
- National and EU-legal frameworks largely favour industrial agricultural models and do little to provide access to land to a new generation of farmers with no agricultural family background.

### *Scaling deep*

- As we have detailed above, not just the physical or financial aspects of succession need to be considered, but also the emotional and cultural facets of transferring a farm.
- Most conventional farmers are not concerned with the need for an agroecological transition and would therefore not prioritise new entrants with an agroecological project to take over their farms.
- Regarding "potential" new entrants, the recognition of food production skills and the awareness of such activities should be further promoted in society and in schools (to encourage vocations).
- Society is aware that environmental transition is an issue in agriculture, but is often less aware that generational renewal is an issue as well.



### *Cross-cutting strategies*

- The need to gain the confidence of established farming organisations regarding the anticipation of farmers' retirement and collective land acquisition
- The need, in the case of Vall del Corb Association (or any territorial initiative working on farm succession) to build relationships with farmers, local authorities, land owners and the regional office of the Ministry of Agriculture (to generate data about retiring farmers for example). A system or network where all the resources are gathered in one place should be created as well. Relationships between the Territori de Vincles and non-local actors (Terra Franca, Escola de Pastors...) should also be strengthened and expanded.

*NB: in the model developed by Kulturland regarding models of ownership of buildings (allowing farm successions to be favoured), the farmer is ready to donate part of the selling price to the foundation of Kulturland, but DLg is not sure they could deal with such cases.*

### 3.4.2 Lowering entry costs

#### **Context and issues:**

- In many European contexts, setting-up a farm often requires investments of several hundred thousand euros including the purchase of land, buildings, inputs, equipment, and livestock in the case of breeding. Over the past two generations, the costs of entering farming have increased steadily, in connection with land concentration (combined with the increase in land prices) and higher capital-intensity of the farms (e.g., machinery, infrastructures).
- Some farms, including farms considered as “family farms”, have become out of reach for smallholders. Even intra-family succession can be affected, due to high mortgage or indebtedness, or when siblings or parents have to be compensated. New entrants, who do not have family's farming assets, find it particularly difficult to gather the amounts needed.
- Banks generally have less confidence in people who do not have an agricultural background and have fewer references for more ‘atypical’ projects (organic farming, short supply chains, on-farm processing, community-connected, etc.).
- Banks often finance agricultural projects by mortgaging agricultural land owned by the farmer (as land generally does not depreciate and is easy to resell), making it difficult to finance projects where land is not owned by the new entrants.
- In parallel, a number of new entrants in agriculture are developing an approach to farming which focuses more on high-value products and niche markets, on-farm added value, or multi-activities (e.g., tourism, renewable energies), rather than the size and capital intensity (see 3.2.1 above).

#### **Objectives**

- Developing models to enter farming and develop farm businesses which are less intensive in capital (land area, buildings, machinery, infrastructures, herd, etc.), hence less costly
- Limiting, through private or public contributions and/or on the basis of specific legal arrangements, the level of personal investment and indebtedness of new entrants so as not to compromise the economic sustainability of their project.



## Key levers

Limiting the need for and reliance on personal investment and indebtedness can be done through:

- renting land from public authorities (see section 3.1.1), community farmland trusts or other charitable land-owning foundations (see section 3.1.2)
- crowdfunding for land (including community farmland trusts – see section 3.1.2), machinery, herds, etc.
- ways to mutualise resources and share equipment, farming activities, markets, etc. such as land partnerships (see box below) or collective farming
- Pooling of equipment (e.g., machinery rings)
- Specific subsidies to cover the purchase of equipment, the financial expenses of loans, etc.
- Reductions in the social security contributions or tax rebates for the first years

In one focus group led in England, members of the focus group highlighted the fact that legal mechanisms for land transfer in England are currently very bureaucratic and highly inaccessible to most people, without the support of legal/financial professionals, which can often be prohibitively expensive, this kind of costs and support could also be covered.

The reduction of costs for the new entrants can be related to their agricultural activity, but also to the costs related to their personal life and to their setting up in the countryside, so they can also concern, for example, the price of their personal housing.

### Highlight: Land partnerships

Land partnerships are mutually beneficial agreements between a new entrant and a landowner or an established farmer who has land available and wants it to be used to develop a new, sound farming business.<sup>39</sup> Such landowners may be: large landowners with land available for use, new landowners wishing to make good economic and social use of their land, ageing farmers wishing to gradually stop their activity and transfer their farm, or established farmers seeking to develop and diversify their activity as well as support new entrants.

The agreement may take many different business and legal forms: land tenancy, joint venture, share farming, piggyback farming, etc. In some instances, the new farmer and the landowner or established farmer will be business partners; in other instances, the relationship will be closer to a classical land tenancy. In all cases, they will share a vision of mutual benefits and shared assets. When the partnership is created on or near an existing farm, the new farmer will often benefit from several aspects of the established farm, in addition to gaining access to land: access to knowledge and support, access to equipment (e.g. machinery, storage, irrigation), and access to markets (e.g. selling at the farm shop).

Such cooperation may be conceived as a start-up phase, to help a new farmer get started, by lowering the costs of land, machinery, access to markets, etc.<sup>40</sup> It may also develop as a long-term cooperation, or be used as a way to enable farm succession.

<sup>39</sup> On land sharing and land partnerships arrangements, see Fresh Start 2015.

See also Shared Assets: <http://www.sharedassets.org.uk/policy/setting-up-supportive-land-sharing-agreements/>

<sup>40</sup> For specific case studies, see the stories of Kate and Jamie, in Rioufol and Diaz de Quijano 2018.

**Other practices:**

Good practices	Examples of case studies
Providing land (and buildings) for rent (rather than sales) on good conditions: favourable tenancy conditions on public land, community farmland trusts, etc.	Public land (see above, section 3.1.1) Community farmland trusts (see above, section 3.1.2)
Hire-to-purchase arrangements, enabling new entrants to progressively buy the land as they consolidate their business <sup>41</sup>	Local council Brenne-Val de Creuse, France: hire-to-purchase scheme to support new entrants <sup>42</sup> Forward selling of a farm house (Ruffier and Rochette 2021, p.121-3)
Support of a community-supported agriculture group (pre-buying the crop, as a way to enable investments in seeds, machinery, etc.)	GaartenCoop CSA
Sharing the costs of entry and of running the farm through establishing a collective of farmers or land partnerships (see the section on “Farm collectives” in Sivini et al. 2021)	Farmers Collective of Toussacq (see Sivini et al. 2021) Farmers Collective of Radis& Co (Rioufol and Quijano 2018)
Enabling farmers to start small before expanding, through farm incubators	Farm incubators (see above, section 3.2.1) <sup>43</sup>
Lowering the costs of maintaining and transferring farm buildings	Handout of Kulturland: “Innovative ownership of farm buildings” (see Annex III of the RURALIZATION report on novel land practices (Loveluck et al. 2021b))
Providing housing on favourable terms on or near the farm	Lenteland, Netherlands Farms at Lacapelle-Cabanac, France <sup>44</sup>
Hosting the farm business during the start-up phase: creating an entity which provides start-up farmers with legal and fiscal status, administrative and accountancy support, seed funding and lease guarantor.	CIAP (Coopérative d’installation en agriculture paysanne), France (Rioufol and Diaz de Quijano 2018)

Table 13 - Good practices aimed at lowering entry costs

<sup>41</sup> On hire-to-purchase approaches and tools, see also the factsheet of the American organisation Land for good: “Lease to own Strategies for acquiring farmland”: <https://landforgood.org/wp-content/uploads/LFG-Leasing-Fact-Sheet-3-Lease-to-Own-Strategies.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.resolis.org/initiatives/communaute-de-communes-brenne-val-de-creuse-un-credit-bail-pour-favoriser-l-installation-hors-cadre-familial/9400bc27-6329-4b2c-9251-d0011a54b9ce>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.lente.land/>

<sup>44</sup> <https://ressources.terredeliens.org/les-ressources/mobiliser-la-procedure-d-abandon-manifeste-et-un-bail-emphyteotique-pour-faciliter-la-rehabilitation-du-bati-a-lacapelle-cabanac-46>

### 3.4.3 Enabling progressive entry

#### Context:

- Public institutions and agricultural representatives tend to view entry into farming as a rather straightforward, and simple process. In these classical cases, one enters farming when setting-up or taking over a farm business, usually while actually starting farm operations, registering as a farmer in legal, fiscal and welfare terms and obtaining the CAP young farmers' grant.
- The concept of "progressive entry into farming"<sup>45</sup> is used to describe the process wherein new entrants enter farming not at once, but through a series of stages, which may extend over several years. This non-linear process often includes time for gaining additional experience or qualification, obtaining a bank loan or grant, or securing adequate access to land. In that sense, entering farming is not one moment, a culmination, but a whole process through which the project is conceived, experimented, matured and adapted. It is non-linear and sometimes one needs to go backwards, or to take a break to better advance afterwards.
- Progressivity may also mean to progressively gain access to the means of production: starting with a small area, leasing before buying, starting with second-hand equipment to limit initial investments, gradually increasing one's customers, etc. The underlying idea is to develop one's activity step by step, in order to limit the risks, to gradually explore the different facets of farming, and thus to establish a good basis before expanding.
- Farming unions and alternative agriculture organisations, and increasingly some public bodies, are supporting new entrants throughout this progressive entry through training, support and guidance.

#### What's at stake:

- "Bridging the gap" for new entrants who do not benefit from family farm inheritance, farm transfer and support
- Opening up our views and understandings of the many different ways, steps and time needed to enter farming so as to design adequate:
  - institutional support: start-up aid for young (or less young?) farmers, minimum sizes and types of farming activities to be eligible to aid, training, etc.
  - social support from farmers unions, CSOs, local farmers and communities: gaining practical experience, experimenting diverse farming models, finding and securing land, etc.
- Articulating and providing support to the different dimensions and stages which may condition successful entry into farming: getting initial training, determining one's farm and

<sup>45</sup> In France, the first congress on the topic was organised by the FADEAR in May 1999, see:

<http://www.agriculturepaysanne.org/>

and « Les chemins de l'installation » on the collective Platform Passerelles Paysannes:

<https://passerellespaysannes.fr/des-outils-pour-sinstaller/les-chemins-de-linstallation/>

The concept of « progressive entry into farming » has now partially been adopted by the Ministry of agriculture and agricultural institutions. Various regional mechanisms are now in place to give several years to new entrants to reach the eligibility criteria for the young farmers' subsidy.

business model, experimenting, gaining practical experience, accessing funds, securing land, being socially and professionally accepted locally, finding markets, etc.

- Providing public and private support (funds, expertise) to new entrants as well as farmers and CSOs supporting them – e.g., compensating farmers who accept to mentor future farmers or to hire future farmers as apprentices or farmworkers on their small farms

### Objectives:

- Enabling new entrants to progressively design, experiment and adapt their farming practices, farm business, skills and outlets.
- Giving new entrants the right to experiment, fail, change their plans or quit, without leaving bankrupt and without having damaged a farm system.
- Giving new entrants the opportunity to start small, with limited production means, and to grow their activities and business progressively.

### Highlight: Temporary land portage<sup>46</sup>

There is often a difference in timing between the landowner, who is eager to sell as soon as possible, and the future farmer, who may need time to complete his/her training, or to gather the money required to buy the land. This gap usually works in favour of farm enlargement: neighbouring farmers often have the information and cash faster. So instead of transferring their farm, many owners end up letting it disappear through absorption by a larger farm.

A good solution to address these situations is to organise land portage, i.e. to have an institution “hold” the land until the new entrant is ready. This implies that the institution holding the land will acquire it and/or manage it for the landowner for a certain time. In France, local authorities, the rural land agencies called SAFER and some public bodies can do land portage (Roumet and Sanglier 2022, pp86-90). While little used until recently, land portage has developed over the past few years.

In 15 Regions, local SAFER and regional governments have signed formal agreements to organise land portage so as to orientate land sales and enable farm transfer to new entrants. All these agreements specify that the regional government agrees to pay land portage costs, whenever the SAFER pre-empt a piece of land and holds it until it finds a “suitable” new farmer. These agreements are often meant to facilitate access to land for young farmers, new entrants and organic farming.

The civic land initiative Terre de Liens is a partner or beneficiary of these agreements. The SAFER may be holding the land until Terre de liens gathers the money to buy the farm and/or until local partners find an adequate future farmer to take over the farm<sup>47</sup>.

### Other practices:

Good practices	Examples of case studies
Farm incubators	See above, in section 3.2.1
Match-making between transferors and successors to encourage the transferor to wait	See above matchmaking platforms and tools (section 3.4.1)
Land partnerships	See above (section 3.4.2)
Hire-to-purchase arrangements	See above (section 3.4.2)
Hosting the farm business during the start-up phase	See above (section 3.4.2)

Table 14 - Good practices aimed at enabling progressive entry

<sup>46</sup> This section is based on Blot et al. 2016.

<sup>47</sup> For a specific case study of land portage associating SAFER and Terre de Liens, see: Farm Succession on Le Pointeau Farm, <https://www.accesstoland.eu/Le-Pointeau-Stocking-Land-Temporarily>

## Issues and challenges for transfer or scaling up:

NB: a lot of the propositions mentioned in this section concern farm incubators, presented in the ‘highlight’ box of section 3.2.1. These propositions/strategies therefore refer both to ‘progressive entry’ and ‘support to newcomers’ strategies.

### *Scaling out*

- Farm incubators can be combined with a cooperative or any other agricultural entity hosting permanent agricultural activities (e.g., farmers who set up their farm after a test period for example) and non-agricultural activities connected to farming (e.g., processors).
- In some cases, finding land after the test period can be difficult, especially if not adequately anticipated.
- There are still difficulties in most cases in proposing test periods on large areas (e.g.: cereal farming) or with herds of large cattle.
- Ensuring the test period with several mentors (rather than just one) can ensure collective responsibility around the new entrant.
- Ideally, the decision, for an incubated farmer, not to enter farming should not be experienced as a failure by any party: the aspiring farmer, the mentor(s) or members of the farm incubator.

### *Scaling up*

- Setting-up subsidies must be adapted to progressive establishment: recognition of these profiles in the schemes, funding in several phases, etc.
- If it is not already possible in a given context: to give the opportunity to former job-seekers, testing a farming activity, to keep their unemployment benefit or any kind of resources that will secure the initiated activity.

### *Scaling deep*

- Established farmers need to get used to leaving room on their farms to have future farmers testing their activity.
- Policies for access to land and support to farmers must increasingly adapt to profiles setting up outside the family and setting up progressively.

### *Cross-cutting strategies*

- Incubators who do not have support from local authorities might experience difficulties (both in terms of funds and in terms of integration in a wider territorial project): integrating local authorities in the incubators' governance can be a response to this issue.
- Physical spaces to test activities (plots and infrastructures) can be combined with an access to pooled equipment and collective points of sale.
- New farmers need to be helped to form ties in the broader local community: with elected officials, consumer groups, farming unions, rural development and environmental protection organisations, natural parks, organic supermarkets, etc.

### 3.4.4 Bridging the gaps between land offer and demand

#### Context<sup>48</sup>

- most European commercial farms are large farms and their size has been increasing, sometimes dramatically, over the past decades. Meanwhile, many new entrants are planning for small-scale farming, due to their limited financial means and/or for ethical reasons and values: opting for a smaller size to better balance life and work; seeking to rely more on low tech and human labour and solidarity than mechanisation and large infrastructures; or planning activities with higher added value (e.g. organic farming, on-farm processing, guest houses) which may provide enough income even on a small scale (Greenfield and Carman 2017). Many also plan to start small and grow over time, as they build up their skills, confidence, financial means and market outlets.
- For some of the same reasons (financial capacity, skills, marketing opportunities and preferences), many are also attracted to market gardening (Harries and Raskin 2017). Meanwhile, many farms up for sale, rent or transmission are mixed or cattle farms.
- When a piece of land goes up for sale or rent, there can be several prospective buyers, including new entrants. The latter may not be in a position to offer as high a price, or pay as quickly as other prospective buyers (e.g. neighbouring farmers, a financial company). Even when the seller is willing to give priority to a new entrant, they may need the highest amount (as a complement to their pension, to share with their children, etc.) and/ or may not be in a position to wait. On their side, the new entrant may need extra-time to complete their training, finalise their business land or concretely obtain public aid (e.g. start-up aid) or a bank loan. A number of land transfers are lost by new entrants due to these price and time gaps.

#### What's at stake?

Addressing the discrepancy between land offers and land demands by new entrants in terms of size, type of farming, price and timing of the transfer to make sure that new entrants can access land offers.

#### Objectives and key levers

Reducing the gaps between land offers and demands for the benefit of new entrants can imply acting on:

- the willingness and ability of land owners and transferors to make their land available for new entrants: planning their succession ahead of time (including maintaining buildings and limited indebtedness), planning a farm transfer rather than sale to neighbouring farmers, accepting the changes a new entrant may bring to the farm, considering the possibility of agreeing to a lower price, etc.
- the willingness and ability of new entrants to enter or evolve towards larger, more complex farms: initial training and lifelong education, farm incubators and start-up programmes, access to financial means (loans, public aid, welfare), support networks, facilitating land partnerships and collective entry into farming, etc.
- the features of the farms: increasing public support for small and medium-size farms, supporting investment plans to transform or develop farm buildings and infrastructures,

<sup>48</sup> This section is based on a previous paper focused on the situation in France with a focus on the Auvergne region, which explores both context-specific challenges, and a range of options developed in different parts of France (Blot et al. 2016)



reversing consolidation trends by re-creating two or more farms out of large consolidated farms, etc.

- intermediary solutions: having a third party (public institution, local authority, community land trust, etc.) to endure the land portage the time needed, cover part of the cost, help with matchmaking of transferors and transferees' plans, (Blot et al. 2016; van Boxtel et al. 2016), etc.

Some of these levers are rather short-term and can be implemented by local actors (civil society organisations, local authorities), others depend on structural changes in public support to agriculture, economic organisation of food and farming systems, and socio-cultural conceptions of what are viable and desirable farming models.

#### **Highlight: Cutting up a large farm to recreate smaller farms**

The experience of the Eygageyres farm<sup>49</sup>, in Auvergne, France bears witness to new possibilities. In the 1970s, this traditional farm, doing mixed and dairy farming on 30 hectares, was deemed too small and not viable. Bought by a neighbouring farmer, it became consolidated into a 70-hectare farm, but remained secondary to the farm system and was progressively left abandoned. When the whole consolidated farm came up for sale in 2014, a strong mobilisation of the municipality, the local Safer<sup>50</sup>, Terre de liens and other local groups made it possible to divide the farm and re-create the Eygageyres farm. It enabled the entry into farming of Romain, a newcomer who had been searching for land for 5 years. The local Safer held on to the land for one year, until Terre de liens raised the full amount needed for the purchase from citizens, associations and businesses who invested to support the project. Romain put the land back in cultivation, restored the buildings, developed local sales and is now planning to create a new job on the farm.

#### **Other good practices**

Good practices	Examples of case studies
Temporary land portage by a public body or local authority (see "Highlight" box in section 3.4.3)	SAFER ensuring land portage for a new entrant: Eygageyres farm (above), Le Pointeau farm <sup>51</sup> and Clermont Ferrand <sup>52</sup>
Supporting entry of a farmers' collective	Radis & Co Collective and La Tournerie farm, France <sup>53</sup>
Matchmaking between transferors and successors on economic valuation of the farm, farming plans, etc.	Land matching platforms from the UK, Germany, France and Spain <sup>54</sup> Tool for discussing the farm's economic valuation with transferors (see Tool 11, Economic Valuation in van Boxtel et al. 2016)
Facilitating land partnerships	See above
Organising farm incubators and start-up programmes	See above

Table 15 – Good practices aimed at bridging the gaps between land offer and demand

<sup>49</sup> Read the full case study on Eygageyres farm: <https://www.accesstoland.eu/Eygageres-farm-and-new-entrant>

<sup>50</sup> The Safer is the French agency regulating the rural land market, see <http://www.accesstoland.eu/Unique-land-agencies-the-SAFER>

<sup>51</sup> Read the case study on Le Pointeau: <https://www.accesstoland.eu/Le-Pointeau-Stocking-Land-Temporarily>

<sup>52</sup> Read the case study on Clermont-Ferrand: <https://www.accesstoland.eu/Clermont-Ferrand-Temporary-Stockage>

<sup>53</sup> Read the case study on Radis & Co in Access to land Network, 2018, Europe's New Farmers and on La Tournerie collective: <https://www.accesstoland.eu/La-Tournerie-farm> and see section "Farm collectives: a lever for an agricultural and rural transition" in the D5.2 RURALIZATION report (Sivini et al. 2021).

<sup>54</sup> Access to land Network, 2021, Land matching platforms in Europe: 4 documentaries, <https://www.accesstoland.eu/land-matching-4-videos>

## 4 ANALYSIS PART 2: main conclusions on transferring and upscaling social innovation on land

As previously discussed, the question of upscaling and how to achieve systemic impact for land innovations can cover a range of strategies (see Moore et al 2015): a. 'spatial' scaling of social innovations (by replication, systems of branching or franchise, or diffusion of principles in new regions) or adaptations of innovations to new audiences (**'scaling out'**); b. 'political' scaling of innovation (by transforming institutions, policies, rules and laws...) (**'scaling up'**); c. 'cultural' scaling of innovation (changing the norms and values, beliefs, 'hearts and minds' around the issue addressed) (**'scaling deep'**).

As we have seen from some of the conclusions of the focus groups centred on the transfer of innovations, the participants, when spontaneously discussing the idea of adopting certain solutions, build their analyses and strategic perspectives:

- in a logic of inspiration/adaptation
- considering the possibility of expansion/change of scale
- evoking the factors and logic, more or less explicitly, that respond to each of these three types of scaling-up strategies

This projection into a large-scale intention can be justified by the fact that, in most European contexts, given certain social and ecological imperatives, most of the land can be considered 'inequitably shared' and 'inappropriately used'. Therefore, a transformative land initiative is often thought of, from the start, both as a multiplication of successful local projects and as a larger movement of political and social transformation. In some cases though, the change of scale is experienced more as a way to consolidate local action and to spread it further, without necessarily considering a change at national level or a systemic change. Some actors are already so engaged in maintaining their operational actions at the local level that scaling up remains a rather distant perspective.

As we have seen, new entrants (and even more so for certain profiles) start their agricultural activity in conditions that are often more difficult than for people from an agricultural background. Moreover, the majority of institutions governing access to land and capital are often promoting a model that is antagonistic to the one that many new entrants wish to foster. As such, even policies or political representatives trying to create better conditions for new entrants, and who might find resistance among some mainstream stakeholders, will need to rely on stakeholders that are pushing for an agricultural transition in a strategic way. These stakeholders therefore need to combine the different levels of analysis and action mentioned (scaling out, scaling up and scaling deep).

### 4.1 Making the best of local ecosystem and resources to ensure neo-endogenous development

These different levels of action and analysis lead the stakeholders wishing to implement new innovations on access to land to answer several kinds of questions when implementing a new approach inspired by some extra-territorial initiatives:

- Which stakeholders (or group/network of stakeholders), local or extra-territorial, have the required skills?

- Which stakeholders could build or participate in building the correct analysis to implement such a new approach in the targeted context and how?
- Which stakeholders are legitimate to tackle the issue, to frame and/or influence the debate and to build the needed partnerships?
- How will the legitimate/skilled stakeholders be funded to start working on this new issue and how will they progress as it is implemented?

The answers to these questions are not always immediate, as the skills, the analyses and the legitimacy (or the partnerships offering this legitimacy) sometimes have to be built or strengthened as the innovation is set up and stabilised.

The answers might also be different depending on the context and the ‘philosophy of action’ favoured. Indeed, the European research project SIMRA has highlighted different ‘innovation pathways’ depending on how stakeholders implemented or transferred a social innovation (SI):

- *Authority path*: "Can be derived from both internal members of a related community who represent the key initiators of SI emergence or external actors (e.g. academics) who bring innovative ideas and/or stimulate the SI emergence and development in the community." (Klůvanková et al, 2017, p36)
- *Self-organisation path*: "Self-organized activities driven by common interest evolve in collective action for community benefit". (Klůvanková et al, 2017, p38)
- *Social entrepreneurship path*: Social entrepreneurs are "competitive externally but think socially internally (...). There is a need to compete with other enterprises, whilst also reinvesting significant social or environmental aspects or revenues back into the community" (Klůvanková et al, 2017, p38).
- *Networking path*: "concerns creations of novel partnerships/connections between different actors from usually different sectors/levels/countries to stimulate knowledge sharing, better coordination, new initiatives and projects " (Klůvanková et al, 2017, p36).
- *Knowledge transfer path*: "The main aspect for development of SI is knowledge transfer brought by actors usually from outside to the community "from those who know to those who do not know". Sometimes the knowledge transfer of the community directs to outside actors. (Klůvanková et al, 2017, p37).

In both the emerging initiatives examined and the way these initiatives were discussed in focus groups, we can consider that stakeholders mainly combine or plan to combine the ‘self-organisation path’ and the ‘networking path’. But in most cases, it happens that an organisation or a network of organisations, sometimes under the initial impetus of one or a few individuals, consider at some point that an issue must be taken up. From that initial collective awareness, they open their attention to different initiatives that could help to find solutions, while refining the analysis of their local problem, in the light of local strengths and resources, to determine the translations that such inspirations might lead to on their own territory. From that starting point, the initiative will follow the stages described in sections 2.2.1 and 4.3.2 of the RURALIZATION report on novel land practices (Loveluck et al. 2021b, based on Thou et al. 2018), or the four stages that the European project SIMRA, which focused on social innovation in marginalised rural areas, had identified. The first is generating and

developing ideas, the second growing, testing and consolidating social innovation, the third concerns implementing, scaling and spreading the social innovation while the fourth relates to changing the system (Klůvanková et al. 2017).

## 4.2 Innovations implemented in an adverse context

1. Even if a range of interactions at different scales explain a given local situation, local actions are always driven, completely or partially, by local actors, with their local legitimacy (or a legitimacy to build), rooted in a local history and a web of local social relations. Discussing innovative practices, focus groups have highlighted a first necessity **to root and anchor locally** the possibility to adopt the innovation. Rooting and anchoring have various dimensions, especially a) assessing the context b) relying on local forces.

Indeed, intimate knowledge of local context can help lifting barriers (that could be easily overlooked by outsiders). For example, in Catalonia owners' and family attachment to the land can be a barrier to farm transfer. As a result, land acquisition may not be appropriate as a local solution, and leasing (avoiding changes in ownership) may be more efficient. In Germany presence of sheep predators (wolves) in natural areas may raise a barrier to implementing conservation through extensive cattle raising.

But beyond local elements, identifying overarching contextual barriers that may be out of reach for local actors or might necessitate larger coalitions to be resolved is an important aspect as well. It can consist in assessing the inadequacy of environmental subsidy schemes to support conservation practices, based on local ecosystem and social specificities for example.

The focus groups have rested on the mobilisation of pre-existing local groups, more or less recently structured and, when not mobilising specific coalitions, there was still a need to appeal to a common interest in the group of people. This shows the key importance of "intrinsic motivation of actors" and the need to rely on a first core group of actors (which might be broader in the successive steps) that share some common values to trigger change: the DLg board, volunteers and staff in Flanders, the "Wilde Wiese Wendland" in Germany, "Territori de Vincles" project in Catalonia, CSO and local authorities with an interest in public land action in France, etc.

2. D3.1 report (Murtagh et al. 2021a) emphasises the need for interconnections among local actors and among local and non-local capital. This dynamic is summed up around the concept of **connecting and diversifying**, linked to the issue of a) stakeholder strategy (broadening the base, importance of networks) b) seeking additional resources and knowledge.

On this aspect, focus groups have highlighted the need to build shared mind-sets across a range of sectors and organisations. This aspect highlights the power of mentorship, exchange of practices and sharing organisational or community culture. In France for example, discussions around public land and county farms gathered a mix of civil society organisations and local authorities, developing a common culture on the connections between land issues and local political issues (local food supply, nature preservation, access to land for new entrants, etc.). Such communities can help building capacities to convince or rally more antagonist actors, a dynamic for which finding a "common" to rally people around is needed.

Regarding the focus group organised by XCN on farm succession, some farming cooperatives were invited for example, but did not come. But some stakeholders who attended the focus

group considered that "if the established farming organisations agree to participate in collective land acquisition, they would be a crucial asset, as they have a wide reach and the trust of many farmers."

### 4.3 Achieving systemic change and strategic perspective

Articulating practices with broader issues and achieving systemic change leads to different questions: a) strategies to be unfolded and combined (including stakeholders coalitions), b) the "time" necessary to develop an innovation and to integrate all the strategies needed (with potential competing political and operational agendas within an organisation or among partners of a coalition) and c) the integrative/fundamental principles of an innovation that need to be conserved as the innovation is growing or being transferred.

Regarding strategies, on the basis of a very broad review of the literature, Syrus Islam (Islam 2021), focusing on the scaling up of innovation of social enterprises (SE), analyses the different dimensions to be taken into account for these initiatives in terms of what Islam calls "ecosystem growth strategy", which, if we take up our analytical categories, combines both scaling up and scaling deep strategies. Indeed, ecosystem growth strategy "includes several [...] specific strategies that focus on growing or sustaining a supportive SE ecosystem as a means to make positive changes in society through activities such as organizing advocacy campaigns, developing and disseminating valuable knowledge and research, providing training and advisory services to other SEs, helping young and less-reputed SEs to gain and maintain legitimacy, and so on." Islam, based on the literature review, identified eight major activities contributing to the ecosystem growth strategy:

- **advocacy work**, focusing on influencing policy-makers *and* other organisations;
- **coalition work**, to build platforms to pool resources and expertise from various stakeholders sharing a common vision;
- **industry work**, aiming at proposing new services/products or at enhancing the innovations implemented;
- externally-oriented **training and advisory work**;
- **infrastructure work**, consisting in sharing common infrastructures with other SEs;
- **legitimacy work**, focused both on improving its own legitimacy and the legitimacy of close partners (e.g. coalition members);
- **research and publication work**, by developing sector-specific knowledge and by better understanding the situation they evolve in;
- **financing work**, combining both the development and improvement of their own business model as well as assistance with access to resources or even direct funding (via the establishment of a Foundation for example) of their ecosystem members.

Even if we have to distinguish, in their objectives as well as in their functioning, the social enterprises from the social innovations we have analysed (less market-based), we can still rely on the different forms of strategies put forward by Islam concerning this "ecosystem growth strategy", which, for a certain number of them, correspond to what we have observed and what was discussed in focus groups. If what Islam calls industry work and infrastructure work apply a little less to the initiatives we have analysed ("industry" could be replaced with "legal and social arrangements" for example), we can observe that all the other strategies are part



of the range of strategies mentioned regarding land innovations. An aspect Islam discusses a bit less though, is how these strategies can combine: for example, research and publication work can also aim at building legitimacy (through a recognised expertise) and sharpen the advocacy work (by refining arguments or persuading certain audiences, etc.).

While discussing this range of strategies, local actors try to understand to what extent the strategies they hear about from other actors could be adapted to their own environment:

- How the advocacy work should be embedded in local debates (e.g., post-Brexit debates in England, high land prices in Belgium, etc.)
- Which stakeholders should be part of a coalition work (Who shares the same values? Among which actors is there a pre-existing trust or working habits? etc.)
- What local features, laws, institutions should the innovation take into consideration to unfold in a relevant way?
- Who would be the most legitimate actor for each aspect the group of actors will have to tackle?
- On which subject/aspect should the group of actors deepen their knowledge through research
- Under what conditions or with what modifications could the innovation be economically viable and who could fund it, with which partnership?

Training and advisory work were a bit less evoked in discussions, as these aspects are generally taken into account at a higher level of maturity of the implementation of an innovation, when enough experience has been accumulated to disseminate it.

The EU-funded ‘research and innovation’ project LIAISON, in its guide focusing on “achieving impact”, states that “Innovation and knowledge resulting from a group’s co-innovation process will be shared and embedded within the partnership but will achieve a far greater impact if it also influences or inspires others outside of this original core group. This both requires planning and the involvement of the right people from the very beginning and throughout the participatory process of working together as a group of innovative partners” (Aldis et al. 2019).

This is, for example, what the stakeholders of the focus group on farm succession led in England thought about, while reflecting on community-owned land, when they mentioned two circles of actors to foster this type of innovation in England:

A first circle, which could be considered as the operational group, consisting of: Stir to Action, which has experience in building community benefit societies and co-operatives using a funding mix; Shared Assets, experienced in both developing business models and forms of governance for a wide range of land-based ventures and building future visioning exercises; CSA Network UK, with technical knowledge on growing food commercially and a network of community based organisations; the Ecological Land Cooperative, with an experience in both the acquisition of land and the identification and recruitment of community-led growers.

And a second circle, to build or strengthen, more or less close to the core group depending on the actors, including: National Farmers’ Union; Urgencii; Access to Land Network; Co-ops UK; Triodos Bank; Landworkers’ Alliance; Farmstart Network; South West Mutual; the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission; Sustain; Linking Environment And Farming; Tenant Farmers’ Association; Country Land and Business Association; the Real Farming Trust; Young Farmers; engaged Local Authorities; business parks; machinery rings and large agricultural estates.



This second circle, in the long term, can help reaching the policy level which, according to LIAISON's guide on impact, « arguably has 'the largest impact' as it has the power to change the 'rules of the game'. » (Aldis et al. 2019). Building these circles, and especially the core group, cannot only rely on common values or common objectives to ensure impactful and long-term partnerships. Indeed, LIAISON's guide insists on the fact that « one of the most relevant factors in improving the likelihood of future collaboration is building trust. Partners will come to rely on each other to meet deadlines and shared commitments, although there will also be times when they disagree. Basic rules around communication and collaboration set out at the start of the partnership will help to resolve conflicts and help ensure a long-term trust-based relationship » (Aldis et al. 2019).

Regarding the time for the development of an innovation and the implementation of all the strategies, different aspects have to be aligned:

- a) the different agendas specific to the organisation concerned, which generally has different workflows on different dimensions but whose results and actions must be articulated and coordinated (so as to feed each other mutually) around clear and discussed objectives;
- b) the agendas of the various partners of a coalition (when the organisation is part of one), because according to the specific focus of the partners' activities, in terms of operational and political imperatives, the different agendas among partners might not be aligned. This can be resolved either by aligning the political objectives (through discussion and prioritisation) or by forward planning and common funding.

## 5 Discussion and recommendations

### 5.1 Networks and communities of practice for land innovation

At an EU level, and from the perspective of our network of social innovators on land we observe the need to:

**1. Reverse the logic of “who” transfers:** it is not the organisation with the innovative model that seeks to spread it, but rather the local partners who are proactive to learn about new solutions to issues similar to those they are faced with. Transfer therefore does not start from the transferor but from the transferee’s will. This implies that the transferors put themselves “at the service” of the request of the transferees, adapting their discourse to the requests and realities of the others. Innovative solutions as well as local realities of transferor and transferee are therefore best apprehended through years of engaging together/inciting inter-knowledge of organisations in networks.

**2. Reverse the linear conception of the transfer:** instead of seeking to transfer successfully one innovative model, actors should seek to inspire local action from a variety of approaches and contributions. This can feed into a virtuous circle: there is a search for a solution, there are ideas and a diversity of solutions provided, and this is met by the transferee with a willingness to “craft” tailor-made methods and “cobble together” solutions for a response that actually is locally-adapted. Sometimes seeds are planted through the introduction of ideas and innovations in a given context, but which will only germinate a few years later, when the actors are sufficiently mature, or when means are available or when a more enabling environment (e.g. policy measures, a coalition of actors) emerges. Richter (2019), in the frame of the EU-funded project RURINO, points out an important aspect of the locally embedded nature of social entrepreneurs that ‘innovation by re-contextualisation’ is more likely when entrepreneurs are socially embedded. This is more than just the transfer of ideas, but their adaptation to suit the specific local context because of their embeddedness. It is also argued that the embeddedness of social entrepreneurs makes it more likely that novel ideas will gain the support of local decision makers and communities, as also part of the social innovation is about changing attitudes. A pre-existing community of practice also plays a role in creating this culture of learning from each other, helps innovators integrate systemic change concepts into practice and accelerate the impacts of funded innovations (Moore et al., 2015).

Richter (2019), also argue that social entrepreneurs bridge spatial, social and cultural disconnections between rural communities and the wider world. They act as intermediaries connecting different ‘worlds’ that generally are disconnected. In the context of the ‘embedded intermediary’ being central to innovation transfer, their absence becomes a barrier to repeat successes. Richter (2019, p.7) argues that: “Intermediaries not only bridge social and spatial but also cultural gaps. They represent the capability to link different worlds, whereas most of the other players are either involved in one or another of these environments”. Richter thus supports a point we already highlighted earlier in D6.5 about the importance of “go-between actors” (see section 4 of the RURALIZATION report on novel land practices, Loveluck et al. 2021b).

To take a few examples on how some solutions exposed in focus groups were reframed by some actors discovering the initiatives:

- In France, an aspect of the debate while discussing the initiative led in England concerning the use of public land was access to healthy and locally-produced food for poorer and marginalised people. Therefore, there was more emphasis by the French public on “food justice” than “land justice”. What attendees would keep from Shared Assets’ core principles exposed though their vision on public land would be: making public land work for broader and common goals (environment, health, food supply...), inciting more transparent and participative practices regarding land planning and adopting public policies that promote a transition of agricultural models. But, on the other hand, they would rather have local authorities drafting themselves a vision for public land rather than having civil society organisations drafting it, even though it could be supported by local and national CSO networks.
- In Vall del Corb, Catalonia, as mentioned in section 3.1.2 (‘offering community-owned land’) regarding scaling out strategies: collective land acquisition (as developed in Belgium by DLg for example) could meet the local needs, but the general feeling was that 1) it may be too complex, 2) local network and context might not be ready for it, 3) it does not resolve all the problems that are hindering agroecological transition within the area (e.g. lack of new entrants, the need to find sustainable business models, etc.). Moreover, it seemed that it would be more suitable to opt for facilitating the rental process rather than the acquisition. The scale of the Vall del Corb would possibly be too small for the practice of collective land acquisition, with less land available for sale and fewer possible new entrants. The practice, if it was implemented, should therefore be carried out at a larger scale. It should also be targeted to land plots of high agronomic potential, as low agronomic potential land is already being gathered (or will be) through land banks.
- For DLg, to develop a practice around biodiversity assessment on their farms: DLg would need time (human capital), and thus financial resources, to discuss possible collaborations with several partners, and time to get informed on current developments that might favour this practice (such as the development of a soil diagnosis led by the institute of agricultural research). DLg would keep the ideas of building partnerships with partners who master the ecological knowledge and involving volunteers (with knowledge on biodiversity issues) but they would focus more on finding solutions to reward the farmers for what they implement on farms.

## 5.2 Implications for public policy

### 5.2.1 Financing land innovation

- Following the conclusions presented in the previous section (section 5.1), we can emphasise the importance of financing “communities of actors” and multi-stakeholders’ ecosystems over the long term rather than financing one-off experience transfer logics. Long-term funding makes it possible to foster engagement, to promote inter-knowledge and familiarity with the specific contexts of each of the partners and to fine-tune innovations over time while benefiting from the support of a community of actors.
- Most of the time, the dynamics of communities of actors go beyond the borders of regional or even national territories. In this respect, the funding of communities of actors, even if they are important on a territorial scale, cannot be limited to this, like LEADER funding, connected to the second pillar of the CAP, which is characterised by a territorial approach. Another long-

term and supra-territorial strategy for structural funding should therefore be combined with such a territorial approach.

- Assuming that funders are concerned about the impact of their investment in social innovations, it is important to highlight that they should pay particular attention to the fact that all the dimensions involved in the change of scale are taken into account, the conditions of geographical dissemination and of access to new audiences, the conditions of transformation of the more general political conditions and finally the conditions of transformation of the public debate and of the mindsets on the issues being addressed. In the same way, in the perspective of favouring the "ecosystem growth strategy", it seems important to ensure that all the strategic components are taken into account and thought through in an inter-connected way: advocacy, legitimacy, coalition, financing, training and advisory, research and publication, industry and infrastructure work.

The reader can also refer to section 6.2.a ('Recommendations related to innovation trajectories') of the RURALIZATION report on novel land practices (Loveluck et al. 2021b) for further recommendations on financing land innovation.

### 5.2.2 General recommendations

The following recommendations can be applied to most thematic issues and solutions mentioned in section 3 of this report. The reader can also refer to sections 6.2.b ('Recommendations on local authorities'), 6.2.c ('Recommendation on new entrants') and 6.2.d ('Recommendations regarding the broader context') of the RURALIZATION report on novel land practices (Loveluck et al. 2021b) for further general recommendations.

1. During the focus groups, some public policies, sometimes newly implemented and for which the concrete content still needed to be refined, appeared to be opportunities for developing certain emerging practices (e.g., post-Brexit agricultural policies or the new land environmental management scheme in England). These policies are not easy to influence though, for several reasons:

- Because influencing concrete public policies requires the allocation of significant human resources for their analysis and for the construction of proposals;
- Because influencing the content of these policies implies having access to the people who can modify this content and having the legitimacy to make proposals to them;
- Because obstacles may come from stakeholders who wish to frame the content of these policies in a way that may be antagonistic to what some CSOs would like to propose (e.g., environmental objectives, framed in a productivist perspective, may be translated to less ambitious measures and might less call into question the most widespread practices, etc.).

Seriously taking into account the voices of stakeholders that are less established in the political arenas therefore involves giving them the means to construct these analyses and fostering their access to the co-construction of policies while taking into account the power imbalances that may exist among actors (by promoting balanced consultation, highlighting contradictory viewpoints and discussing them, etc.).

2. Stakeholders can initiate transformations of existing laws or even propose new ones, but in these cases, between the initial proposals and the concrete law, several processes can occur:

- On the one hand, the proposal, changed by the codes of legislators, sometimes disconnected from field issues, may be 'reformatted';

- The law may be subject to modifications which are often the result of political struggles regarding their concrete translation, leading to laws which are inadequately meet the initial objectives envisaged.

Actors can then both rely on these new laws, which can represent a strong legal basis for innovation, while applying them in a way that is different from the ‘initial spirit’ of the law or going further (which could lead local stakeholders to propose improvements to the legislator at a later stage). We can refer to the case of environmental leases in France, which TDL uses to guarantee an ecological use of the land they collectively own. On the one hand, these leases represent an interesting basis for discussing the issue of collective land management with the farmers and to guarantee good land stewardship to the people who participated to the crowdfunding for land acquisition. On the other hand, the legislative framework is not completely ideal (regarding the environmental clauses proposed for example) and different forms of concrete use (more or less participatory, before or during the lease) can be implemented with the farmers. The interaction between legislators and the stakeholders relying on the legal framework must therefore be considered at all stages of the production of laws, as well as in their improvement or assessment.

3. In the same way that an organisation aiming to scale up its social innovation must take into account all the dimensions that up-scaling involves (scaling out, scaling up and scaling deep), policy makers should participate in the construction of an enabling environment taking into account all these dimensions. Regarding ‘scaling up’ and ‘scaling deep’ especially, decision-makers must create the conditions for political and sectoral connections allowing for more structural changes. Among the examples discussed in the focus groups, we can mention:

- Connecting community-led housing and territorial food planning;
- Reinforcing the links between rural (offer of agricultural products) and urban local authorities (stronger demand for agricultural products) through common funding and planning;
- Combining answers to short-term issues (like the lack of access to quality food) to long-term objectives (like working on farm succession).

### 5.2.3 Thematic recommendations

The following recommendations refer to the solutions that were more broadly discussed among the focus groups on emerging land innovations. The reader can also refer to section 6.1 (‘Thematic recommendations, linked to specific land issues’) of the RURALIZATION report on novel land practices (Loveluck et al. 2021b) for further thematic recommendations linked to the emerging land innovations implemented and studied in the frame of task 6.4.

1. Concerning **the use of public land**, most stakeholders who attended the focus group agreed on the fact that public land should be used as a medium for broader objectives, like health issues, access to land and employment, training, environmental issues and local food supply. To achieve these goals, departments of local authorities should work jointly on these issues while a co-constructed framework, legitimate for all stakeholders, should be discussed and adopted regarding the vision that should be unfolded on public land. Building on a strong national framework that would give a clear mandate to local authorities to act on their land, with specific means and support (e.g., by coordinating a community of local authorities on this issue), would reinforce such initiatives and their legitimacy.

2. Concerning **community-owned land**, as we have observed, the approach is not suitable for all regions, depending on production systems and the mobility of the land market. Indeed, in regions where access to land is mainly ensured through access to leases, alternative solutions have to be found. In these cases, collective land management can be achieved through institutionalised dialogue with landowners and by transforming the laws, in close cooperation with local actors, on the regulation of lease transfers or on the regulation of practices within leases. In order to foster agroecological generational renewal in the cereal area of Vall del Corb, stakeholders also mentioned that the strategy should go beyond collective land acquisition. Services, infrastructures and machinery should also be shared or used collectively, and this process should be facilitated by the practice leaders. The support of public policies on the issue of collective acquisition must therefore take into account the specificities of the contexts and the local organisation of the land market and take into account the financial rationalities of each of the elements of the farm (land, equipment, cattle) according to its specificity.

3. Regarding the issue of **good land stewardship and biodiversity management on the farms**, the issue appears to be a good vector for mobilising certain farmers and volunteers, even if the stakeholders all agreed that reaching beyond the already convinced farmers was a complicated task. Globally, beyond the issues of changes in practices, the topic should be tackled at the territorial level, as stakeholders highlighted the need for mixed landscape structure, without monocultures and with high basic biodiversity. On this aspect, the dialogue between Terre de Liens and the CEN made it possible to highlight:

- that Terre de Liens could implement, in connection with their farmers, practices at the whole farm scale, but without having the ability to act on more territorial issues;
- that the CENs were working at territorial scales on these issues, but without necessarily having the capacity to act on whole farms included in their perimeter, but only on a few scattered plots of these farms.

Therefore, beyond the necessary territorial dialogue allowing approaches to be combined at the farm and the territorial levels, the challenge is also to determine how to combine legal tools to protect biodiversity (environmental leases, etc.), educational tools, civic mobilisation through volunteering on diagnosis, participatory workshops, public subsidies targeting nature preservation and incentive tools based on market recognition (labels, etc.). Ideally, all these levers should be activated jointly within an ambitious general decision-making framework. Since most of the territories are involved in long-distance or even export supply chains, reaching the objectives envisaged to foster the improvement of biodiversity may, however, rapidly require the transformation of national or even European frameworks.

4. Concerning **farm succession**, discussions highlight the point that, in terms of policy measures, the end of the economic cycle of a farm (when the farmer is about to retire) and the middle of the economic cycle (periods during which investment can still take place) should be thought of simultaneously, with a link between these issues and land regulation. Indeed, for example, proposing as it was discussed in one focus group a lump sum of money from the government, when the farmers retire, to allow them to promote the transfer of their farm, does not solve, in itself, many aspects of the problem:

- the fact that, without land regulation or conditions on the lump sum of money, the prices offered for the purchase of land are still embedded in a market logic, so that farmers may still wish to get the greatest profit from the sale of their land despite the compensation;



- the fact that, even if they benefit from a compensation, in the case of small farms, the general conditions, for a small farm that was set up at a given period, are not necessarily met to still be profitable in the economic environment in which the new entrant arrives when accessing the farm (especially in areas where the possibilities of developing short supply chains are low).

In addition, at a more cultural level, if there is a strong reluctance in the rural fabric towards agroecology, the compensation paid will not necessarily encourage the reorientation of the farm towards agroecology when the farm is transferred. Agroecology must therefore be integrated as part of a wider ecosystem: into public policies, among actors of the agricultural supply chains and in the traditional extension services.

Concerning the general public as well as public policies, while the issues consisting in favouring an agriculture that preserves the environment (water, air, soil, biodiversity...) are generally well assimilated (even if this does not necessarily lead to ambitious political actions on this issue), the issues of generational renewal and of farm succession are still only marginally taken into account by public policies, or not yet in a structural way, and are often unknown to the general public. Issues concerning the role of farmers in rural life, the potential links between the scale of farms and the possibilities of nature conservation or other issues linked to generational renewal should therefore be both more discussed and should be the subject of further research.

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## 7 Annexes

- **ANNEX I:** Focus groups participants
- **ANNEX II:** Focus group template report

## ANNEX I: Participants in focus groups

Organising partner	Action presented	Territorial scale	Meeting format	Type of partners attending	Number of participants	Women
SA	Action of Shared Assets on <b>County Farms</b>	<b>NUTS1</b> Wales (regional - local)	Online meeting	Farmers, Civil society activists and NGO representatives.	8	8
SA	De Landgenoten action on <b>farm succession</b>	<b>National</b> scale: presentation to English and Irish stakeholders	Online meeting	Rural development and agricultural organisations, researchers and policy-makers	9	5
DLg	Kulturland's action on <b>buildings ownership</b>	<b>NUTS1</b> Flanders region in Belgium (regional - local)	Meeting in Muizen (Flanders)	Rural development and agricultural organisations, farmers, a researcher, a policy officer of nature organisation	11	3
DLg	Terre de Liens' action on <b>assessing biodiversity</b> on farms	<b>NUTS1</b> Flanders region in Belgium (regional - local)	Meeting in Muizen (Flanders)	Rural development and agricultural organisations, farmers, a researcher, a member of a short supply chains community	11	3
ER	Terre de Liens' action on <b>assessing biodiversity</b> on farms	<b>NUTS3</b> Huedin region (regional - local)	Online meeting	Farmers, rural development and agricultural organisations, community facilitators, local and regional civil society representatives, local authority representatives.	28	7
ER	Shared Assets' action on <b>County Farms</b>	<b>NUTS3</b> Sibiu (local, village of Hosman)	Online meeting	Farmers, rural development and agricultural organisations, community facilitators, local and regional civil society representatives, local authority representatives.	27	11
XCN	De Landgenoten's action on <b>farm succession</b>	<b>NUTS3</b> Lleida and Tarragona (local, area of Vall del Corb)	Online meeting	Rural development and agricultural organisations, third sector initiatives, farming schools, regional office of the Ministry of Agriculture, phytopathology consultancy	12	8

Organising partner	Action presented	Territorial scale	Meeting format	Type of partners attending	Number of participants	Women
KL	XCN's action on <b>hay meadows (biodiversity)</b>	<b>NUTS3</b> Lüchow-Dannenberg (regional - local)	Online meeting	Farmer union, rural development and agricultural organisations, civil society activists, district council representatives	14	7
TDL	Terre de Liens' action on <b>assessing biodiversity</b> on farms	<b>NUTS1</b> Occitanie (regional) and <b>national</b> dimension	Meeting in Montpellier (Occitanie region)	Farmers, nature conservation organisation, rural development and agricultural organisations, researchers	32	18
TDL	Shared Assets' action on <b>County Farms</b>	<b>National</b>	Online meeting	Elected officials and staff of local authorities, territorial food plan organisations, rural development and agricultural organisations, researchers, state representatives.	72	51
<b>Total</b>					<b>224</b>	<b>121</b>

## ANNEX II:

## T6.5 FOCUS GROUPS

### Template Report

#### PART 1: EVENT DESCRIPTION

##### Factual summary

<b>Topic</b>	
<b>Location</b>	
<b>Attendees</b>	<b>N°</b> <b>N° women:</b> <b>N° young people (under 30 years old):</b> <b>Type:</b> e.g. farmers, policymaker, researcher, etc.
<b>List of organisations represented</b>	-.. -..

##### Summary of the focus group and main conclusions (200-300 words)

##### Additional event description

*Did you work with a RURALIZATION consortium partner, in particular an academic partner to prepare the event? If yes, how?*

*Did you organise the event as part of a larger one or co-organised it? If yes, please tell us the specifics.*

*Why did you invite these stakeholders specifically? How did you reach out to them? Did some stakeholders refuse to come and why?*

How would you characterise the interest of stakeholders for the innovation presented (e.g. level of skepticism or enthusiasm)? Did the innovation “match” local needs identified or not quite?

## PART 2: EXOGENOUS LEVERS AND OBSTACLES

### Qualitative assessment

Describe the local context characteristics in relation to the context where the innovation was originally developed. Please be detailed and specific on what are the differences and similarities in terms of: geography, land/farm structure, type of agriculture, age of farmers, socio-economic, cultural or legal/policy aspects, etc.

Why did you choose this context to do the focus group? In what way did you consider it promising to develop the innovation?

What did the group identify as main obstacles to develop the innovation **linked to the local context**?

What did the group identify as main obstacles to develop the innovation **linked to the larger, overarching context**? E.g. obstacles linked to national legislation or policy context, EU or national regulations, climate or market tendencies, etc.

What did the group identify as main levers or resources to develop the innovation linked to the local context?

Did the group identify some main levers or resources linked to the larger, overarching context? E.g. legal or policy context, EU or national regulations, etc.

**Factual summary** (above you are commenting only on “**main**” obstacles and levers, here you are asked to include bullet points summarising all observations gathered in the meeting)

	Levers identified that may support innovation development	Obstacles identified that may hinder innovation development
geography and environment		
economy and employment		
social and human		
cultural and behavioural		
legal and policy		
other		

### PART 3: ENDOGENOUS LEVERS AND OBSTACLES

Are there actors with local legitimacy to carry out the action? Who are they and where does their legitimacy come from? Would they benefit from further building/reinforcing legitimacy to develop the innovation (if yes, explain how: e.g. by allying with other partners, by developing more expertise, by seeking institutional recognition, etc.)?

Beyond potential innovation leaders, who were the main partner(s) or network(s) identified as possible supporters of the innovation? What are the main strengths and weaknesses of these networks?



*How would you characterise the level of “connection” between actors interested in developing the action? Is there a need to develop or strengthen relationships of work, trust, or else?*

*What are the main endogenous resources or capitals leverageable by leaders as well as supporters to develop the innovation? Are these local or non-local resources? Would they benefit from further building/reinforcing some resources? If yes, explain which ones (please be specific e.g. “hire someone in a specific position”, “develop expertise in...”).*

*Other endogenous levers or obstacles identified in relation to innovation development? (E.g. competing priorities of actors, calendar issues, etc.)?*

#### **PART 4: STRATEGY TO DEVELOP THE INNOVATIONS**

*List the main measures or features of the innovation that could be kept and the main adaptations needed (in terms of scale, governance, legal basis used, etc.)?*

*List concrete proposals to go forward with the innovation development : timeline or next steps, partners to reach out to or funding to be sought, etc.?*

*Are further exchanges planned among focus groups participants and/or with the original innovation developer? Were there needs to learn more about the original practice or specific areas of research identified?*

*Any other perspective or comment on possible future developments?*

## PART 5: QUALITATIVE MEETING OBSERVATIONS

*Citation from actors : include comments or citations from stakeholders that you find relevant or inform us about the interactions that took place.*

*Analyse actor dynamics: was there a good level of debate or, on the contrary, low interactivity? Were there explanatory factors that you know of about these group dynamics (e.g. the group was made of “peers”, people used to working together or, on the contrary, was more heterogeneous, or some stakes were attached to the meeting like creating new partnerships, convincing an institution, etc.)?*

*Did the meeting reveal any possible tension or difficulty to take into account in future innovation development? Were new synergies and partnerships created or deepened?*

