

CARING TOGETHER FOR NATURE

Manual on land stewardship as a tool to promote social involvement with the natural environment in Europe

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COORDINATION:

Pilar Rodríguez (xct) and Xavier Sabaté (Espai TRÉS)

AUTHORS:

Xavier Basora, Brent Mitchell, Catherine O'Neill and Xavier Sabaté

ADVISORY BOARD:

Damiano Di Simine (Legambiente), Claudie Houssard (CEN L-R), Nicole Nowicki (Eurosite), Jordi Pietx (xct) and Miquel Rafa (Foundation Catalunya-la Pedrera).

OTHER MAIN REVISERS:

Merijn Biemans (Eurosite), Neil McIntosh (Eurosite), Raphael Notin (independent reviser), Pilar Rodríguez (xct).

SPECIFIC KIND CONTRIBUTIONS:

Lauriane Chalard (xct), Hernan Collado (xct), Marcus Gilleard (National Trust), Marie Kaerlein (DVL), Josep Maria Mallarach (nature conservation consultant), Montse Masó (xct), Irene Navarro (landscape consultant), Jordi Recordà (Insta — Serveis Jurídics Ambientals), Jordi Romero-Lengua (Espai TRÉS), Peter Torkler (WWF-Germany).

LINGUISTIC CORRECTION:

Alexandra Rogers

DESIGN:

L'Apòstrof, SCCL

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LandLife partners:



"It's a question of discipline",
the little prince told me later on.
"When you've finished washing
and dressing each morning, you
must tend your planet".

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, The Little Prince, 1943

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOREWORD

There are many factors contributing to continuing **biodiversity** loss at global level and around Europe: amongst other things, significant factors include, increasing pressure on natural systems, the effects of climate change, the intensification of production systems, and the abandonment of traditional agricultural production. The need to address such issues and strengthen the European approach for nature and biodiversity conservation has led to the creation of a groundbreaking framework of legislative and financial mechanisms: the Habitats, Birds and Water Framework Directives, or the LIFE+ Programme, for example, are integral components of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020, adopted in 2011. The Biodiversity Strategy 2020 sets purposefully ambitious targets for biodiversity in Europe, to halt its loss, prevent degradation of ecosystems and restore them as far as feasible. The underpinning premise is two-fold: to ensure Europe's sustainable development by integrating the value of biodiversity in the economy and society, and, to preserve the diversity and richness of species, habitats, and ecosystems that characterise Europe.

Based on experience, to achieve the targets and ensure successful implementation of European policies, it is necessary to develop strategies and implementation methods that generate strong involvement of local stakeholders and land users. Methods that take into account local land uses and socio-economic contexts are particularly valuable. **Land stewardship** is a good example of a practical tool for nature and biodiversity conservation that involves landowners and users (farmers, foresters, shepherds, hunters, fishers, etc.) through voluntary **agreements** with **land stewardship organisations**.



In this sense, land stewardship has enormous potential to contribute to implementing and achieving the objectives of the Birds and Habitats Directives across the European Union in the management of Natura 2000 sites and the wider European countryside. As an approach, it provides an effective means to engage local stakeholders in the direct implementation of core nature conservation policies also integrated with other policy priorities in areas such as agriculture, rural development and social cohesion. As reflected in this manual, land stewardship offers valuable opportunities to apply integrated approaches within European policies directly, 'on the ground'.

This manual is a product of the LIFE+ funded project "LandLife: Boosting land stewardship as a conservation tool in the western Mediterranean arc: a communication and training scheme" (LIFE 10/INF/ES/540). The project aims to communicate how land stewardship can be an effective and successful tool for nature and biodiversity conservation in Europe. The manual provides a unique analysis of practical

experiences with land stewardship around Europe, as well as valuable insights about how land stewardship is used in the process of protecting Europe's nature. Such insights will be useful for those already working in stewardship projects, as well as those new to land stewardship.

The main message for European readers is that a plurality of people, landowners and users, public and private organisations, and civil society have a decisive role to play in nature and biodiversity conservation: as the authors say, "the term stewardship means—in its broadest sense—people taking care of the earth. The stewardship approach is predicated on responsibility of land users and owners to manage and protect land and natural resources".

We hope that this manual, the first hands-on publication on land stewardship in Europe, will help to foster greater understanding about land stewardship, as well as the value and importance of exchanging experiences and good practices to increase stakeholder awareness and involvement.



Angelo Salsi
Head of Unit, LIFE Nature,
DG Environment,
European Commission

LANDLIFE PARTNERS FOREWORD

Land stewardship promotes the idea that nature and biodiversity conservation is compatible with human activity, encouraging the involvement of people who work in and know their landscape. At the core of land stewardship lies the principle of co-responsibility in the management of natural resources. To describe the essence of land stewardship, we have to use words like *caring, respect, sharing, managing resources, responsibility, confidence, engagement, involvement*.

It is precisely these values and principles that make land stewardship an innovative and useful strategy to manage and conserve the land through the involvement of stakeholders—together, there is a valuable contribution to be made to strengthen implementation of European Union policies related to nature conservation, the key objective of halting biodiversity loss and securing the common interest of all Europeans to share a healthy environment.

Land stewardship in Europe is embedded in a wide diversity of contexts and realities. This manual aims to show this variety by presenting a wide range of case studies, which reflect the different approaches that have developed in Europe and the rich mechanisms, which are adapted to respond to local and regional contexts.

The manual provides recommendations and ideas to start land **stewardship agreements** or to improve existing ones from both technical and legal perspectives. In this sense, the manual is intended for a wide range of public: landowners, land users, public and private organisations and even the general public (citizens), willing to implement the values promoted by land stewardship: the involvement of all sectors is key to ensure the success of any nature and biodiversity conservation initiative.

This manual, the first hands-on publication about land stewardship in Europe, is not only the result of the LandLife partners' experience, but also the experience of many organisations and professionals who are working with land stewardship in Europe. The manual would not have been possible without the collaboration of many experts and organisations that have contributed towards its development. In this sense, the manual reflects the enthusiasm and efforts of all those who, in different countries and contexts, work daily to promote and ensure a responsible use of the land and its natural resources.



LandLife partners:



1. INTRODUCTION

Land stewardship is a strategy to involve landowners and users in the conservation of nature and landscape, with support from and inputs by a wide range of civil society groups. Through voluntary agreements between landowners/users and land stewardship organisations, nature, biodiversity, ecological integrity and landscape values will be maintained and restored.

The land stewardship approach is versatile and adaptable: It utilises a wide variety of tools and resources and involves many different stakeholders, especially landowners and NGOs. One of the strengths of the stewardship approach is that all society groups can use it or participate in some way. Today, land stewardship is used in most continents of the world as a nature and biodiversity management and conservation tool.

In Europe, land stewardship can be more widely used as a practical tool to implement and complement many different policies and legal instruments of biodiversity conservation. It can help to create opportunities for nature conservation in individual Member States and regions, and contribute to biodiversity conservation across Europe by directly involving people. Land Stewardship also embraces enough elements to foster European involvement in caring for nature, providing opportunities for participation in European Policies and concepts such as Natura 2000, the Common Agricultural Policy, the [European Green Infrastructure](#)...

This manual is intended to introduce the meaning of land stewardship and the instruments to implement it, using a European-wide approach, but understanding that there are national, regional and local differences in the ways that land stewardship can be applied.



In Europe, land stewardship is understood and addressed through a wide range of perspectives, so a certain degree of clarification of the concept and tools available is required. In fact, this manual is a contribution to raise further awareness about land stewardship. Since every type of land has its own characteristics and depends on local contexts and specific cultures, there is no single model that should be replicated and implemented under all circumstances. Essentially, therefore, this manual illustrates through a selection of case studies around Europe, different ways that land stewardship can be and is being implemented.



This publication is part of the LIFE+ funded project *LandLife. Boosting land stewardship as a conservation tool in the western Mediterranean arc: a communication and training scheme* (LIFE 10/INF/ES/540). This project aims to communicate the value of land stewardship to public institutions, key stakeholders as landowners, farmers, hunters, fishers and other resource users and their organisations as well as environmental and conservation organisations, and to the general public. The LandLife project runs from 2011 to 2014. More information on the LandLife project at www.landstewardship.eu.

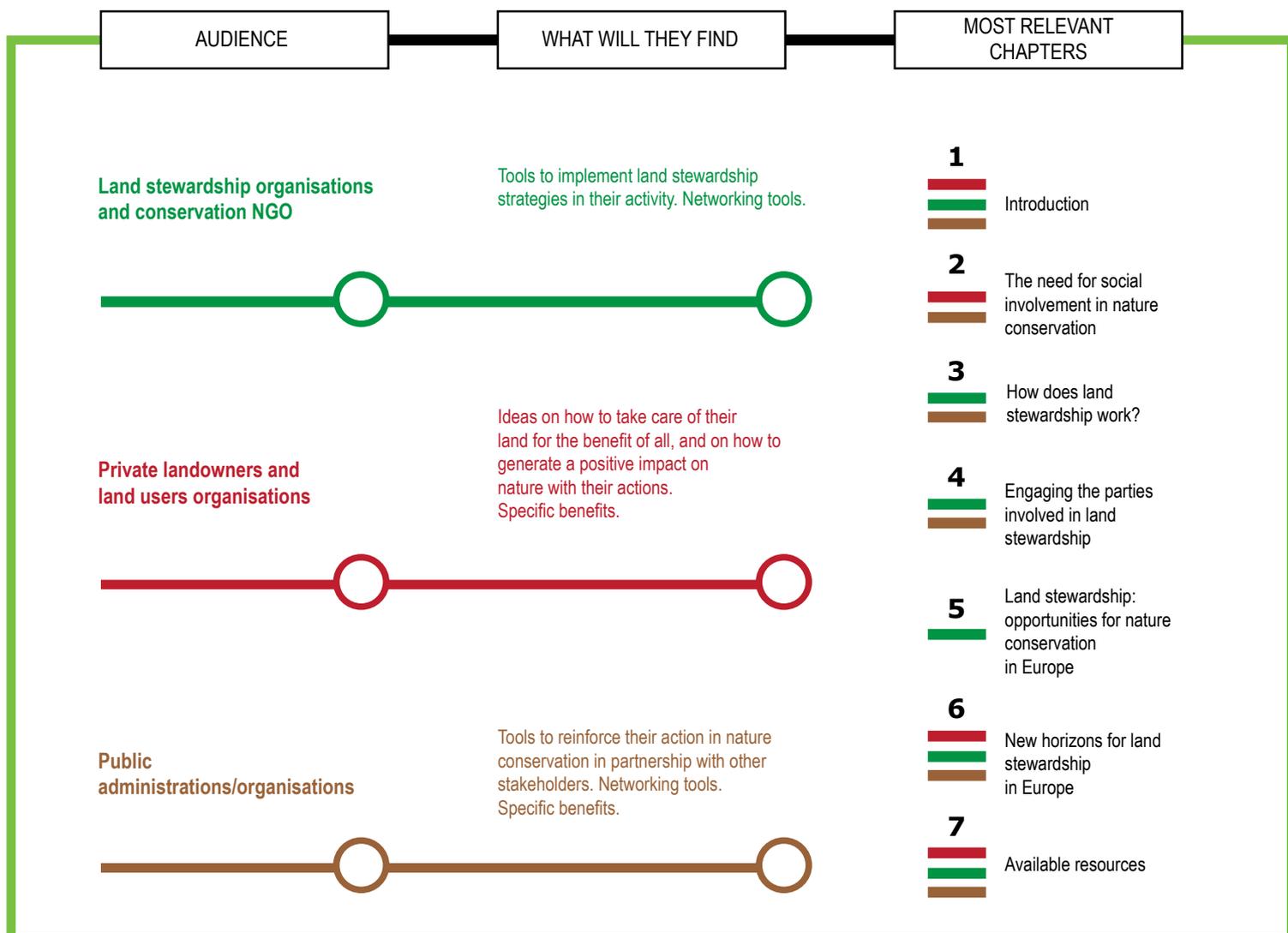
WHO WILL BE INTERESTED IN THIS MANUAL?

Many kinds of people and organisations are involved in land stewardship. This manual is intended primarily for staff, volunteers and representatives of organisations identified as stakeholders in nature conservation, especially land stewardship organisations and conservation NGO, private landowners and land users organisations and public administrations and agencies (see figure 1).

Other groups involved in land stewardship (businesses, funding organisations, schools and universities, citizens interested in nature conservation, etc.) may also be interested in its contents, namely those explored in chapter 4. Businesses and other funding organisations will find ideas to become involved in managing land for protection (section 4.4). Schools and universities can also collaborate with land stewardship organisations to connect the students with nature. Moreover, land stewardship offers an excellent opportunity to empower citizens and allow their active involvement in the conservation of biodiversity and landscape (section 4.3).



Figure 1. Main audience of this manual and some tips to read it



PRODUCTION OF THE MANUAL

This Manual is a collaborative work, coordinated and produced by a team of international authors with experience in communicating nature conservation and stewardship. This team was supported by an Advisory Board formed by leading professionals of all the LandLife project members, and other experts that have kindly helped to revise the text. The Manual has several case studies, provided by organisations all around Europe, that are used to illustrate land stewardship initiatives. The authors and the LandLife partners wish to thank all people involved in the elaboration of this document.

LAYOUT OF CONTENTS

This Manual is structured in seven chapters.

The **first chapter** is this introduction you are reading.

The **second chapter** introduces the concept of land stewardship as a tool for nature and landscape conservation and management, providing a global framework about nature conservation in Europe and the role of different stakeholders in the governance of nature conservation. This chapter will also introduce the main promoters of and benefits for people available from land stewardship.

The **third chapter** presents how stewardship can be and is being applied. It deals with the tools that land stewardship organisations use to implement voluntary agreements with landowners and other stakeholders, the steps that encompass the negotiation, signing and monitoring of a stewardship agreement, and the relevance of a suitable legal framework for stewardship.

The **fourth chapter** provides instruments and recommendations addressed mainly to stewardship organisations, in order to reach different target groups and support their involvement in stewardship. This chapter also provides an overview of **partnership** and **networking** strategies and deals with social involvement as a strategy to bring people and other organisations closer to nature and landscape.

The **fifth chapter** aims to analyse the European context regarding land stewardship, and presents the potential role of the main European NGOs in land stewardship promotion and development. This is one of the core sections of this Manual, explaining how land stewardship fits in the framework of European law and policies, and related tools. The chapter concludes with a useful summary regarding funding opportunities.

The **sixth chapter** is divided into two main sections. The first section is aimed at presenting the main conclusions of the Manual as opportunities to promote land stewardship in Europe. The second section addresses the main target groups of the Manual, presenting recommendations to launch land stewardship strategies.

At the **seventh and final chapter** you will find information on European institutions and organisations related to land stewardship, taken from references and links cited in the text. There you will also find the **first European Glossary on Land Stewardship**, based on specialised terms used in the Manual.



CASE STUDIES DISTRIBUTION



Along the Manual a various array of **case studies** are presented to illustrate the Manual's contents, and to show how land stewardship is used to protect Europe's nature. This map shows the distribution of the case studies in this Manual.

Other case studies can be found at the [LandLife project website](#).

2. THE NEED FOR SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT IN NATURE CONSERVATION

This chapter introduces the concept of land stewardship as a tool for nature and landscape conservation and management, as well as for the protection of resources and ecosystem services important to society. First it offers a global framework about nature conservation in Europe and the role of different stakeholders in the governance of nature conservation. Land stewardship as a concept is defined, explaining that stewardship is also a tool for landscape, cultural heritage, urban, and agricultural lands.



2.1 GLOBAL FRAMEWORK FOR NATURE CONSERVATION IN EUROPE: A SHARED CHALLENGE

Stewardship of natural resources has been a practice of people for as long as there have been people to practice it. As people evolved, they had to have knowledge of and respect for their environment in order to survive. Through famine and other times of scarcity, people learned the limits of their sources of sustenance and were intimate with their connection and dependence on the earth. Those who understood their relationship to the land and learned to be stewards of the environment prospered; others perished. Ironically, as European populations grew, both in complexity of social order and in numbers of people, pressure on land grew, challenging people to live within the limits the resources could sustain. Some societies found balance, shaping wilderness into productive land uses and forming many of the landscape patterns we find today, important both for production and cultural values.

Europe is a world leader in recognising the value of managed landscapes, for most of the continent has long been heavily settled and many landforms remained essentially unchanged for centuries. The role of humans in shaping landscapes is more accepted here than in many other parts of the world because, for millennia, agriculture has contributed to the diversity of landscapes, creating many landscape features which are part of its culture and identity.

It was this European sensibility, and examples from around the Mediterranean, that inspired a seminal book in the global conservation movement. ***Man and nature; or, Physical geography as modified by human action*** was written by George Perkins Marsh in 1864. Marsh was the first American ambassador to unified Italy, and previously to the Ottoman Empire and Greece, and travelled much of the northern Mediterranean. He learned of medieval societies that had become out of balance with the land, leading to deforestation, loss of soils and other environmental degradations. He made a connection to contemporary rapacious land practices in his native Vermont (New England). His book was a wake-up call, and has been called “the beginning of land wisdom” in America (Udall, 1963).

Many of the Mediterranean landscapes Marsh observed were vulnerable due to their natural geographic characteristics, but at least impacts in medieval times were limited by the technology of the time. Humans’ capacity to transform their environment increased exponentially in the industrial age, as did populations to yield that technology. Perhaps more importantly, what had been overwhelmingly agrarian or resource-dependent societies changed fundamentally to industrial, urbanised economies. As a consequence, in many countries large segments of the population for the first time depended on others to work the land and produce for them. We began to lose our relation-



“Is not enjoying a healthy and beautiful landscape an end itself? Which is, then, the most adequate way to manage it? That one that takes care of its health, beauty and permanence”.
E.F.Schumacher

ship to the land and with it our “land wisdom”. Ironically, while our land knowledge has increased through science and education, much of that information is abstract and not part of a direct relationship with the land for too many of us. Many—though certainly not all—of the remaining producers began to regard the landscape not as something of which they were a part, but as a commodity in the industrial economy. In many ways, the modern stewardship movement is an intentional attempt to compensate for, and eventually restore, humans’ relationship to landscape.

This is not to say that previous generations and cultures were “better” in taking care of the land. Rather, because in the past more people were more directly dependent on the land, more people by necessity were directly involved in its management, and felt more immediate consequences from its use or abuse. Today we have more tools than ever to better steward the land (remote sensing, GIS, agricultural and ecological science, and higher general science education, to name but a few), yet too many of us lack that very direct connection to the land. Stewardship offers all of us an opportunity to reconnect and pass on greater understanding of our surroundings.

It is also important to point out that this connection is not critical only for our environment. Many of our cultural traditions and history are linked to land, harvest, and nature. By taking care of these things we are also maintaining the rich cultural fabric of Europe. Ultimately, stewardship can help us to better understand what it means to be human.



Initial steps towards the creation of **protected areas** in the 19th century were led mainly by privately funded organisations (European Environment Agency, 2012b). Since then parks, reserves and other protected areas were created in varying forms and with varying success across Europe. By the early 20th century, the state re-emerged as an actor in protected areas, leading to the creation of publicly funded protected areas. Generally, they were designed to limit the intensity of land use (including eliminating use altogether in some instances) or to allow direct regulation of use by government managers, up to direct management by government authorities themselves. For many years, this top-down approach by central government was the most common conservation tool.

Protected areas designated by public authorities will always play a fundamental role in biodiversity conservation and landscape management. However, it is increasingly clear that governments cannot do the job on their own. The reasons why we cannot solely depend on governments are both quantitative and qualitative. Protected areas must be managed in a connected network system. Parks, reserves and Natura 2000 sites cannot begin to cover the entire habitat needed to conserve biodiversity, and land stewardship can be a tool to manage even these effectively. The most ambitious global biodiversity goals include targets to “improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity.” Target #11 of the Convention of Biological Diversity reads: “By 2020, at least 17% of terrestrial and inland water, and 10% of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.”

While the European Union is close to the terrestrial percentage, many of the sites are not managed by governments but rather by private owners and even if governments could manage that much land, protected areas would not address over 80% of land and habitats. Many species depend on the same land types that humans find most useful too. Many conservationists have begun to campaign that “**nature needs half**,” that is, that society should protect half of the earth in order to sustain natural systems.

Over time, it became clear that protected areas could not succeed without public support, particularly as the extent of protected areas grew, leading inevitably to conflicts with local people living in and around them. Public protected areas are also dependent on public funding, and can be an expensive way to manage resources. Stewardship of landscapes, rather than isolated natural and historic sites, requires a major shift in thinking for governments (and others) from the role of owner and manager to that of partner and facilitator. The stewardship approach does not replace, but rather runs parallel with



Many of our cultural traditions and history are linked to land, harvest, and nature. Ultimately, by taking care of these things through land stewardship we can better understand what it means to be human.

more traditional approaches to nature, historic and cultural preservation. Land stewardship does not hold all the answers, but it can be used effectively as a practical and important complementary tool for conservation and management.

Stewardship offers a means of extending the reach of conventional protected areas because it addresses conservation needs on lands outside protected area boundaries, and it cultivates local responsibility for sound resource management. It offers the potential to conserve heritage at the level of ecosystems and landscapes. By engaging resource-users, landowners, civic organisations and municipalities, a local stewardship initiative can help to build a strong constituency for conservation, thus strengthening the position of protected areas.

For these and other reasons, we have in recent years seen some public bodies engaging more meaningfully with communities and citizens and more conservation work done directly by civil society organisations. Which leads us to make an effort to create, nurture and enable responsibility among landowners and resource users to manage and protect land and natural resources: that is, stewardship.

In many ways, the emerging spectrum of land stewardship arrangements parallels the recently elucidated matrix of protected area governance: a classification system for protected areas comprising both management category and governance type (see table 1). While many stewardship agreements might not meet the IUCN definition of a protected area, the understanding that conservation cannot be solely the responsibility of governments is widening. Prior to the last World Parks Congress (South Africa, 2003), conservationists focused attention primarily on management objectives of protected areas, assuming that ownership of protected areas would largely be state or regional governments, so there was little attention paid to governance. But the number and extent of **private protected areas** has grown exponentially, many government designated sites are managed by nongovernmental partners, and recognition has increased of the role community and indigenous groups have long played in protected land for conservation. In short, we are learning that nature conservation is too big and important a challenge for governments to address alone. The growing number of land stewardship organisations and voluntary stewardship arrangements is another reflection of that fact.

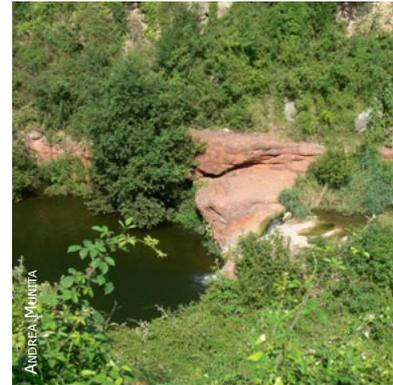


Table 1. The IUCN protected area matrix

		GOVERNANCE TYPES										
		A. Governance by government			B. Shared governance			C. Private governance			D. Governance by indigenous people and local communities	
		Federal or national ministry or agency in charge	Sub-national ministry or agency in charge	Government-delegated management (e.g. to an NGO)	Transboundary management	Collaborative management (Various forms of pluralist influence)	Joint management (pluralist management board)	Declared and run by individual land-owners	...by non-profit organisations (e.g. NGOs, universities)	... by for-profit organisations (e.g. corporate owners, cooperatives)	Indigenous peoples' protected areas and territories - established and run by indigenous people	Community conserved areas - declared and run by local communities
PROTECTED AREA CATEGORIES												
Ia. Strict Nature Reserve												
Ib. Wilderness Area												
II. National Park												
III. Natural Monument												
IV. Habitat / Species Management												
V. Protected Landscape / Seascape												
VI. Protected Area with Sustainable Use of Natural Resources												

**Land
stewardship
optimal use**

Source: Dudley, N. (Editor) (2008).



A SPECIAL MILITARY CAMP IN FRANCE

CASE STUDY

Location: Lot, Tarn et Garonne, France

Leading organisation: Conservatoire d'espaces naturels de Midi-Pyrénées

Other stakeholders: State and French Army



Camp militaire de Caylus is part of a Natura 2000 site (FR7300953 - Causse de Gaussou et sites proches) owned by the French military authorities. It contains 13 habitats of European importance —like dry grasslands— and many species associated with these habitats are protected under the Habitats Directive: several plants species, 15 bat species, 6 reptiles and 11 amphibians. Furthermore there are many butterfly and bird species in the area.

Through an agreement between the **Conservatoire d'espaces naturels de Midi-Pyrénées** (CEN-MP) and the military authorities, signed for 5 years and renewable, the CEN-MP provides ecological management services for this natural area. First, the CEM-MP surveyed, described and mapped the wildlife features of the area. Then both parties approved a management

plan. This plan includes actions such as cutting colonising shrubs, complemented by extensive grazing, in order to favour ecological connectivity. Other threatened habitats such as screes or wet grasslands require specific management measures.

The French Army is interested in this agreement because it enables maintaining essential military activities while contributing to the State's commitments to improve the condition of biodiversity on its territories. In exchange, the CEN-MP has access rights, to inspect work areas and secure commitment from the owner to apply the ecological management plan established by the Conservatoire.

Indeed, military terrains are an interesting opportunity to ensure proper ecological management in usually large nature areas.



More information:
www.caylus.com

2.2 THE LAND STEWARDSHIP APPROACH FOR NATURE AND LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION

Land stewardship is a strategy to involve landowners and users (farmers, foresters, shepherds, hunters, fishers, passive recreationalists) in the conservation of nature and landscape, with support by a wide range of civil society groups. Through voluntary agreements between landowners/users and land stewardship organisations, nature, biodiversity, ecological integrity and landscape values will be maintained and restored¹.

The stewardship approach—predicated on encouraging individual and community responsibility for sustainable natural resource management—offers a means of extending conservation practices beyond the boundaries of conventional protected areas, to address needs on the “land in between”.

When used with respect to natural resources, the term *stewardship* means—in its broadest sense—people taking care of the earth. The concept encompasses a range of private and public/private approaches to create, nurture and enable *responsibility* in users and owners to manage and protect natural resources.

Land stewardship draws on an array of tools to conserve landscape and cultural values of areas withheld from strict protection for economic or political reasons, or where the objective is to maintain land uses which are beneficial for nature. Methods generally focus on encouraging landowners—individuals and families as well as businesses, municipalities and other organisations—, and users —farmers, hunters, fishers-, to manage areas to protect or enhance these values, or to allow others to manage the biodiversity and natural heritage.

Stewardship is an especially helpful concept in the many instances where sustainable management—rather than absolute protection or preservation—of natural resources is the objective. Though stewardship tools may be employed to preclude use of specific areas, they more often are used to *restrict* certain uses (e.g. intensive agricultural, forestry or hunting practices) or to maintain or restore others (e.g. extensive agriculture, use of ecologically sensitive lands). A stewardship approach is often implemented where a wilderness preservation approach may not be suitable. As techniques are introduced to a broader range of players, and adapted for use in new regions, stewardship can offer new ways of meeting conservation objectives in and outside of protected areas. It is a complement to, not a replacement for, these other approaches. In Europe, stewardship can become a strategy of modern sound management of privately and locally owned rural lands, related to sustainable and ecological agriculture and forestry practices, with elements of restoration and maintenance of habitats through innovative or traditional practices



(or modernised traditional practices, as in the case of management regimes).

The practice of stewardship draws on many disciplines, mostly from the natural sciences, social sciences and law. Though the philosophy and many of the techniques of stewardship are not new, their application has become more frequent, better recognised and more formalised since the beginning of this century.

In this Manual, the term “land stewardship” will be used in a broad way, though restricted to activities that have a direct impact on the land (e.g. not felling an important tree, or setting aside a woodlot, voluntary clean-up of a stream, promote pasture to keep habitat open) rather than actions with important but less direct impacts on the land. The term “land stewardship organisation” will be most used to refer to the organisations that use land stewardship tools, while the term “land trust” will be mostly used to refer to this kind of organisation in **Common Law** countries, in United Kingdom and North America in particular.



THE OLD TREE OF SOUTH BOHEMIA

CASE STUDY

Location: Prachatice, South Bohemia, Czech Republic

Leading organisation: Czech Union for Nature Conservation (ČSOP)

Other stakeholders: Local landowner



Podlesak's elm is an old tree (*Ulmus glabra*, the big mountain elm) in South Bohemia (Czech Republic). 22 meters high and 4 meters wide, it is the second biggest tree in the region. The tree is near the Bohemian town of Prachatice.

Members of the **Czech Union for Nature Conservation (ČSOP)** found it when it was threatened to be felled for timber. ČSOP is a civic association that protects and restores nature, the landscape and the environment, to promote environmental education and support sustainable living. When ČSOP members began negotiating with the owner of the tree, he was suspicious, but after long negotiations, both parts agreed to include the tree in the list of protected trees in Czech Republic, as a memorial tree.

The owner also agreed the **lease** of land around the tree to the stewardship

organisation, for an indefinite period. The fee of this lease was symbolic: only 1 Czech crown (0,04 €) for the entire period. Through this lease, the land stewardship organisation committed to the health care of the tree.

The main goal of ČSOP was to attract residents and tourists to visit the tree as a special feature of the region. For this purpose, a bench and an information board about the tree were installed, with the help of a sponsor, to inform residents and visitors on the particularities of the tree. Now the tree has become quite popular for tourists and citizens.

The owner of the tree is glad that the memorial tree is named after his ancestor (the name of tree is now Podlesak's elm). ČSOP regularly cares for land around the tree, mainly through mowing. The tree was treated in 2009 and since then it hasn't required further work.



ZDENKA TYCOVA

More information:

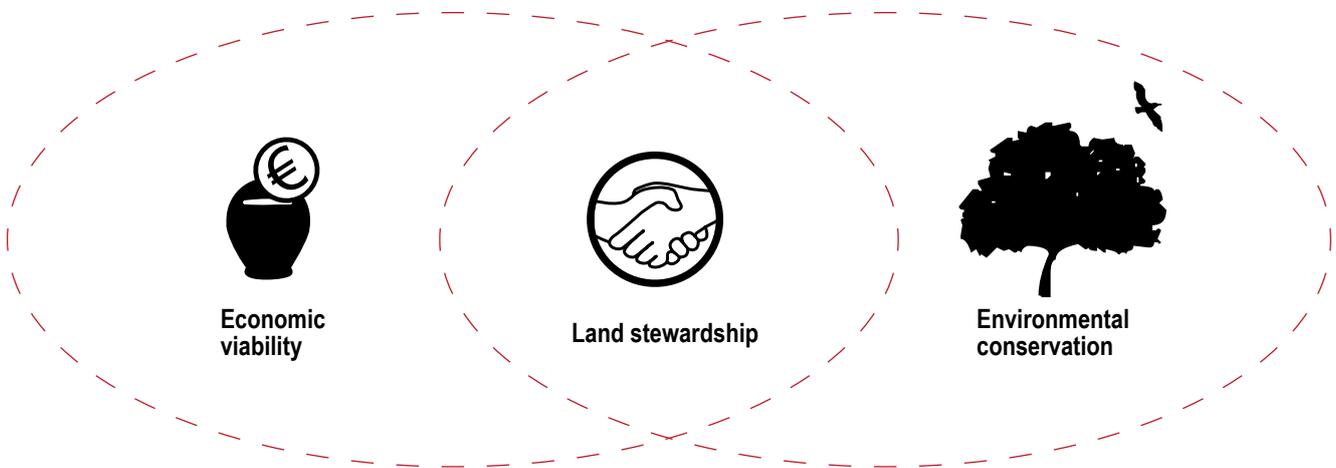
www.csop.cz

While many stewardship approaches rely on private mechanisms, stewardship should not be viewed as a solely private approach to conservation. Rather it rests on two elements coexisting in a civil society: private initiative (on the part of an individual landowner, a resource-user, a business and/or an NGO), and public policies (which provides a framework in the form of programmes, incentives, land-use planning and a supportive climate for private organisations).

Stewardship can be adaptive, building on traditional means of management to meet changing needs. Recognising that land management requires not only social will but skills within the society to do the job, the stewardship approach includes education for direct resource users and for decision makers in government and the private sector. Stewardship takes an overall landscape view, addressing conservation needs on land which cannot be separated from human existence and commerce. This approach can address the often compatible objectives of biodiversity conservation, rural economic development and maintaining individual and community connections to the land.

Stewardship takes an overall landscape view, addressing conservation needs on land which cannot be separated from human existence and commerce.

Figure 2. Land stewardship, blending economic viability with environmental conservation



Source: GOB-Menorca



In much of this Manual, we speak in terms of *land* stewardship, but we could also speak of marine, river, or urban stewardship, to say some. The wider concept of *nature stewardship* can also be used. Many of the agreements and programmes described target terrestrial resources owned by individuals, families, corporations or municipalities. We often think of land stewardship agreements with farmers as the “typical” expression of this work, affecting the land under their feet. But stewardship can be applied to other resources. Perhaps second to farmers, there are many stewardship agreements with forest and landscape owners, encouraging or committing them to certain husbandry practices. Both can be influenced and guided to care for freshwater resources, particularly ponds that may be their private property. Of course, freshwater resources also benefit from improved management of adjacent lands of ponds, lakes and rivers. Many stewardship organisations focus on harmonising land uses, especially as such areas often are especially attractive to human use and development. These considerations are especially relevant to coastal environments where very often intense human use and infrastructure disrupt nature and natural ecosystem functions.



MARINE STEWARDSHIP NEAR BARCELONA

CASE STUDY

Location: North of Catalonia, Spain

Leading organisation: SUBMON

Other stakeholders: Ministry of Agriculture, Generalitat de Catalunya, Diputació de Barcelona (regional administration), 7 municipalities. Yatch Clubs. Local Fishermen's Associations



Marine stewardship is defined as “a conservation strategy intended to generate the responsibility of institutions with competencies on the marine environment and its users in the conservation and good use of its natural and cultural resources, and landscape”.

Maresme Canyons (Natura 2000: ES5110017 Costes del Maresme) is the name of the coastal marine waters between Barcelona and Blanes (North Catalonia), with a total surface of 2.300 Km². **Submon**, an association created in 2003 and dedicated to marine stewardship in Catalonia, developed many marine stewardship agreements between 2009 and 2011 in this area. Submon does not directly manage the area, but develops actions to improve the marine environment.

The aim of Submon is to engage users in the study and the conservation of the area and promote the protection of cetaceans that inhabit it — this is one of the most important ecological values of the area. To this aim, Submon develops a programme of stewardship actions, and one of its strategic lines is to promote the protection of the area for the conservation of cetaceans.

In marine stewardship initiatives, there are no private landowners involved. So, agreements are signed with sea users (fishermen, divers, etc.) and public administrations with competencies on its management. Submon has signed marine stewardship agreements with 7 municipalities, with a core objective being to communicate the ecological values and biodiversity resources that can be found in

their coasts. The municipalities then offer their communication channels to citizens to inform them of such values. Some citizens have taken initiatives to organise their own activities, including different actions addressed to the nautical and the fishing sector.

Maresme Canyons is the most recent and methodologically consistent case of a number of efforts developed in Catalonia to start implementing the concept of Marine stewardship. To this aim a number of marine stewardship organisations under the umbrella of Catalan Land Stewardship Network (xct) participate in the **Marine Stewardship Working Group**.



More information:

Marine Stewardship Working Group

Application of the land stewardship approach can also be complex when applied to an urban environment. Urban areas are dense by definition, with little room for nature and landownerships that tend to be small. Use is most often managed by regulation in urban areas, but voluntary stewardship can be useful in some circumstances, for example promotion of community gardens, green infrastructure such as living rooftops, redevelopment of corridors for nature and recreation.

Because it often involves a voluntary agreement on the part of the owner, in most instances, we think of stewardship as applying in cases where there is “simple ownership” (full ownership by a single person or entity). While small streams and ponds may have a single landowner, lakes and rivers often have many adjacent landowners, and in some countries they are considered public domain. The same goes for locally or community owned mountain and forest lands, and including the marine environment. Even so, with *de facto* (if not *de jure*) “owners” and resource users, stewardship approaches can be applied.

Stakeholders in land stewardship range from the single landowner to the general public that ultimately benefits from his or her action through nature conservation.

2.3 STAKEHOLDERS IN LAND STEWARDSHIP

One of the strengths of the stewardship approach is that anyone can participate in some way. Many kinds of people and organisations are involved in land stewardship. Stakeholders are as diverse as the social, ecological and political environments across the continents. Recalling the definition of stakeholder as one who is involved in or affected by a course of action, stakeholders range from the single landowner to the general public that ultimately benefits from his or her action through nature conservation.



Figure 3. Land stewardship stakeholder model



Source: xct

Stakeholders can be described in four main groups according to their function (see figure 3). As we will see in succeeding chapters of this Manual, this is a highly simplistic conceptual framework, with many differing permutations existing in the real world involving a complex array of actors and stakeholders (i.e. at various stages, the public could also be *actors*, or the funding institutions could also be *Actors*, as well as *facilitators* and *enablers*).

- > **Actors** — those owners and users that voluntarily take an action (including, in some cases, agreeing not to take deleterious action) to protect nature and/or restore habitat or ecosystem function. These include, depending on the circumstance, landowners, farmers, fishermen, foresters, hunters, and other resources owners and users.
- > **Facilitators** — land stewardship organisations that work with *Actors* to identify stewardship opportunities. These groups enter into stewardship agreements with Actors, monitor their implementation and distribute their benefits.
- > **Enablers** — Those who create the conditions for the first two groups to cooperate. These include government administration (local, regional, state and EU), regulators, donors, support networks and platforms, nongovernmental organisations, and funders. Universities and other technical resources that provide knowledge, evaluation and research can be considered enablers, too.
- > **Public** — This category includes the general public who receive the direct (stewardship products and services) and indirect benefits of stewardship and provide public support for it.

All of these categories can reach high levels of organisation. *Actors* at the individual level are often organised into groups (farm bureaus, hunting associations, wood producers, landowner associations, etc.). Stewardship organisations (*facilitators*) in some regions have already banded together into umbrella organisations that provide guidance, technical assistance, standardisation and coordination (e.g. xct in Catalonia or ČSOP in the Czech Republic). In both cases regional umbrella groups in turn have come together to form national associations, in particular to lobby for policy change on the part of the *enablers*, and to promote education of the *public*. This is just starting to be the case of the Spanish “*Forum of Land stewardship organisations and networks*”, created in November 2011.



Promotion of land stewardship can take other forms as well. In Spain, to name one, the National Government is encouraging stewardship through a [website portal](#), grants, legal research and other complementary actions managed by the agency *Biodiversity Foundation*. This very own LandLife project is trying to set a permanent networking strategy at the European level, including a [website](#) as well.

All of these stakeholders (*actors*, *facilitators*, *enablers*, and *public*) enter into partnerships to meet shared objectives. Rarely is only one representative of each category involved in any stewardship agreement or activity. Such partnerships rely on trust, and are based on transparency of operations, the burden of which falls mainly to the *facilitators*—the land stewardship organisations. Chapter 4 is dedicated to this kind of partnerships.



2.4 BENEFITS TO LANDOWNERS AND LAND USERS

What are the benefits to landowners and land users who engage with land stewardship? For many of them with a strong **land ethic**, the benefits are intangible but deeply rewarding. However benefits can also be material, including free-of-cost conservation actions or economic benefit (see table 2). The most obvious are subsidies, incentives, exemptions or other compensation for taking certain actions, or avoiding others. These kinds of rewards are only sustainable in time so long as there are funds to support them. Stewardship organisations can also help landowners better manage land by removing perverse incentives. For example, many agriculturalists are saddled by debt incurred by policies that encouraged them to invest in machinery to “modernise” their farming practices. Farmers can be trapped in a cycle of debt, opting for short-term returns that are unsustainable but required to finance capital improvements. Prudent intervention can break this cycle and allow these individuals to return to being effective land stewards.

One benefit to the owners under an agreement is the support and advice they receive from stewardship organisations. This basic advice usually involves guiding the owner in the interpretation of the agreement and advising him or her on all questions or decisions affecting the conservation of the property. If the landowner needs it, organisations can inform him or her about changes, opportunities or new technical and legal issues that may affect his or her land (subsidies, tax breaks, new management techniques, news, etc.). Thus, this advice can be supporting the owner in those proceedings where necessary.



For those landowners and land users with a strong land ethic, the benefits of engaging within land stewardship are intangible, but also deeply rewarding, such as social acknowledgement, learning or personal satisfaction.

← Programa Empreses d'Acord amb la Terra

Promoure la col·laboració activa i voluntària d'empreses i institucions en iniciatives de custòdia del territori

La Custòdia del Territori es presenta per a les empreses com una oportunitat única d'invertir en el capital natural que representa el territori

Hi ha diverses maneres de convertir-se en 'empresa d'acord amb la terra':

- Col·laborant en el **Dossier de Projectes de Custòdia (DPC)** de la xct. La col·laboració de les empreses pot ser econòmica, material o en recursos humans.

- Participant d'accions de RSC en indrets en custòdia.
- Oferint **assessorament i suport empresarial** en àmbits com la gestió, el màrqueting, la comunicació i el finançament a les entitats de custòdia.
- Creant **'Reserves Naturals d'Empresa'**: participant directa i activament en la protecció i el manteniment de la diversitat biològica i del paisatge, i amb l'assessorament de la xct.
- Invertint o comprant productes del **Mercat de Custòdia**, que ofereix productes elaborats en finques on s'hi desenvolupa un acord de custòdia i, per tant, on hi ha una gestió de conservació del territori. També inclou serveis de lleure o aprenentatge.
- **Difonent i promovent la participació** de la



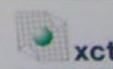
vostra base social en projectes de custòdia del territori.

Per què col·laborar amb la custòdia del territori?

- Perquè aporta **valor afegit als vostres productes o serveis**
- Perquè permet mostrar el compromís de la vostra empresa en termes de Responsabilitat Social Empresarial, augmentant-ne el prestigi i la reputació social
- Perquè **garanteix un desenvolupament econòmic sostenible** i genera un retorn social i ambiental per la vostra empresa i un benefici directe per la preservació del nostre territori.

XCT: 93 886 61 35

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CARING FOR WADERS AND GRASSLAND BIRDS IN AGRICULTURAL AREAS

CASE STUDY

Location: polder Ronde Hoep, Noord-Holland, the Netherlands

Leading organisation: Landschap Noord-Holland

Other stakeholders: farmers, agricultural nature conservation associations, De12Landschappen (umbrella organisation of 12 provincial landscape conservation organisations)



Ronde Hoep, a 1.260 hectares polder in the lower provinces of the Netherlands, consists of wet grasslands which are being managed by the organisation **Landschap Noord-Holland** and farmers together to promote the conservation of threatened Black-tailed Godwits (*Limosa limosa*).

In the central part of the polder, there is a 160 hectares bird sanctuary, where the young Godwits find a very wet and quiet area, both conditions being difficult to combine with agricultural practices. Farmers adapt their management practices to the Godwits' needs — for example they limit the use of fertilization (rough manure) and have adapted mowing regimes.

The cooperative management has achieved its objectives so far, and after several years

of a population decline, in 2011 238 breeding pairs were counted, one more than in 1974. In addition to that other bird species benefit from the management practices, including, lapwing, redshank, oystercatcher, gadwall, shoveler and garganey skylark.

Volunteers make a substantial contribution to the maintenance of grassland bird populations in the Netherlands. About 9.500 volunteers are engaged in meadow bird protection on farmland, partly under an agri-environmental scheme. In the case of polder Ronde Hoep about 20 volunteers are involved, searching for nests to be protected, tracking nesting bird pairs, discussing the agricultural and management activities with farmers, and advising on (last minute) management to farmers.



STIJN VAN BELLEGHEM

More information:

www.landschapnoordholland.nl

Stewardship benefits can be intergenerational. Good stewards of one generation want to ensure that conservation will continue in the future, beyond their lifetimes, and so enter into legal arrangements to protect the land from decisions of heirs known or unknown.

Stewardship can also be used to mitigate impacts of development. When a land use change is desired in one location, government policy or regulation may require that an equal or greater area of habitat or ecosystem be enhanced or protected to offset the impacts of development. In this instance, the person or company seeking to make a land use change must either purchase other land for habitat restoration, or fund another landowner to willingly make changes on his land. Ideally, mitigation regulations would require that more habitats be created than is destroyed, as a hedge against unsuccessful restoration. This kind of “resource banking” is in its infancy, and is fraught with ecological challenges as to the validity of people’s ability to replicate ecosystems.

Stewardship can also generate economic benefit, through the use of market approaches, encouraging people to buy locally from producers, or to use ecotourism, leisure or learning services, involved in stewardship agreements that encourage good land management practices. The benefit to the landowner is a more predictable market and, if local, lower costs in transportation and distribution (see section 4.3.5). For corporate landowners, stewardship offers opportunities for positive public relations and brand-building (see section 4.4). Stewardship can, therefore, be part of the new social green economy.



2.5 BENEFITS TO NATURE AND SOCIETY

Many stewardship initiatives conserve biodiversity through protection of habitats. This is perhaps the most straightforward objective of many stewardship agreements, and a prime driver for protection under many of the European directives detailed later in this Manual.

Similarly, stewardship can protect open space and fragile natural areas in the face of development pressures, especially in areas where planning controls are weak. In this case, stewardship acts as a voluntary mechanism in unison with regulatory tools. Stewardship can also play a role, through responsible farming, in the long term quality of a soil and underground water, and also ensure long term local food production and local resilience.

As stewardship organisations have matured in other places around the world, they tend to move away from the protection of isolated land parcels and toward recognition of the importance of preservation



at the landscape level. Targeting protection of whole ecosystems, specific watershed or coastal protection activities, or greenways and green infrastructure movements to protect scenic and recreational corridors are examples. In these cases, strategies tend to begin with the most willing landowners, establish a track record with them, and build out with their cooperation to reach more reluctant owners on adjacent lands.

Many species are dependent on traditional land uses. Sustaining these uses, such as high nature value farming and small-scale forestry is often a focus of land stewardship organisations because they recognise their importance for its ecological, economic and scenic values.

Government agencies have learned to appreciate land stewardship organisations ability to enhance their capacity, through partnerships, to secure and manage publicly owned protected areas. Private organisations can often react more quickly, flexibly and cost-effectively than government agencies to land conservation opportunities.

Table 2. Illustrative examples of land stewardship actions and some of the possible benefits to landowners and to nature

Stewardship agreement	Benefit to landowner/user	Benefit to nature/society
Maintaining set-back from a river	Water retention; reduced flood damage/erosion; recreation area, land knowledge/wisdom, public recognition	Improved drought/flood control; increase in fish and wildlife, reduce water contamination and treatment costs
Mowing field after breeding season	Certification of best practices; financial incentive; birdlife appreciation, land knowledge/wisdom, public recognition	Increase in birdlife, recreational opportunity (birding)
Restoring ephemeral pond	Water retention; technical/financial assistance, ground water recharge, land knowledge/wisdom, public recognition	Improved drought/flood control; surface water filtration increase in wildlife
Selective forest harvesting	Greater long-term yields, technical assistance (harvesting plan), land knowledge/wisdom, public recognition	Forest habitat diversity, underground water quality, wildlife
Fishpond management	Certification of best practices; financial incentive; wildlife appreciation; tourism income, land knowledge/wisdom, public recognition	Increase in wildlife, as fishponds can approximate the ecological role of lost natural wetlands

Source: Compiled by authors



3. HOW DOES LAND STEWARDSHIP WORK?

This chapter presents the basis on the application of land stewardship and the tools that stewardship organisations use to implement voluntary agreements with landowners and other stakeholders. Furthermore, the steps that encompass the negotiation, signing and long term follow-up of a stewardship agreement and the relevance of a suitable legal framework for stewardship are also discussed.



3.1 A LAND STEWARDSHIP ORGANISATION IN ACTION

Land stewardship organisations (land trusts in Common Law countries), together with landowners and managers, are an essential element in any process of land stewardship.

Land stewardship organisations are a growing force in land protection in Europe. This is due in part because they can take multiple forms; they can range from major foundations to small associations of nature conservation, schools or groups of volunteers, even municipalities and county or regional administrations, provided that one of their goals is land conservation and they use land stewardship tools. Even though each one has its own way of working, they share some common aspects (see [Land Stewardship Toolkit](#), Box 1).

These are the most relevant activities in the daily task of any land stewardship organisation:

- > **Contacting landowners, negotiating and reaching land stewardship agreements with them** so they become engaged in the conservation of nature and landscape. This may be the main and most distinctive activity by a land stewardship organisation (see sections 3.3 and 4.2).
- > **Giving technical and financial support to willing landowners and municipalities**, normally through an agreement, so together they can perform a proper management in the long term (see section 3.3.2).
- > **Planning, restoring and managing valuable areas**, through agreements with landowners and with the help of volunteers and in partnership with other organisations.
- > **Owning valuable areas or rights through purchase or donation** and managing them in a way that maximises biodiversity and other values (see section 3.2.4).
- > **Monitoring stewardship agreements and long term follow-up with landowners**, ensuring compliance and the optimal use of resources for nature and landscape conservation (see section 3.3.2).
- > **Raising awareness amongst the general public**, children, students, landowners and users, and other targets that could become engaged in nature conservation, and organising volunteer activities to help managing and monitoring land stewardship agreements (see section 4.3).



- > **Performing studies and research** to identify suitable properties where to intervene or improve the management actions through monitoring and evaluation of its effectiveness.
- > **Promoting sustainable economic activity** in the lands they own or they take care of, by promoting compatible activities such as agriculture, forestry, learning in nature or ecotourism (see section 4.3.5).
- > **Networking with other organisations** to reach common objectives, and to gather support for lobbying activities (see section 4.1).
- > **Fund-raising** so all the activities listed above can be provided by the organisation.

Stewardship organisations should be prepared to use different mechanisms and work in partnership with many different actors to meet biodiversity and heritage protection goals. To do so, a land stewardship organisation must count on a well-prepared and trained professional or volunteer team, with good knowledge on nature and heritage features and their management, and also on the territories where the organisation is settled. Of course, the stewardship organisation may not have expertise in all areas, but may be able to find the most reliable scientific information on best practices and help landowners initiate land stewardship activities.



Box 1. LandLife support tools to land stewardship organisations

At the [website](#) of the LandLife project you will find several support tools mainly for land stewardship organisations, but also for public administrations, landowners, land users, and other land stewardship stakeholders. There are 3 main tools that complement each other, with the objective of helping to develop land stewardship strategies.

- **FAQ:** This section presents answers to frequent asked questions about land stewardship and how to implement it.
- **Nature stewardship toolkit:** basic but complete information to act as a land stewardship organisation and to develop land stewardship projects, organised by thematic tools (e.g. a guide to plan land stewardship projects, a manual to negotiate stewardship agreements, etc.).
- **Helpdesk forum:** An organised forum to ask any question/doubt related to land stewardship, answered by a team of advisors.

Depending on its governance structures, an organisation must have the support of a directing board, members, advisers, citizens, institutions, landowner and farming organisations, sponsors and patrons providing the necessary resources and skills for the proper functioning of the organisation.

Of course, the professional or volunteer profile, as well as other functioning aspects will depend on the scale of the organisation. Some of them may be started by neighbours wanting to protect a piece of land or help an owner to improve its landscape... Many organisations may start small and build up as needed in the future, updating knowledge and improving skills, and others may have a long-standing record as environmental groups, and start a new stewardship programme.

Despite many challenges, stewardship organisations are able to work effectively because:

- many landowners are open to work with a private or local stewardship organisation, instead of dealing with government agencies,
- stewardship agreements can confer material advantages to landowners and
- private and local organisations can generally respond quickly, flexibly and in innovative ways to threats and opportunities.

The quality and good management of organisations is key to the development of sound agreements and initiatives and to the recognition of their work. Fulfilment of commitments contained in the agreements will lead to greater confidence in land stewardship as a tool for conservation, and therefore a greater recognition. That will help, in turn, to consolidate a suitable legal framework and tax benefits (see section 3.4) for land conservation and the preservation of valuable landscapes. Land stewardship networks in some countries (Catalonia, Czech Republic, USA, Canada...) have developed standards of quality and best practices for organisations, in order to improve their performance².



3.2 VOLUNTARY AGREEMENTS AS THE KEYSTONE

Land stewardship is a conservation strategy built upon a large variety of instruments and activities by land stewardship organisations. In the previous section, a list of activities exercised by stewardship organisations was presented. However, there is one instrument that is particularly representative of the whole strategy of land stewardship, and this is the voluntary agreement for nature and landscape conservation.

Also known as stewardship or voluntary agreements, they usually involve a landowner and a stewardship organisation. However, sometimes more than one organisation or even more than one landowner can be involved. Its exact terms and conditions are variable and negotiable between the parties, and will be tailored upon the characteristics of the property and the objectives of each party. In other words, there may not be two identical stewardship agreements. However, some of the common applied characteristics are now explained.

Stewardship agreements are usually established on a written document (contract or convention), but in some cases they can also be of verbal nature, secured with a simple and sincere handshake. Their contents may vary from agreement to agreement (see box 2 for an example of basic contents) and can encompass the whole property or only a part. The duration of the agreement can vary on the selected option, but it is recommended to establish agreements for a long period of time, over more than 10 years or even perpetual if possible³, to make sure efforts made by all parties are long lasting. Establishing an agreement may take time and a long dialogue and negotiation process (see section 3.3.1 for more information) between the stewardship organisation and the landowner thus being a reason to encourage long standing agreements.

The voluntary agreement is the most representative land stewardship instrument, and it usually involves a landowner and a stewardship organisation.

Box 2. Basic contents of a stewardship agreement

- > Presentation of parties involved
- > Scope of the agreement: a whole property, or part(s) of it, identification of pieces of land involved In the agreement, referring to a precise map annexed to the agreement
- > Description of values and items of interest that justify the agreement:
 - Habitats, species, landscapes, particular architectural elements, historic, cultural heritage, symbolic or identity elements, local services (soil and water quality...) etc.
 - References to the property values on legal protection schemes
 - Priority values and complementary values
 - Needs and threats to property and identified values
 - Photographs attached (property values, state of property, referring to a photo-location map...)
 - Baseline and maps describing the property at time of signing (serving as reference for regular monitoring and compliance, and as a comparison to see results of stewardship actions)
- > General and specific objectives of the agreement
- > Commitments (or actions) of the stewardship organisation, referring to maps and plans
- > Commitments (or actions) of the landowner, referring to maps and plans
- > Management guidelines (sometimes a management plan may be attached to the agreement)
- > Access to property: who can access it, with what aims, when, etc.
- > Public communication of the agreement and signposting of the property
- > Expenses derived from the agreement by the owner and the organisation
- > Duration of the agreement. Usually with mention of a tacit renewal if none of the parts communicates the opposite
- > Baseline and annual monitoring procedures of the agreement by the stewardship organisation
- > Other issues: transfer of the property, dispute resolution and any adaptation required by certain legal form of agreements (lease, will, donation, **sale...**).

Land stewardship networks, like the Catalan xct, provide their members with written models of agreements that can be adapted to the peculiarities of the property, the organisation and the owner. (General models of contract can be found at the [Land Stewardship Toolkit](#)).

Source: xct



CONSERVING DEHESA HABITATS THROUGH LAND STEWARDSHIP

CASE STUDY

Location: Cáceres Province, Extremadura, Spain

Leading organisation: Global Nature Foundation

Other stakeholders: Local farmers, Parque Nacional de Monfragüe, Obra Social Caja Madrid, Fundación MAVA-CICONIA



The vast majority of the lands under land stewardship agreements in Extremadura are dehesa systems with ranching, agriculture and forestry. Dehesas are an outstanding agrarian landscape in Western Spain and are considered high natural value areas, and is home of the populations of some endangered species, such as the rabbit, the storke and especially the black vulture and the imperial eagle. The low economic profitability and environmental degradation of pastures in recent times are a major problem to keep its management.

The **Global Nature Foundation's** first experiences of land stewardship can be traced back to the beginnings of the

organisation, in 1994, with the purchase of the property "El Baldío" and the lease in 2001 of the farm "Aroche". These developed in to the first stewardship actions, with other agreements signed between 2009 and 2012. The Foundation has 28 land stewardship agreements in Extremadura, 26 of which (93%) are written agreements.

The actions performed on farms under stewardship are aimed at the conservation and restoration of habitats and species of the Mediterranean forest. This has involved restoring ponds, building nesting platforms, building heaps, construction and restoration of pylons, and re-vegetation and reforestation.



More information:

www.fundacionglobalnature.org

There are three main options for land stewardship agreements, depending on the subsequent relationship of the landowner with his or her property, and they usually are represented as a ladder or sequence of mechanisms (see figure 4), which also includes those that do not involve agreements:

- > Non-agreement mechanisms
- > Agreements where the landowner continues to manage the land, but he or she commits to conservation-oriented actions (Management support).
- > Agreements where property’s management is, totally or partially, transferred to the land stewardship organisation (Management transfer).
- > Agreements that imply transfer of property title to the land stewardship organisation (Property transfer).

Figure 4. Land stewardship options and tools



Source: Compiled by authors, based on Hilts *et al.* (1990).

Note: options and tools cited on the right are explained in the following sections and specifically and fully defined in the Glossary (section 7.4).



3.2.1 Non-agreement mechanisms

Although stewardship agreements are the main and distinctive land stewardship tools, they are not the only available option. Other activities such as awareness-raising, education campaigns towards the general public, punctual actions of landowner support, volunteer actions, or acknowledgement actions are some other tools used by organisations. Though obviously these actions do not imply an agreement as such, they may be fundamental to set a collaborative framework with the landowner, and to give support to on-going stewardship agreements.

3.2.2 Management support agreements

Most landowners manage their own properties on a regular basis, and have been caring for their land, sometime for a long period of time across generations. This is the case of most farmers, foresters, and other landowners that live continuously in or close to the property. These landowners know well how to take care of their land, but are likely to appreciate any advice, information on natural heritage and specificities on their lands, and directions from a land stewardship organisation, especially if this support means a visible improvement in the property, or an opportunity to obtain extra income through its heritage management. On the other hand, some organisations have knowledge but don't have enough financial assets and staff capacity to manage a property, so what they can best offer is their technical expertise to help landowners maintain and improve nature conservation in their own lands. Some organisations can contribute to the implementation of the action via the organisation's pool of volunteers.

Most landowners know well how to take care of their land, but are likely to appreciate any advice, from a land stewardship organisation, especially if this means a visible improvement in the property.



TAKING CARE OF THE BLACK FOREST IN SCHILTACH CASE STUDY

Location: Schiltach, Baden-Württemberg, Germany

Leading organisation: German Association for Landcare (DVL)

Other stakeholders: Private landowners (including farmers) and the Landcare Association Central Black Forest (LACBF)



The **Landcare Association Central Black Forest** (LACBF) is committed to preserve the cultural landscape of the Black Forest in the southwest of Germany. Due to traditional land use, this region reflects a mosaic of forests, pastures and grassland. Many species have adapted to the mosaic-rich landscape and are dependent on continuing land use. The LACBF organises pasture management to keep the grasslands open, supports regional products and offers educational training to raise awareness about the very specific countryside in the Black Forest.

The biggest challenge now is to stop the loss of traditional land use practices in small agricultural holdings, to prevent biodiversity loss, as well as the degradation

of the Black forest's cultural landscape and its services.

The LACBF runs different projects to achieve its objective. It seeks to cooperate with municipalities and landowners to maintain the landscape with open spaces, through the management of pastures. It also promotes marketing regional products (such as fruit juice from orchards) with added value for nature and economy.

In addition, the LACBF organises public events to explain the link between pastures, forests, grasslands, biodiversity and ecosystem services, educating and involving school children and also providing informative excursions for local politicians and decision makers.



More information:

www.lpv.de

German Association for Landcare (DVL)

In this type of agreement, the landowner keeps the management of the land, but he or she commits to conservation-oriented actions (see box 3). Land stewardship organisations and landowners agree to a set of actions to be developed in the property, so both parties commit to the terms and conditions of the agreement. The land stewardship organisation will ensure that the agreed actions are implemented (monitoring activities, see section 3.3), and will assist the landowner with any nature management issue that may show up, and will inform him or her of any grant or incentive opportunities that could benefit the property.

These types of agreement usually take a written form such as a collaboration convention, sometimes supplemented with a management plan document, written by the land stewardship organisation with the help of the landowner.

3.2.3 Management transfer agreements

Some other landowners may prefer someone else taking care of their lands whilst retaining the property rights, or the land stewardship organisation may want to undertake an own specialized management of valuable lands. Whatever the reason, the landowner probably desires to maintain and upgrade the value of the estate, and will appreciate a land stewardship organisation taking practical responsibility of its management. Of course, this stewardship organisation should carefully evaluate the challenge of managing a property before accepting, as this may be time and resource consuming.

As in the previous type of stewardship agreements, the landowner and organisation agree which actions will be developed in the land (see box 3), but in this case it will be the stewardship organisation itself that will carry them out. It means that property's management is, totally or partially, transmitted to the land stewardship organisation. The land stewardship organisation is responsible to demonstrate to the landowner that the agreement terms are being met. Should that not happen, the agreement would be broken and the landowner would have the right to recover the management of the property.



GOLA DEL TINAZZO, AN OPEN-AIR LABORATORY OF BIODIVERSITY CASE STUDY

Location: Bergamo, Lombardia (Italy)

Leading organisation: Legambiente local group (Legambiente Alto Sebino)

Other stakeholders: Landowners



From the starting point of a small wood, crossed by footpaths, the visitors of Gola del Tinazzo reach a very steep rocky wall that seems to form a dead-end. Two walls, 40 meters high and 4 meters wide, stand at the entrance to the Gola del Tinazzo. This area has a very high historical, geological and natural values. During the last centuries, hundreds of thousands of cubic meters of sands and rock were extracted and transported to Iseo lake by the Borlezza stream.

The owner of the area asked **Legambiente** to take over the management functions of this site. They signed an automatically renewable agreement and committed not to

build and not to modify the destination of soil use for 5 years. Legambiente restored the natural area to create a public park for citizens and schools — an open-air laboratory of biodiversity. Furthermore, it also runs a project to protect amphibians.

Legambiente cooperates with local authorities and companies and is responsible for environmental education for primary schools, and has reached an agreement with a private steel enterprise and an environmental association for the management of the area. In addition, the local group of Legambiente organises regular educational activities and public cultural events.



More information:

www.custodiadeltoritorio.it

In some cases, these agreements imply a no-action: the land stewardship organisation may obtain (after a donation, a **cession** or a purchase) the rights of use of some part of the property precisely to not to use them. The primary purpose of these “land stewardship rights” is to protect land from certain forms of development or use (intensive agriculture, logging, grazing, water extraction, construction, etc.). Leasing these rights, a land stewardship organisation or the government may compensate the owner for not exercising these activities when required. The tool itself may be of different types and vary depending on the Civil Code (see section 3.4.2). In Catalonia, for example, this tool is developed through the right of partial use: the land stewardship organisation becomes the owner of certain rights, independently of the ownership of the land and other uses (see [Land Stewardship Toolkit](#)).



A LEASE TO KEEP GREY CATTLE IN A FORMER STATE FARM IN HUNGARY

CASE STUDY

Location: Kiskunság National Park, Hungary

Leading organisation: Network of Public Foundations for Nature Conservation

Other stakeholders: Private landowners (including farmers), Birdlife Hungary, Kiskunsági Természeti Nonprofit Zrt, Kiskunság National Park Directorate



The Hungarian Network of Public Foundations for Nature Conservation was founded to respond to the privatisation of state farms. Many types of grassland were too poor to be managed by farmers for economic reasons. However, often biodiversity rich grasslands have to be managed in order to maintain biodiversity rich states.

Following political changes in the 1990s, state farms were privatised. However, no one was interested in the Kiskunság state farm with its 10.000 hectares — this was primarily due to the fact that its infrastructure had been utterly worn out making it almost unsuitable for alternative uses, and the lands had a very low fertility which made them solely suitable for extensive farming. At the same time though, the area had a high nature conservation value, as one of the largest alkaline steppe of the Pannon eco-region. Just before the farm was to close down, a lease contract was awarded to a farmer who kept Hungarian grey cattle.

The Network acquired 5.150 hectares of pastures, hayfields, marshes and fishponds. Management was aimed at the conservation

of the natural values and developing good cooperation with farmers. The Network now owns cattle, buffalos and sheep, which are used to manage the areas.

In addition to maintaining good condition of the areas and effective cooperation with farmers, the Network also pays particular attention to the transfer of its experiences in nature friendly management to the farmers: manuals and books are published and made available to the farmers. Also, the Network organises seminars and consultations free of charge for the benefit of the farmers. The Network has also concluded an agreement on cooperation with the universities in Hungary providing courses in nature conservation. As a result, universities regularly take their students to the lands of the public foundations for field practice. The experts of the Network are involved in university education.

The Network also has environmental educational programmes, runs visitors' centres, has conducted a habitat restoration programme (primarily for wetlands) and supports the development of sustainable tourist activities which support local economies.



Other kinds of options available to land stewardship organisations are the **lease**, the **cession** and the afore-mentioned **verbal agreements**. As with those agreements where the landowner continues to manage the land, the land stewardship organisation may write a management plan, elaborated with the participation of the landowner, to establish the priorities in the management of the site. LIFE+ Nature includes the lease and use rights of land amongst its eligible actions.

Box 3. Some examples of commitments of each party in a land stewardship agreement

Whether the owner keeps the management of the land or it is passed onto the land stewardship organisation, here are some examples of commitments by the owner and the organisation (this is a non-comprehensive short list, considering the variety of European habitats & landscapes).

Owner's commitments

- To avoid clearing certain forests for its wildlife or its age.
- To adopt a game management plan to reduce browsers' impact.
- To protect a spring or any other water feature.
- To not build buildings/facilities incompatible with the objectives of the agreement.
- To avoid discharges of liquid or solid waste.
- To conserve a type of crop or grazing area.
- To collaborate with certain scientific studies.
- To restore a forest of the property.
- To keep a particular use of the land.
- To allow people visiting the property under certain circumstances.

Land stewardship organisation commitments

- To guide the owner in the interpretation of the agreement.
- To give advice on questions or decisions affecting the conservation of the property and research best practices recommended by experts.
- To inform the owner about issues which could affect their property (news, subsidies, tax reliefs, management techniques, plans...)
- To develop a management plan or guidelines for managing the land.
- To support, cooperate in or even assume the execution of certain actions (with own, external or owner funding, and volunteers).
- To monitor the agreement objectives through an annual visit and to write an annual report on the development of the agreement.
- To manage the lands with conservation and/or restoration objectives (in management transfer agreements).
- To promote social value activities related to the agreement (volunteering, educational visits, nature value product marketing, etc.)

Source: compiled by authors



3.2.4 Property transfer agreements

There is still another kind of agreement, where ownership of the property changes hands. This means that the landowner transmits his or her property (or part of it) to a land stewardship organisation, which commits itself to developing responsible management of the property. Of course, once the conservation organisation owns the land, it is free to develop the conservation strategy that it deems most appropriate, without negotiating them with the landowner. Although giving away a property for nature conservation purposes is undoubtedly an act of responsibility, the probable effect is that the landowner will get detached from the land, hence terminating the landowner commitment.

The typical legal tools for these kinds of agreements are the **sale**, the **legacy**, the **donation** and the **exchange** (most used in urban and land planning actions). Transfer of the property does not always mean the stewardship organisation actually buying the land. Donation of private land to stewardship organisations in order to guarantee its long-term management and protection can become a usual procedure in countries where land donations receive **tax incentives**, or where the values of conservation have really a social recognition. In some countries, donation in payment schemes in compensation of tax payments (dation or payment in kind) can help put land under public property and transferred to a stewardship organisation. Another way to receive land is through a legacy left by individuals in their will.

Single ownership as a method of nature conservation is quite common in some parts of Europe, such as the Netherlands and United Kingdom. Also, LIFE+ Nature includes the purchase of land amongst its eligible actions. In such cases, organisations must consider the costs (of purchasing and/or maintaining the land), responsibilities and commitment that ownership implies. Of course, the more consolidated the organisation, the more chances it has to receive (and be able to accept) donation proposals, or even to purchase land if they deem it necessary.

Although giving away a property for nature conservation purposes is undoubtedly an act of responsibility, the probable effect of property transfer agreements is that the landowner will get detached from the land, hence terminating the landowner commitment.



TERRE DE LIENS, HELPING FARMERS TO HAVE GREATER ACCESS TO LAND

LAND STEWARDSHIP ORGANISATION

Location: Hotonne, Ain, Rhône-Alpes (France)

Leading organisation: Terre de liens

Other stakeholders: Farmers, local authorities, agricultural and rural bodies (chambers of agriculture, SAFER, etc), farmers' union, rural development groups, consumers' groups



Terre de liens is a civil society organisation created in 2003 to address the difficulties faced by organic farmers in securing agricultural land. Rising land prices and market competitiveness make access to land a major bottleneck for farmers seeking new farms or additional land to maintain their current activities. Initially, Terre de liens supported collective ownership schemes, wherein farmers received contributions from their family, consumers or local community to set up an investment business to buy their land. Since 2007, Terre de liens has also directly acquired farmland, which holds in **perpetuity** for the sake of current and future generations.

Directly owning and managing organic and biodynamic farmland enables Terre de liens to fulfil its goal of keeping land in sustainable agricultural use and protecting the environment. Terre de liens and farmers agree on agricultural leases, which include legally binding environmental clauses such as the requirement to undertake certified organic (or biodynamic) farming and other aspects, as appropriate to each farm: soil preservation; prohibition of irrigation and drainage; diversification of crop rotation; specific harvesting techniques; and the creation, preservation and management of particular landscape components such as hedges, slopes, terraces, ponds and groves. Such leases provide for a review of the environmental state of the farm every three years.

Terre de liens has also experimented, and will try to generalise the use of a tool for agro-environmental diagnosis (Dialect), helping farmers to assess the state of their land and to define priority actions. It also facilitates or supports territorial dynamics and diagnosis, for farms located in Natura 2000, nature reserves, etc. so as to identify the benefits of the farming practices, as well as possible improvements.



MARIO KLESZEWSKI

More information:

www.terredeliens.org

www.terredeliens.org/524

www.terredeliens.org/591

www.terredeliens.org/186

3.3 STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENTS: FROM A NEGOTIATION PROCESS TO A MONITORING SYSTEM

Land stewardship means caring for nature, surrounding landscape and other ecosystem services through the commitment of different parties fixed by an agreement. The process to get to sign a land stewardship agreement can be time consuming, or relatively straight forward. During this process, each party's perspectives about the land are to be mutually understood and respected, and with the aim being to arrive at a common vision of land stewardship to be applied.

After a landowner and a land stewardship organisation's first contact, regardless of who has taken the first step, the decision-making process starts, encompassing a set of actions (see figure 5). Regardless of the time needed, once the agreement is reached, the *real* land stewardship begins; the partnership between two –or more– parties based on the commitments and actions agreed upon. This land management model involves regular contact between the parties, and the organisation monitoring the agreement and giving basic advise to the owner.

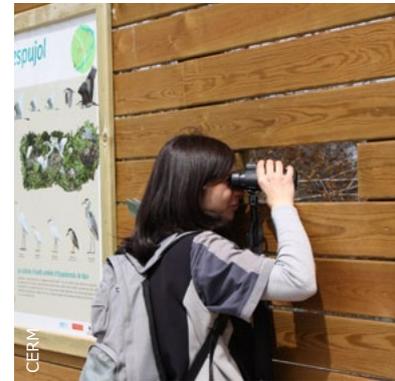
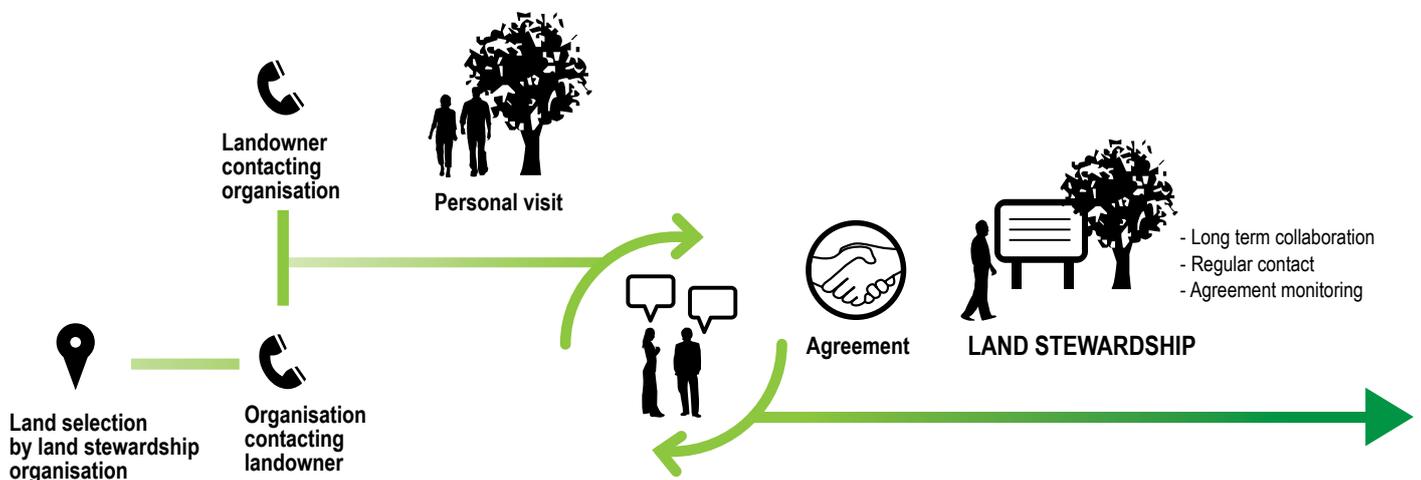


Figure 5. The steps to reach a land stewardship agreement



Source: Compiled by authors



3.3.1 Before signing the agreement

Although the landowner can be the first to contact land stewardship organisations, normally these organisations have their own strategy or fixed programme that establishes the areas where they would like to intervene (see [Land Stewardship Toolkit](#)). Through these strategies, they have clear criteria to prioritise their actions, or to evaluate proposals from landowners. The organisations' criteria can also be based on regional strategies (for land stewardship, specifically, or more generally, for nature and biodiversity conservation) established by a public authority or by a partnership between public administration and one or more land stewardship organisations.

After having decided where the organisation wants to intervene, it gets in contact with the owners and they visit the property together (see section 4.2.1). These are key steps to begin a good relationship between landowners and stewardship organisations. The first visit is meant to make an initial exchange of positions, and to open communication between the owner and the organisation. After which, there will be further meetings to define and negotiate the agreement.

During the negotiations of the agreement, the two parties have to resolve many aspects depending on the property features, such as landowner interests and concerns, and organisation goals —and available resources (see section 4.2.2). As explained (see section 3.2), there are three main options for land stewardship agreements and different tools according to the legal framework of each country. The agreement may provide management measures to preserve property heritage. It is important to write a good agreement as a first step to achieve full compliance, so the terms and commitments are clear, unambiguous and applicable to ensure good monitoring (see Box 2 in section 3.2).

3.3.2 After signing the agreement: long-term responsibilities and monitoring

Beyond specific commitments under each agreement, once the collaboration between stewardship organisations and landowners begins, there are two long-term responsibilities that require special attention: basic advice from the stewardship organisation to the landowner and maintaining contact between them. These duties are essential because the land stewardship organisation needs the involvement of the owner to ensure compliance with the commitments.

The basic advice from the stewardship organisations usually involves guiding the owner in the interpretation of the agreement and advising him or her on all questions affecting the daily decisions related to the management and conservation of the property. If the landowner needs it, organisations can inform him or her about changes and new



technical and legal issues that may affect the land (subsidies, tax reliefs, new management techniques, news, etc.). Additional information that organisations can provide are various communications and participation opportunities that may arise as celebration of events (e.g. the European Land Stewardship Week, landowner meetings), opportunities for volunteer supported action in the property or fairs and public events where to present their conservation efforts and to show the products and activities at the property as a conservation-quality product.

Moreover, the relationship between landowner and organisation is built through regular contact between the two parties (see box 4).



Box 4. Tips for land stewardship organisations to maintain long-term contact with the landowners

- > Calling landowners periodically keeping in touch to know and talk about the land
- > Informing landowners before a staff or volunteers visit to the property.
- > Visiting the properties once a year (minimum) with the owner.
- > Sending organisation newsletter (and, if available, a newsletter specifically aimed at landowners who collaborate with the organisation).
- > Sending greetings for special season events (New Year, spring, summer solstice, etc.).
- > Inviting landowners to public events arranged by the organisation, and by other institutions, where to learn and share their experience.
- > Organising an annual meeting (e.g. a dinner or a picnic) inviting all owners and staff involved in the stewardship agreements. It is a good time for the owners to know about similar experiences or different realities, and to exchange impressions.
- > Planning workshops with landowners or themed visits to properties with agreements.

Source: Basora & Sabaté (2006).

Meanwhile, the owners also have to establish contact with the organisation if they think it is necessary. In fact, one of the deals that usually includes the stewardship agreements is the owner commitment to inform the organisation when they are conducting an important action on the property and, in particular, the intention to sell (or donate, etc.) or lease the property to a third party. Mutual trust and regular contact are essential to achieve this disposition of the owners.

Monitoring is the main way for testing and confirming that land stewardship is effective for the conservation of natural heritage and landscape. So this practice is an essential tool for social recognition, transparency and accountability. In short, monitoring is the instrument land stewardship organisations use to certify their activities before their collaborators, partners, the government, and society in general. However, monitoring agreements have other specific aims (see Box 5).

Monitoring is the main way for testing that land stewardship is effective for the conservation of natural heritage and landscape.

Box 5. Aims of an effective monitoring agreement

- > Maintain and improve the relationship with the landowner.
- > Obtain regularly details of the property state.
- > Ensure or help ensure that the agreement is fulfilled.
- > Verify if the agreement actually helps achieving conservation goals.
- > Identify opportunities for future management.
- > Identify potential of conflicts and facilitate their solution.

Source: Compiled by authors

Generally, monitoring procedures within the agreement are a responsibility of land stewardship organisations. That means regular visits to the property by staff to review and assess the conservation state of the property and to ensure the compliance of the agreement. However, it can be a good idea to involve landowners in monitoring, for example by accompanying the organisation's staff during the visit. To deal with non-compliance, it may prove useful to the parties involved to discuss it to find out why the agreement was not respected. Helping the owner implementing some action might be necessary to adjust the terms of the agreement to achievable actions.

Monitoring must be a regular and methodical activity (i.e. performed and at the same time of the year, to increase comparability). The number of visits can be set according to the real need for each agreement. However, one or at most two visits per year are recommended. In those properties with more intensive uses, or where the organisation has been actively involved in their management, may require more frequent monitoring. An organisation can also set up monitoring campaigns at particular times if the characteristics of the property and its natural values require so.

Although the monitoring system can be tailored to each agreement, it is strongly advised for organisations to create a protocol or method to be followed for each property/agreement (see [Land Stewardship Toolkit](#)). Some land stewardship networks, as the Catalan xct, has done so, for the benefit of all its members.



3.4 LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR LAND STEWARDSHIP

Our societies are based on the state of law, and so we depend on rules to develop our relationships with others. Land stewardship is not an exception and is also based on a legal framework. The most significant land stewardship tool, the voluntary agreement, implies a legal relationship, even if there is no signed contract between the parties. Usually stewardship agreements take the form of legal mechanisms, as private contracts, leases, sales, cessions, and other instruments (see section 3.2 and glossary for details). Some of these instruments are specific to be used with land stewardship (they derive from some specific land stewardship legislation), whereas others are generic and then used with land stewardship purposes.

The main virtue of land stewardship is, precisely, that private agreements may happen and start no matter if a formal legal framework for land stewardship exists or not. Therefore, anywhere in Europe, the smallest non-profit organisation interested in land stewardship can start to write its first agreement when a landowner is willing to sign it.

Some large land stewardship organisations and networks have lawyers in their staff, providing legal assessment to other land stewardship organisations and landowners. Smaller and newer initiatives may benefit from volunteer legal expertise.

Finally, other instruments performed by land stewardship organisations not implying agreements (awareness-raising, education, fundraising...) may also benefit by a suitable legal framework (e.g. a specific law on volunteering).

3.4.1 From verbal agreements to top legal certainty

Land stewardship agreements are based on private law, and are always based on the wilfulness of both (or all) parties. Even verbal agreements are valid as a contract in all civil codes⁴ if they are based on the autonomy of will of the parties involved (this is, in fact, a fundamental principle of **civil law**).

However, if in some cases the parties should want to enforce the verbal agreement in front of third parties, it would be difficult to prove its existence, without witnesses. Therefore, from a judicial point of view, we can conclude verbal agreements have low **legal certainty**.

Legal certainty is a principle in national and international private law, which holds that parts in a contract should be able to enforce the rights and legal position derived from the agreements or business they sign. In short this means that stewardship agreements must be lawful, and parties involved should have confidence in their effectiveness and that therefore no one should desire to break it deliberately. Higher legal certainty means higher commitment, and indeed, a



higher quality of the agreements. Of course, this may mean higher constitution costs as well, although an appropriate **alliance** with a legal institution could help alleviate this cost.

Legal certainty in land stewardship agreements is achieved by, for example, establishing concrete clauses, ensuring the legal capacity of parts, using the appropriate legal forms or formalising them in a **deed**, that is, giving them more public relief. In those EU states based on Civil law (21 out of 27, see figure 7), this brings the option to request the services of a notary or any other public office holder to confer authenticity on the land stewardship agreement signed before him or her, so it becomes a public deed. This is an especially adequate option for organisations with more capacity and in circumstances where there is greater complexity of land stewardship initiatives, bringing them stronger long-term security.

In some cases, a land stewardship agreement may even enter in Real Estate registry systems, meaning a long-lasting effect in the property, because the terms of the agreement would be bound to the property, independently of its future owners (see figure 6). In this sense, it is advisable to proceed with the advice of lawyers and notaries to help reach this maximum level of legal certainty.



IN REM RIGHT AGREEMENT OF LA CENTRAL DEL FAI CASE STUDY

Location: Bigues i Riells, Vallès Oriental, Catalunya, Spain

Leading organisation: Associació Hàbitats — Projecte Rius

Other stakeholders: Landowners, Deganat de Registradors de Catalunya, Col·legi de Notaris de Catalunya



“La Central del Fai” is at the middle stretch of the River Tenes. This is a highly populated area only 30 km to the North of Barcelona. Only a few hundred meters further upstream, lies Sant Miquel del Fai, a natural and religious centre that receives thousands of visitors a year.

Due to its location, there are serious threats from excessive human presence, as well as from introduction of invasive river species, water eutrophication and occurrence of foam. In the property, the remnants of a hydroelectric power plant that used to produce electricity at the beginning of the 20th century can also be found: nowadays, in ruins, it is nonetheless registered as a municipal interest building because it is an example of 20th century industrial architecture.

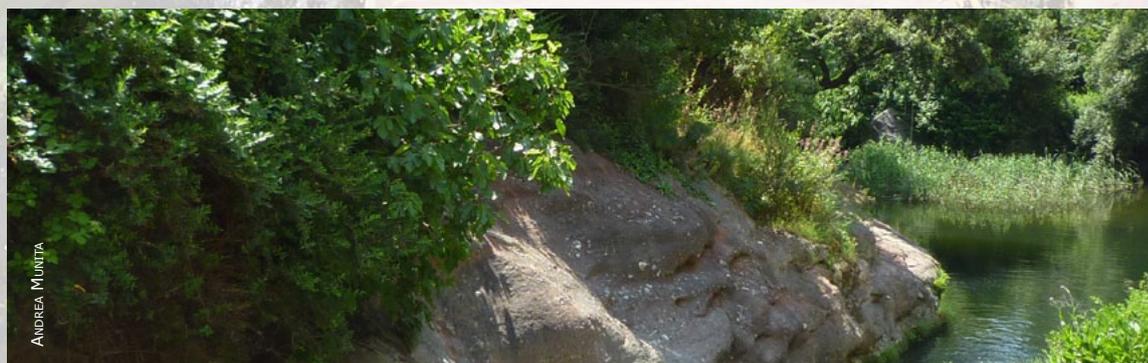
The owner purchased the land in 2008 and has collaborated with **Associació Hàbitats - Projecte Rius** in its management and monitoring through a 5-year voluntary agreement. In 2012, both parties agreed to sign a long-term deed by which Associació Hàbitats - Projecte Rius acquires the right to manage the land in cooperation with the owner with the aim to re-establish its natural and cultural values. The organisation also acquired the entitlement to draw a

management plan and to monitor the land, and the right to restore the power plant building and turn it into a nature interpretation centre.

From late 2009 to early 2012, xct developed a pilot initiative to achieve long term *in rem* agreements to enhance legal certainty of land stewardship agreements in general. Those rights that accompany land, and not persons, are known as *in rem rights* or *real estate rights*. *In rem* rights are constituted on the land to last on it regardless of changes in property.

As a result of this pilot initiative, four land stewardship organisations have signed deeds for terms of between 10 and 30 years, and three of them have been inscribed in the Real Estate Register. “La Central del Fai” was one of these agreements, and is especially remarkable as the legal form used is not typified by any rule, but drafted specially for this case for the first time in Spain.

In this initiative, xct worked in partnership with the Catalan institutions of notaries and real estate registrars. This partnership included a workshop and a seminar to transfer technical knowledge to the land stewardship organisations’ staff.



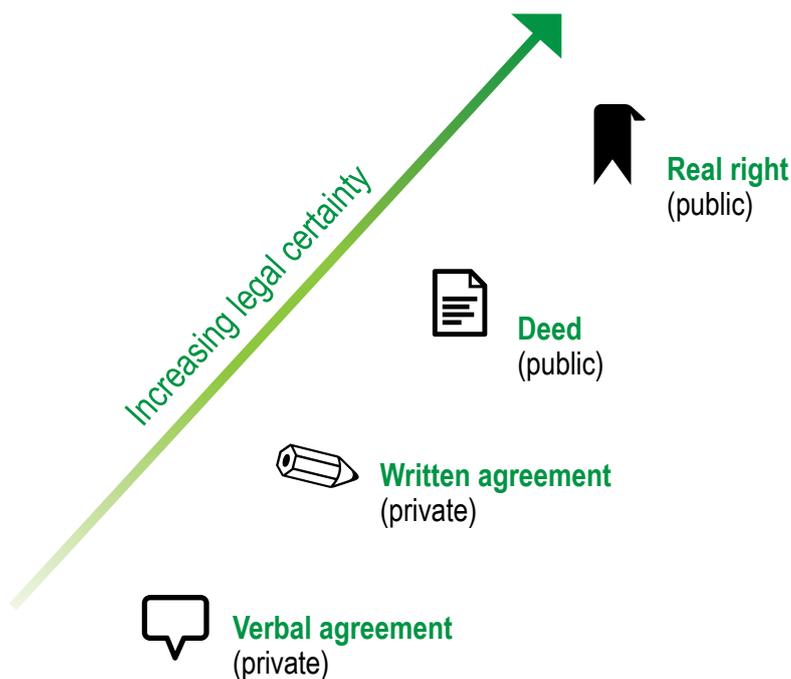
More information:
biguesiriells.wordpress.com

Legal certainty is not only useful to give confidence to the parties involved in a stewardship agreement: it is almost a *sine qua non* condition to ensure legal recognition of incentives for land stewardship over the long term, thanks to the proof of lasting protection measures.

Usually, a landowner and a stewardship organisation may start collaborating through verbal agreements for a short period of time, eventually renewed if the agreed objectives are achieved, and withdrawn if some part does not comply. In certain circumstances, this 'sincere handshake' can be a very useful preliminary tool and can lead later on to a longer-term partnership. It may take time (maybe more than 10 years) before settling an agreement under a form of top legal certainty. Before that, however, a suitable legal and fiscal framework should be set to help the legal consolidation of land stewardship techniques.



Figure 6. Legal certainty of land stewardship agreements.



Source: compiled by authors



3.4.2 The importance of a suitable legal framework

There are plenty of land stewardship techniques that do not require a specific legal framework, and, as explained above, a land stewardship agreement can be simply based on regular general private law. It is important to stress that to actually develop land stewardship techniques, it is not necessary that the law in force defines or mentions land stewardship. Moreover, it is not necessary for a specific law on land stewardship to be passed, to actually develop land stewardship techniques. Land stewardship is an available tool for organisations and landowners anywhere in Europe no matter the legal framework. However, in the long term, if land stewardship is to be an attractive tool for both land stewardship organisations and landowners, it will surely benefit from having a suitable legal framework to support stewardship initiatives be it at the National or European level.

Currently, European legislation and policy does not make explicit reference to “land stewardship” as an approach to biodiversity conservation or land management, and few national laws actually contain explicitly the phrase “land stewardship”. At the time of the publication of this Manual, Spain was the only country that had laws⁵ that referred to the preservation of natural heritage and biodiversity through land stewardship. These laws define the concept of land stewardship and land stewardship organisations, establishing rules for promotion mechanisms and incentives for land stewardship. These legal rules relate specifically to tax measures that support environmental services in favour of the preservation of natural heritage, CO₂ fixation and conservation of soils and waters, amongst others. However, the legal development of land stewardship in Europe is still in its early stages (see Section 5.1).

If land stewardship is to be an attractive tool for both land stewardship organisations and landowners, it will surely benefit from having a suitable legal framework to support stewardship initiatives be it at the National or European level.



Many European policies do promote participatory approaches, **contractual measures** and other actions involving landowners, civic society and within the private sector. Natura 2000 is a typical example of conferring a system of legal protection with a clear policy of participatory and partnership approach. This will be discussed more in detail in section 5.3.

In addition, there are many sectorial laws indirectly related to land stewardship: nature conservation, hunting, fishing, farming, landscape, civil contract, public participation and urban planning laws... all these may relate to land stewardship in some way or another, since land stewardship can be a very effective tool to reach these regulations' goals.

Moreover, when land stewardship agreements are recognised by contract law, they warrant higher legal certainty to the parties involved, as they rely on norms that assist in regulating with precision. But other issues arise from a favourable framework, such as tax incentives and economic and financial tools.

Tax incentives, in addition to economic and financial tools are a key issue regarding the consolidation of land stewardship as it happens in France with Natura 2000 implementation. A sound legal framework for land stewardship can offer tax benefits to the parties involved, and can also provide economic incentives and funding for conservation actions in lands under stewardship agreements.



DOMAINE DE PEYREMALE: FARMING IN A NATURA 2000 SITE CASE STUDY

Location: 76 Ha in Montolieu, 20 km northwest from Carcassonne in the area of the “Cabardès-Montagne Noire”, Languedoc-Roussillon (Département de l’Aude), France

Leading organisation: Conservatoire d’espaces naturels de Languedoc-Roussillon

Other stakeholders: Farmers, Conseil Général de l’Aude (departmental council), Société d’Etude Scientifique de l’Aude, LPO, OPIE, Fédération Aude Claire



The “Domaine de Peyremale”, part of the Natura 2000 site “Vallée du Lampy” (FR9101446), is a sheep farm of 76 ha managed by a couple of farmers. 72 ha are grazed by sheep (330) and is made up of wooded areas (15 ha), natural meadows (36 ha) and grasslands (21 ha). The farmers do not use any fertiliser, other than small amounts of manure. This management helps to maintain and develop an “islet” of exceptional biodiversity, remarkable in the region (and even in the country) and it contributes to good water quality in the nearby rivers.

This kind of extensive farming (that is, an agricultural production system that uses small inputs of labour, fertilisers, and capital, relative to the land area being farmed) is the main reason of the great biodiversity in the area, but it is also the cause of a lack of feeding resources for the livestock, posing

a threat to the economical sustainability of the farm. Therefore, the departmental council decided to provide finance for agri-environmental measures until the Natura 2000 contracting process can be used.

The **Conservatoire d’espaces naturels de Languedoc-Roussillon** (CEN L-R) reached agreements to maintain extensive farming and good practices, facilitating the departmental council to finance agri-environmental measures until the Natura 2000 contracting process is activated. Furthermore CEN L-R supports the proper management of the area and monitors the flora and fauna concerned by the agri-environmental measures (only the selected habitats, not all the property). Thanks to these agreements, the farmers can maintain good environmental practices by receiving financial compensation and technical advice.



More information:
www.cenlr.org

A suitable legal framework also helps to promote other activities by land stewardship organisations beyond land stewardship agreements, i.e. public-private partnerships, role in land planning, donor incentives, awareness activities, or advising farmers and landowners. It may also be useful for activities such as education, fund-raising, volunteer management, etc.

Regional and National institutions have a lot to say in this. Laws are approved at state and regional levels, and it is in each parliament and government where those tools may be discussed.

Many European NGOs are directly involved in the development of biodiversity and nature legislation in Europe (see section 4.2). They collaborate with other stakeholders and EU Institutions to develop and influence legislation that can be either directly or indirectly beneficial to land stewardship. It is important that stewardship organisations are involved in such policy development in order to give advice and advocate for specific stewardship issues. Land stewardship organisations can work with other stakeholders, NGOs, land managers, landowners and other society representatives to influence European Institutions to develop future proposals that benefit or contribute to land stewardship as an approach for biodiversity conservation across Europe. Land stewardship networks can have a very important role on this (see section 4.1).

It is also important that stewardship organisations and networks are involved in policy implementation within Member States. They have an important role to play with landowners and other stakeholders to ensure that legislation is beneficial to land stewardship and is implemented correctly and successfully.

Another reason why legislation is relevant for the promotion of land stewardship is that very often, when a law is passed, appropriate policies and strategies are to be introduced or implemented by the governments (take the Bird and Habitats directives and the Natura 2000 network as an example). It would be plausible that a law promoting land stewardship would be followed by a national or regional strategy on land stewardship.

Land stewardship organisations can work with other groups to influence European Institutions to develop future proposals that contribute to land stewardship.



For the last 25 years in the European Union, through EU legislation, a common framework for the management of nature conservation and natural resources has developed, although Member States enforce this European legislation according to their specific cultures and traditions. The legal system of each country is shaped by its unique history and therefore laws are incorporated in different ways. Each country and region has its own administrative framework, legal and normative development, ownership structures, and political and social culture; however they must be consistent with the European Directives. It is a common challenge to make land stewardship a well valued tool through social consensus and legal reinforcement.

Figure 7. Legal systems in Europe

-  Civil Law
-  Common Law
-  Bijuridical

Source: Wikipedia



In this sense, it is crucial to bear in mind the functional equivalences amongst legal concepts in Common law vs. Civil law and among European civil law systems. For example, an in rem right in Spain may not have the same characteristics as in Ireland or the Czech Republic; a notary doesn't have exactly the same function, for instance, in Italy as opposed to the United Kingdom. It is not the intention of this Manual to contain a full comparative law study, but in Europe (see figure 7) most differences in law systems are found amongst those countries based in Civil Law (most of Western Europe) and those based in Common Law (most of the UK, Ireland and Cyprus).

In any case, when implementing legal provisions from other countries (especially from different juridical traditions), beware of "false friends" in law terms, because one same term may have different meanings (i.e., the term "jurisprudence" can mean either "precedent" or "law theory" depending on the language and juridical tradition), and always seek legal advice from professionals.

Each country and region has its own administrative framework, legal and normative development, ownership structures, and political and social culture, and all that will determine how land stewardship is applied.



THE DUTCH MODEL OF LAND STEWARDSHIP NETWORKS AND ALLIANCES

Location: The Netherlands

Leading organisation: Staatsbosbeheer, Natuurmonumenten, Provinciale Landschappen

Other stakeholders: Kingdom of the Netherlands



Conservation organisations are a key player in the Dutch nature conservation system, contributing to a model based on the purchase of natural and non-natural areas. As a result of acquisition policies, these organisations own almost 12% of the surface of the country (Sabaté, 2001).

The leading organisations are: **Staatsbosbeheer**, founded in 1899, a national public body which originally was dedicated to forest management; **Natuurmonumenten**, a national association; and twelve provincial foundations that share the same character (**Provinciale Landschappen**). As in the UK, social support for conservation organisations is high and has a long history. For example, Natuurmonumenten was created in 1905 and with its 727,000 members (2011), it has been part of the top 3 membership organisations in the Netherlands for the last 15 years.

Acquisitions can be partly funded by national and provincial governments in equal shares. Natuurmonumenten and other organisations therefore devote most of their income to site management, but even the latter can be subsidised. Approximately 25% of Natuurmonumenten's income comes from governmental subsidies.

Acquisitions are mainly targeted at sites designated as "core areas" within the National Ecological Network (NEN), a network of existing and newly created

nature areas that is being developed and originally was planned to be ready by 2018 (Shine, 1996; Biemans & Snethlage, 2008). The NEN policy envisages developing 'new nature areas' by giving nature conservation function to 180,000 ha of agricultural land. The original intention was to have the government purchase this land to pass it on to nature conservation organisations. However, after policy changes were made in the past few years, more than a quarter of the 180,000 ha is to be managed by farmers or private landowners, provided that the costs should not exceed those for land acquisition, and that the same ecological results should be achieved. However, at the end of 2012 a new government was elected and the way of establishing the NEN is being debated once again.



More information:

www.staatsbosbeheer.nl
www.natuurmonumenten.nl
www.de12landschappen.nl

4. ENGAGING THE PARTIES INVOLVED IN LAND STEWARDSHIP

This chapter focuses on practical instruments and recommendations used mainly by stewardship organisations, to engage target groups in land stewardship. This chapter also provides insights to partnership and networking strategies. In addition, it deals with social involvement as a strategy to bring landowners, people and partner organisations closer to nature and landscape.



4.1 PARTNERSHIP AND NETWORKING AS A STRATEGY TO INVOLVE PARTIES

Nature offers many examples of species working together to obtain food, shelter, transportation, hygiene, etc. These symbiotic relationships consist of alliances between different individuals in order to achieve mutual benefits. Land stewardship is close to this idea, as its distinctive feature is the voluntary agreement between parties. But a strong collaboration may go beyond a single agreement, and most organisations build partnerships among various actors through what are also known as strategic alliances. In other words, land stewardship is based on alliances between people, places and nature.

A partnership means an on-going collaborative relationship between two or more parties, who work together toward some mutually held objective(s). In the context of today's world — increasingly globalised, changing and competitive — partnerships may become an optimal strategy for adapting to changes and to not remain at the mercy of circumstance. Moreover, the capacity for individual actions when confronting contemporary challenges, tend to be insufficient. It is then that concert-building and collaboration come along. The result of which is not the lineal sum of efforts but its multiplication. Partners in an alliance share efforts based on the features and capacity of each member, whereby, the collective contributions are greater than the sum of the individual parts.

This way of working makes much sense in land conservation, where stakeholders with different capacities (legal, administrative and economic) interact: partnerships can become the more interesting as they may involve diverse social groups and stakeholders, sometimes far away from conservation.

The in-built agreement culture in land stewardship and the enormous diversity of agents involved in land conservation open the door to many possibilities of strategic alliances to promote and carry out actions of stewardship. These alliances can take various shapes and are of unlimited variety. They depend on the imagination of the parties involved. Here are some imaginative examples as cited in Basora and Sabaté (2006):

- > A land stewardship organisation with high economic capacity acts through a smaller organisation who knows the territory and its people. Thus, the economic resources of the large institution are better used and the local organisation can intervene in conservation of its land with good financial support.
- > A company links their product to a land stewardship organisation. The organisation receives funding for their activity, and the company gets advertising with a continuous action of prestige



The enormous diversity of stakeholders involved in land conservation open the door to many possibilities of strategic alliances to promote and carry out actions of land stewardship.

in the area involved. Corporate social responsibility offers great potential for strategic alliances with stewardship organisations.

- > A land stewardship initiative is supported by several institutions and local businesses to apply for European funding.
- > A stewardship organisation reaches agreements endorsed by the Administration through a certain certification. In turn, it involves local tourism companies for the dissemination of this certification among its customers.
- > Land stewardship organisations from various places develop a joint project to offer similar stewardship agreements in their areas of action recognised by the general administration and private actors support. Thanks to the project, land stewardship organisations exchange experiences and learn together, and simultaneously achieve the recognition of society.
- > Two or more organisations share staff, equipment or one same office headquarters to reduce structural costs.

Land stewardship can envisage lots of benefits due to good partnership. Not only better use of resources and available means result from alliances, but some intangible benefits come out from alliances which are consistent with land stewardship (participation, wilfulness, collaboration...). An action carried out by more than one agent means more participation in its conception and execution, and increases its potential to reach a larger number of beneficiaries. This, in turn, brings prestige and social recognition of the initiative and creates a sense of community that has often been lost in our modern society.

A fruitful partnership implies a relationship of trust and mutual understanding and team work that should take many aspects into account. Alliances are created from the equality and from the voluntary will for all parties. If working together is made with transparency, imagination and flexibility, the benefits of nature conservation will so reflect. However, all actions must have a representative that will oversee actions of each partner. Someone has to take the lead.

Just as with stewardship agreements, partnerships can be settled through a simple handshake, or may take a more institutional form. In these cases a formalised agreement may spell out the nature of the joint work and the responsibilities of each partner.

Regardless of whether a partnership is formal or informal, an effort must be made to keep it strong and alive. At some point, problems or differences of opinions may arise, even with the best of relationships. An existing, vibrant, working relationship provides a platform of trust and common purpose that makes it much easier to address issues as they arise. Good relationships are based on trust, and it



takes time and effort to develop and maintain relationships that will result in effective collaboration.

Face to face meetings are still the best option to have a full relationship with others, however there are lots of tools that help to achieve and keep networking alliances. Information and Communications Technology (videoconference tools, shared folders, cloud services, etc.) offer a lot of opportunities to link people and organisations that just some years ago seemed unthinkable. They allow optimising resources and increasing the scope and impact of networking between individuals and between groups.

Creating, nurturing and maintaining partnerships is more of an art and an attitude in human relationship, than a methodology. Learning by doing, and being inspired by example of others (like the case studies in this Manual) can be a good way to start on a good foot.

Box 6. The keys to build genuine relationships

- Focus on shared core objectives.
- Communicate well and often.
- Use an open and inclusive approach.
- Be honest and keep no hidden agendas. Establish mutual trust.
- Listen well, be flexible, and be responsive to the needs and concerns of others.
- Develop collaborative leadership skills.
- Understand the goals, expectations, and organisational culture of the other parties.
- Go out to where people are; don't wait for them.
- Evaluate and monitor the performance of the partnership. Foresee any conflict before it shows up.
- Remember that good personal relationships underlie good organisational relationships.

Source: Adapted from Tuxill *et al.* (2009)

Building and maintaining effective relationships should always be a priority as it enhances the ability of an organisation to achieve its objectives and builds broader support. Strategic alliances, well raised and enforced, are a powerful tool to streamline resources, people, projects, etc. As simple and complex as the old saying that there's strength in numbers.

4.1.1 Allies for land stewardship promotion at a regional or national level

Promoting land stewardship cannot be a solo effort, so institutional alliances and partnerships are essential to develop a strong network of people and organisations promoting land stewardship. Strong social and communication skills will be necessary to pull together stakeholders such as:

- **Nature conservation organisations:** Many may in fact realise that some of their projects (if not most) do fit within the stewardship concept. They will be the key partners to start building a network for the promotion of land stewardship (see section 4.1.2).
- **Public administration (at all administrative levels):** Public agencies have an important role giving support to land stewardship. Both technical and political support, as well as legal development will come from the public sphere (parliaments as well as governments), so it is crucial to make them a key ally. The kind of support and activities may differ amongst administrative levels, and local administrations can play a more active role developing stewardship initiatives in their municipalities.
- **Public protected areas managers:** are also important public stakeholders, especially on those protected areas that need active landscape management. Protected areas managers must adjust to declining public resources available for protection, at the same time that they must work more closely with residents in and around protected areas. The stewardship approach therefore offers a way to deal with the forces of change underway in the region.



- **Landowner and farming organisations:** Landowners and land users organisations (farmers, foresters, timber organisations, hunting & fishing clubs), as their members are key partners in land stewardship agreements, are one of the most important stakeholders to contact with when developing land stewardship. It is important that these organisations are in contact with the development of the movement at its early stages.
- **Universities and research centres and technical consultants:** Land stewardship needs a lot of Research and Development, so it is important to involve research centres in its development, especially at the beginning, when innovation is most necessary. A land stewardship organisation should have access to scientific advice: to get expert (local if possible) advice or existing research on specific practices, habitat management, species requirements, consult scientists to base management on sound practices, and also to topics more specific of stewardship: legal development, negotiation and participation, incentive, externalities and ecosystem services, etc. This is key for credibility and successful results.
- **Businesses and private foundations and funders:** The role of corporate companies and private foundations can be determining to rise funding, and also to offer advice, pro-bono support, in-company volunteers, commercial services or products to help developing land stewardship. Specific sectors can see more clearly the value of these partnerships (tourism, agricultural services, ecological agriculture, primary sector businesses, etc.).
- **Lawyer, notary and registry institutions:** These institutions may help engage law professionals in the knowledge of the reality of land stewardship, developing new agreement models, and can be of great help to increase the legal certainty (and value) of land stewardship agreements.
- **European networks and land stewardship organisations in other countries:** They can give support, share their positive and negative experiences, help demonstrate success stories to main stakeholders
- **Other organisations and networks:** There may be other organisations and networks in the region, working with parallel objectives (youth, social entrepreneurship, volunteer work, agriculture issues...), to become part of them or collaborate with them.



BREEDING SHEEPS TO PREVENT FOREST FIRES CLOSE TO THE CITY

CASE STUDY

Location: Girona (Catalonia, Spain)

Leading organisation: Ajuntament de Girona (Girona City Council)

Other stakeholders: Landowner, Ministerio de Agricultura, Alimentación y Medio Ambiente



The Sant Daniel valley is a transitional space, strategically located between the town of Girona and the western foothills of the forest area of the Gavarres massif. The risk of forest fires in a peri-urban area increases with the abandonment of agriculture, and maintaining agricultural mosaic in such areas is emerging as the only measure to prevent the spread of wildfire in the area of the Gavarres. Also, the use of traditional farming and livestock activities help to maintain the ecological and landscape quality of the area in which they are located.

The traditional agricultural use in this area is in danger due to the lack of economic viability, and now owners find it impossible to maintain this use. The abandonment of

agricultural activity threatens ecological and landscape values and enhances the risk of forest fires.

The **Girona City Council** launched an initiative to promote the conservation of the municipal territory and maintain its ecological landscape quality. The City Council contacted the various owners of the area to establish land stewardship agreements, with the main goal of maintaining traditional agriculture activities. In some cases, it is the owner himself who continues farming, and, in other cases, the City Council has contracted a herd and someone else to farm. In some areas there have been other actions like the clearing of land when the forest has started growing again after agriculture has been abandoned.



More information:
www.girona.cat

The numbers and variety of stakeholders engaged in stewardship can be bewildering at first, but in the end, it is one of the strengths of this approach to conservation. With many actors, facilitators and enablers engaged in land stewardship, their many voices make the system stronger, but this requires strong and effective partnership among these key stakeholders.

All these stakeholders can be put together under an umbrella organisation, specifically land stewardship networks, which do evolve in most regions where stewardship becomes a stable and valued strategy by society.

4.1.2 Land stewardship networks

Different types of alliances lie at the heart of different types of networks. Networks of people and organisations can sometimes be referred to as 'umbrella' organisations (or networks), which are fairly common especially with private organisations. Other names for these kind of organisations are platforms, councils, federations, coordinators, second tier organisations... They can facilitate the development of the land stewardship approach at the local, regional, national or international levels. Some examples of nature conservation and land stewardship networks are Eurosite and the Catalan [Xarxa de Custòdia del Territori \(xct\)](#) (leading partner of the LandLife project), the [Federation of Conservatories of Natural areas in France](#), Czech Union for Nature Conservation ([ČSOP](#)) in Czech Republic, [De Landschappen](#) in the Netherlands, [Deutsche Verband für Landschaftspflege \(DVL\)](#) in Germany, and [Foro de Redes y Entidades de Custodia del Territorio](#) (land stewardship forum) in Spain.

Stewardship networks can also be effective if they are more loose and informal, as a response to particular circumstances. A very recent example of this is the 2011 funded [TransCantabric Network on Land Stewardship](#), an informal (with no legal entity) network covering the coastal and mountain regions of North Atlantic Spain, which has started as a very active group of land stewardship organisations.

A special feature of land stewardship networks is that they may be formed by more than one kind of organisation and may cover land with different legal status and ownership. While most umbrella organisations are formed by members sharing a similar profile, a land stewardship network may bring together stewardship organisations, public administrations, landowners and the full array of stakeholders that interact in land stewardship, for a common goal. Stewardship networks engage diverse partners in ways that build a sense of common purpose and ownership in the on-going collaborative work. In the most effective networks, more and more partners align their efforts directly with the initiative's goals and mission over time.



Land stewardship networks may be formed by more than one kind of organisation and may cover land with different legal status and ownership.



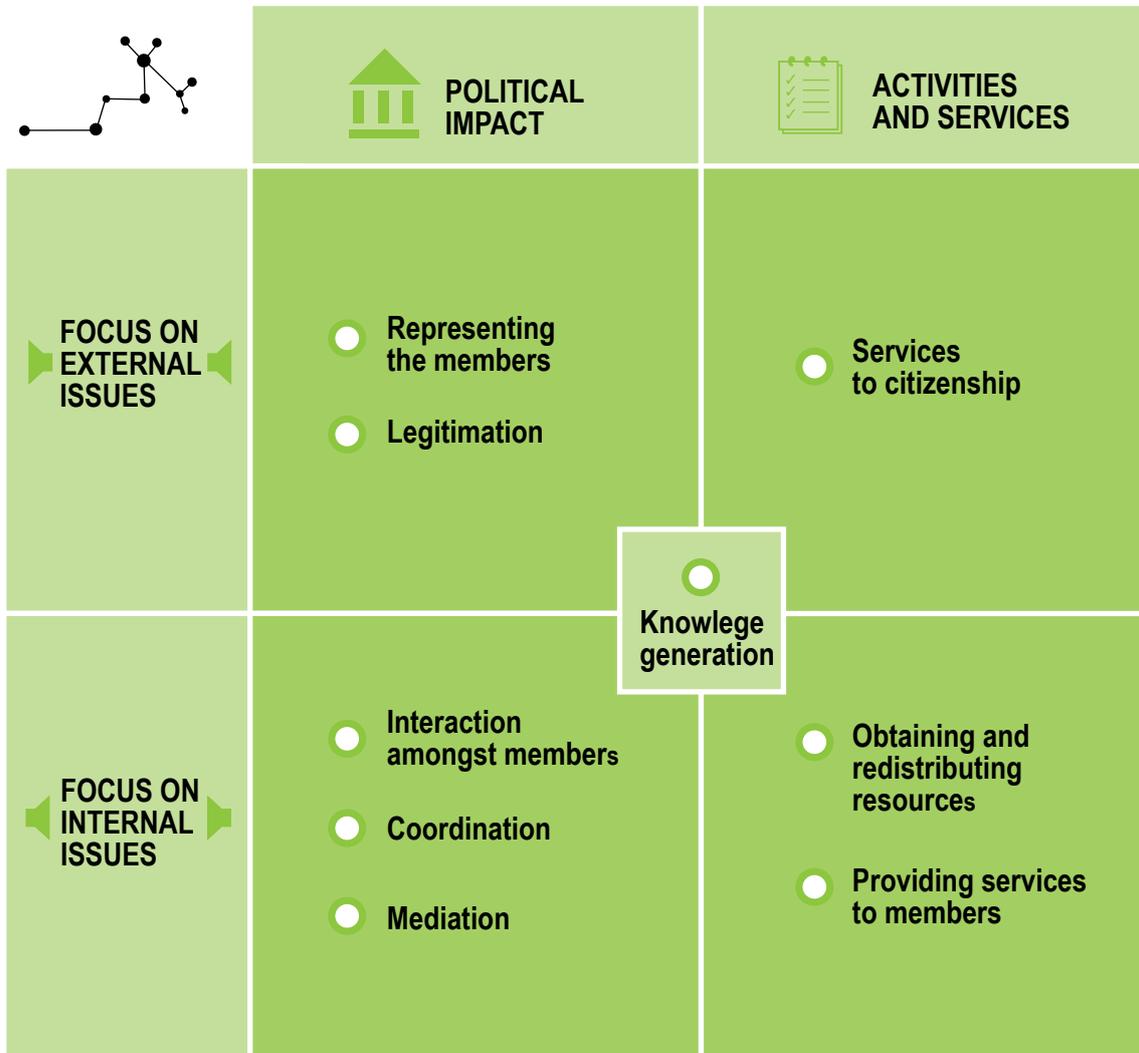
Mainly, land stewardship networks exist to provide support to other organisations. To be more specific, below are the functions that an umbrella organisation may develop regarding land stewardship (see figure 8).

- **Interaction amongst members:** Networks are fundamentally meeting points. Relationship building is an important investment in the future of any network, and presence and virtual meetings amongst members help strengthening the bonds in the network. Exchanging experiences and other opportunities of joint work amongst members are to be enhanced in any network, especially when made up by a diversity of stakeholders. This function may include coordination of joint actions by members, or solving conflicts amongst them. Working groups and task forces for certain issues on land stewardship are other ways of interaction amongst members.
- **Providing services to members:** One of the most common functions of a network, and the most valued services are legal support (see section 3.4), fundraising and communication services (see section 4.3.1).
- **Providing services to citizenship:** Some networks can also offer services to citizenship and the whole society in behalf of the member organisations. This would be the case of a volunteering organisations network that offers stays in work camps to youngsters.
- **Obtaining and redistributing resources:** Land stewardship networks may have access to certain resources, specifically oriented to networking, and ability to redistributing them among its members.
- **Knowledge generation:** Networks may have the capability to generate knowledge beyond the availability of its member organisations. Some research projects may be expensive and better engaged from a network than from single organisations. An example of this is the elaboration of guidelines for landowner contact (see section 4.2.1), the establishment of best practices in land stewardship, or studies of the development of stewardship in a certain territory, or manuals as this one.
- **Representing the members:** The network can speak in name of its members in a given context. This may economise energy and resources when acting in behalf of a broader group. It will also facilitate dialoguing with stakeholders who would not be available to small organisations. For example, when interacting with the parliament as a lobby to pass a law on land stewardship (see section 3.4.2), a network may be more powerful and legitimate speaker than a single organisation. To develop this



function adequately, the network must count with full trust from its member organisations, something that may come over after some years of sound collaboration and well-functioning of the network in all the other aspects that have been commented.

Figure 8. The functions of a land stewardship network



Source: Based on Observatori del Tercer Sector, 2009.

Well-functioning networks rely on sound relationships, leadership, good communication, trust and respect, transparency in network operations, and ultimately shared responsibility and accountability. Obvious as it may seem, organisational networks work fine when its members sense they obtain more benefits from participating in them than the costs of being part of them.

4.1.3 European and global alliances and networking

Working at an international level may empower land stewardship organisations and networks, and give projects an innovative, transnational, comparative and broader scope, and access to a wide variety of new possibilities. This is one of the key aims of LandLife Project. In fact, the LandLife [website](#) acts as a base point to promote land stewardship internationally.

Although they offer a lot of opportunities to the parties involved, participating in partnerships at an international level is not exempt of challenges, especially regarding communication. Language can be a barrier, and the physical distance among members may be sometimes limiting when coordinating tasks. Different cultures have different world views as well, and that may also generate some challenges. Due to these types of challenges, it is fundamental that among partnerships proper communication, trust, transparency and shared goals, are established and continue to be worked on from the beginning, when outlining the project or joint-working envisaged. Fluid networking on land stewardship will also have to be sensible to the particularities of each land stewardship approach (amongst countries and regions in Europe, and even more at the international level).

Some of the calls for proposals for European projects are oriented with a European focus and perspective. Their results have to be disseminated to reach out to a wider public, and a commitment to reach international audiences is one of their core requirements (see section 5.4). This may be one reason to work with international partners, but it should not be the only one!

There are several examples of international partnerships in land stewardship. In Europe, there is a noteworthy collaboration over two years between the Catalan xct and the Czech ČSOP, to promote international exchange, and between Euro-regional land stewardship cooperation network (See page 78). The LandLife project, in fact, is the result of an international partnership of organisations from different countries in Europe.



THE PYRENEES MEDITERRANEAN EUROREGIONAL LAND STEWARDSHIP COOPERATION NETWORK

NETWORKS AND ALLIANCES

Location: Catalonia, Aragon, Balearic Islands and the French regions of Midi-Pyrénées and Languedoc-Roussillon

Leading organisation: xct



Euroregions are an EU instrument to coordinate action amongst trans boundary territories. One of these euroregions is the Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euroregion, comprising the Spanish regions of Catalonia, Aragon, Balearic Islands and the French regions of Midi-Pyrénées and Languedoc-Roussillon (see map). The population of this Euroregion is 14 million inhabitants and an area of 152,831 km². One of its objectives is fostering cooperation networks.

The first Euroregional Land Stewardship Network in Europe, following the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC, Regulation (EC) 1082/2006 of the European Parliament), was formed in the Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euroregion, with participation of the **Conservatoires d'espaces naturels Languedoc-Roussillon & Midi-Pyrénées**, **xct**, **ICTIB** and **Avinença** the Catalan, Balearic and Valencian land stewardship networks.

The overall aim of the Pyrenees Mediterranean Euroregional land stewardship cooperation network is to create a meeting place to ensure regular exchange of information and experiences as well as a coordinated action between partners beyond administrative boundaries. In other words, provide trans boundary policies and tools between the partners within the different regions. All this with the aim to contribute to the social interest of the conservation and land stewardship in the whole Euroregion.

The network was created in 2009 through a series of meetings and exchanges among the founding organisations and currently involves 9 stewardship networks and organisations in the Euroregion. The network runs with a loose but active model of relationship trying to find common interests as they arise. Some results are, a Euroregional green infrastructure model (**EURO-IN-VER**), experience sharing activities (exchanges, field visits and joint seminars), and a simple up-to-date **blog**. LandLife is the first long-term project involving Euroregional partners, and new projects are continuously sought.

L'EUROREGIÓ PIRENEUS MEDITERRÀNIA

L'EURRÉGIÓN PYRÉNÉES-MÉDITERRANÉE

POBLACIÓ / POPULATION:
14.000.000 HABITANTS

EXTENSIÓ / EXTENSION:
152.831 KM²



More information:
cepmctgc.blogspot.com

4.2 ENGAGING LANDOWNERS

The main way to involve landowners is through land stewardship agreements (see section 3.2). The process to get to sign an agreement includes one or more visits to the property and a necessary negotiation between two or more parties. This section includes guidelines to engage landowners that a stewardship organisation should consider before contacting the owner, when the contact starts, and during the agreement negotiation. However, every agreement is different, so the procedures presented will have to be adapted to each case.

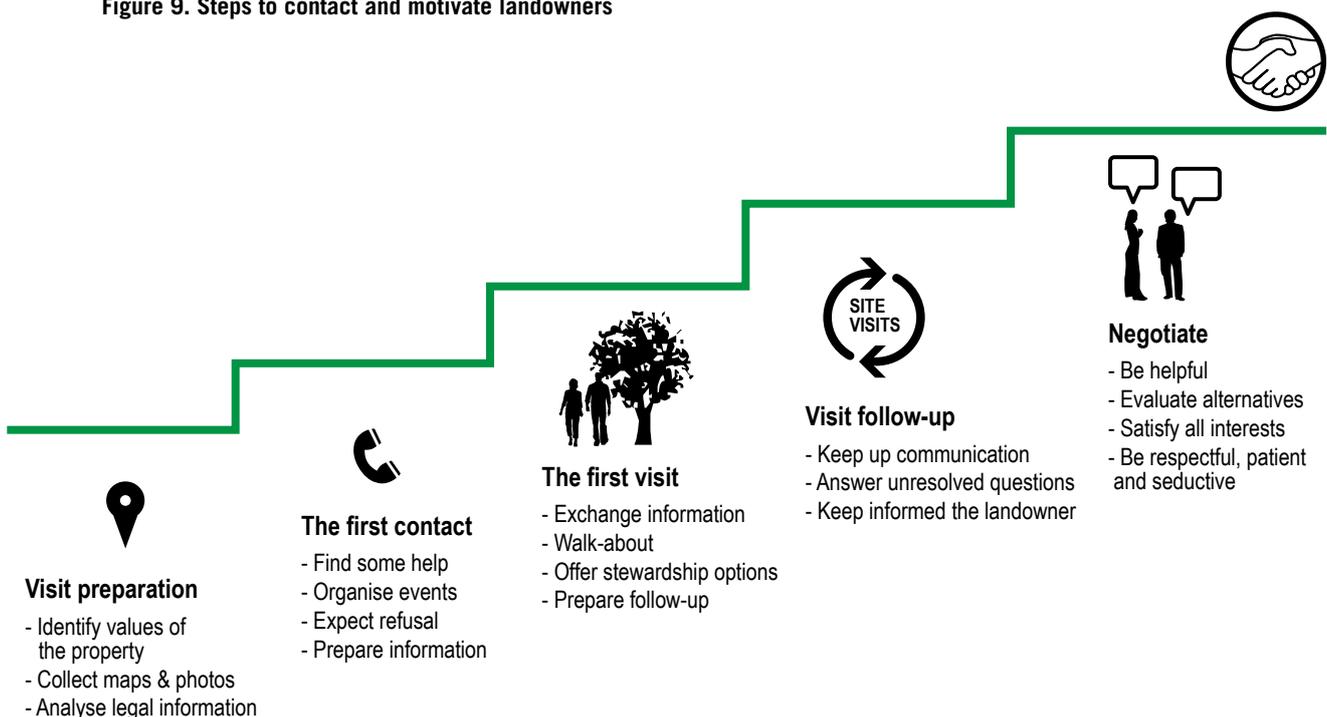
However, stewardship agreements are not the only option. Other activities such as awareness-raising of landowners, punctual actions of landowner support, volunteer actions, or acknowledgement actions are some other tools available for organisations (see [Land Stewardship Toolkit](#)). Though obviously these actions do not imply an agreement as such, they may be fundamental to set a collaborative framework with the landowner, and to give support to on-going stewardship agreements.



4.2.1 Contacting and motivating landowners

The following recommendations are proposed for land stewardship organisations to prepare and carry out **landowner contacts**⁶. However, the following guidelines are simple suggestions, not a fixed procedure to apply everywhere. Every stewardship organisation has a particular way to work adapted to individual landowners, local conditions, etc.

Figure 9. Steps to contact and motivate landowners



Source: Compiled by authors



A. Before the visit: information to search

A good preparation prior to contact is essential to make the process more productive and fulfilling for both parties. Since the main task of personal contact is to provide information, the land stewardship organisation must research different types of information.

If the organisation has developed a strategy to prioritise its action (see [Land Stewardship Toolkit](#)), it will find it easier to focus efforts on the most important values of the property that it will visit. It is usual to consult biophysical resources inventories to collect this type of information. Government agencies —and their websites— and other conservation organisations (be them larger or more local) may provide the most recent information.

It is essential to collect maps and aerial photos to know natural areas, waterways, buildings, roads, property lines and other important features of a property. Furthermore, it is important to check the municipal planning to obtain more detailed maps. Aerial photographs provide the only 'true picture' of a site and also give some historical information, depending on the year they were taken. The information obtained can be used to create a landowner map site: a map that illustrates the natural and human features of the area that will probably be a valuable resource contacting a person.

Legal information is also very important. Land registry maps are useful for identifying property limits and the area dimensions, and also the name of the owners. Where information gaps persist, the organisation can fill in the blanks by interviewing the landowner or by talking with neighbours or other landowners in the area.

B. Preparing for the visit: the first contact

Once all the available information is collected, the next step is to contact the landowner to arrange a visit. Some organisations may move forward on the basis of previous contact with an acquaintance of the landowner (a friend, a neighbour or a member of the city council...). This previous contact can serve to inform the landowner that he will receive a phone call by a respectful and supportive conservation group he or she knows, contributing to build trust. Alternatively, the stewardship organisation can arrange a workshop, a public discussion or an information event to invite a group of landowners —and other stakeholders— of an area. This event can be useful to explain the organisation mission and actions and to prepare landowners for individual contacts.

When contacting with an unknown landowner for the first time, the organisation has to be prepared to respond properly to any reluctance the owner may present. They may have had a bad experience with another group, think they will have to give up money or rights,



Since the main task of personal contact is to provide information, the land stewardship organisation must research different types of information related to the property.

are worried about what their neighbours will think, are suffering personal or economic hardship, or don't like to be involved in public programmes.

Once the visit has been arranged, it is essential to prepare written information, such as brochures of the land stewardship organisation or some of its projects or stewardship agreements. It is also important to offer a brief presentation on the property with the main values, maps and aerial photos. To explain how land stewardship works, it is useful to provide a guide or a manual (like this one you are reading, for example).

C. During the first visit

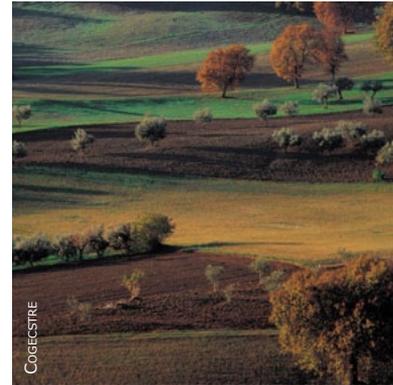
This first visit gives the landowner an opportunity to obtain information on land stewardship options and allows the organisation to hear him or her talk about their land, how they manage it, what they know about the resources, as well as the history of the land (past owners and uses...).

Since landowner contact is a continuous process, what doesn't get accomplished on this visit can be done later. Therefore it is always important to arrange a follow-up visit after the first and the following encounters.

During this first visit, a good idea with significant benefits is a "walk-about", the term given to walking around a site with the owner during which the organisation can point out plant or animal species, valuable habitats and other signs of wildlife, best practices in the owners' specific crop production or use of the land, or cultural heritage (stone walls...).

Finding out how a landowner protects or manages natural and cultural features of their property and providing landowners with information on how to further protect these features is a first step to build a long-term relationship. In this sense, it is useful to provide the landowner with a specific publication on land stewardship options and the different levels of commitment that involves. This information is the first step to negotiating an agreement during the next visits and contacts.

After the visit, it is also helpful to fill in a form for recording observations during the site visit. Early in the process, before any visit is made, organisations must decide exactly what information they want to collect. Once the site is visited, the organisations' staff will fill in the remainder, noting such details as prominent natural and cultural features and the landowner's interests, attitude and concerns.



Box 7. Tips for stewardship organisations wanting to motivate and involve landowners

Mutual trust and owner's motivation are imperative conditions for a successful agreement between the owner and the organisation. Some tips to motivate landowners are:

- > Generate a relaxed atmosphere before starting to talk about land stewardship options. Start by asking the owner about subjects he or she is comfortable with. This period of introduction can help put the two of you at ease with each other. Once you're both feeling comfortable, get down to business.
- > A visit is a two-way conversation, not an interview. Don't bring a questionnaire with you, or make extensive notes during your visit. If you want to know something, ask informally. Then record your information on a document after you leave, while details of the visit are still fresh in your mind.
- > In the first meeting, pay attention and detect the owner's main interests and worries in order to offer him or her solutions to be included, if possible, in the agreement. Active listening —listening to both the feeling and the meaning of what speaker is saying— can help you get a better understanding of a landowner's perspective.
- > Provide the owner with clear information about the value of his or her land and the importance of its conservation. Showing pictures, data and visiting the property is a good way to generate confidence in this sense.
- > Clarify the confidentiality of your conversation and site notes right away. Be honest about the fact that some information will be retained in your records, reiterating that no details will be released without the owner having first given permission.
- > Explain and remark the benefits and advantages that the organisation can offer the owner (such as commitment, advice, support, information...). Also highlight the intangible benefits such as personal satisfaction, social recognition and learning. Basic information about how the organisation is funded and who is paying for this service could be clarified here so the owner does not assume he will bear the cost.
- > Remark the importance of the owner's implication to ensure a long term conservation of land's values.
- > Avoid critiquing the owner's land management practices.
- > Inspire credibility by explaining the good results achieved in other agreements done by the organisation. In this sense, offer the possibility of visiting other properties to share impressions and feelings with other owners.
- > Have ready responses to frequently asked questions from landowners (see [Frequently Asked Questions](#) in the LandLife website and Basora, 2009)

Source: Compiled by authors, based on Duynstee (1997).

D. Follow-up visits

Short-term follow-ups generally consist of a simple thank-you letter or e-mail one or two weeks after the visit. That gives enough time for the organisation to review the main comments and ideas discussed during the visit and include information about upcoming events such as workshops or field trips. It is also a good opportunity to incorporate responses to any unanswered questions during the site visit. As well as saying thank you, the letter reinforces the positive experience of the visit and paves the way for further cooperative efforts.

It is the owner now who is meant to take further action—at the very least, after reading the message they should know how to get in contact with the land stewardship organisation if they need anything else.

It is important to write a good agreement as a first step to achieve full compliance, so the terms and commitments are clear, unambiguous and applicable to ensure good monitoring.

4.2.2 Negotiating an agreement

After the first visit, and depending on the results, organisations will need more visits and contacts (even involving any other parties) to negotiate and close a land stewardship agreement. As seen on section 3.2, a stewardship agreement must include different aspects. Now, some useful tips to be considered during the negotiation are presented.

Land stewardship option. To choose the most suitable option agreement, a balance must be sought between the property features, the landowner interests and concerns, and the organisation goals. Every option has particular conditions according to legislation (see section 3.4), so the organisation (and the landowner as well) may need a legal advisor (see [Land Stewardship Toolkit](#)).

Site planning. Some stewardship agreements involve the drafting of a management plan, namely, a technical document that will determine strategies and actions in the mid and long term that will be developed on the property. However, in many cases it won't be necessary to elaborate a management plan, avoiding then the related economic cost. Simple management guidelines and practices will be enough. These guidelines can be attached as an add-on to the stewardship agreement, or written later once the agreement has been reached (see [Land Stewardship Toolkit](#)).

Land management responsibility. If the landowner accepts, the stewardship organisation is capable and the site has a strategic importance, the organisation can assume land management. However, organisations must be realistic and avoid commitments that exceed their capacities. In this sense, many land stewardship organisations, especially smaller, avoid taking full management of the site, but prefer to advise the owner on new management criteria that conserve natural resources and values.



Who implements and finances the management measures and practices? It is important that the agreement determines the responsibility for implementing each management measures and possible ways of financing, as well as eventual subsidies and tax benefits. Different stakeholders can assume funding: landowners, land stewardship organisations, government agencies, sponsors, etc.

Public communication. It is important for the stewardship organisation that the agreement is well known by media, neighbourhood and other stakeholders. But the owner may not be interested to publicise the agreement in case it increases the number of visitors in his or her property. Usually, both parties should make the agreement public, contributing to their mutual recognition. In addition, the media coverage allows other owners to be interested on land stewardship.

Signposting properties. Land stewardship organisations —and landowners too— will usually want to install signposts in main entrances to the property, where to include the name of the property and the existence of an agreement. The owner or the organisation can take over the costs, depending on the possibilities of each one.

Agreement monitoring. It is essential to provide a monitoring programme to check periodically the implementation of the commitments by both parties (see 3.3.2).



Box 8. Key rules to be considered during any negotiation

- **No one will negotiate with you unless he thinks that you can help him/her.** In land stewardship, a good explanation is required on how the land stewardship organisation—and the agreement— can benefit the landowner. It is very important to stress what your organisation can provide to landowners that they can't easily obtain otherwise.
- **The alternatives represent all the power you have in negotiation.** In all negotiations it is important to look outward and be aware of existing solutions for both sides. The organisation must evaluate successfully all alternatives before closing a deal. This will let you know the real value of each possible deal, and reach the best agreement.
- **Identify particular interests at stake.** Each party has its own interests, and each party values them in their own way. It is very important to distinguish those interests, because they will be the main keys in negotiation. The agreement must satisfy, to a greater or lesser extent, the interests of both parties.
- **The negotiation rules are tacitly accepted through the relationship established by both parts.** The rules of the negotiation (treatment, time and location of meetings, formality, media between parts, etc.) are unique to each agreement, depending to your interlocutor.
- **Best attitudes and values to negotiate: be respectful,** humble, honest, patient, persistent and persuasive. You must practise active listening, don't force the agreement and never forget that landowners always have the last say.

Source: Capdevila *et al.* (2008).

4.3 ENGAGING CITIZENS

Land stewardship provides a good framework to boost many ways of social involvement with land and nature. Obviously, landowners are more than simply the main stakeholder, as they are a fundamental part of the process, when they become involved in land stewardship through agreements with organisations, as well as by other means. However, land stewardship offers an excellent opportunity to empower citizens and allow for active involvement in the conservation of biodiversity, nature and landscape. In fact, the origin of a land stewardship organisation is often the interest of a group of people to improve land use and protect natural and cultural features.

Land stewardship organisations need a strong social involvement for many reasons (see box 9). Reaching this social involvement with nature conservation usually is one of the main goals of any stewardship organisation, sometimes even part of the mission statement.

As strong a land stewardship movement may seem, it will always be ineffective if it does not have a broad support from citizenship. Accordingly, social involvement will need a lot of efforts, resources and time from organisations.

Box 9. Benefits from social involvement for land stewardship organisations

- > **Economic stable resources.** From membership subscriptions, sponsors, companies, donors, specific campaigns and appeals (crowd funding), visitor incomes to properties or merchandising.
- > **Human resources.** Through voluntary dedication.
- > **Increase membership and social base.** Citizen activities and campaigns are a good chance to explain the goals of land stewardship organisations and to recruit new members.
- > **Achieve wider public legitimacy.** Beyond the mission, greater legitimacy comes from having an active and involved social base.
- > **Mobilise capacity.** A strong membership and a great number of volunteers is a good base to mobilise and involve other people for specific campaigns.
- > **Generate knowledge and new ideas.** People involved in organisations can provide strategic ideas and reflections about the environment and related issues to identify new challenges and areas for action and to better adapt to changes.
- > **Exchange and diversity.** Engaging citizens in stewardship activities allows rural land-owners and local groups to exchange with members and volunteers from urban areas and elsewhere, thus creating a sense of shared place and commitment for stewardship of natural heritage in the land.
- > **Power for advocacy.** An extensive social involvement is necessary to achieve political impact (if it is one of the organisation objectives).

Source: compiled by authors, based on *Observatori del Tercer Sector* (2007).

Through social involvement, land stewardship organisations have the opportunity to help people understand and appreciate the importance of natural and cultural resources. Land stewardship allows the development of personal connections with nature and landscape, so that citizens find ways to underpin long-term attachment to these values.

Each person has a unique combination of identity, values, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, education, behaviour, etc. and therefore the process of engagement will vary depending on the individual carrying out that activity. So, involvement can therefore be described as a process, or a ladder, with increasing levels of engagement into the stewardship organisation (Esteban *et al.*, 2009). I.e., involvement can begin with awareness and knowledge (people talking about the organisation), continue with interest (people want information about it), then individuals can participate in its activities —occasionally or as continuously involved volunteers— and, finally, collaborate with the organisation with money —as members, ambassadors/representatives or as donors in specific campaigns or projects.

There are many ways for the general public to get involved with land stewardship (see box 10).



Box 10. Different ways people can become involved in land stewardship

- **Basic knowledge and interaction.** As citizens, we can be informed of the organisations' action through social networks, newsletters, websites, books, etc. and we can also express our opinions.
- **Visiting nature reserves and properties with land stewardship agreements.** People can be in contact with nature and know organisations projects through guided tours. Paying these guided tours people are also supporting financially nature conservation. Visitors are an excellent source of potential new membership.
- **Participating in activities offered by organisations.** Stewardship organisations are very active and offer a lot of activities for general public or local communities: dinners with fresh products from land under stewardship agreement, talks, fairs, photo contests, polls, etc.
- **Shopping responsibly.** Individuals can buy products (food, drinks, clothes, crafts...) made with raw material from sites with stewardship agreements. Another type of products can be merchandising (books, posters, caps, T-shirts, toys, etc.) and, in the same way, mean a contribution to organisation action. A good gift can also be a membership for a friend or relative.
- **Volunteering.** Organisations offer different ways to recruit volunteers. People can participate in a specific activity as a volunteer or become a volunteer.
- **Specific donations, social investment & crowd funding.** People can donate money for specific actions or campaigns launched by stewardship organisations. Projects generating a margin of benefit can attract social investment. Individuals can also leave a legacy to the organisation in their will (see section 3.2.4).
- **Membership.** People can become members of a land stewardship organisation. Through subscriptions, individuals support the activity of the organisation and receive services — and a lot of intangible benefits.
- **Advisor, opinion leader, ambassadors/champions.** Individuals can invite contacts and friends to engage with land stewardship and nature conservation.

Source: Compiled by authors and advisors.

Organisations must define their target groups —it could be a long list— and after deciding the priority groups to engage in stewardship organisations, they should address their activities and communicate their messages to landowners, land users (farmers, hunters, fishermen, foresters, etc.), leisure organisations, the elderly, schools and teachers, university students and, of course, people interested in nature and landscape conservation. I.e., there are many different approaches to engaging youth directly, such as on-site class visits, after-school programmes, mentoring, internships, and summer work programmes, as well as indirectly through teacher enrichment and training (Tuxill *et al.*, 2009).



Land stewardship organisations use different strategies and tools to engage individuals, and this section will only present the main tools at hand.

4.3.1 Effective communication to mobilise people

Since land stewardship is a strategy that tries to connect people with nature, communication is a crucial tool for land stewardship organisations. Not only landowners, but the public in general, need to be aware of the services such organisations provide to local communities and society. Land stewardship, and messages like “people caring for the land” or “Conversations on conservation” can appeal to strong emotions and seduce for nature. Other ideas and messages related to land stewardship can be found in Box 11.



Box 11. Main ideas and messages to communicate land stewardship to the general public

- **Preserving nature and landscape, everybody matters.** The essence of land stewardship is the joint work of many people from different groups.
- **Enjoying nature, respecting it.** Usually, people can visit and know natural sites with land stewardship agreements. It is a big opportunity to connect with nature.
- **Working with nature.** Sites with land stewardship agreements are good examples of caring for nature.
- **Helping to manage the countryside.** Stewardship organisations help landowners to manage and maintain their properties. A well-managed countryside provides a lot of ecosystem services for the society.
- **Caring for our local environment, know it and be watchdogs.** As citizens, we can use land stewardship tools to take care for these local places that we love or we use in our leisure.
- **Addressing a diversity of issues.** Land stewardship can help local sustainability and climate resilience, preserve local ecosystem services used by the community, gives opportunity for personal engagement and is part of rebuilding lost local community, etc.
- **Contributing to create new jobs.** Land stewardship is part of green economy concept and can generate new jobs through organisations involved.
- **An opportunity for participating in Natura 2000.** Land stewardship offers valuable tools for addressing the biodiversity conservation challenges set by Habitats Directive — and Natura 2000 network— and other European strategies and policies.
- **Being part of a known strategy around the world and Europe.** Land stewardship has been applied successfully for years in many parts of the world.

Source: Compiled by authors, based on Basora (2009), and advisors.

Beyond the messages, land stewardship organisations must build trust and people must be moved. There are several ways to achieve this goal, i.e with real stories involving real people, sense of humour, collaborating with celebrities, using inspiring or cheering up images and videos⁷, etc. But most importantly, building trust depends on being positive, innovative and creative. Land stewardship organisations can benefit from social media and appearances in traditional media (TV, radio, press). To do that, land stewardship organisations can capture attention through different events (Box 12).

Social involvement is also a measure of the effectiveness of communication skills—and resources— of the organisations. When social recognition does not reach expected levels, it is time for the organisation to focus on a communication campaign (see [Land Stewardship Toolkit](#)).

Box 12. Events related on land stewardship that can be interesting for media

- **The signing of an agreement between an organisation and a landowner.** Overall, this news will have more space in local media, especially if the property was relevant for any reason (surface, a known landowner, an emblematic place, etc.).
- **New campaigns or appeals.** When an organisation launches a new campaign, it is a good moment to appear on media.
- **Activities with a lot of people involved.** For example, a volunteering day with a lot of people working to conserve or improve a specific place.
- **Projects and actions related to wildlife.** Animals have a high performance for media, especially television. Thus, projects or activities involving the preservation of wildlife can easily become news.
- **A new study or publication with new data and results.** Organisations must select most relevant data included in the study and present them with an easy language.
- **New laws benefiting landowners.** Landowners and land users will be very interested in this kind of news.

Source: Compiled by authors, based on xct (2012b).

From a communication point of view, it is also essential to launch branding strategies to get social recognition. Land stewardship organisations must plan and work on how people will know and recognise the organisation.

THE LIVE THE EARTH STRATEGY COMMUNICATION TOOL

Location: Catalonia, Spain

Leading organisation: Xarxa de Custòdia del Territori (xct)

Other stakeholders: xct membership, especially land stewardship organisations, citizen, businesses, landowners



The Catalan Land Stewardship Network (*Xarxa de Custòdia del Territori* —xct— in Catalan) works to communicate land stewardship among citizens and other stakeholders to improve understanding about, use and development of this nature conservation tool. In 2009, xct boosted the website www.viulaterra.cat (*Live the Earth* in Catalan) as a tool to involve the general public in land stewardship and nature conservation. This website is an action planned in the *Social Involvement with Land Stewardship Plan*, a strategic document prepared by xct in 2008.

The website www.viulaterra.cat provides the citizens with multiple ways to participate and get involved in nature conservation through land stewardship organisations. In this sense, the website and its newsletter— with 550 subscribers in late 2012 — includes a common agenda of activities and proposals (volunteering, guided walks, workshops and conferences, specific donations, etc.) undertaken by stewardship organisations. In addition, users can tell about their own experience, sharing their pictures, videos and a blog.

This portal also addresses specific stakeholders, not only the general public. For example, the *Land stewardship game* is oriented to students to play and learn about how land stewardship works. Students

assume a specific role and try to cooperate to reach a land stewardship agreement.

Businesses and landowners are another target group of the viulaterra website. In dedicated sections, the website offers multiple opportunities to these stakeholders to know about land stewardship and how to become involved.

Since its beginning, Viulaterra is not only a website: it is a communication strategy with different tools and actions. So, viulaterra is also present in social networks. In Twitter, [@viulaterra](https://twitter.com/viulaterra) has 1.150 followers —as at mid 2013—, while in Facebook [the site](https://www.facebook.com/viulaterra) has 850 friends. Moreover, in October 2011, xct launched a campaign called “Ten ways to live the Earth” (with a distribution of 10,000 postcards and the premier of the [video](#) titled *Root yourself*) and in April 2012 the book “Live the Earth - 12 land stewardship agreements around Catalonia and Balearic Islands” was presented.



More information:
www.viulaterra.cat

EUROPEAN LAND STEWARDSHIP WEEK

COMMUNICATION TOOL

Location: Europe

Leading organisation: xct

Other stakeholders: Eurosite, CEN L-R, Legambiente and Prysm.



The first **European Land Stewardship Week** (from September 28 to October 7, 2012) was a big success thanks to the large number of activities organised for the occasion and the active participation of citizens in the programme of events offered.

A total of 231 conservation organisations, public agencies, volunteer groups, municipalities, businesses, schools and other institutions organised more than 420 events inspired by the common goal of preserving natural, cultural and landscape heritage.

During the European Land Stewardship Week, more than 15,000 people took part in the activities, making a significant contribution to land conservation and helping to take a step forward for land stewardship in Europe.

The **Connect with Nature campaign**, organised to engage people in the European Land Stewardship Week, encouraged people to relive the simple pleasures that we obtain from being in contact with nature, and to share those experiences through pictures. This campaign received more than 250 pictures of people around Europe showing their way of connecting with nature. The highest-rated photos were used as part of a European travelling exhibition.

The European Land Stewardship Week is an initiative of the **LandLife Project**, and an example of how this project intends to boost land stewardship in Europe.



More information:
www.landlifeweek.eu

SIMONE GUIDETTI

4.3.2 Membership: recruiting and management

Membership funding and support, as small as it may be, is crucial to guarantee the structure of the organisations, and to keep them independent from external funding. If an organisation does not have enough member support, it will not have enough social and institutional strength to consolidate its core funding and support for its land stewardship tasks, nor will it have enough recognition to reach certain agreements.

Beyond general membership, the organisation may also benefit from personal contributions of sponsors and donors, who may sometimes be the same owners with stewardship agreements. Membership funding also encompasses funds that come from volunteers and other partner organisations.

All organisations are always trying to recruit new members through different ways and strategies that we will not detail here. However, it is essential to show and highlight the benefits and services that an individual will receive (see Box 13) and how nature benefits from the actions they will support. Usually, organisations offer different levels of subscription, which is also a useful means to attract new members through membership.



Box 13. Examples of membership benefits from different land stewardship organisations

- **Free entry into Visitor Centres and reserves.** As members, people can visit without cost all wildlife reserves owned or managed by the stewardship organisation. Some of these places have visitor centres, also free for the members.
- **A gift when joining them for first time.** Such a manual, a backpack, a wildlife guide, a T-shirt, etc.
- **Discounts on guided walks and events.** Stewardship organisations organise hundreds of events and activities to suit all ages, from illustrated talks and guided walks to coffee mornings and children's workshops.
- **Discounts from eco-friendly retailers.** As members, people can know and buy —with some discounts— eco-friendly products (food, clothes...) with a direct relationship with the land.
- **Free subscription to magazines.** Many stewardship organisations edit a magazine once, twice or three times a year.
- **Volunteer opportunities.** A range of tasks and activities to suit everyone at stunning locations.
- **Invitation to the annual members' event.** To know other members, receive the latest news, and an opportunity to vote on the organisation affairs, etc.
- **Contact with like-minded people.** To meet people with similar interests.

Source: Compiled by authors and advisors.

Membership management can be a big challenge for stewardship organisations, especially when they have a large number of members. Members must be well informed about organisation activities, and they must be offered different possible ways to collaborate and participate in the decisions of the organisation.

To recognise the importance of membership and to mention their contribution is essential. Thus, **acknowledgments** to the members must clearly appear on the annual reports, the website and all information materials.

SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE UK LAND STEWARDSHIP ORGANISATION

Location: United Kingdom

Leading organisation: National Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Wildlife Trusts Partnership

Other stakeholders: Citizens, farmers



In the United Kingdom (UK), the role of NGOs in nature conservation and sustainable land management is extremely relevant and their social support is high. In fact, this broad social support enables stewardship organisations to considerably reduce their dependence on government subsidies.

The most well-known example is **the National Trust** for England, Wales and Northern Ireland (NT), founded in 1895 to preserve places of historic interest or natural beauty permanently for the nation to enjoy (Scotland has its own, separate organisation, **the National Trust for Scotland**, established in 1931). Today, the NT is the UK's if not Europe's largest conservation body. The NT's 4 million members, as well as 67,000 volunteers and many benefactors, tenants and other partners, provide an important amount of revenue (more than 538 Million Euros in 2011/12). The NT currently owns more than 250,000 hectares of the most beautiful countryside in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, making it one of the largest landowners in the UK. It also owns over 1,141 kilometres of coastline and protects

over 350 historic houses and monuments. With over 80% of that land being farmed by the NT or its 1,700 tenant farmers, this makes the NT a high profile part in the public debate on sustainable land management.

The Wildlife Trusts Partnership, established by the 1960s, is a nationwide network of 47 local organisations supported by more than 800,000 members and 35,000 volunteers. They buy or lease land to be managed specifically for the benefit of its wildlife, with each organisation having its own acquisition policy. Furthermore, every year they advise thousands of landowners and organisations on how to manage their land for wildlife. The Wildlife Trusts manage 2,300 nature reserves across UK covering 93,000 ha.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), which with over a million members and 18,000 volunteers is the largest NGO in Europe devoted entirely to nature conservation, owns or manages 200 nature reserves covering almost 130,000 hectares, and is known by its innovative social involvement campaigns.

More information:
www.nationaltrust.org
www.wildlifetrusts.org
www.rspb.org.uk



NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES/ARNEIL DE SIERRA

4.3.3 Volunteering management

Volunteering is a powerful source and vital for all organisations, especially smaller ones. In one sense, they can be considered a segment of the public, but they can also interact with the public on behalf of the stewardship organisation. In this “quasi-staff” role, they need to be informed of the organisation’s efforts and principles, and possibly receive training.

Land stewardship organisations must offer volunteers attractive and rewarding activities. Some activities relate to the regular action of any NGO (communication, fundraising, etc.). However, other activities are more related to land stewardship, for example, establishing direct links with stakeholders (see box 14). Otherwise, there are different levels of engagement. For example, one person can participate in a volunteering day, in a work camp —with a longer duration— or become a long-term volunteer in the organisation headquarters or boosting a local group.



MANAGEMENT OF COASTAL MEADOWS IN ESTONIA

CASE STUDY

Location: Coastal area (west), Estonia

Leading organisation: Estonian Ministry of Environment

Other stakeholders: Matsalu Nature Reserve, Amphi Consult, Danish Co-operation for Environment in Eastern Europe (DANCEE)



Boreal Baltic coastal meadows are a priority habitat located close to the shores of the Baltic Sea in Sweden, Finland and the Baltic states. This habitat type has suffered from destruction and degradation due to alternative, non-compatible land uses and a lack of management (grazing, hay-making, etc.). In Estonia the estimated total area has declined from 29,000 ha in the 1960s to approximately 5,100 ha today. This decline has also affected various bird species, such as the ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*), little tern (*Sterna albifrons*) and corncrake (*Crex crex*), all listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive.

The possibility to apply for LIFE-Nature funds presented itself in the year 2000. In the following year the project "Boreal Baltic Coastal Meadow Preservation in Estonia" for the preservation and restoration of coastal meadows was launched. 75% of the project's budget was financed from the EU LIFE-Nature fund. The project was implemented by the Estonian Ministry of Environment. Matsalu Nature Reserve and the Danish company Amphi Consult acted as project partners, and the Danish Co-operation for Environment in Eastern Europe (DANCEE) was project co-financier.

The main aim of the project consisted in preserving and partly restoring the Baltic Sea coastal meadows and in improving the living conditions and conserving of their characteristic species. A total of 1,700 ha of coastal meadows were managed and restored in the course of three and a half years.

In terms of coastal meadow restoration, a great deal was achieved with the help of volunteers in the form of fourteen work camps with more than 200 participants. As the project progressed, the number of people interested in coastal meadow management and willing to participate increased considerably. People also revised their attitudes towards their surrounding nature: coastal meadows, which had often been considered pastures and hayfields of little value, became to be appreciated for their diverse biota. Furthermore farmers gained income from the 'meadow meat' which is particularly interesting for the export market.



ALASTAIR RAE

More information:

Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Estonia (2004). Coastal meadow management. Best Practice Guidelines. The experiences of LIFE-Nature project "Boreal Baltic Coastal Meadow Preservation in Estonia" LIFE00NAT/EE/7083.

Volunteers can fit in different target groups. Some tasks for volunteers do not require specific knowledge, whilst others need experience in specific areas (species monitoring, GIS, legal framework, on-line technology, etc.). Recently, several profiles are emerging, such as corporate volunteering — staff of companies collaborating in specific tasks— or online volunteering —tasks requests from organisations to people to be done from home.

If volunteering is important in the organisation, it is then also essential to develop a specific plan. This plan must define the actions to undertake (e.g. to recruit volunteers) and identify the volunteer profile and the capacity of the organisation to manage and train volunteers.

Box 14. Specific volunteering activities on land stewardship

- > Contact programmes with landowners. Volunteers, with a good training from the organisation, can visit landowners of special interest areas and try to begin a long-term collaboration.
- > Agreement monitoring. A critical issue for any stewardship organisation (see section 3.3.2). And it requires also a good training.
- > Land planning. Volunteers can help organisation staff to elaborate a management plan for a property.
- > Tasks and actions to manage and restore places under land stewardship agreements. Habitat management such as coppicing, fencing, pulling up invasive plants, planting trees or wildflowers, or brush cutting.
- > Studies and research. For example, to identify areas with natural values where the action of the organisation is a priority, or to obtain information for studies. Participating in bird counts and species monitoring.
- > Education & raising awareness activities. Helping to plan, assist and lead educational events, and work with school groups.
- > Working with visitors. Welcoming visitors at visitor centres, sharing wildlife information, promoting the work of the stewardship organisation, dealing with sales transactions.

Source: compiled by authors and advisors.

4.3.4 Fundraising campaigns and crowd funding

“Nature needs you. Do something small, be part of something big. Stepping up for nature”. This was the motto for a [campaign](#) launched by the [Royal Society of Protection of Birds](#) (United Kingdom). And it is a good example of a fundraising campaign. Usually, these campaigns are aimed at obtaining economic resources from citizen for specific projects and actions (see [Land Stewardship Toolkit](#)).

Land stewardship organisations are always thinking and working on new campaigns to obtain donations and other forms of financial support from people. Different campaigns enable different forms of financial contributions: however, most fundraising is also about raising awareness and generating people’s involvement.

Crowd funding is also a way of obtaining funds from a lot of small donors. Though the name is quite new, the idea is quite old already, and is based on the funding of a relatively large amount of money through very small donations. The new term is used to describe the collective cooperation by people who network and pool their money and other resources together, usually via internet. Today the internet offers a lot of possibilities in this sense and, in fact, there are many online platforms for crowd funding.



4.3.5 Land stewardship products and services

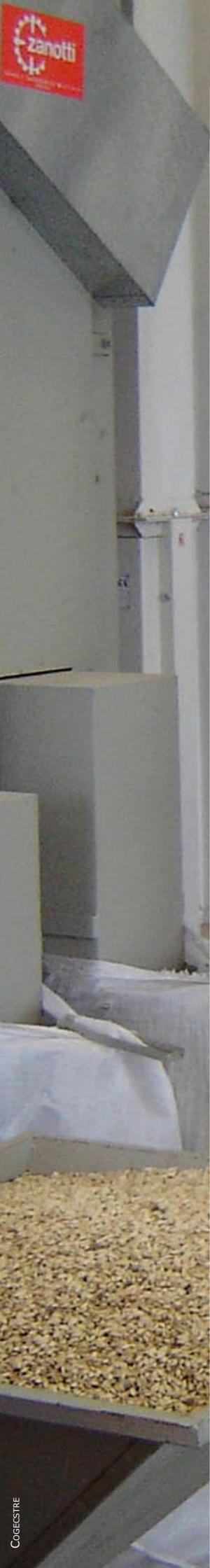
Land stewardship organisations can use market approaches to promote sustainable economic activity in the lands they take care of, by promoting compatible activities such as agriculture, forestry, crafts, education or ecotourism. A growing number of stewardship organisations produce food or wood products on their own as a demonstration of best practices and to cover costs for other stewardship activities. The products and services coming from the stewardship lands can provide some revenues to the organisation and to the landowners, and be developed as a type of social entrepreneurship or social green economy (see [Land Stewardship Toolkit](#)).

Developing markets for land stewardship is not always a possibility, but if practical, it can offer a sustainable, long-term source of finance. Additionally, income received from biodiversity may increase awareness of its value (both intrinsic and economic) and encourage land stewardship and protection by citizens.

Social entrepreneurship can be interested in promoting land stewardship as a growing market. This specific type of entrepreneurship aims at businesses to impact positively on society, the environment or local community rather than primarily focusing on creating profits. It can offer new and creative solutions and can be an alternative to the public and private sectors.

Stewardship organisations can encourage members and friends to buy locally from producers and farmers whose land management practices are deemed good stewardship. The benefit to the landowner is a more predictable market and, if local, lower costs in transportation and distribution. Land stewardship organisations can also improve markets for local stewards by organising them.





LAGO DI PENNE AND WWF OASI CASE STUDY

Location: Lago di Penne, Abruzzo region, Italy

Leading organisation: WWF OASI

Other stakeholders: Private landowners (COGECSTRE cooperative, in lago di Penne)



WWF Oasi was created in 2007 as a private company belonging to the WWF Italy Foundation with the aim to effectively manage WWF Italy's protected areas. WWF Oasi today manages 43 areas: WWF Italy private property, areas entrusted to WWF by the Public Administration and "affiliated areas", generally private farmlands.

The network of affiliated reserves is governed by guidelines laid out by WWF Italy. After a series of supervisions and on-site evaluations, WWF Oasi and the landowners sign an agreement. WWF Oasi's role is to monitor the agreements as well as to provide all the necessary support. In order to be part of the system, these areas need to ban hunting from their grounds, ban any form of activity that interferes with the conservation of the landscape, take actions to conserve their biodiversity and restore degraded ecosystems where possible and the restoration of old buildings. The main goal of these areas is to integrate biodiversity conservation with economic and social activities. In fact, many of these areas are farmlands dedicated to organic farming, recovery of rare autochthonous varieties and environmental education.

The [Lago di Penne nature reserve](#), a Natura 2000 site (IT7130214) located in the Abruzzo region, is one of these affiliated areas. Over the last three years WWF Oasi in collaboration with the Lago di Penne nature reserve has

been developing a line of food products from the Oases. In Penne, the heart of the project, spelt is grown and transformed to produce different types of pasta. Other products produced from this area and other WWF Oases include olive oil, honey, salt and rice. New products to be introduced include wine, which will be produced in another WWF Italy affiliated Oases in the Piedmont region of northern Italy.

All these products are sold in [WWF Oases](#) and on the e-commerce website and their revenues will be invested in the management and conservation of the nature reserves. These areas hold an important educational role and prove how sustainable farming and conservation are able to co-exist to meet the needs of both nature and man.



More information:
www.cogecstre.com
www.wwf.it

To properly promote these products and guarantee their origin and production methods, eco labelling can be useful. Eco labelling involves a certificate, or label, that helps consumers to identify products and services that have a reduced environmental impact. One such label is the [EU Ecolabel](#), which is a voluntary label that promotes environmental excellence within the EU. Currently this label does not include food or medicines, but does include other materials and services that could be useful such as soil improvers, tourist accommodation services and wooden furniture.

Although not an official eco-label, the promotion of goods or services produced within Natura 2000 lands could increase finance to landowners or managers. With the development of the Natura 2000 network and its appropriate management, Natura 2000 as a “brand” will develop in the mindset of travelling European citizens as a sign of excellence in biodiversity⁸. An example down this line is [WebRed-Natura](#), a commercial website with foods produced in Natura 2000 sites from three Spanish regions.

Tourism is also an option to explore for land stewardship. According to IUCN, ecotourism is an environmentally responsible travel to natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and accompanying cultural features, both past and present) that promote conservation, have a low visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local peoples. The main motivation of ecotourists, different from that of other type of tourists that also visit natural areas, is to watch, enjoy and learn about the diverse manifestations of nature and the landscape. Popular activities related to ecotourism are bird watching, nature photography, whale watching or guided walks.



In spite of ecotourism being practiced in protected areas, lands with stewardship agreements provide good opportunities for carrying out ecotourism activities and other types (rural tourism, gastronomic tourism, etc.). In addition, these lands may test mechanisms that apply one of the fundamental principles of ecotourism: ecotourists actively contribute to conserve the places they visit. Ecotourism can also bring economic benefits to the area as well as increasing public awareness and appreciation for the protected land and the activities taking place.

The main land stewardship organisations in Europe have complete programmes to visit and enjoy their own reserves. For example, **RSPB reserves** (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, in United Kingdom) welcomes 1.5 million visitors per year. In these places tourists and visitors can contract guided activities to get really close to some of the most exciting wildlife in Britain. Moreover, most reserves have a lot of visitor facilities, like a visitor centre. In Catalonia, many stewardship organisations, for example, Accionatura or Foundation Catalunya-La Pedrera have created or promoted routes in areas with land stewardship agreements with the landowners' collaboration. Two good examples are "a **legend forest**" and l'**Avenc de Tavertet**.

4.3.6 Education strategies

Education is the most straight-forward way to raise awareness, as it involves the transfer of knowledge and the awakening of attitudes and values. School and leisure education are the social framework in which a very important part of a person's education takes place. It is an ideal arena for promoting land stewardship.

In fact, nature conservation issues may be found in school curricula, especially in natural sciences and social sciences, geography and even history. There have been several experiences of introducing land stewardship in those curricula⁹. Societal trends and increasing technological sophistication need to be considered in order to reach young people and provide meaningful learning experiences.

A good tip for education strategies is to engage teachers in the process. Teachers are an important link, not only connecting with young people and their families, but also to other educators, educational institutions, and their communities.

Service learning is a method of teaching that combines formal instruction with a related service in the community. Through this strategy, learning is enhanced through direct application in appropriate social contexts of principles and practices taught through formal instruction concurrent with guided reflection of the student's experiences. This service integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, encourage lifelong social involvement, and strengthen communities for the common good.



The products and services coming from the stewardship lands can provide some revenues to the organisation and to the landowners, and be developed as a type of social entrepreneurship or social green economy.

4.4 ENGAGING BUSINESSES AND OTHER PRIVATE INVESTORS

Today, there is growing recognition within businesses that economic or financial success is inextricably linked to environmental and social performance. Though not yet part of mainstream thinking, many companies, to some extent, are paying attention to what is often referred to as 'corporate social responsibility' (CSR). The European Commission defines it as a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis. In the context of their CSR, businesses can play a positive role in biodiversity conservation and land stewardship offers good opportunities in this sense.

The term 'businesses' represents a large variety of actors. It covers such diverse sectors as the extractive industries (mining, oil and gas); the banking and financial sector; biodiversity-based companies such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry and water; tourism; energy; manufacturing to name but a few. Businesses also operate at very different scales: from small artisanal operations, to small and medium-sized companies and global multinationals. The needs of these companies will be very different so everyone must target individualised biodiversity activities (Earthwatch Europe *et al*, 2002). Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are often in a better position to contact local or regional groups and help them in their activities, obtaining this way a better marketing result to their local clients.

Linked to the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, the Commission has also set up the [EU Business and Biodiversity Platform \(B@B\)](#), which currently brings together businesses from six different sectors (agriculture, extractive industries, finance, food supply, forestry and tourism) to share their experiences and best practices¹⁰.

Stewardship organisations should find out how they can contribute to bridge the gap between nature and business. One idea is to utilise businesses' CSR agendas and jointly think about how to work together — for example, seek mutual gains where 'green' businesses have dedicated funding to implement CSR objectives. In this sense, a stewardship organisation is able to offer imaginative and appropriate ideas for a company interested in stewardship. Furthermore, a strong partnership can be created providing financial resources to the organisation, and other non-economic forms of cooperation (by assessment and dialogue — e.g. via biodiversity checks, in products and services, through corporate volunteering, marketing campaigns, etc.). Through partnerships and cooperation, the private sector can increase its awareness and commitment to stewardship and this may encourage its long-term investment.



CSR may also lead to **corporate stewardship**, a variant of land stewardship that involves companies that own extensions of land (agriculture, forestry, etc.). Companies have a range of different options for engaging in active protection (Stolton and Dudley, 2007): 1) Sale of land to conservation organisations or similar; 2) Contributing land for biodiversity conservation and handing over management (e.g. through land stewardship agreements); 3) Owning and managing land for biodiversity conservation. All these options are related with land stewardship, or create other imaginative partnerships, because companies can use (or sell) part of their properties for conservation purposes through an agreement with a stewardship organisation. For corporate landowners, stewardship offers opportunities for positive public relations and brand-building which can in turn be promoted and supported by networking at the EU level.

Through CSR, companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis.

Many companies may not be direct owners of land but still be managers for biodiversity conservation. Most of the major resource management companies lease more land than they own outright. Similarly, popular tourist destinations agreements between local landowners and tourism companies often result in land being managed for conservation and related ecotourism activities (such as wildlife watching).

More obviously, there are companies whose activities are associated with major use of land (e.g. waste dumps management, construction of public works, large commercial or industrial parks). They can participate financially or as sponsors in partnerships with stewardship organisations as a **compensatory mechanism** of their activities. Habitat banking is a developing model of compensation and investment in biodiversity, where land stewardship organisations can play a major role.



Box 15. Utilitarian reasons for companies to become involved in managing land for protection

Good press (or responding to bad press). There is clearly considerable gain from telling stakeholders, shareholders and the general public about the wide range of philanthropic commitments a business is making.

Endorsement. Increasingly, some eco-labels, grants or even licenses (permissions to operate) are dependent on setting aside particularly sensitive areas for conservation. For example, under the Common Agricultural Policy there may be incentives or obligations to set aside specific areas on farms, including small corridor areas (e.g. field margins or hedgerows) or habitats such as upland moor or lowland heath.

Trade-offs. Some companies have set up protected areas as a trade-off for land transformed in other places. —For example, forest lost through mining is “offset” through investment in conservation elsewhere. The concept of trading off is controversial and needs careful consideration; loss of one area will not necessarily be compensated by conservation of another. On the other hand, compensation is often much better than nothing.

Financial gain. Tax and direct profit, access to grants and commercial activities (like ecotourism).

Mitigation/protection linked to core businesses. Companies may also protect land and water for the direct benefits from the environmental services that they provide: these are particularly related to water quality and sometimes supply; prevention of erosion; protection against avalanche or landslide risk; and sometimes more directly biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration (e.g. in habitat banking).

Biodiversity conservation. Companies that take their environmental responsibilities seriously are now increasingly prepared to invest in biodiversity conservation as part of their best practice or their CSR. In some cases this simply means setting aside parts of their own holdings, but in other cases companies have been prepared to put time and money into being partners in landscape-scale planning exercises or to ensure that conservation efforts are as successful as possible.

Source: Stolton and Dudley (2007).

Other private investors can have a central role to play in sponsoring nature conservation and land stewardship. Social investors, philanthropic individuals and private foundations (or similar organisations) can be an important source of funding available for land stewardship across Europe. Even key and substantial landowners such as churches, health providers (hospitals and health centres) can be relevant here. A coordinated effort to build awareness and communicate issues involved is necessary in order to attract such funding. By communicating the long-term benefits of land stewardship and involving society in its development, private funding streams may be uncovered and accessed. Land donations are also a profitable source of private funding.

THE FOUNDATION CATALUNYA-LA PEDRERA LAND STEWARDSHIP ORGANISATION

Location: Catalonia, Spain

Leading organisation: The Foundation Catalunya-la Pedrera

Other stakeholders: CatalunyaCaixa savings bank



The **Foundation Catalunya-la Pedrera** (FCP) started its programmes on nature protection in December 1997, with the establishment of the then called Territori i Paisatge Foundation (Catalan for Territory and Landscape). It has its headquarters in Barcelona, in the historic building of "La Pedrera", a World Heritage Site. In almost 15 years, it has become one of the largest land conservation organisations in Spain. The majority of the Foundation's work is conducted within Spain, primarily in Catalonia, where the Foundation has become the largest private landowner.

FCP was established by a savings bank, Caixa de Catalunya, and from which it received almost all of its core financial support until 2011. To date, this has totalled approximately 20 million Euros on land conservation projects alone. In 2012, the Foundation became independent of the bank and has a new status, with its own resources and income (mainly from the 1 million visitors of La Pedrera).

FCP owns a network of 24 natural sites (7,800 ha purchased), called *Xarxa Espais Natura*, almost all within the Natura 2000 Network. Additionally, there are other lands under classical land stewardship agreements (15 sites, 561 ha); contracts for timber rights and other rights paid for environmental services (27 forest reserves, 197 ha); and, finally, agreements for territorial planning and conservation (64 agreements, almost 160,000 ha). FCP also develops an important educational programme, with two environmental education centres in **the Pyrenees** and in **the Ebre delta**.

All this **private conservation** work became possible thanks to the opportunity to develop a conservation initiative in the framework of the "social work" of the Catalunya Caixa savings bank. These special financial institutions were, in fact, non-profit, as there were no private investors and any profits were to be reinvested or given back to society in the form of so-called "Social Work" or "Social Fund". These particular savings banks were very important in Spain and had a long tradition, until the present economic crisis almost eliminated all of them, through mergers or reconversion to standard commercial banks.



More information:

www.monnaturapirineus.com

www.monnaturadelta.com

www.fundaciocatalunya-lapedrera.com

Governments and local authorities can also encourage private investment in land stewardship by providing appropriate incentives or benefits. Through **tax relief, deductions** or other incentive types, private donors can be invited to invest in land stewardship. To strengthen this process, policymakers can develop sound mechanisms, which encourage all businesses (including financial institutions) to pick up care for the land as an integrated share of Corporate Eco-Social Responsibility¹¹.



5. LAND STEWARDSHIP: OPPORTUNITIES FOR NATURE CONSERVATION IN EUROPE

This chapter starts analysing the European reality regarding land stewardship, and outlines the potential role that various leading European NGOs could have in promoting and developing land stewardship. Following this, one of the core sections of this Manual is presented, explaining where land stewardship fits in the context of European law and policy frameworks, including Natura 2000, CAP, LIFE+ etc. The chapter concludes with a practical overview of funding opportunities.



5.1 LAND STEWARDSHIP IN EUROPE: A SHORT HISTORY AND DIFFERENT APPROACHES

In Europe, land stewardship is understood and addressed through a wide range of perspectives and there is no unique or uniform strategy for its implementation. Given this, a certain degree of detail about the evolution of this concept in Europe is necessary in this Manual.

5.1.1 A short history of land stewardship in Europe

The use of land stewardship approaches in Europe can be traced back to the establishment of the [National Trust](#) in the United Kingdom, in 1895. Other organisations followed, including [Natuurmonumenten](#) (founded in 1905) and the provincial [Landschappen](#), both in the Netherlands; more recently, the [French Conservatoire du Littoral](#) (founded in 1975), is a public agency, which uses voluntary agreements that can also be considered as a stewardship approach. In fact, all these organisations are owners of lands of natural, cultural and landscape value, and management of their sites is part of their core business.

In 1989, several Central European countries (Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia) started a decade of exchanging and debating new approaches to land management and conservation, together with land trusts, public agencies and other organisations, including experts from New England, under the concept of land stewardship (Beckmann *et al*, 2000).

At the same time, organisations and institutions in Catalonia started international contacts that eventually lead to the [Montesquiu International Seminar on Land Stewardship](#) (2000), and the creation in 2003 of the (Catalan) Land Stewardship Network ([Xarxa de Custòdia del Territori](#) in Catalan).

Founded in 1895, the UK National Trust can be considered the original land stewardship organisation in Europe. Soon, other organisations followed.



XCT, THE LAND STEWARDSHIP NETWORK OF CATALONIA

NETWORKS AND ALLIANCES

Location: Catalonia, Spain

Leading organisation: Xarxa de Custòdia del Territori (xct)

Other stakeholders: Land stewardship organisations, Government institutions, and rural landscape stakeholders



The Montesquiú Conference, held in November 2000 in Catalonia, is a milestone in the particular history of land stewardship in this region and in the rest of Spain. It was promoted and sponsored by Foundation Territori i Paisatge-Caixa Catalunya (today [Foundation Catalunya — La Pedrera](#)).

The Conference served to present the concept of land stewardship to a pre-selected audience of experts and grass-root practitioners from Catalonia and the Balearic Islands. International examples were presented from Canada, France, Italy and the United States, and participants discussed opportunities to apply these tools in Catalonia. At that time, several Catalan NGOs and private foundations were already responsible for some natural areas, with different kinds of ownership and management agreements.

The main Conference output was the Montesquiú Declaration on land stewardship, open to signature by any organisation interested following the conference: within a few months, there were more than 60 signatories, including public institutions, and from the civil and private sectors.

The Declaration gave birth to what is now the Catalan Land Stewardship Network ([xct](#) in Catalan).

xct celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2013 as a network bringing together more than 160 associations, foundations, government institutions, town councils, companies, universities & research centres and individuals. The mission of xct is to promote land stewardship as a strategy and as a practical means to achieve the participation of society in nature conservation and management. Networking is an essential tool for xct. It recently started a 2011-14 Legislature Strategic Plan with the [Department of Territory and Sustainability](#) of the Govern of Catalonia aimed at fostering the strategy of land stewardship in Catalonia.



More information:

www.xct.cat

[Montesquiú Declaration on website](#)

[2011-14 Land Stewardship Legislature Strategic Plan](#)

In the first decade of the 21st century, some European exchanges started under this unifying concept. The [Czech Union for Conservation of Nature](#) (ČSOP) and xct shared three exchange visits (2006-2009): also, they joined [Legambiente-Lombardia](#) and the [German Association for Land Care](#) (DVL) in seminars and exchanges, linked to the 2009 *Milano Declaration on Land Stewardship*, a proposal to promote and extend the concept throughout Europe. Between 2004-2006 the concept of land stewardship extended throughout Spain as well, which led to the creation of the [Land Stewardship Platform](#), managed by the public *Fundación Biodiversidad*, as well as the development of regional stewardship networks in different parts of the country, ultimately resulting in the creation of the Spanish [Forum of Land Stewardship Networks and Organisations](#) in 2011. Interestingly, DVL promotes a similar approach to land stewardship, based on the term “land care”, as used in Australia, and work is being done to explore and strengthen the common features of these two approaches.



LAND STEWARDSHIP NETWORKING IN SPAIN: CONFERENCES, PLATFORM AND FORUM NETWORKS AND ALLIANCES

Location: Spain

Leading organisation: Fundación Biodiversidad, Land stewardship networks

Other stakeholders: Land stewardship organisations



In Spain, land stewardship is a growing strategy. Starting in Catalonia, the Balearic Islands and the Valencia Region in 2000-2003 (see page 111), land stewardship has continued to extend across the whole of Spain as a result of the first National Conference on Land Stewardship organised in Murcia in 2004 by the University Rey Juan Carlos and the CAM Foundation. Conferences continued up to the 4th edition in 2010. As a result of these conferences, land stewardship organisations started to work throughout Spain and two parallel coordination initiatives emerged: The [Land Stewardship Platform](#) and the National Land Stewardship Forum.

The [Biodiversity Foundation](#) (Fundación Biodiversidad), which reports to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment, has amongst its goals: to achieve greater involvement and shared responsibility on behalf of society with regard to the conservation and protection of biodiversity. The Land Stewardship Platform (Plataforma de Custodia del Territorio), an initiative of the Biodiversity Foundation, was launched in 2007 and was created with a view to contributing to the common objective of promoting land stewardship development throughout Spain. The Platform acts as a tool to disseminate and drive this conservation strategy and serves as a meeting place for all land stewardship organisations, supporting them and encouraging them to continue working in this vein.

The Platform is integrated by a website, the Spanish Inventory on Land Stewardship Initiatives, a large-scale endeavour to compile all the actions from Spanish land stewardship organisations and to monitor

the evolution of this nature conservation tool. A first inventory was published in 2008 and in 2013 a third inventory will be launched. Provisional results of this third inventory show a total of more than 1.700 land stewardship agreements and almost 200 land stewardship organisations. In 2010, the Platform published an extensive report analysing the legal framework of land stewardship in Spain, including the opportunities open for land stewardship, as well as the legal challenges relevant to this conservation strategy in other state laws.

The [Spanish Forum of Land Stewardship Networks and Organisations](#) is a parallel process to that of the Platform, also emerging from the national conferences. The Forum was originally a framework for debate and common voice on national issues between stewardship networks and organisations that met occasionally during the year. In 2011, the Forum evolved into a voluntary-based national association to have a clearer institutional and legal format. It is formed by 7 regional networks, plus individual stewardship and supporter organisations, to network the entire stewardship movement in Spain. The Spanish Government includes the Forum in its stakeholder's dialogues, and the Platform mentioned above also coordinates regularly with the Forum.

More information:

www.custodia-territorio.es
frect.blogspot.com



This compact historical review, covering recent years since the inception and promotion of the land stewardship concept in Europe, brings us to the start of the LandLife¹² project in September 2011. This project aims at developing new steps in this process, through a partnership between [xct](#) (Spain), [Conservatoire d'espaces naturels du Languedoc-Roussillon](#) (France), [Legambiente Lombardia](#) (Italy), [Eurosites](#) (Europe) and [Prysm](#) (Spain). The LandLife partners aim to exchange, enhance and promote expertise in the management of sites for nature, throughout Europe, by spreading the concept of land stewardship among landowners, public and private organisations and the wider public in general (e.g. citizens). Their shared goal is to reach a level where land stewardship can be applied in such a way and on such a scale that it helps to achieve the European target to halt the loss of biodiversity.



5.1.2 Different contexts, different approaches

The first thorough analysis of land stewardship in Europe is a report to the Council of Europe called "Private or voluntary systems of natural habitats' protection and management" (Shine, 1996)¹³. This research showed an extension of these approaches throughout Europe and cited conservation associations from different countries like United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France, Switzerland and Germany.

The Council of Europe report concluded that "the status of voluntary habitat protection and management is often determined by a country's legal traditions and political and popular culture". For example, it compared the case of some Scandinavian countries with the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. The former countries have long upheld public ownership as the most appropriate method of nature conservation, with private organisations playing a complementary but secondary role. In contrast, in the UK and the Netherlands, working with private landowners and private organisations is an integral component of national conservation policies, where land stewardship organisations, such as [The National Trust](#) and [Natuurmonumenten](#), play an important role in nature conservation.

In fact, there are large differences between regions in the role of land stewardship organisations in the conservation of European landscapes. There are countries or regions in which these organisations have a high specific weight, and there are others in which the role of the public administration is much more relevant.



According to the Council of Europe report, “it is in the national interest of any country to make legal and economic instruments available to private actors—individuals, conservation associations or companies—which facilitate their active participation in countryside conservation”. Despite this goal, it highlights that this interest is “a slow process”. 15 years after that report, the LandLife project is attempting to address the challenge to increase leverage and use of these concepts and instruments throughout Europe (see Chapter 6).

As presented in Box 16, the study by Quer *et al* (2012) aims at analysing the degree of development of land stewardship at European level, with special emphasis on three western Mediterranean regions: Catalonia (Spain), Lombardy (Italy) and Languedoc-Roussillon (France). Organisations from these three regions are, with Eurosite, the main partners of the LandLife project. The general conclusion of this first attempt to monitor land stewardship in Europe is that the degree of knowledge, understanding and development of land stewardship is considerably different between regions and countries. Further and deeper analysis of this matter would be worthwhile to explore in the near future.

Box 16. Inventory of land stewardship in Europe

In order to assess the development of land stewardship projects across Europe, the “Study of the development and implementation of land stewardship in the Mediterranean Arc and Europe” (Quer *et al.*, 2012) launched an online questionnaire in January 2012. The main targets were organisations, both public and private. A total of 186 responses were obtained, covering a total of 31 countries, including 21 of the 27 EU Member States.

According to the replies, (which are also useful reference indicators) land stewardship is not an unknown concept (74% of respondents knew about it), and 63% of responding organisations had already participated in land stewardship projects and agreements.

In fact, 16,269 land stewardship agreements were identified in Europe through the replies. However, the study showed a large variability and lack of homogeneity about land stewardship as a concept in Europe, with differences about the forms of agreements, what may or may not constitute an agreement, etc. Therefore, this figure has more significance as an indicator of potential types of forms of land stewardship, rather than having any substantial quantitative significance.

THE CZECH UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE LAND STEWARDSHIP ORGANISATION

Location: Czech Republic

Leading organisation: Český svaz ochránců přírody (ČSOP), The Czech Union for Conservation of Nature

Other stakeholders: Public Administration



In the Czech Republic, the term 'land stewardship' has not been introduced at conceptual level but has been introduced in practice taking advantage of the existing legal instruments (purchase, lease, management agreement, etc.). Land stewardship organisations devote much effort to recover all types of traditions, including cultural, culinary, agricultural, and livestock practices. Since its implementation, protecting natural and cultural heritage through land stewardship has become an established tradition in Bohemia.

Land stewardship was introduced in the Czech Republic through contacts with North-American organisations and, specifically, with the [Quebec-Labrador Foundation](#). The political past of this country results in a specific perception of the relationship between State and private conservation organisations. A good example is ČSOP (*Ceský svaz ochránců přírody*, The Czech Union for Conservation of Nature), created by the State in 1978, and evolved in 1989 into an NGO, although ČSOP continues to work closely with the Public Administration. In 1997, the Advisory Board of the Ministry of Land Associations was founded, where ČSOP has an important role within it.

Nowadays ČSOP is a network of 360 conservation organisations with 10,000 members throughout the Czech Republic. However, only 42 organisations of

ČSOP are considered full stewardship organisations. Although not all land stewardship organisations are members of ČSOP, this organisation is responsible for the accreditation of land stewardship organisations in the country, and the allocation of state funds intended for land stewardship based on a quality system inspired by the [Land Trust Alliance](#) of the USA. Both members and non-members receive advice and structural funding from ČSOP. Furthermore, many of the areas acquired by land stewardship organisations have been purchased with funds from a campaign launched by ČSOP (*Místo pro přírodu — A place for nature*) to raise donations from citizens.



FRANTIŠEK FAKTOR

More information:

www.csop.cz

Beckmann, A; Ptáček, L.; Mitchell, B.; Kundrata; M. and Serafin, R. (2000). Carving for the Land: A Decade of Promoting Landscape Stewardship in Central Europe. Czech Republic: Environmental Partnership for Central Europe Consortium and QLF/ Atlantic Center for the Environment. (pdf).

Gamundí, I. (2009). Intercanvi professional de custòdia del territori a la República Txeca. Documents ocasionals de la Xarxa de Custòdia del Territori, 13 (2a edició). xct. (pdf)

5.2 THE ROLE OF EUROPEAN ORGANISATIONS IN LAND STEWARDSHIP

Due to the diverse and varied nature of land stewardship across Europe, many different individual stakeholders, organisations and institutions are involved in its development, promotion, implementation and success. The roles of the various organisations working at the European level can range from legal expertise to land management advice and policy development and they can have an important role to play in the communication and future expansion of land stewardship across Europe. This section presents a small sample of representative European organisations that can play an important role promoting land stewardship across Europe through nature conservation, management and protection along with policy development and implementation.

The main European NGOs involved in land management are **Eurosite**, the **EUROPARC Federation** and the **European Landowners Organisation (ELO)**.

Eurosite, created in 1989, is one of the largest pan-European organisations dedicated to improving the practice and quality of nature conservation and includes private, governmental and non-governmental organisations. It aims to exchange, enhance and promote expertise in the management of sites for nature across Europe. Eurosite network members are either landowners or have direct responsibilities for land management 'on the ground', as well responsibilities for implementation of nature conservation policies. Many of Eurosite's member organisations across Europe are, to varying degrees, involved in land stewardship. Eurosite itself is a partner of LandLife and advisor to this Manual.

The **EUROPARC Federation**, created in 1973, represents many protected areas across Europe and facilitates international cooperation and networking with regard to the management of protected areas. The organisation encourages cooperation and exchange between protected area staff.

Eurosite and the EUROPARC Federation work as pan-European networks, promoting collaboration with and between national organisations, to exchange expertise and experience, share information and foster learning. Eurosite and EUROPARC are currently in the process of intensifying a long-standing joint working relationship and collaboration. The aim is to bring together two of the leading European networks dedicated to promoting landscape scale integrated management of European natural heritage by improving the quality of nature conservation and sustainable development practice. The planned outcome of this work is to seek to create a new network organisation, based on the existing two networks that will be better placed to meet European nature's needs in the 21st century. This proposed



The roles of European level organisations can range from legal expertise to land management advice and policy development, and they can contribute in the communication and future expansion of land stewardship across Europe.

development will have great significance, not only for site based nature conservation practitioners and their organisations around Europe, but also in terms of opportunities to promote land stewardship (amongst other things) as an approach and practical tool that can help realisation of environmental and sustainable social and economic priorities in Europe.

The European Landowners Organisation (ELO) promotes a sustainable and prosperous countryside and aims to increase awareness of environmental and agricultural issues by involving the relevant stakeholders at the local, national and European level and creating policy recommendations.

The European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism (EFNCP) is a European network which raises awareness of the importance of low-intensity farming for nature conservation. It brings together farmers, conservationists, policy makers, researchers and NGOs to improve the way public policies respond to the needs of these farming systems.

The European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC) is an independent organisation working for the conservation and sustainable use of Europe's nature, biodiversity and landscapes. It works with a large network of organisations and institutes across Europe, providing expertise to national and regional governments, intergovernmental organisations and institutions working in financing, land use and research.

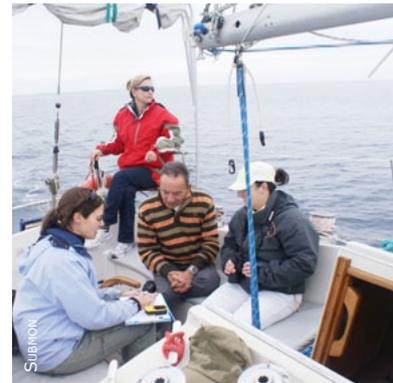
Another important European organisation, the **Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)**, is an independent research organisation dealing with policies affecting European environmental issues. The organisation collaborates closely with EU institutions, national governments, NGOs and academics. It works with policymakers and stakeholders to ensure that it is at the forefront of discussions involving environmental policy. It has developed many publications and policy papers in areas such as agriculture and land management, environmental economics and biodiversity. It can be an important information source for existing and upcoming policies and financial instruments affecting land stewardship.



In Europe, there are many organisations working on environmental policy and legislation, however one prominent and influential Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) is the **European Environmental Bureau (EEB)**. This organisation focuses on influencing EU policy development and implementation, working with biodiversity experts from its member organisations and monitoring the implementation of existing legislation. It also gives input into discussions surrounding upcoming policy changes for biodiversity, soil, water, agriculture, air and other issues relevant to land stewardship across Europe.

At the international level, the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** is the largest professional global conservation network. Through its work with thousands of scientific experts it has developed the international standards for species extinction risk - the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and the IUCN protected areas categories and matrix (see section 2.1). It is involved in many conservation projects worldwide and is focused on the sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources. The organisation influences international environmental issues through its many governmental and institutional members. Some other global networks with European offices are **Birdlife**, **Plantlife** or **WWF**.

The contact details of all the organisations listed above, along with many others can be found in the reference section at the end of this Manual.



5.3 HOW LAND STEWARDSHIP FITS EUROPEAN POLICIES AND LEGAL INSTRUMENTS

Land stewardship is a tool available for use by organisations and landowners anywhere in Europe no matter the legal framework (see section 3.4). Currently, many European policies and legal instruments proactively promote participatory approaches, contractual measures and other actions that directly involve landowners, civic society and the private sector.

In fact, land stewardship can be used as a practical tool to implement biodiversity conservation in Europe as it complements and reflects the priorities of many different policies and legal instruments. It can help to create opportunities for nature conservation in individual Member States and contribute to biodiversity conservation in common ways across Europe. Stewardship also embraces enough elements to become a key communication platform that engages Europeans in caring for nature, therefore providing an opportunity for active and direct participation in the Natura 2000 network, the Water Framework Directive, the European Green Infrastructure concept and local and regional nature priorities across Europe.



Europe and its Member States comprise rich and diverse habitats, species, ecosystems, landscapes and cultures. As a result of this diversity, European nature conservation policies and legal instruments must be applied and implemented by Member States in ways that generate feasible, workable and meaningful solutions to biodiversity conservation. Local stakeholders are well positioned to give advice and support to new legislation and land stewardship can promote local knowledge and experience in both the development and implementation of European policies and instruments.

Following the Sixth EU Environment Action Programme (2002-2012), the 'Seventh EU Environment Action Programme to 2020' will include environmental priorities that will contribute to the '*sustainable, smart and inclusive growth*' objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and a vision for long-term European environmental policy. It will be a strategic document that sets the framework for all environmental policy and work towards Member State acceptance and implementation (European Commission, reference IP/12/334). Through policies and strategies such as the Natura 2000 Network, Water Framework Directive, Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection and European Green Infrastructure, along with the European Landscape Convention, the multi-faceted, cross cutting approach of land stewardship can be harnessed to support European nature conservation policies and strengthen the long-term protection of biodiversity across Europe (table 3).

In addition, land stewardship, as a participatory tool for nature conservation, is consistent with the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. This was signed on June 1998 and is applicable in the EU through several specific directives on public participation in environmental issues, and other directives, such as the [Water Framework Directive](#) (Directive 2000/60/EC).

Land stewardship, as a participatory tool for nature conservation, is consistent with the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.



Table 3. How land stewardship fits with European policies, legal instruments, conventions and strategies

EUROPEAN POLICY, LEGAL INSTRUMENT, CONVENTION, STRATEGY	How land stewardship fits
<p>EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stewardship organisations and those involved in agreements contribute directly to the '2020 headline target for biodiversity'. • Many valuable 'ecosystem services' are provided to society through land stewardship agreements. • Land stewardship can increase stakeholder awareness, which is an important action within the strategy.
<p>EU Birds and Habitats Directives (The Natura 2000 Network)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through effective land management, stewardship strives to bring protected habitats and species to favourable condition and, therefore, contributes to achieving, maintaining or improving 'favourable conservation status'. • Land stewardship is a useful 'contractual measure' to support implementation of the Natura 2000 Network, which can be used flexibly according to the needs and circumstances of individual sites. • Land stewardship promotes involvement and participation of people and other stakeholders in the management of Natura 2000 sites.
<p>EU Water Framework Directive (WFD)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landowners, stakeholders and organisations are included in the decision making process. • The Water Framework Directive directly affects farmers and land managers involved with land stewardship agreements. • The upcoming 'blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources' invites active involvement from organisations such as those involved in land stewardship activities.
<p>EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and High Nature Value Farmland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land stewardship throughout Europe can be a useful mechanism to encourage greening of the CAP, promoting, communicating and supporting high nature value farmland across the Member States. • Land stewardship can be a key component of European Rural Development Programmes (Pillar 2), and to conservation practices (Pillar 1). • The valuation of agricultural products and services from farms with stewardship agreements raises awareness about how to relate economy to nature. • In order to help achieve the targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, high nature value farmland must be protected and land stewardship can support this goal.
<p>EU European Green Infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat fragmentation and degradation can be reduced through effective land stewardship agreements and land management. • Land stewardship organisations can be relevant partners in environmental compensation and habitat banking projects. • Land stewardship can contribute towards the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 Network and the connectivity of biodiversity across Europe.
<p>EU Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The stewardship approach contributes to soil preservation from desertification and sealing, improves the land fertility and supports healthy soils through the exchange of information and best practices. • Sustainable agricultural practices and land management that support healthy soil and its biodiversity are promoted and implemented through land stewardship agreements.
<p>Council of Europe (CoE) European Landscape Convention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many land stewardship agreements occur within landscapes of historical, cultural or natural value and contribute significantly to their management or protection, concretely applying the individual responsibility principle that is implied by the Convention.

Source: Compiled by authors



5.3.1 The EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020

European leaders and Member States have developed ambitious and long-term goals to halt the loss of biodiversity across the EU and contribute to global biodiversity conservation. In March 2010, EU leaders established a headline target for biodiversity in 2020. In May 2011, the EC adopted a new strategy that sets out the necessary actions to reach the 2020 headline target of *"Halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, and restoring them in so far as feasible, while stepping up the EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss"*.

This **EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020** involves six individual but complementary targets that address the main drivers of biodiversity loss. Each target includes a set of actions along with a clear time-frame. The individual targets and their specific actions clearly explain how the strategy will be developed. Land stewardship has a relevant and important role to play in this strategic approach to biodiversity and ecosystem services conservation. For example, in order to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives (Target 1), good management (Action 1) and increased stakeholder awareness and involvement (Action 3) are listed action points. Land stewardship involves stakeholders and civil society, enabling them to be contributors and partners in European biodiversity conservation.

The EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 is ambitious, time sensitive, and will require the cooperation and contribution from all Member States, stakeholders and civil society. The EC and Member States have a clear outline for developing partnerships to meet the targets and land stewardship is a versatile and instrumental tool that can significantly contribute to the strategy and the long-term protection of biodiversity across Europe. Through the conservation of soil, landscapes, water and biodiversity, land stewardship can work with the land users, Member States and the EC to protect the ecosystems across Europe and the valuable services that they provide: in addition, it is a working tool to generate associated and matched social and economic benefits, making care of the environment and protection of biodiversity an efficient means and integral way to meet cross-cutting policy priorities.

Updated information can be found on the [European Commission's website](#).

5.3.2 The EU Birds and Habitats Directives and the Natura 2000 Network

Natura 2000, the network of protected areas across Europe, is regularly referred to as the 'cornerstone' or 'centrepiece' of EU biodiversity policy. Natura 2000 plays a crucial role in protecting threatened or



endangered habitats and species across Europe and is integrated into many other programmes in addition to legislative and financial instruments. The Natura 2000 network is comprised of Special Protection Areas (SPAs), which are identified and designated by the individual Member States under the Birds Directive ([Directive 2009/147/EC](#)) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) under the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC). Currently, Natura 2000 is the largest coordinated Network of protected areas in the world, covering 18% of EU territory and including approximately 26,000 sites (European Commission, 2011).

The overall aim of the Natura 2000 Network is to ensure that the habitats and species identified as being of European importance are restored to 'favourable conservation status' within their natural range in the EU. In order to achieve that goal, the effective long-term management of Natura 2000 sites is the responsibility of the individual Member States. Although land stewardship is not specifically mentioned within the Directives, it is acknowledged through 'contractual measures' in Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

Article 6.1 of the Habitats Directive states that '*For special areas of conservation, Member States shall establish the necessary conservation measures involving, if need be, appropriate management plans specifically designed for the sites or integrated into other development plans, and appropriate statutory, administrative or **contractual measures** which correspond to the ecological requirements of the natural habitat types in Annex I and the species in Annex II present on the sites.*'

Natura 2000 is not a strict network of reserve sites, but a flexible framework for land use practices. The network embraces traditional agricultural practices that encourage biodiversity across Europe and many of the protected habitats and species depend on certain agricultural practices. The successful implementation, management and restoration of the Natura 2000 network will play a central role towards achieving the EU Biodiversity Strategy headline target of halting the loss of biodiversity by 2020. To date, much of the network has been designated, however many sites still require effective management plans. This involves individual stakeholders, organisations and civil society. As demonstrated in various case studies, the variety of tools used by land stewardship organisations can significantly contribute to and support the Natura 2000 Network and assist in the effective, long-term management of the sites across Europe, especially through the contractual measures mentioned in Article 6.1 of the Habitats Directive.

Further information can be found on the [European Commission's website](#).



The Natura 2000 network embraces traditional agricultural practices that encourage biodiversity across Europe and many of the protected habitats and species depend on certain agricultural practices.

MANAGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL RURAL LANDSCAPES IN FINLAND

CASE STUDY

Location: Rekijoka river valley, Finland

Leading organisation: Association for traditional rural landscapes in SW Finland

Other stakeholders: Farmers and NGO's, Finnish Government



The Natura 2000 site Rekijoka river valley, with its 1.209 hectares of semi-natural grasslands, wooded pastures, forests and deep rivers slopes, hosts some of the most vulnerable and endangered habitats in Finland. The majority of the habitats are protected and managed through voluntary agreements with private landowners, 167 in total (17 for protection zones for water bodies).

These agreements are framed under the **Finnish Forest Biodiversity Programme Metso**. The main objectives are to increase managed meadows and pastures, increase conservation agreements for herb-rich forests, improve effectiveness of management practices, protect species and ecosystem services, and increase understanding about the importance of the habitats through communication.

Management plans are written using a participatory process. Based on those plans, conservation agreements are set up and signed. With these agreements, long-term management of the grasslands is ensured. Other areas are purchased and managed by the Government. There is also public funding and NGO's are involved in management activities (e.g. management guidance and realisation of recreational paths).

Integrated management, cooperation with stakeholders, creation of a wide basis for funding, improvement of rural development programmes and promotion of (agricultural) products with added value, are key words in this programme.



ETJA HAGELBERG

More information:

www.vsperinnemaisemat.net

www.landscape.fi

www.natura.org

5.3.3 The EU Water Framework Directive

The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) was adopted in 2000 and establishes a legal framework for community action in the field of water policy within the EU and includes an integrated approach to water policy. Stakeholders and civil society are included in the decision making process as they are invited to participate in the development of river basin management plans. The WFD aims to involve the water users (stakeholders) in every step of the process to achieve the overall objective - reaching good water status in all watersheds across the EU. This ambitious aim fits with the land stewardship approach to conservation and its variety of tools available. The WFD is due for renewal in 2015.

Box 17. Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources

The EC has recently presented the document a '*Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources*'. This document reviews the past achievements of EU water policies, address the weaknesses and present options to strengthen and improve future water policies. Its recommendations complement the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. The Blueprint also makes significant statements about resource efficiency, especially in relation to water resources, as well as the contributions to be made through resource management, natural responses to climate change and green jobs. The public (citizens, organisations and public authorities) were invited to contribute their input during the consultation period in 2012. This active involvement of civil society and stakeholders again reflects the land stewardship approach and can contribute to the reform of water policy within the EU. Further information can be found at the [European Commission's website](#).

The WFD directly affects farmers, landowners and land managers, as they need to implement changes in management and farming practices in accordance with the Directive. Agriculture is one of the largest consumers of water and if it is not regulated correctly, is often a large source of pollution. But other stakeholders may be involved in stewardship initiatives related to water resources, such as fishermen, energy producers, mineral water bottling companies, and other organisations with interest on water uses.

The WFD is oriented to different kinds of water bodies, from lakes, ponds, to rivers and groundwater. The work of many stewardship organisations has been noteworthy, as they have attempted to reach good water status in freshwater public domain lands, that fall under the concept of river stewardship, which is quite developed in some countries such as Spain. In most countries rivers and aquatic ecosys-

tems are of public domain, and of course that means adapting land stewardship techniques to fit in the transition between public water courses and adjacent private properties.

Stewardship agreements that imply water management (particularly reducing its consumption or improving its quality), or other aquatic ecosystems management, such as vegetated buffers, and monitoring and raising awareness of the importance of water resources strongly contribute towards achieving the objectives of the WFD (Sabaté *et al*, 2008).



RIVER STEWARDSHIP AT THE TER BANKS

CASE STUDY

Location: More than 20km of river in Torelló, les Masies de Voltregà i Manlleu municipalities, Catalonia, Spain

Leading organisation: Centre d'Estudis dels Rius Mediterranis —Ter Museum

Other stakeholders: 3 municipalities. Catalan Water Agency, Catalan regional Government, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and the Environment of the Spanish Government.



This project consists in the development of the High Ter river stewardship agreements and specific actions with various owners (public and private) based on a framework stewardship agreement established in 2009 with 3 municipalities (Torelló, Masies de Voltregà and Manlleu) and the **Study Center of the Mediterranean Rivers - Ter Museum (CERM)**.

The main objective is to generate greater responsibility for river stewardship among users and owners, but also with authorities associated with rivers and wetlands conservation. The project, therefore, aims to achieve a large number of river stewardship agreements over the mid-term.

The main actions are intended gradually preserve and restore all the rivers in the basin of the Upper Ter. Also, conservation measures are developed to protect and rehabilitate existing values, restore good ecological status and reach high levels of biodiversity, as far as possible and within available resources. There are monitoring and research studies to evaluate the results of the actions.

CERM also delivers an environmental education programme in the area and has designed nature trails as well. CERM is member of xct's River stewardship working group, created in 2008, to promote stewardship initiatives in rivers, especially in Catalonia.



More information:

www.mitmanlleu.org

www.mitmanlleu.org/riberesdelter

www.xct.cat

5.3.4 The EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) & High Nature Value Farmland

Traditional, local, agricultural practices have shaped the unique landscapes across Europe for thousands of years. Through the long-term relationship between farming and nature, European landscapes have evolved and their biodiversity has increased. Such biodiversity rich agricultural areas are often referred to as **high nature value farmland** (HNV). These lands differ between Member States, biogeographical regions and habitat types, but they all rely on local farmers for their long-term management and survival.

Studies (such as Oppermann, Beaufoy, Jones (Eds.) 2012) have shown that biodiversity benefits most from low-intensity agriculture. In order to maintain these cultural landscapes and HNV agricultural lands, extensive and traditional agricultural practices must be encouraged throughout the European Member States. As the farmer is crucial to the long-term management of such lands, they must be supported, both economically and socially to continue working on the land.



CAP FUNDING AND FARMING IN THE BURREN CASE STUDY

Location: The Burren, West Ireland, Ireland

Leading organisation: Government of Ireland

Other stakeholders: Local government, farmers, NGOs



The Burren is one of the finest examples of a glacio-karst landscape in Western Europe. Located in the west of Ireland, covering approximately 720 km², its nature value is recognised with most of its area being designated under Natura 2000 (IE0001926) – the Natura 2000 sites consist of semi-natural grasslands, scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (important orchid sites), Alpine and Boreal heaths and lowland hay meadows. Typical management practices are predominated by extensive grazing systems. The area is isolated and the farming population is aging.

The **BurrenLIFE Project** (2004-2009) was a pilot scheme which developed a sustainable agricultural approach in the region in order to conserve and restore the important habitats and to develop strong relationships and partnerships among the relevant stakeholders. It was enlarged by the **Burren Farming for Conservation Programme** (BFCP, 2010-2013), aiming to find a new model for the sustainable agricultural management of the Burren.

The objectives of the Programme are the Sustainable agricultural management of high nature value farmland in the Burren, the positive management of the Burren landscape and its cultural heritage, and to improve water quality and water usage efficiency in the Burren region.

Cooperation with farmers and providing them with a future perspective positively encourages them to manage their farmlands for nature. The farmers receive a fee and get paid on the basis of the work that is carried out. Their participation is voluntary but competitive. The incentive is always bound to achieve an improvement in habitat quality, and farmers fund a substantial part of the work themselves. The Burren Farming for Conservation Programme is open to all farmers, but targets those on Natura 2000 sites and also non-designated areas of Annex I habitats.

The BFCP is a successful example of CAP funding supporting local cooperation and partnerships to promote, restore and conserve High Nature Value farmland.



More information:

www.BurrenLIFE.com

The legal proposals set out by the EC in October 2011 for the “greening” of the CAP post 2013 indicate that support will be provided for environment friendly farming practices. Land stewardship throughout the European Union can contribute to the CAP reform, in order to promote, communicate and support high nature value farmland across the Member States. As Oppermann *et al* (2012) states, ‘A robust strategy for biodiversity in Europe needs to take account of the full range of HNV farmland, within and outside the Natura 2000 network’. So, in order to achieve the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, HNV farmland must be recognised. By supporting local and traditional agricultural practices, communicating their benefits and involving local people in their biodiversity and culturally rich landscapes, land stewardship can continue to protect high nature value farmland and contribute towards the 2020 targets.

During the development of this Manual, the 2014-2020 CAP period is still under discussion and many details are pending. Further, updated information on CAP reform can be found on the [European Commission’s website](#).

Land stewardship organisations can be in a good position to provide biodiversity information and advisory services much in need for farmers having to apply the new CAP instruments, with their obligatory or voluntary measures.

5.3.5 The Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection

All European citizens require and depend on healthy soil. Soil plays a central role in agriculture, biodiversity, water quality, climate change, human health and ecosystem services. However, soil degradation is increasing rapidly across Europe and the effects can be found throughout societies and landscapes (COM (2006) 231). The importance of soil, its functions and link to EU biodiversity was acknowledged in the Sixth Environmental Action Programme of the European Community (2002-2012) with a call to develop a ‘Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection’. The Strategy was adopted in 2006 and the objective was to protect and sustainably use soil through the prevention of further degradation, the preservation of soil function and the restoration of degraded soils. Although the proposed Soil Framework Directive has not been adopted, the Strategy has been a remarkable catalyst of instruments for monitoring soil use changes and their environmental effects and also for increasing awareness of soil initiatives, such as the European Network on Soil Awareness (ENSA).

Land stewardship can support healthy soils across Europe through the exchange of information and best practices, along with the integration of soil knowledge into agreements and activities. Healthy soil across Europe can significantly contribute towards achieving the EU Biodiversity to 2020 Strategy and through increased awareness, civil society can become more informed about the importance of healthy soil across the EU. Sustainable agricultural practices and land management that support healthy soil and its biodiversity can be promoted and implemented through the land stewardship approach.

GROWING SYNERGIES IN AGRICULTURAL STEWARDSHIP

CASE STUDY

Location: Alt Empordà, in Catalonia, and Menorca in the Balearic Islands. Spain

Leading organisation: Balearic Group of Ornithology and Defence of Nature (GOB de Menorca) and Altempordanian Institution of Defence and study of Nature (IAEDEN),

Other stakeholders: About 30 owners. Ministerio de Agricultura, Alimentación y Medio Ambiente, FEADER, Obra Social Sa Nostra Caixa de Balears, Consell Insular de Menorca, Diputació de Girona.



Agriculture and environment are two inter-related areas with great potential to obtain mutual benefits. It is necessary then to promote agricultural management systems that can bring economic viability objectives (fundamental for the survival of the agricultural sector) combined with preservation of the environment. This was the goal of the project carried out simultaneously in Menorca and Alt Empordà by **GOB Menorca** and **IAEDEN** respectively.

Through voluntary stewardship agreements on sustainable agriculture practices, between the owner or farmer and the organisation, both parties are committed to achieve the maximum possible from a list of measures. The agreement allows other actors, public institutions or companies in other sectors to collaborate. In addition to the sustainable management of the properties, the stewardship organisations and the landowners agree to monitor the environmental effects of the agreement.

GOB Menorca and IAEDEN also deliver training days, to facilitate exchange of experiences and projects concerning the relationship between agriculture and nature, as well as to find new partnerships. Other educational activities include volunteer workshops to directly help management activities on farms, or activities at school, so youngsters learn about farming and what lies behind all of the products, the farmers, the countryside, nature, and so on.

The project also publicises and promotes the farms' products as part of the stewardship agreements, and therefore helps to boost the economic viability of farms. This includes participating in fairs and markets in the area, organising local product tastings, and other marketing strategies to promote the products and the stewardship agreement itself. Some outstanding initiatives are a *video* and a *spot* related to the project.



More information:

agroterritori-iaeden.blogspot.com

www.gobmenorca.com

www.xct.cat

Further, updated information can be found on the [European Commission's website](#).

5.3.6 The European Green Infrastructure

The European Commission defines green infrastructure as 'a strategically planned and delivered network of high quality green spaces and other environmental features'. When successfully implemented, it can address the needs of both nature and people, offering multiple uses and services. It includes semi-natural areas, natural and man-made areas in terrestrial, marine, coastal and freshwater areas in both rural and urban settings. Much of Europe's landscape is degraded or fragmented, and biodiversity is vulnerable to both natural and man-made environmental pressures. If ecosystems or habitats are reduced in size or become more isolated, due to the development of transport infrastructure or urban development, they may reduce the services that they provide. Many Natura 2000 sites are also isolated protected areas that are rich in biodiversity, and thus vulnerable to outside pressures. Green Infrastructure aims to improve the connectivity of Europe's biodiversity and ensure the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 Network. This will improve the mitigation and adaptation of the network to climate change and other environmental risks.

Land stewardship has an important role to play both within Natura 2000 and outside the network. The land outside the Natura 2000 network (both private and public land) can support biodiversity and green infrastructure across Europe by creating 'stepping stones' or 'ecological corridors'. A land stewardship approach to ecological connectivity across Europe will involve the relevant landowners, land users and civil society and can support healthy and resilient ecosystems and the services that they provide. While Natura 2000 land do have a legal frame, lands involved in the Green Infrastructure do not. Therefore, land stewardship can even be more important as a tool in those areas in the Green Infrastructure.

Further, updated information can be found on the [European Commission's website](#).

5.3.7 The Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention

The European Landscape Convention is the first international convention specifically aimed at landscapes. It aims '*to promote landscape protection, management and planning and to organise European cooperation on landscape issues*' (European Landscape Convention, Article 3). Landscapes do not respect territorial borders and the Convention proposes regional and cross-border cooperation for the protection and management of European landscapes. A flexible approach is suggested and the signed parties can apply solutions that suit their specific requirements and complement other national policies.



The Convention presents a new approach to the landscape and implies that it is a right of all individuals to enjoy and benefit from it. It also implies that the landscape is the responsibility of each individual and this complements and reflects the land stewardship approach to conservation.

Stewardship poses clear, specific and interesting opportunities for protecting, maintaining and managing the landscape. Indeed, landscape is the background for many stewardship agreements, even if they are not explicitly mentioned within the agreements themselves. In fact, many of the areas for which stewardship agreements are reached have high aesthetic and landscape values. Moreover, stewardship promotes and increases the public's awareness of the importance of landscapes across Europe. It includes individual users in the management of such landscapes and encourages stakeholders to take responsibility for their protection and development. Therefore, land stewardship is proposed as a strategy employing wide-reaching participation and social recognition to contribute to the conservation of natural, cultural and landscape heritage in Europe, and the European Landscape Convention can help giving a relevant framework to stewardship initiatives.

Further information can be found on the [Council of Europe's website](#).



5.4 EUROPEAN UNION FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Land management and nature protection across Europe is financed through a variety of local, regional, national, European Union (EU) and international level funding. The location of the land, the biodiversity living there, the Natura 2000 status and the activities being carried out will all affect the public funding available for land management and land stewardship. Every site is unique and the funding sources available will vary accordingly. Land stewardship in Europe is characterised by its diversity, variety of legal approaches and stakeholder involvement. The various financial instruments and funding opportunities can reflect this diversity as land stewardship fits the requirements of many funding streams.

There are a wide variety of grants and public subsidies available to stewardship organisations and landowners in order to develop various actions included in a stewardship agreement. Stewardship organisations can play a role in assisting landowners in the search for relevant funding opportunities and also in the specific submission of their application. This section focuses primarily on public funding opportunities within the EU. However, information about other private sources of funding are detailed in sections 4.3 and 4.4.



Focusing on the funding opportunities available from European institutions, the EU's multi-annual financial framework determines the maximum financial commitments for policy areas or 'headings' for the annual EU budgets. The multi-annual financial framework for 2014-2020 will support the overall EU Strategy to 2020 and set the budget for future biodiversity conservation in the EU. The European Commission has proposed to strengthen environment and climate change requirements within policies such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Cohesion Policy for the period 2014-2020 and to mainstream environmental policy priorities and climate actions into all the major EU funding instruments. Readers must be aware that at the time of writing this Manual the 2014-2020 funding framework is still under discussion at the institutions of the European Union, and therefore its final format may differ.

The EC funding strategy is focused on the need to have integrated funding streams, developed through Prioritised Action Frameworks (PAFs) which can use multiple available resources in smart ways to contribute to nature conservation priorities and other priorities, such as social and economic objectives. This integration of issues into all funding instruments can increase the financial opportunities for land stewardship across Europe. Currently, some of the most relevant EU financial instruments for land stewardship include the **Structural Funds, especially the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE+).**



Table 4. Public funding sources for land stewardship

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY	Possible benefits for land stewardship
Natura 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 8 of the Habitats Directive makes provisions for European financial support or co-financing for necessary conservation measures for priority habitats and species. • A variety of both European and National funding sources available if land stewardship activities occur within Natura 2000.
European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Common Strategic Framework (CSF) will provide the strategic guidelines for the ERDF during the 2014-2020 programming period. • Article 5 of the proposed ERDF (2014-2020) lists the following investment priorities that may provide funding for land stewardship: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 5 (5) - promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management; • Article 5 (6) - protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency; • Article 5 (6) (c) protecting, promoting and developing cultural heritage; • Article 5 (6) (d) protecting biodiversity, soil protection and promoting ecosystem services, including Natura 2000 and green infrastructures. • Ref: (COM(2011) 614 final)
European Environmental Funding Instrument (LIFE+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2012 call for proposal lists clear priority areas and objectives that land stewardship can meet, such as 'demonstration or innovative projects contributing to the implementation of the objectives of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020'. • The new programme for 2014-2020 will contain sub-programmes for 'environment' and 'climate action' and promote partnerships. Many land stewardship activities will fall under these categories and may be suitable for funding. • The new 'integrated' approach to projects and funding may create opportunities for land stewardship.
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 5 of the proposed EAFRD (2014-2020) sets out six 'Union priorities for rural development' to contribute to the EU 2020 Strategy. Land stewardship may be suitable for funding under priority 4 that aims at: 'restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems dependent on agriculture and forestry'. • Land stewardship can successfully implement the measures addressed in Article 29 (agri-environment-climate) and Article 36 (co-operation) of the proposed EAFRD. • Ref: COM(2011) 627 final/2

Source: Compiled by authors

5.4.1 Natura 2000

If land stewardship activities occur within Natura 2000, Member States will be responsible for funding the management of the land in increasingly integrated ways. Although Natura 2000 is the key piece of EU biodiversity policy, it does not have a dedicated financial instrument for the long-term management of sites or for the protection of the listed habitats or species. It does however, benefit from a variety of funding sources both at the EU and national level, such as the LIFE+ programme, The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), Structural Funds and private funding. Land stewardship within Natura 2000 can also benefit from such funding. Article 8 of the Habitats Directive makes provisions for Member States to gain EU financial support or co-financing for the necessary conservation measures for priority natural habitat types and species. However, at the time of writing, these mechanisms are currently being discussed and are likely to be significantly changed in the coming 2014 to 2020 programme period.

Moreover, Natura 2000 as a policy has introduced essential ways of working together with landowners and land managers. New participative, financial and fiscal tools have been introduced by some Member States to encourage landowners and land managers engaging in nature conservation. For example, in France voluntary agreements can be signed under **agri-environment schemes**, and a tax relief is offered to landowners who have signed a Natura 2000 charter that commits to sustainable management within clear limits.

The Natura 2000 network benefits from a variety of funding sources both at the EU and national level, such as the LIFE programme, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), Structural Funds and private funding.



5.4.2 The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

In March 2012, The European Commission presented the Common Provisions Regulation for the 2014-2020 programming period (COM(2011) 615 final/2). This regulation aims to assist Member States in setting clear priorities that work towards meeting the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, while also enabling a more efficient and integrated use of EU funding. If adopted, the Common Strategic Framework will provide one source of strategic guidelines for the following funds: ERDF, European Social Fund (ESF), Cohesion Fund, EAFRD and the European Marine and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). National and regional authorities will develop 'partnership contracts' with the European Commission, stating how they intend to prioritise and meet the EU 2020 targets.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) aims to support economic and social cohesion by redressing regional imbalances. It supports regional and local development by co-financing investments in a variety of areas, including the environment and mitigation of climate change (COM (2011) 614 final), and has the potential to supply financial assistance to land stewardship. Member States are responsible for the management and control of the operational programmes. Financial availability depends on the location and the chosen priorities of the programmes in line with the regulations objectives and investment priorities of the programme. A land stewardship approach to biodiversity conservation can potentially meet many of the requirements of the budgetary categories and thus gain access to funding through the ERDF. However, access to ERDF by non-governmental land stewardship organisations depends on decisions by member states on how to apply these funds.

Further information can be found at the [European Commission's website](#).

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) aims to support economic and social cohesion by redressing regional imbalances. It supports regional and local development by co-financing investments in a variety of areas.



5.4.3 LIFE+ Programme

The LIFE+ programme, the EU environmental funding instrument, has co-financed many projects that involve land stewardship. In an attempt to better link it to the EU 2020 Strategy and its priorities, the LIFE+ programme was recently reviewed and adjusted by the European Commission. Through the development of the new 'integrated projects' category, the programme now aims to improve the implementation and integration of environmental and climate policies and objectives. This will be done by integrating European, national and private funding opportunities. The LIFE+ programme aims to complement the Common Strategic Framework instruments and to work towards an integrated approach of using funds for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development and this may create more funding opportunities for land stewardship.

Further, updated information can be found at the [European Commission's website](#).



A NEW LIFE FOR THE SALT WORKS OF VILLENEUVE

CASE STUDY

Location: 15 km southwest from Montpellier, 3 municipalities concerned: Villeneuve-lès-Maguelonne (144 ha), Vic-la-Gardiole and Mireval (147 ha). Languedoc-Roussillon (Département de l'Hérault), France

Leading organisation: Conservatoire du Littoral

Other stakeholders: Conservatoire d'espaces naturels de Languedoc-Roussillon, Thau Agglo, SIEL, Municipality of Villeneuve-lès-maguelonne, farmers, fishers, hunters and other activities (kite-surfers, walkers...)



The salt works of Villeneuve is a preserved area in a highly urbanised coastline with high, seasonal tourism activity. The area has been exploited from the 12th century to the last part of the 20th century (until 1989). The site, its biodiversity and landscape have been shaped by many years of interactions between man and nature. This has resulted in a very complex ecosystem, where each species and each kind of user require specific conditions to live or to practice activities. The area is a Natura 2000 site (*Etangs palavasiens et étang de l'Estagnol*, FR9110042) and contains 12 habitats of European interest, both in salt and fresh water. As the stability of the site is fragile, when also combined with activities, such as livestock farming (bulls, horses), fishing activities, and recreation activities (hiking, hunting), the conservation and management of the site is complex.

The first areas were purchased in 1992 by the **Conservatoire du Littoral**. The Conservatoire aims to protect nature and maintain economic activities, whilst promoting public access to nature. The Conservatoire never manages its properties itself: rather, it builds partnerships with different land managers, with complementary expertise and skills to achieve its objectives. In Villeneuve, 6 agreements were reached, 3 of them concerning the general site's management involving 5 partners (CEN L-R and local authorities), and the other 3 relating to

economic activities (e.g. with farmers for their flocks to maintain the habitats, and with fishers to respect some basic rules about resources use).

In 1996, the first management plan was written and, since 2009, the CEN L-R has been involved in management of the area: then, in 2010 several livestock farmers, fishermen and hunters became involved. Every two months, CEN L-R, the owners and their land managers get together to talk about various management actions and discuss progress, in order to inform management decisions. Moreover, once a year and during some specific thematic meeting, the users are invited to discuss.

The primary objectives are to repair and preserve natural habitats, ensure that local economic and traditional activities become compatible with the biodiversity objectives, and to improve the knowledge of the ecosystem and its traditional management practices.

The main funds come from public partners: EU (LIFE+), the Regional Council, State, Departmental Council, the water agency; and private partners: Véolia, Caisse d'Épargne, Lafarge.

More information:
www.conservatoire-du-littoral.fr



CEN L-R

5.4.4 European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

There is potentially a large amount of funding available for land stewardship within the EAFRD as many of its activities fit within the set criteria. Article 5 of the proposed EAFRD (2014-2020) sets out six 'Union priorities for rural development' to contribute to the EU 2020 Strategy.

The six Union Priorities include:

- > fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas;
- > enhancing competitiveness of all types of agriculture and enhancing farm viability;
- > promoting food chain organisation and risk management in agriculture;
- > restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems dependent on agriculture and forestry
- > promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy in the agriculture, food and forestry sectors;
- > promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

Land stewardship may be suitable for funding under priority 4 that aims at: 'restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems dependent on agriculture and forestry'. Land stewardship can also successfully implement the measures addressed in Article 29 (agri-environment-climate) and Article 36 (co-operation) of the proposed EAFRD.

Further information on the legal proposal for support for rural development¹⁴ can be found on the [European Commission's website](#).



6. NEW HORIZONS FOR LAND STEWARDSHIP IN EUROPE

This chapter explores opportunities for land stewardship in Europe. It is divided into two main sections. The first is aimed at presenting the main conclusions of this Manual as opportunities to promote land stewardship in Europe. The second section is addressed to the main target audiences of the Manual, presenting recommendations to become involved in land stewardship.

6.1 OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTE LAND STEWARDSHIP IN EUROPE

Land stewardship in Europe must develop its own character and structure. American models of land stewardship work in the United States. Canadian models work in Canada, as they are evolving in South America and other regions. Every region and country has its own cultural, social and institutional framework, meaning that threats and opportunities will differ and that land stewardship will evolve differently. A good dose of creativity, innovation and ability to networking will be necessary to develop a consistent and efficient land stewardship model in each European territory, which will for sure be unique.

Promoting land stewardship in a country or region is a challenging effort. Of course, there are plenty of opportunities that, well taken, can boost land stewardship promoters to face any difficulty ahead.

The main opportunities for promoting land stewardship in Europe and any of its regions can be grouped in five main aspects: A) general opportunities, B) land stewardship as a tool for nature conservation and management, C) networking opportunities, D) as a tool for social involvement and those E) opportunities arising from European policies and legal instruments.

A) GENERAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR LAND STEWARDSHIP

- > **Land stewardship is an inclusive concept**, which is able to harmonise nature conservation with the provision of goods and services from biodiversity and other natural resources. This concept has the potential to invite all stakeholders in caring for the land, and needs to be understood as a step toward each other to fulfil our respective needs.
- > **Economic restructuring today opens the door to land stewardship solutions.** In front of the economic crisis facing society today, land stewardship can bring innovative quality and excellence solutions to farmers and landowners of high nature value lands and farms, reinforcing their products and services. Land stewardship offers a set of tools that can be easily adapted in times of rapid transition, changing social, political and economic conditions.

B) LAND STEWARDSHIP AS A TOOL FOR NATURE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

- > **An integrated approach and joint work between different sectors will often prove to be more sustainable than individual microsite land use decisions responding to**



immediate needs. Land stewardship is based on the idea of collaboration and partnership amongst different sectors.

- > **Most of European landscapes need some sort of management to be maintained.** To sustain working landscapes, land stewardship programmes must involve a wide range of players, including landowners, local communities, NGOs, commercial interests, and government agencies. The evolving landscape conservation approach “brings conservation to where people live and work”, and offers a bridge between the perceived dichotomy of natural and cultural heritage. Since European policies are oriented to a model of land management that promotes biodiversity, land stewardship has a significant growth potential in most Europe.
- > **The concept of land stewardship offers valuable tools for addressing the challenges for conserving biodiversity, landscapes and local communities in diverse regions of Europe.** In addition to the direct benefit of improving nature conservation, these approaches can serve to strengthen local leadership and institutions, encourage citizen participation and bring together diverse stakeholders to address problems at a local level. These contributions, in turn, reinforce the characteristics and the role of civil society and its sense of place.
- > **Land stewardship is suited to answer in practical ways to challenges climate change pose.** Climate change is the main threat to biodiversity loss and land stewardship is an effective tool to address it, whether by mitigating impacts of practices or by anticipating changes with sustainable practices (habitat connectivity, food production, access to water resources, wildfire and drought prevention).
- > **Land stewardship is part of the rural green economy and social entrepreneurship** as a tool that can enhance the economic viability of biodiversity sound business and socially oriented activities. Most land stewardship agreements can be related to activities that bring new income related to the natural heritage in the property. Commercialisation of land stewardship products and services (quality foods, crafts & nature friendly items, ecotourism, nature learning activities, etc.) is an opportunity both for landowners and farmers involved in the agreement and the stewardship organisation itself, as presented in this Manual and in some case studies. All these activities are types of rural green economy that boost economic viability and profit related to nature, and can be implemented as social entrepreneurship activities related to stewardship.



C) NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LAND STEWARDSHIP

- > **Networking in Europe for land stewardship can strengthen regional efforts and spread innovation.** Stewardship networks and individual organisations have a lot to learn and share if they network at the European level. There are different reasons to network: common message and reinforcement of European policies and Natura 2000, joint advocacy for European policies and strategies, professional exchange, joint campaigns (e.g. www.landlifeweek.eu, the European Land Stewardship Week), exchange of methods and innovations (R+D+i), comparison of organisational and project strategies, etc. In fact, more and more specialised networks are being created and developed in Europe and regional and National organisations understand the benefits of international alliances and networking.

- > **There is enough experience and innovation in Europe on land stewardship promotion,** and plenty and diversity of land stewardship organisations and networks ready to share their knowledge. LandLife project includes many other learning tools, which also encourage networking, such as the [Land Stewardship Toolkit](#), online education or a help desk. All of which can be found through www.landstewardship.eu.

- > **The common European nature conservation programmes fixed by European institutions will foster coordination.** European organisations will be driven to work together with a common legal framework and common approach when dealing with European instruments and funds, what will lead to a common way of working, however conserving its particularities and local strengths.

- > **Europe's cultural and political diversity will allow different ways to apply the concept of land stewardship.** Europe has a rich patchwork of nature conservation models, so if land stewardship is to be implemented all over Europe, it will take different forms depending on where it is applied. Learning and exchange amongst European countries will foster innovation and allow a quick adaptation of land stewardship to different realities.

- > **Linking of Europe to the worldwide scene** of land stewardship in the world. While land stewardship in Europe must have its own characteristics, it can be enriched by engagement with parallel efforts in other regions of the world. Experimentation in policy and practice is very dynamic on many other continents, and can inform efforts at home.



Promoting land stewardship in a country or region is a challenging effort. Of course, there are plenty of opportunities that, well taken, can boost land stewardship promoters to face any difficulty ahead.

D) FROM LAND STEWARDSHIP AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT (LANDOWNERS, LOCAL PEOPLE, CITIZENS, BUSINESSES)

- > **Land stewardship is an opportunity to empower society** and allow its active involvement in the conservation of biodiversity, nature and landscape management, facing the growing environmental awareness amongst the general public. By fostering individual and community responsibility, the land stewardship approach puts conservation in the hands of the people most concerned by it. Most land stewardship organisations have their origin in local or regional groups of concerned citizens wanting to preserve something special in their area. Contributions by concerned citizens can arrive in form of donations, membership, volunteer work camps...

- > **The trend in protected areas management toward involving local people offers new opportunities to build alliances with landowners and resource-users.** Traditionally the establishment and management of protected areas had a “top-down” approach, involving minimally communities in the process. With time, local community involvement has reached education and participation processes, and until recently a direct role in conservation action has not been considered. Indeed, now managers are examining ways in which local communities can benefit from activities associated with protected areas, such as those provided by land stewardship. Communication and education programmes play an important role creating a climate for cooperation with stakeholders. This is a key strategy for managing the Natura 2000 Network.

- > **Land stewardship offers a means of extending the reach of conventional protected areas** because it addresses conservation needs on lands outside protected area boundaries, and it cultivates local responsibility for sound resource management. It offers the potential to conserve heritage at the level of ecosystems and landscapes. By engaging resource-users, landowners, civic organisations, community groups and municipalities, a local stewardship initiative can help to build a strong constituency for conservation, thus strengthening the position of protected areas.

- > **Opportunities of private funding of land stewardship.** Corporate Social Responsibility, philanthropy organisations, social investment funds and other sponsorship actions can offer new support to land stewardship initiatives, and at the same time are an opportunity to involve businesses in nature conservation through partnerships and alliances.



E) OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM EUROPEAN POLICIES AND LEGAL INSTRUMENTS

- > **Government policies which provide a strong legal basis and incentives for conservation agreements can encourage private initiative.** Government policy and legislation can provide frameworks and incentives for private landowners to enter into agreements with land stewardship organisations or government agencies to protect valuable natural and cultural resources.
- > **Stewardship organisations may be well positioned to give advice and support to new programmes and policies** and promote local knowledge and experience in both the development and implementation of European policies and instruments. As farmers and landowners take up their role as stewards of the land, they will need more expertise. Land stewardship organisations can be on their side as key advisors to face the new opportunities ahead.
- > **The up-coming EU programmatic period (2014-2020) offers interesting new opportunities to finance an integrated approach to land conservation** and to cooperation between different stakeholders under different EU programmes. That's especially important relating to the LIFE+ Programme, Natura 2000 network, the CAP reform, and its rural development programmes.
- > **The Natura 2000 network, with its legal, financial and administrative framework at the European and national levels, is a solid institutional basis for the development of land stewardship in the EU.** Promoting land stewardship as a useful tool to involve stakeholders in the management of Natura 2000 sites is relevant and appropriate. In fact, land stewardship could become an icon concept for social involvement and participation in the European network of nature and biodiversity, bringing a whole new age to the system. LandLife will continue to investigate and reinforce this during its life-span (2011-2014).
- > **The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) offers key opportunities for land stewardship.** As the legislative proposals for the reform of the CAP 2014-2020 are being discussed, it is clear that land stewardship will benefit from the greening of the first pillar of the CAP (through green direct payments in association with cross compliance measures) and the opportunities offered by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). Land stewardship organisations can be in a good position to provide biodiversity information and advisory services much in need for farmers having to apply the new CAP instruments, with their obligatory or voluntary measures. Many actions related to



stewardship agreements in farm and forest land and other rural areas can be part of EARDF projects. Land stewardship networks and organisations must explore these opportunities, both at the European and the National and regional level, and making the best use of comparative research for regions and member states applying the CAP funds with the best land stewardship and biodiversity conservation approach . There is also the possibility for farming and nature conservation interests to join together within the context of the proposed European Innovation Partnerships, particularly those based on the theme of sustainable agriculture.



→ **European rural development instruments (Leader) can help reaching out local stakeholders.** The Leader programme and the potential to work with the Local Action Groups is an opportunity to put in place land stewardship practices. Most of Local Action Groups are already concerned with caring for their land, which means an opportunity to reach out local stakeholders on stewardship through Leader, which has a wide base of local actors at the EU scale.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONSIDER BY STAKEHOLDERS WANTING TO IMPLEMENT LAND STEWARDSHIP

There are plenty of key aspects to consider regarding the implementation of land stewardship in a geographical area, and it is worthy to analyse them before initiating and leading land stewardship in a given territory. The LandLife *Study of the development and implementation of land stewardship in the Mediterranean arc and Europe* (Quer et al., 2012) provides comparative tools useful for future analysis of land stewardship development in other countries and regions, and it identifies the following aspects to understand the context of land stewardship (see table 5). Once all these issues have been identified and analysed in a given area, it will be a starting point for promoting land stewardship, involving as much allies as possible into the project.



Table 5. Aspects to analyse in any country or region where to develop land stewardship

Political – administrative framework	How State, regional and local administration act toward civic society being involved in land management? Which roles they adopt and which legislation and public policies are being implemented? Which place is given to stakeholder involvement/participatory approaches in nature conservation?
Systems of nature protection	How state and regional policies have addressed the protection of the environment? Legal development of biodiversity protection systems and natural areas, degree of development of Natura 2000 network and nature management systems... availability of information regarding the environment: biodiversity data, maps...
Legal development of land stewardship	To what extent does current legislation include land stewardship in its rules and regulations? legal development of land stewardship, tax benefits and other economic or fiscal incentives that may be introduced or are already in place in order to boost land stewardship.
Ownership structures	Ownership of land is an important and relevant matter for land stewardship. From determining the degree of public and private property (in general and in protected areas) and the degree to which information on ownership structures is available, and information for designing strategies for the promotion of land stewardship.
Constituency (membership) and alliances for land stewardship	Analyse active organisations and the relationship they have among each other. Especially, the roles of organisations and how public, private, institutionalised, non-institutionalised and other types of organisations may influence the development and promotion of land stewardship. Is there enough critical mass in the country to promote land stewardship?
Implementation of land stewardship projects	Gather information regarding land stewardship projects in the region. In some cases, some preliminary actions may have been developed (even without knowing that they are based on land stewardship concepts), and even some land stewardship organisations may be active in the country.

Source: LandLife study of the development and implementation of land stewardship in the Mediterranean arc and Europe (Quer *et al.*, 2012).

The following guidelines may be useful for all types of organisations and institutions interested in promoting land stewardship in their region or country. And, even better than single organisations a partnership of public and private institutions, as exposed in some case studies of this Manual.

European level recommendations

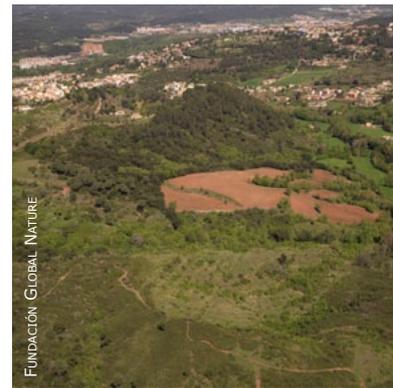
- Introducing the concept and promoting land stewardship within Europe’s policy agenda, especially EU’s conservation and protection of the environment programmes, and the greening of the CAP, as a way to promote an integrated approach to biodiversity.



- > Introducing the concept of land stewardship in EU regulations and processes such as different working groups on biodiversity, the new biogeographic process and projects supported by the LIFE+ Fund.
- > Exploring, defining and securing opportunities for the development of land stewardship, that support and strengthen the implementation of various EU policies and recommendations, such as the CAP (in particular in areas of High Nature Value farming), Green Infrastructure, the Water policy, the Soil strategy, Forest, and Climate change.
- > Promoting EU specific references to land stewardship as an effective tool for biodiversity conservation and land management when implementing policies, such as Natura 2000, the CAP or the European Regional Development Funds, amongst others.
- > Identifying and developing relationships between land stewardship and the green economy and social entrepreneurship, achieving the potential of land stewardship to contribute to the development of green jobs.

National and regional level recommendations

- > In dialogue with stakeholders involved, introducing the concept and promoting land stewardship into national or regional policy agenda, especially in relation to conservation and protection of the environment programmes, especially those cofinanced by the European Union like LIFE+.
- > Establishing land stewardship promotion as one of the functions of the national or regional government, and developing actions performed by the responsible public body, in partnership with the stewardship movement. This Manual proposes many ideas for this. Analysing on-going examples across Europe and visiting them, can be a useful step to kick-off this process.
- > Creating the conditions for land stewardship agreements with adequate legal recognition at state or regional level, e.g. to strengthening the mechanism in nature conservation policies and enabling incentives on land stewardship agreements.
- > Giving support to land stewardship organisations and networks and promoting their creation if necessary.
- > Creating funds and tax benefits that help making land stewardship agreements more attractive for landowners and stewardship organisations, i.e. making sites under a land stewardship agreement eligible for financial and tax incentives, for example.



At any administrative level, one of the first steps to take is introducing the concept and the promotion of land stewardship into the policy agenda.

- > Ensuring that the possibilities of co-funding coming from the European Union can be accessed for Land Stewardship programmes by including the concept in the national Prioritised Action Frameworks for Natura 2000.
- > Engaging local authorities and municipalities with land stewardship by showing them the opportunity to use land stewardship agreements as a means for participation and local involvement in the protection and management of natural areas of local interest.



Land stewardship networks (at national or regional level)

- > Getting acquainted with land stewardship network strategies developed in other parts of Europe, and trying to share and to learn from their experience. Use the tools and opportunities provided at www.landstewardship.eu.
- > Organising congresses, meetings, exchanges, future vision workshops or start-up events that create momentum and nurture the drive for a joint stewardship vision. Using these events to sketch a strategic plan for your stewardship network. Being creative and developing your own models in accordance with your geography, society, culture and legal context.
- > Involving as many allies as possible (and as diverse stakeholders as possible) into the land stewardship project.
- > Setting a plan to involve government and public agencies into the land stewardship network strategy. Looking for the appropriate stakeholders in public institutions for this key alliance. Showing them how land stewardship can contribute to public conservation objectives and the management of Natura 2000 sites.
- > Gathering information on stewardship organisations and local stewardship practices in some sort of national or regional databases so that sharing experience is made easier.



Land stewardship organisations and conservation NGOs and foundations

- > Prioritising quality over quantity in land stewardship agreements, and using best practices and quality systems for land stewardship organisations. Link to new video by xct. (see [Land Stewardship Toolkit](#)).
- > Establishing new quality partnerships within one's own capacity, even if that means refocusing existing ones, with a range of institutions and constituencies, but always within own capacity and prioritising quality over quantity.
- > Presenting yourselves to landowners as key partners to face together the opportunities of a changing political and economic framework, especially that derived from the multi-annual financial framework for 2014-2020 that will support the overall EU Strategy to 2020.
- > Ensuring core funds for your organisation and allocating them to reach land stewardship agreements and boost new projects to conserve places and species. Linking these projects with social involvement in your area of influence, to maximise the use of efforts, resources and time.
- > Promoting of citizen responsibility and care for their environment/ surroundings and a beautiful landscape.
- > Initiating or taking part in developing land stewardship networks in your country or region. Being part of them. Asking them to work on those collective objectives that you cannot develop on your own.
- > Networking internationally with other land stewardship organisations through training activities, project visits, R&D projects, Euroregional initiatives, etc. Using this Manual, its case studies and www.landstewardship.eu as means to start contacts abroad.

Private landowners, land users and its organisations

- > Discovering land stewardship and its opportunities, and reaching agreements with land stewardship organisations and networks.
- > Learning from other landowners already involved in land stewardship agreements.
- > Searching for advice on the natural values of your property and its management. Participating in local conservation groups that might evolve into land stewardship organisations.



- > Asking the land stewardship organisations in your area how they work for the best quality and how you can become involved in projects to develop agreements of higher legal standards and best conservation results. Considering the positive aspects of high legal certainty agreements.
- > Partnering with land stewardship organisations and networks through your landowner and farming, forestry, hunting and alike organisations. Looking for common interests and advocate for them together.
- > Relating your land stewardship agreement to green economy activities in your property (e.g. commercialisation of products and services). Discussing options and joint opportunities with your land stewardship organisation.
- > Sharing your concerns about land management with land stewardship organisations and networks.
- > Organising debates and presentations on land stewardship with farmers and owners already in stewardship.



Businesses and corporations as sponsors and landowners

- > Analysing the impact of your business activities on biodiversity. Searching for specialists or land stewardship organisations that can help you achieve a better output for your activities.
- > Considering land stewardship as an approach that can help you deliver or implement your Corporate Eco Social Responsibility objectives. Benefiting from the experience of existing land stewardship organisation through partnering.
- > Contacting land stewardship organisations in your area and getting to know their work. Participating in events, joint meetings, site visits. Learning the needs of each other in relation to biodiversity and land stewardship. Looking for opportunities within an open range (marketing and promotion, volunteering, client prizes and experiences, fundraising campaigns, labelled quality products, expertise sharing, etc.).
- > Partnering and contributing with land stewardship and its organisations.
- > Developing your own land stewardship initiatives as part of your Corporate Eco-Social Responsibility, as a way to get involved in nature conservation.
- > Organising volunteer stewardship days with your workers, clients or stakeholders.
- > Promoting corporate stewardship in company lands, as presented in this Manual.
- > As an inclusive concept, bringing people together and engaging diverse local organisations to help protect the land and waters they care about, land stewardship offers many possibilities for development in Europe, contributing to conservation, the green economy and green jobs. With its long tradition and diversity of cultures, landscapes and biodiversity, Europe can build upon the evolution of the governance of its protected areas towards an active participation of all stakeholders. Properly recognised, supported at the European level and imbedded within an integration approach to land management, Natura 2000 and High Nature Value farmland can become the core areas for the development of land stewardship in the wider countryside all over Europe. The landscape is rich with opportunities for the maintenance and restoration of biodiversity by local people motivated to care together for nature.



7. AVAILABLE RESOURCES

This final chapter includes information on European institutions and organisations related to land stewardship, the details of the references and links cited in the text, as well as a glossary of specialised terms used along the Manual, which is, in fact, the first European Glossary on Land Stewardship ever done.



7.1 MAIN EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS RELATED TO LAND STEWARDSHIP

LandLife partners

- Conservatoire d'espaces naturels du Languedoc-Roussillon
- Eurosite
- Legambiente-Lombardia
- The Land Stewardship Network of Catalonia (xct)

Land stewardship and conservation networks in Europe

- Conservatoires d'espaces naturels (FR)
- Foro de Redes y Entidades de Custodia del Territorio (ES)
- German Association for Land Care (DVL) (GE)
- Plataforma de Custodia del Territorio —Fundación Biodiversidad (ES)
- The Czech Union for Conservation of Nature (Čsop) (CZ)
- TransCantabric Network on Land Stewardship (ES)

European NGOs and private organisations

- ECNC - European Centre for Nature Conservation
- European Environmental Bureau (EEB)
- European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism
- European Landowners Organisation (ELO)
- Eurosite
- Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)
- Notaries of Europe
- PAN PARKs, The European wilderness protection organisation
- The EUROPARC Federation

European Union institutions

- > European Environmental Agency (EEA)
- > Joint Research Centre, Institute for Environment and Sustainability (IES)
- > Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI)
- > The Council of the European Union
- > The Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development
- > The Directorate-General for the Environment (DG Environment)
- > The European Parliament

International organisations

- > Birdlife International
- > International Union for Conservation of Nature — World Commission on Protected Areas (IUCN-WCPA)
- > Plantlife International
- > The Land Trust Alliance of US
- > The Nature Conservancy

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7.3 LINKS RELATED TO THE TEXT

[A Blueprint to safeguard Europe's Waters](#)

[European Commission Co-decision procedure](#)

[Common Agricultural Policy \(CAP\) Reform](#)

[Common Strategic Framework](#)

[ERDF_ The European Regional Development Fund](#)

[EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020](#)

[Europe 2020 Strategy](#)

[European Commission. Green Infrastructure](#)

[European Commission. Information on Financing Natura 2000](#)

[European Commission Social Business Initiative](#)

[European Ecolabel](#)

[LIFE+ Programme](#)

[Multiannual Financial Framework \(2014-2020\)](#)

[Natural England, Environmental Stewardship Programme](#)

[Water Framework guidance documents](#)



7.4 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

A

Acknowledgment: Complementary technique to any kind of land stewardship agreement by which a public administration or a land stewardship organisation publicly recognises and thanks (with a public event, a commemorative plaque...) the work of a private owner towards conservation. (Source: www.custodiaterritori.org/glossary/)

Agreement: see stewardship agreement.

Agri-environment schemes (AES): Agri-environment schemes are Government programmes set up to help farmers manage their land in an environmentally-friendly way. Agri-environmental schemes are important for the conservation of farmed environments of high nature value, for improved genetic diversity and for protection of agro-ecosystems. (Source: [EEA multilingual environmental glossary](#))

Alliance: see partnership.

B

Biodiversity: The variability among living organisms - animals, plants, their habitats and their genes - from all sources including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they are part. This includes diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems. (Source: http://www.iucn.org/iyb/about/bio_glossary)

C

Cession: Act by which an owner transfers the rights of use of his/her property to a land stewardship organisation for a period of time during which this organisation commits to undertake a series of actions or not to use the ceded rights. The agreement can be formalised through conventions or contracts (see Stewardship agreement). (Source: www.custodiaterritori.org/glossary/)

Charitable status (of a LS organisation): Equivalent to any form of public utility declaration, it is a legal status of any organisation that allows, according to the applicable law of the country concerned, tax benefits for the donation of money or land to this organisation. (Source: Shine, C. (1996). *Private or voluntary systems of natural habitats' protection and management*. Council of Europe. p. 49)



Civic engagement: Continuous, dynamic conversation with the public on many levels that reinforces public commitment to the preservation of heritage resources, both cultural and natural, and strengthens public understanding of the full meaning and contemporary relevance of these resources. (Source: [Stronger Together: A Manual on the Principles and Practices of Civic Engagement - USNPS](#)).

Civil law: A body of laws and legal concepts which come down from old Roman laws compiled by Emperor Justinian (482 - 565). Countries with civil law systems have comprehensive, continuously updated legal codes that specify all matters capable of being brought before a court, the applicable procedure, and the appropriate punishment for each offense. (Source: <http://dictionary.law.com>)

Common Law: Legal system originated in England and developed over a period of time from old customs and court decisions, rather than laws made in Parliament. Common law is generally uncodified. This means that there is no comprehensive compilation of legal rules and statutes. While Common Law does rely on some scattered statutes, which are legislative decisions, it is largely based on precedent, meaning the judicial decisions that have already been made in similar cases. Regarding to land stewardship, under Common Law systems land trusts have the legal capacity to receive and retire development rights in perpetuity and legally enforce an agreement, while perpetuity is not possible within the Civil Law framework. (Source: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org>)

Community conservation: Conservation movement emerged in the 1980s through dialogue with local communities affected by international attempts to protect the biodiversity of the earth. The object of community-based conservation is to incorporate local people in conservation through the co-management or joint management of a protected area. (Source: [Wikipedia](#)).

Compensatory mechanism: When avoiding, and reducing damage from a project to the environment has been explored, the last measure is to compensate this damage by financing the conservation of some other natural area. This mechanism opens a lot of opportunities for land stewardship.

Conservation easement: In Common Law systems, right that a land trust acquires in the property of another person with the primary purpose of protecting land from certain forms of development or use. Lands for which conservation easements may be desirable include agricultural land, forest resources, and/or other valuable natural resources such as wildlife habitat, clean water, clean air, or scenic open space. Through conservation easements, such rights as to subdivide, overexploit or build on the land become separated from the other rights of ownership for a long period of time, or even for ever, regardless of property changes. (Source: www.custodiaterritori.org/glossary/)



Contractual measures: Measures that involve setting contracts or agreements usually among managing authorities and landowners or users in the site. As provided in the article 6.1 of the EU *Habitats Directive*, contractual measures constitute —along with management plans and statutory, administrative measures- positive measures which aim to contribute to achieving the general objective of the Directive. This opens the interpretation that land stewardship agreements can be a tool to implement the Habitats Directive. Agri-environment schemes (AES) can be such contractual measures. (Source: Draft of the European Commission Establishing conservation measures For Natura 2000 sites, 17 November 2011)

Corporate stewardship: Variant of land stewardship that involves companies and corporations that own major extensions of land (agriculture, forestry), or whose activity is associated with a major use of land (waste dumps management, construction of public works, large commercial or industrial parks). These companies can use part of their estates for conservation purposes through a stewardship agreement, or they can participate financially or as sponsors in partnerships as a compensatory mechanism of its activity. (Source: www.custodiaterritori.org/glossary, Wikipedia).



D

Deed: A public document that is recorded before a notary authorised by law, signed by a grantor or grantors, giving faith on the legal capacity of the contents and the date when it was made legal. In Europe it is the most formal instrument for a written stewardship agreement. (Source: Cortina & Collado, 2011)

Deed restriction: See conservation easement.

Donation: Method by which a donor transfers something (a property, an amount of money) freehold to a second person, for example a land stewardship organisation, without expecting anything in return. The donor may condition its donation to certain restrictions in management that the land stewardship organisation must accept. In some countries, the donation to an organisation may allow the donor to enjoy tax relief, accordingly to the national legislation, some of which specifically intended for land stewardship and sometimes protected areas as well. In a donation of an estate, the owner can maintain the usufruct of a part of its property or of any use, indefinitely or for life. (Source: www.custodiaterritori.org/glossary).

E

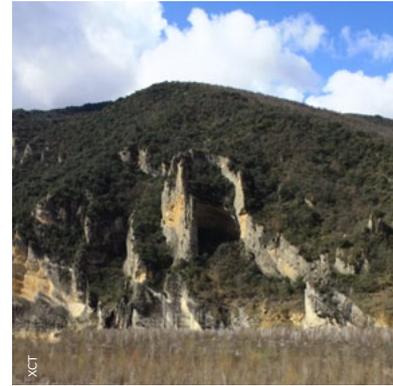
Environmental public goods: Public goods are defined as having two main characteristics. First, they are 'non-rival' which means that if the good is consumed by one person, it does not reduce the benefit available to others. Second, they are 'non-excludable', meaning that if the good is available to one person, other people cannot be excluded from enjoying its benefits. In this regard, environmental public goods refer to goods as high quality air, soil and water, landscape or biodiversity. (Source: study Public goods and public intervention, from European Network for Rural Development)

European Green Infrastructure: A strategically planned and delivered network of high quality green spaces and other environmental features'. (Source: European Commission).



F

Favourable Conservation Status: The status of a natural habitat is defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive as 'favourable' when 'its natural range and areas it covers within that range are stable or increasing, and the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future'. The conservation status of species is considered 'favourable' when 'population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats; and the natural range of the species is neither being reduced for the foreseeable future; and there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis. (Source: Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC).



H

High nature value farmland: Comprises those areas in Europe where agriculture is a major (usually the dominant) land use and where that agriculture supports or is associated with either a high species and habitats diversity or the presence of species of European conservation concern of both. (Source: Developing a high nature value farming area indicator, final report of the European Environment Agency).

I

Inalienable rights: Rights that cannot be surrendered, sold or transferred to someone else, such as the right to own property. However, these rights can be transferred with the consent of the person possessing those rights. (Source: <http://definitions.uslegal.com/i/inalienable-right/>)

In rem rights: Those rights that accompany land, and not persons. *In rem rights* (or real estate rights) are constituted on the land to last on it regardless of changes in property (they are bound to the land). *In rem* rights are opposed to *personal rights* (i.e. those derived from a lease contract or any other personal agreement), which are only effective while the grantor is the owner of the land.

In rem rights of partial use: (in Catalan law). Agreement by which landowner transfers the use of the natural goods and services provided by a property to the land stewardship organisation for it to manage them, for a long period of time, independently of the ownership of the land and other uses, in a similar way to conservation easement. (Source: Quer, B., Asensio, N., Codina, J. *et al.* (2012). Study of the development and implementation of land stewardship in the different participation regions).

L

Land care: Land care is the practice and ethic of caring for the land. It is locally-led, community based land stewardship including sustainable farming, forestry, landscaping and related activities that improve economic, social, and environmental conditions. (Source: US Landcare, Landcare notes, July 2008)

Land consolidation: Planned readjustment and rearrangement of land parcels and their ownership. It is usually applied to form larger and more efficient land holdings. Land consolidation can be used to improve the rural infrastructure and to implement the developmental and environmental policies. (Source: Wikipedia).

Land stewardship: Strategy that intends to involve landowners and users (farmers, foresters, shepherds, hunters, fishers, passive recreationalists...) in the conservation of natural landscape, with support by a wide range of civil society groups. Through voluntary agreements between landowners/users and land stewardship organisations, natural environment and landscape will be maintained and restored. (Source: Quer, B., Asensio, N., Codina, J. *et al.* (2012). Study of the development and implementation of land stewardship in the different participation regions).

Land stewardship organisation: Non-profit public or private organisation that actively participates in the conservation of land and its natural and cultural values, using land stewardship techniques. This term is starting to be adopted in some European regions, and included in the national legislation in some cases (e.g. Spain). (Source: www.custodiaterritori.org/glossary).

Land trust: see Land stewardship organisation. This term is more widely used in the US and other English speaking countries, and under Common Law systems, where trusts also have the legal capacity to receive and retire development rights in perpetuity and legally enforce an agreement.

Landowner contact programme: Different set of actions planned and systematised by a land stewardship organisation (telephone calls, group presentations, personal visits...) in order to contact owners from selected properties to initiate stewardship agreement negotiations. A methodology commonly used in Canada. (Source: www.custodiaterritori.org/glossary).

Lease: Private contract by which the owner lends the use of land to another user (i.e. a land stewardship organisation), for a period of time, in exchange for a previously agreed remuneration. The lease may include all or part of a property, or a particular use, such as fodder or hunting (if the property is a private hunting area). (Source: www.custodiaterritori.org/glossary).



Legacy: Mortis causa option to give a certain good to a certain person. Through legacy, a landlord can express the will to give a piece of land to a land stewardship organisation, and this will can be revoked until the time of death. (Source: Quer, B., Asensio, N., Codina, J. *et al.* (2012). Study of the development and implementation of land stewardship in the different participation regions).

Legal certainty: Principle of private law which holds that parts in a contract should be able to enforce the rights and legal position derived from the agreements or business they sign. Legal certainty in land stewardship agreements is achieved by, for example, establishing definite clauses, ensuring the legal capacity of parts, using the appropriate legal forms or formalising them in a deed. (Source: Hernan Collado, pers.com.).

N

National trust, National organisation whose landholdings are inalienable, thereby preventing their development or sale without a special permission by the National Parliament. This fuller protection against expropriation virtually guarantees that a site will remain free of Government interference. The near-certainty that an estate will remain in continuous protective ownership is of immense importance in encouraging gifts or bequests of sites of high conservation value as well as long-term investment in the management of such sites. (Source: Shine, C. (1996). *Private or voluntary systems of natural habitats' protection and management.* Council of Europe. p. 29)

Nature stewardship: See Land stewardship. In UICN Barcelona WCC 2008 this term was used as a more inclusive synonym of land stewardship (as it may include marine and freshwater areas as well).

Networking: Strategy where two or more individuals or organisations think, communicate and act together, sharing resources, combining skills and efforts, relating their actions to achieve a common objective. Networking can sometimes take the form of partnerships. (Source: <http://www.redeuropea.org>).

O

Oases WWF: Throughout Italy there are over 100 oases WWF, places of extraordinary beauty created to protect biodiversity. These areas are also oriented to social uses such as education, environmental awareness and leisure. Oases are owned and managed by WWF - Italy. (Source: <http://www.wwf.it>).



P

Partnership: Also known as alliance. Voluntary agreement of collaboration between various public and private agents to achieve common objectives through several specific actions. With partnerships, the sum of resources and mechanisms enables to achieve objectives that neither party could achieve alone. For land stewardship organisations, alliances with government institutions mean the availability of institutional, technical and economic support to develop stewardship activities in addition to set a favorable legal and political framework for land stewardship. (Source: www.custodiaterritori.org/glossary).

Perpetuity: In Common Law systems, any limitation tending to take property out of commerce for a longer period than a life or lives, inalienable beyond the period allowed by law. Perpetuity is not possible within the Civil Law framework. (Source: Bouvier's Law Dictionary and Concise Encyclopedia).

Personal contracts: Personal management agreements, limited in time, which may be concluded pursuant to nature conservation legislation or to sectoral incentive schemes, and may incorporate prescriptions leading to nature conservation and other social and economic uses. (Source: Shine, C. (1996). *Private or voluntary systems of natural habitats' protection and management*. Council of Europe. p. 37)

Private conservation: As opposed to public conservation, private lands conservation is lead by the private sector, be it local groups, landowners, communities, cooperatives or businesses. Some of the main tools used to achieve these goals include land trusts, conservation easements, private reserves and incentives. Therefore, land stewardship is a sort of private conservation, though some land stewardship initiatives may be lead by local public authorities. In Latin America it is used almost as a synonym to land stewardship. (Source: <http://www.nature.org>).

Private Protected Area (PPA): Term internationally recognised (e.g. by IUCN) to include the management of a private land with the main aim to protect its natural values, independently of its legal status or level of protection (in some countries, this kind of Protected Area can also be recognised by specific legislation). Usually, this is done by a nature conservation organisation (NGO, Foundation, Trust, etc), but can be done also by a private owner who cares about his/her land. Also can be named Private Nature Reserve or a similar denomination, such as the Italian WWF's "Oasi". (Source: monographic issue on PPAs of "Parks", IUCN's journal of the Protected Areas Programme, Vol. 15 n°2, 2005).



Protected Area: A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values. (Source: IUCN).

Purchase: See sale.

Purchase of freehold: Full acquisition of land in fee simple (the freehold), which facilitates its conservation in perpetuity, however is the most expensive purchasing option. (Source: Shine, C. (1996). *Private or voluntary systems of natural habitats' protection and management*. Council of Europe. p. 13)

Purchase of leasehold or limited property rights: Acquisition of the leasehold, or *in rem* rights, of some values of part of the land, as opposed of the freehold purchase. This option may be suitable for legal (i.e. when land is in the public domain) as well as financial reasons. (Source: Shine, C. (1996). *Private or voluntary systems of natural habitats' protection and management*. Council of Europe. p. 21)

R

Real estate rights: See *In rem* rights

Resale: Some land stewardship organisations may resale their land to public agencies or other nonprofit groups for permanent stewardship. It is also a common strategy for the agility of land stewardship organisations to manage transactions, that will at a later stage be resold to public agencies once these finalise the administrative procedures to buy land of high nature value. (Source: Shine, C. (1996). *Private or voluntary systems of natural habitats' protection and management*. Council of Europe. p. 19)

S

Sale: Mechanism by which an owner seller conveys the freehold property to a buyer who will become new owner in exchange for a fixed price. The sale can be conditioned to management restrictions. The new owner, for example a land stewardship organisation, has to rise its status in public through public registry of ownership to the deed of the property. (Source: www.custodiaterritori.org/glossary).

Service learning: Method of teaching that combines formal instruction with a related service in the community. Advocates claim that learning is enhanced through direct application in appropriate social contexts of principles and practices taught through formal instruction concurrent with guided reflection of the student's experiences. That's why service learning is frequently implemented as youth service. This



service integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, encourage lifelong civic engagement, and strengthen communities for the common good. Land stewardship offers many opportunities for service-learning projects and activities. (Source: Wikipedia).

Social Property: A land which is privately owned, but that is managed for the general benefit of the Society and oriented to the public use. It has been conceptualised by the Catalan Foundation "Territori i Paisatge" in the period 1998-2008 (now Foundation Catalunya-la Pedrera), to explain the purchase and creation of a network of PPA using the benefits of the Social Work of the Savings Bank Caixa de Catalunya. (Source: monographic issue on PPAs of "Parks", IUCNS's journal of the Protected Areas Programme, Vol. 15 n°2, 2005).

Stewardship agreement: **1.** Voluntary process between an owner and a land stewardship organisation to reach an agreed way to preserve and/or manage a territory, even if it is verbal or written, whether with legal basis or without. **2.** Private agreement as a contract or convention between the owner and the land stewardship organisation. The convention is a more general form of agreement, establishing a general framework of commitments, while the contract is more concrete and more suitable for stewardship mechanisms with a legal basis. (Source: www.custodiaterritori.org/glossary).

Stewardship contract: See stewardship agreement

Stewardship ethic: Intrinsic sense of moral principles relating to care for resources, shaped by culture, personal development and education. It relates to the concept of land ethic, as presented by Aldo Leopold.

T

Tax deduction: A deduction from gross income that arises due to various types of expenses incurred by a taxpayer. Tax deductions are removed from taxable income (adjusted gross income) and thus lower the overall tax-expense liability. Some types of stewardship agreements can claim tax deductions in countries where stewardship is most developed.

Tax incentive: see tax deduction.



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U

Usufruct: An in rem right that includes full use and profit of land in a very wide sense for long periods of time. Landowner doesn't keep any faculties, but the right to transfer ownership, constitute a mortgage or others that won't affect usufruct. (Source: Quer, B., Asensio, N., Codina, J. *et al.* (2012). Study of the development and implementation of land stewardship in the different participation regions).

V

Verbal agreement: is the simplest form of stewardship agreement between the land stewardship organisation and the owner or user, with a common compromise but no signed document. Verbal agreements have very low legal certainty, but have been extensively used as promotional programmes for example in Canada related to landowner contact programmes. (Source: Quer, B., Asensio, N., Codina, J. *et al.* (2012). Study of the development and implementation of land stewardship in the different participation regions).

Voluntary reserve: A few European countries have enacted legislation which confers special protection on voluntary reserves which have been officially approved on the basis of their conservation value or other criteria. Usually the approval order lists the activities which are prohibited on the site and defines the landowner's own obligations, but in other cases voluntary reserves may benefit from non-binding forms of protection. (Source: Shine, C. (1996). *Private or voluntary systems of natural habitats' protection and management*. Council of Europe. p. 28)



7.5 NOTES

1. Definition adapted from the *LandLife study of the development and implementation of land stewardship in the Mediterranean arc and Europe* (Quer et al., 2012)
2. Noteworthy are Bates and Van Ryn (2006), Byers and Marchetti (2005) and Canadian Land Trust Alliance (2005).
3. As the **conservation easement** (contract in perpetuity), a very much extended tool in America, that allows permanent protection without requiring full landownership by the organisation.
4. A **civil code** is a systematic collection of laws designed to comprehensively deal with the core areas of private law.
5. Ley 42/2007, de 13 de diciembre, del Patrimonio Natural y de la Biodiversidad.
6. North American organisations have extensive manuals with guidelines to contact owners and negotiate arrangements. Two good examples are *Landowner Contact Training Manual* (Hilts et al., 1990) and *Landowner Contact Guide for British Columbia* (Duynstee, 1997). The Catalan Land Stewardship Network (xct) has also developed some materials to facilitate landowner contact, like *Conservant tot conreuant* (Mañosa, Giralt and Pietx, 2007).
7. Some good examples are pending links from xct, or **Stepping up for nature**, a campaign from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).
8. A useful guide is **Branding the Landscape - a guide**, which has been developed within the framework of the "LIFESCAPE YOUR LANDSCAPE" European project and is supported by means of the EU INTERREG program and the German Federal Ministry for food, farming and consumer protection. This publication is a step by step guide for marketing regional products that are produced while managing the regional landscape.
9. The **land stewardship game** in Catalonia is an example. Pending to add specific URL in English included in the LandLife website.
10. http://ec.europa.eu/environment/biodiversity/business/index_en.html.

- 11.** See Eurosite Policy Advice Paper “The future economy of nature” to know more recommendations for policymakers in this sense. http://www.eurosite.org/files/EU_NGO_2011_-_Policy_Advice_Paper_-_Nature_and_Economics.pdf.
- 12.** LIFE10 INF/ES/540, <http://www.landstewardship.eu/>
- 13.** Also relevant (although not for all of Europe) is Beckmann *et al.* (2000). *Caring for the Land: A Decade of Promoting Landscape Stewardship in Central Europe.*
- 14.** Ref: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)/ COM(2011) 627 final/2



LandLife is a LIFE+ Information and Communication project (LIFE 10 INF/ES/540) that aims to boost land stewardship as an effective and successful tool for nature and biodiversity conservation in Europe.



The main objectives are the following:

- > to publicise the theoretical basis of land stewardship as a strategy for nature conservation and landscape and provide the tools and recommendations to implement it effectively.
- > to make land stewardship an attractive mechanism for conservation bodies, land-owners, and local and regional governments, linking with new opportunities for rural development, marketing of local products, boosting in ecotourism and other benefits. Generate networking between these actors.
- > to train organisations involved in land stewardship.
- > to communicate land stewardship among the general public, in order to involve more people in biodiversity conservation, and a more sustainable model of land use.

To ensure these aims, LandLife focus in two different types of actions:

Communication and awareness raising campaigns:

- > Comparative Study of the development and implementation of land stewardship in Europe.
- > European manual "Caring together for nature. Manual on land stewardship as a tool to promote social involvement with the natural environment in Europe".
- > Regional land stewardship and European networking workshops in Catalonia, France and Italy, Spring 2013.
- > European land stewardship Congress, Autumn 2014.
- > Multimedia materials for communication and participation in land stewardship.
- > European website with the aim to communicate the land stewardship strategy for nature and biodiversity conservation at European level. www.landstewardship.eu
- > European Week of land stewardship, Autumn 2012. www.landlifeweek.eu

Training activities:

- > Help desk for the development and implementation of initiatives in land stewardship. Development of a technical support platform to support land initiatives that includes different online services.
- > Online course on land stewardship.

As an inclusive concept, bringing people together and engaging diverse local organisations into caring for the land and waters they appreciate most, land stewardship offers many possibilities for development in Europe, contributing to conservation, the green economy and green jobs. With its long tradition and diversity of cultures, landscapes and biodiversity, Europe can build upon the evolution of the governance of its protected areas towards an active participation of all stakeholders.

Properly recognised, supported at the European level and imbedded within an integration approach to land management, Natura 2000 and High Nature Value farmland can become the core areas for the development of land stewardship in the wider countryside all over Europe. The landscape is rich with opportunities for the maintenance and restoration of biodiversity by local people motivated to care together for nature.

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This publication is presented in two formats: a printed version and an electronic version (e-Manual). The e-Manual, written only in English, is the extended version, with detailed contents about how land stewardship works and the opportunities for nature conservation in Europe. You can read the e-Manual at www.landstewardship.eu.



LandLife partners:

