

# International Workshop: Incentives for Private Land Conservation Madrid, Spain, 5-7 November 2018

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## **Introduction**

This second workshop of the LIFE project “Development of a European Private Land Conservation Network – ELCN” explored the potential of conservation organisations and public authorities to create positive incentives for motivating private landowners to engage in nature conservation on their land.

The motivations of landowners to conserve their property can be manifold, ranging from emotional place attachment to personal history, general environmental ethics and values, the feeling of social responsibility, financial considerations or compliance with environmental regulation. Interestingly, studies have shown that financial motivations often rank at the bottom of the list of reasons for private land conservation. The workshop confirmed this with results of global scientific research and practical examples from Ireland and Spain.

The workshop examined and compared various tools for creating private land conservation incentives: fiscal support (e.g. taxes, subsidies), technical assistance, and legal tools. It presented best-practice examples for incentivising private land conservation, but it also touched upon the potential areas of conflict (e.g. crowding out of intrinsic motivations through financial incentives).

By looking at examples from outside of Europe (i.e. tax incentives and ballot measures in the US), the workshop provided an opportunity to discuss whether similar incentives mechanisms could work also in Europe, and whether the ELCN can help make this happen.

The workshop was hosted by LIFE ELCN project partner "[Fundación Biodiversidad](#)" at their new premises in Madrid, Spain. The workshop was attended by 39 participants from 12 countries.

## **Workshop contents**

### ***Private land conservation in the EU - state of play***, Angelo Salsi, EASME

In his presentation, Mr Salsi stressed the need for a coordinated private land conservation movement in the EU and the development of organisations with the appropriate skillset to help private landowners in conservation transactions. He pointed out that in the US, the success of private land conservation only became possible because of the development of a specialised type of conservation organisation – the land trust.

In this light, Mr Salsi also emphasised the need for continuous close knowledge exchange between EU and US conservation organisations. He welcomed the efforts undertaken by the ELCN (and the ILCN) to facilitate this exchange and to pioneer promising private land conservation tools in the EU that have already been established elsewhere, such as conservation easements.

### ***Motives for private land conservation - insights from six continents***, Jennifer Gooden, Oxford University

Jennifer Gooden presented the results of her research on motives for private land conservation, which focused on the psychological factors that make owning a private reserve appealing. She began with a primer on types of motivation, drawing a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation occurs when a person does something because it is inherently satisfying, whereas extrinsic motivation occurs when a person does something in response to an external incentive, such as getting a reward or avoiding punishment. When a person is intrinsically

motivated, offering an external incentive can lead to a phenomenon called ‘motivation crowding.’ Motivation crowding can undermine intrinsic motivation, leading to a situation in which the person engages in the activity only due to the incentive. Unless managed carefully, this can result in incentives creating problems for motivation. However, it is possible to create conditions conducive to intrinsic motivation. Self-determination theory identifies three conditions: people must feel autonomy with respect to the behavior, competent in negotiating the environment, and related (connected) with others in the context of the activity.

In her research, Jennifer found that individuals who own private reserves are driven primarily by personal and family motives, such as an interest in nature, feeling of personal responsibility, or enjoyment of time in nature. She identified four major categories of co-benefits that accompany private land conservation: beneficence (the sense of being able to give), direct experience, demonstration, and investment. She also found that the most prevalent reason for buying a private reserve was the opportunity for engagement. Owning a private reserve provides opportunities to engage in a personal project and to engage directly with nature. She presented a model of engagement that explains the factors that contribute to and result from engagement.

Finally, her presentation concluded with implications for policy. She explained that policy instruments vary in the extent to which they allow people to experience autonomy and self-determination. In addition, policy instruments can be implemented differently, and research suggests that, when policies are implemented in a way that fosters autonomy, the results include both more engagement in the project and better ecological outcomes. Recognizing that not all landowners are inherently motivated, she closed a discussion of policy for behavior change and introduced some questions for further consideration.

***Pocket, head and heart: Farming for conservation in the Burren Region, Ireland***, Brandan Dunford, The Burren Programme

The Burren Programme ([www.burrenprogramme.com](http://www.burrenprogramme.com)) was developed in over 15 years in the west of Ireland as a locally-targeted, farmer-centred, results-based approach to the management of private land for conservation. The model – initially developed through a LIFE Nature project (‘BurrenLIFE’) – is simple, highly cost-effective, impactful and highly adaptable. It focuses on two measures: one for actions (scrub removal, wall repair, water provision, habitat restoration etc.) and one for performance (grassland habitat status, dependent on grazing density, feeding systems etc.).

The Burren model is a good example of how to incentivise farmers to engage in the conservation of natural values on private land by giving them a high degree of ownership and flexibility, and by considering them equal partners in a jointly developed programme. This approach differs from most RDP implementation schemes found across the EU. The programme’s structure, its mechanisms to communicate with landowners and land users and its ways of how to involve them in the implementation of the programme go beyond a typical rural development action, as they concern the relationship between multiple stakeholder groups in the context of the conservation of high nature value farmland.

Adapting and scaling the Burren model to apply in a wide variety of situations could offer a welcome solution to the land management challenges faced by many conservation organisations and farmers, and prove a valuable resource for an emerging private land conservation network.

***Demand and potential fields of application for conservation easements in the EU***, Tilmann Disselhoff, NABU, and Inga Racinska, SIA Biota

Dr Disselhoff and Mrs Racinska briefly presented the recently published study “The Use of Conservation Easements in the EU” (available for download on the ELCN website). The workshop participants then discussed possible lines of inquiry for a follow-up study on the actual demand for the conservation tool in the EU and potential fields of its application. It was agreed that such a study would be desirable. Dr Disselhoff announced that NABU will charge Mrs Racinska with the task of coordinating the study. Results are planned to be presented at the next ELCN workshop.

***Ballot measures for land conservation***, Will Abberger, The Trust for Public Land

A ballot measure is a legislative proposal that is voted on in a general election. In this sense, it is an element of direct democracy. In the US, ballot measures are used as a tool to generate funding for land conservation. The Trust for Public Land (TPL) has specialised in helping conservation initiatives to introduce ballot measures on using various types of taxes or charges to fund conservation projects. Since 1996, TPL has helped state and local communities across the country raise more than \$74 billion in voter-approved public funds for land protection for parks, and acquisition of land to protect wildlife habitat, farmland, drinking water supplies, and natural areas. 82% of the 561 ballot measures TPL has supported were adopted with overwhelming voter approval since 1996. The impressive results of TPL’s work led to an in-depth discussion among workshop participants about the potential of using referenda or petitions to generate conservation funds in the EU.

***The need for new incentives to support private land conservation in the EU***, Joseph van der Stegen, European Commission

Mr van der Stegen outlined the political framework for private land conservation in the EU. He pointed out that the Fitness Check of the Nature Directives concluded that while the directives were considered fit for purpose, their implementation needs to be improved. In response, Action 8C of the EC Nature Action Plan calls for a boost of private sector investment in nature projects. In particular, the large share of the Natura 2000 network is privately owned, which makes involving private landowners in the management of Natura 2000 sites key to a successful implementation of the network. Moreover, as the loss of biodiversity affecting the wider countryside and increasingly expanding to formerly common species, private landowners/managers at the forefront of fighting for biodiversity conservation. Mr van der Stegen hence listed numerous psychological, pragmatic, financial and economic reasons for putting private landowners in the driver’s seat of land conservation. In conclusion, he outlined relevant criteria and characteristics of tools that need to be developed for private land conservation in the EU.

***Incentivising private land conservation in the USA***, Phil Tabas, The Nature Conservancy

Phil Tabas presented the work of The Nature Conservancy against the backdrop of the legal and financial enabling conditions for private land conservation in the US. He explained how in the US, due to its tradition of charitable giving, a unique system of incentivising conservation through various tax provisions has been developed. In particular, the combination of property rights tools (conservation easements) and tax policy has led to remarkable conservation outcomes: As of 2015, 1,400 land trusts had protected 16.7 million acres through conservation easements. Other conservation activities that are incentivised under the US tax system include gifts or sales of land, defraying the cost of habitat management or restoration activities, reducing the cost of ownership of conservation properties and subsidising the transaction expenses incurred by a private landowner in conservation projects. Last not least, land trusts benefit from charitable (and hence tax-deductible) donations of cash. Mr Tabas convincingly showed that although the market for charitable giving is

much bigger in the US than in the EU, the use of tax incentives for stimulating donations of land use rights in the form of conservation easements is an approach whose replicability in the EU is worth exploring.

***Working session: Financial incentives for private land conservation - opportunities and barriers***

In the first interactive working session, participants discussed the question which financial tools are currently most important to incentivise private land conservation in their respective contexts, which tools have not been used to their full potential yet, and what would be needed to establish these tools. The results are summarised below. Interestingly, some tools were identified as well-established in some (EU) countries, but regarded uncommon in others.

<b>Most currently used</b>	<b>Biggest potential</b>	<b>Steps needed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• grants from funding programmes (EU/national/regional)</li> <li>• lottery proceeds</li> <li>• mitigation payments</li> <li>• certification/labelling</li> <li>• eco-labels</li> <li>• eco-tourism</li> <li>• subsidies</li> <li>• entrance fees</li> <li>• tax deductions: (inheritance tax in NL, real estate in FR and ES)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• income tax deductions</li> <li>• inheritance tax deductions</li> <li>• property tax deductions</li> <li>• tourism tax</li> <li>• carbon credits/carbon tax</li> <li>• ecotourism</li> <li>• crowdsourcing</li> <li>• user fees</li> <li>• RDP funds</li> <li>• temporary nature permits</li> <li>• private corporate funding for ecosystem services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitoring benefits</li> <li>• accountability</li> <li>• transparency</li> <li>• price on carbon</li> <li>• NGO capacity on legal and economic issues</li> <li>• education</li> <li>• political will</li> <li>• lobbying for better funding of PLC</li> <li>• test cases for innovative tools</li> <li>• new alliances between NGOs and businesses</li> </ul>

***Land conservation - the landowners' perspective, Anne-Sophie Mulier, LIFE LIFE ELO***

Anne-Sophie Mulier outlined the scope of the LIFE project “Land is forever (LIFE)” that is being implemented by the European Landowners Organization together with The Nature Conservancy and the Flemish Agency for Nature and Forest. The project’s objective is to expand the use of private land conservation methods and approaches in the EU by developing recommendations for new and more effective private land conservation supporting private landowners involved in nature conservation. Local stakeholders will be involved in a series of workshops in Germany, France, Czech Republic, Spain, Belgium, Sweden, Poland, Bulgaria, Ireland, the Netherlands, Estonia, Romania, Denmark, and Italy. On the basis of these events, the most popular private land conservation tools will be selected for further field testing. As output, the project will develop a set of policy recommendations for EU decision makers.

***Payments for ecosystem services in Catalonia, Ignasi Puig Ventosa, Fundació ENT***

Ignasi Puig presented the general concept of payments for ecosystem services (PES) and some examples of its application in Catalonia. The Selvans Programme in the province of Girona aims to preserve a network of mature forests by paying landowners a compensation for not logging trees. It is now hosted by the NGO Acció natura and funded from donations. In total, more than 3,000 ha of forest have been conserved through the programme. Other examples for PES in Catalonia include parking and entrance fees for privately protected areas or natural hot springs. In conclusion, Mr Puig gave a critical assessment of the potential of PES for private land conservation, as their effectiveness is limited to situations in which barriers for conservation are primarily economical, but easily surmountable. In order to apply PES schemes, property rights need to be well defined and transactions between sellers and buyers need to be possible.

***Ethical motives for private land conservation, Joseph-Maria Mallarach, Silene Association***

As final presentation of the workshop, Mr Mallarach reminded participants that the most important and fundamental motives for private land conservation are not financial, but ethical. He offered a new paradigm for protected areas as interconnected networks with adaptive and holistic management (including domesticated diversity, cultural and spiritual heritage), local governance diverse funding, and multiple benefits. Underlying this transition would be a renewed understanding that private property entails social responsibility and a land ethic based on the durable wisdom of ecology and “ecosophy”. Mr Mallarach argued that in the Anthropocene, ethical motivations rooted in shared values (humanistic, religious, spiritual) that support diverse knowledge systems (scientific + traditional) and deliver rights-based and equitable conservation outcomes for improved governance and benefits for local livelihoods, provide the soundest base for private conservation, as well as for reforming economic and sectoral policies.

***Working session: Other incentives for private land conservation***

In the second interactive working session, participants were asked what motives are most important for private landowners and companies to engage in conservation activities, and what is needed to engage them in private land conservation. The responses focused on non-financial motives, as financial tools had already been dealt with in the first session. However, companies in particular are mostly driven in their decisions by economic reasoning, which has repercussions for the strategies proposed for engaging them.

<b><i>Motives of private landowners and companies</i></b>	<b><i>How to engage private landowners</i></b>	<b><i>How to engage companies</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no alternative</li> <li>• value added to the product</li> <li>• need for technical assistance</li> <li>• place attachment</li> <li>• moral responsibility</li> <li>• pride</li> <li>• tradition</li> <li>• mandatory by law</li> <li>• family values</li> <li>• sense of ownership</li> <li>• avoid degradation of resources</li> <li>• increase property value</li> <li>• love of land</li> <li>• personal experience</li> <li>• cultural values</li> <li>• identity</li> <li>• follow role models (“bell cows”)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• passive conservation (asking to be allowed to do sth)</li> <li>• flexible language</li> <li>• peer recognition</li> <li>• dialogue</li> <li>• shared vision</li> <li>• identify key players</li> <li>• listen</li> <li>• engage neighbours</li> <li>• build trust</li> <li>• use opportunities of generational change</li> <li>• use historic memory of elders</li> <li>• friend-raising</li> <li>• local ambassadors</li> <li>• communicate successful stories</li> <li>• create local conservation groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• find win-win scenarios</li> <li>• certification</li> <li>• CSR</li> <li>• therapeutic integration</li> <li>• shareholder values</li> <li>• influence employees</li> <li>• recognition</li> <li>• strategic alignment with company purpose</li> <li>• allow compensation for environmental damage</li> <li>• pressure through consumers</li> <li>• use underutilised assets</li> <li>• European Enterprise Network</li> <li>• engage employees as volunteers</li> <li>• contact key person interested in conservation</li> <li>• offer technical support</li> <li>• “pester power”</li> <li>• ease permits</li> <li>• allow temporary nature</li> </ul>

## List of participants

First Name	Last Name	Organisation	Country
Will	Abberger	The Trust for Public Land, Florida State Office	United States
David	Álvarez	Ecoacsa Reserva de Biodiversidad	Spain
Jelke	Brandehof	Eurosite	Netherlands
Zdravko	Budimir	Association BIOM	Croatia
Pitz	Carline	IMA-Europe	Belgium
Kristijan	Civic	Eurosite	Netherlands
Tilmann	Disselhoff	NABU	Germany
Brendan	Dunford	Burren Programme	Ireland
Santiago	Garcia	Biodiversidad + Desarrollo (Bi+De)	Spain
Teresa	Gil	WWF	Spain
Jennifer	Gooden	University of Oxford	United Kingdom
Víctor	Gutierrez	Fundación Biodiversidad	Spain
Laura	Johnson	International Land Conservation Network	United States
Lydia	Jungnickel	Fundación Biodiversidad	Spain
Andras	Krolopp	The Nature Conservancy	Germany
Josep Maria	Mallarach	Silene Association	Spain
Francesco	Marcone	WWF OASI SRL	Italy
María	Matas	Fundación Biodiversidad	Spain
Anne-Sophie	Mulier	ELO	Belgium
Chandni	Navalkha	Lincoln Institute of Land Policy	United States
Concha	Olmeda	ATECMA	Spain
Stefano	Picchi	WWF OASI SRL	Italy
Sara	Pont	Generalitat de Catalunya	Spain
Oscar	Prada	Fundación Biodiversidad	Spain
Pedro	Prata	Rewilding Europe	Portugal
Ignasi	Puig Ventosa	Fundació ENT	Spain
Inga	Racinska	Latvian Fund for Nature	Latvia
Miquel	Rafa	Fundació Catalunya La Pedrera	Spain
Jofre	Rodrigo	Xarxa de Custòdia del Territori	Spain
Ernesto	Ruiz	ATECMA	Spain
Antonio	Ruiz Salgado	Foro de Redes de Custodia del Territorio	Spain
Mireia	Salazar Gabarró	Xarxa de Custòdia del Territori	Spain
Angelo	Salsi	European Commission	Belgium
Amaya	Sánchez	Foro de Redes y Entidades de Custodia (FRECT)	Spain
Kyriakos	Skordas	Eurosite	Greece
Philip	Tabas	The Nature Conservancy	United States
Joseph	van der Stegen	EU Commission	Belgium
Eva	Vayhinger	NABU e.V.	Germany
Jóni	Vieira	Montis	Portugal