



# FRAMEwork system promotional and advisory information packages

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## Deliverable Description & Contributors

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- **Contributors**
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## 1. Background to the FRAMEwork project

### 1.1 FRAMEwork Project Executive Summary (*abbreviated*)

Biodiversity is essential for agroecosystem resilience, sustainability, and long-term food security. Traditionally, management for short-term economic returns has taken priority over management for the environment. Current mechanisms for compensating and encouraging farmers to apply biodiversity sensitive management strategies are often inefficient, being applied at individual farm rather than landscape level, and tend to be generic solutions, imposed from the top down at an EU or national level. Monitoring is rarely carried out and there is therefore little scope for evaluating the success of strategies in achieving improvements to farmland biodiversity.

The FRAMEwork project has been designed and develop a novel alternative to this called the **FRAMEwork System for Biodiversity Sensitive Farming** to enable the transition of EU farming systems to a position where they can conserve biodiversity and benefit from the enhancement of ecosystem services, while mitigating agronomic or economic risks. The FRAMEwork System combines the following elements:

- **Advanced Farmer Clusters** – local farmer groups working as a collective to deliver landscape scale management, supported by a Cluster Facilitator with expertise in agriculture and the environment, and linked to a local Cluster Stakeholder Group to inform and promote policy and practice, organised into regional, national, and international networks.
- **Technical Resource** – technical specialists associated with the regional, national, international networks to provide technical information, methods, and tools to support agrobiodiversity monitoring, management and policy including the dedicated DSTs – FRAMEselect and FRAMEtest.
- **Scientific Innovation** – researchers associated with regional, national, international networks to provide knowledge on the ecology, sociology and economics that underpins the functioning of sustainable agricultural systems.
- **Citizen Observatory and Information Hub** – an open access platform to support FRAMEwork networks, sharing activities, information, data and resources between farmers, scientists, policy makers, and citizens.

The FRAMEwork project will design, build, test, and deploy a prototype of the FRAMEwork System for Biodiversity Sensitive Farming and will work with 3 concepts important to the success and delivery of the project: (i) promoting collective landscape management; (ii) applying the approach across a diversity of European farming systems; and (iii) understanding and supporting the social and ecological change associated with a transition to biodiversity sensitive farming.

## 1.2 Project Partners

No	Participant organisation name	Type	Country
<b>1*</b>	The James Hutton Institute (HUTTON)	Research Inst	UK
	Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT)	Non-profit	UK
<b>3</b>	Groupe de Recherche en Agriculture Biologique (GRAB)	Non-profit	FR
<b>4</b>	Universitaet fuer Bodenkultur Wien (BOKU)	University	AT
<b>5</b>	Eesti Maaulikool (EMU)	University	EE
<b>6</b>	Hoehere Bundeslehr- und Forschungsanstalt fuer Landwirtschaft Raumberg-Gumpenstein (AREC)	Research Inst	AT
<b>7</b>	Fundacion Artemisan (ARTEMISAN)	Non-profit	ES
<b>8</b>	Scuola Superiore di Studi Universitari e di Perfezionamento Sant'anna (SSSA)	University	IT
<b>9</b>	The University of Hertfordshire Higher Education Corporation (UNI OF HERTS)	University	UK
<b>10</b>	Centro de Investigacion Ecologica Yaplicaciones Forestales Consorcio (CREAF)	University	ES
<b>11</b>	Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA)	Research Inst	FR
<b>12</b>	Internationales Institut fuer Angewandte Systemanalyse (IIASA)	Research Inst	AT
<b>13</b>	Universiteit van Amsterdam (UvA)	University	NL
<b>14</b>	Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology (LIST)	Research Inst	LU
<b>15</b>	Universitaet Osnabrueck (UOS)	University	DE
<b>16</b>	Taskscape Associates Limited (TAL)	SME	UK
<b>17</b>	Ceska Zemedelska Univerzita v Praze (CULS)	University	CZ
<b>18</b>	Nordisk Fond for Miljo og Udvikling (NORDECO)	SME	DK

\*Coordinating institution

## 1.3 Purpose of the Deliverable

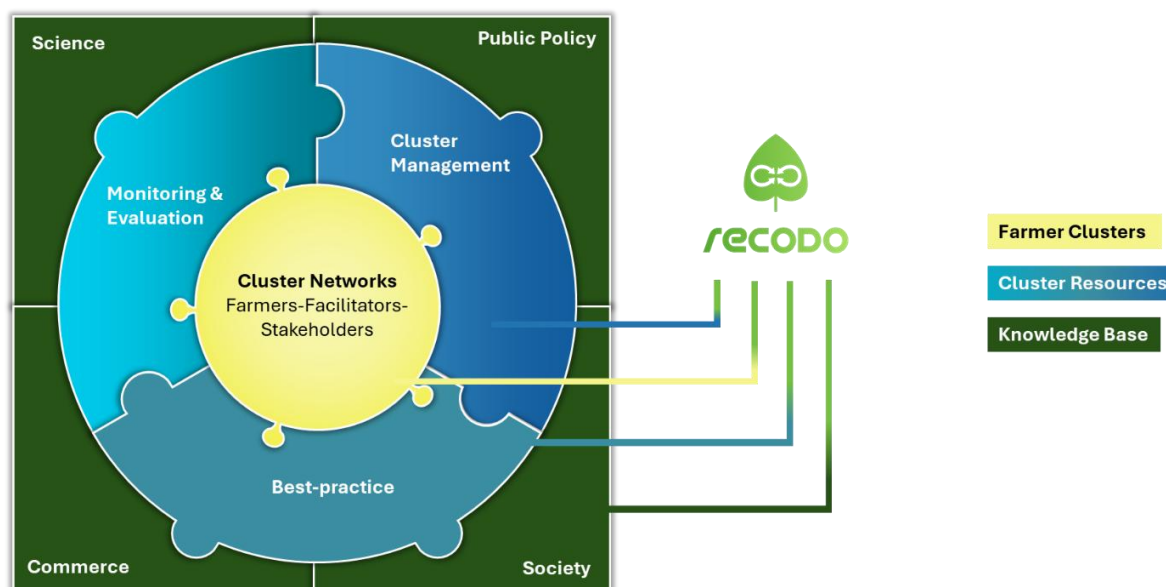
This deliverable describes our framework for biodiversity friendly farming (formerly referred to as the FRAMEwork System for biodiversity sensitive farming) and how it will be promoted to encourage its adoption.

## 2. A Framework for Biodiversity Friendly Farming

### 2.1 Background and Concept

The FRAMEwork System for Biodiversity-Sensitive Farming (FWS) is designed as a transdisciplinary strategy to facilitate the transition of European farming toward biodiversity conservation, while enhancing ecosystem services and mitigating economic and agronomic risks. The FWS was designed in response to the challenges evident in achieving the large-scale adoption of sustainable practices within farming. It responds to this by providing a structured, system-focused approach that builds on farmer-led initiatives, and connects them with key actors from the domains of science, policy, commerce, and more. The approach is aligned with the Multi-Level Perspective (MLP) of socio-technical transitions, in which transitions are seen to occur as a result of interactions between 3 levels: niches, regimes, and landscapes (Geels, 2011; El Bilali, 2019). In this framework, niches are spaces for radical innovation where new technologies, practices, or ideas emerge. Regimes encompass the dominant structures, rules, and institutions that stabilise existing systems, including the current agri-food system. Landscapes refer to broader external factors, including cultural trends, economic conditions, and environmental pressures, which influence but are not easily altered by actors within the system. The FRAMEwork approach, is structured around three tiers (Figure 1):

1. **Farmer Clusters** – Localised, collaborative networks for biodiversity-friendly farming.
2. **Cluster Resources** – Tools, knowledge, and policy mechanisms to support sustainable practices.
3. **Knowledge Base** – The scientific, policy, and commercial background shaping agricultural transitions.



**Figure 1.** Graphical representation of our framework for biodiversity friendly farming.

At the core of FRAMEwork is the recognition that farmers are central to biodiversity management. Building upon the successful Farmer Cluster model established in the UK (Nichols et al., in press), the FWS promotes bottom-up, regionally tailored biodiversity management, in which farmers are

facilitated and supported to identify, implement, and evaluate modifications to their farming practices with the aim of incorporating biodiversity friendly approaches. From an MLP standpoint, **Farmer Clusters represent niche innovations – localised, small-scale sustainability experiments in which farmers act as local agents of change.**

The development and application of biodiversity sensitive farming practices requires extensive knowledge, which farmers do not typically possess. Furthermore, the operation of Farmer Clusters necessitates effective collective management, stakeholder and community engagement, public or private finance, and the ability to monitor and evaluate their progress. Such support mechanisms are not typically available to farmers within the existing agriculture regimes. Therefore, the FWS introduces regime level change by incorporating support for the farmer clusters in areas such as farming practice, biodiversity monitoring, and cluster management.

Key resources include:

- **Cluster guidelines and Training Programmes for Cluster Facilitators** – Capacity-building initiatives to equip farmers and facilitators with biodiversity conservation skills.
- **The Farmland Ecosystem Assessment Support Tool (FEAST)** – A decision-support tool that helps cluster farmers to assess and enhance farmland ecosystems.
- **Biodiversity Monitoring Guides** – Resources enabling clusters to track ecological changes and assess the impact of their conservation efforts.

These resources act as leverage points that can shift the agricultural system towards sustainability. By embedding financial, technical, and policy support within farming communities, the FRAMEwork approach ensures that innovative biodiversity-friendly practices become economically and institutionally viable.

Tier 3, the knowledge base of the FWS, seeks to establish a two-way connection between the landscape level of the agricultural system and the clusters and cluster resource tiers. The Knowledge Base collates evidence on science, policy, markets, and social trends to inform the operation of clusters and the development of cluster resources. In return, it represents a forum where insights from clusters can inform management, policy, and commercial aspects of biodiversity-sensitive farming practices. From an MLP perspective, at the landscape level, broader economic, climatic, and social trends (e.g. climate change, consumer demand for sustainable food, EU Green Deal policies) create windows of opportunity for transforming the agricultural system. The Knowledge Base equips stakeholders at the regime level with the insights needed to respond to these shifts strategically. By providing evidence-based recommendations, the Knowledge Base also helps align national and EU policies with biodiversity-sensitive farming, creating an enabling environment for scaling up Farmer Clusters.

Tiers 2 and 3 of the FWS are designed to support the innovations of the Farmer clusters by providing an interface with the regime and landscape levels of the agricultural systems. To share and amplify information across levels and throughout the system, an online information hub was created. The Recodo platform serves as an important channel, enabling the dissemination of best practices, monitoring data, and policy insights, thereby accelerating the spread of successful innovations beyond the individual clusters and allowing influence to cross between niche, regime and landscape levels. In

conclusion, the FRAMEwork System provides a structured yet flexible approach to biodiversity-sensitive farming through action research, collaboration, and adaptive management. By integrating local farmer-led initiatives (niches) with institutional support (leverage points) and policy frameworks (regime-level change), it fosters a multi-level transition.

## 2.3 Promotional and advisory information

The FWS incorporates a range of resources and tools necessary to implement the approach. At the time of writing, not all resources are yet available. Hence the brochure will be updated as the content comes on stream.

### 2.3.1. Tier 1: Farmer Cluster

A '**Farmer Cluster**' is a community of local farmers who share knowledge, support and motivate to improve biodiversity and the ecological health of their farms, cluster landscape and beyond!

Farmers are supported by a '**facilitator**' who provides environmental expertise and helps with cluster tasks and administration. Clusters can include individual '**volunteers**' or organisations who share an interest in the aims and work of the cluster.

To read inspiring stories the FRAMEwork Farmer Clusters, see <https://recodo.io/page/farmer-cluster-overview>. A detailed description of each of the 11 Farmer Cluster networks is available at <https://recodo.io/page/farmer-clusters/farmer-cluster-finder>. This enables the Farmer Clusters Facilitators to regularly update their cluster profile with information on recent activities and events. A mapping visualisation is also featured to help localise the different clusters in Europe and provide opportunity to interlink with similar location-based data and information (<https://recodo.io/map/basic>).

### 2.3.2. Tier 2: Cluster Resources

Farming with nature is knowledge intensive and needs resources not usually available to farmers. This tier contains a collection information and tools to help manage and monitor clusters and implement nature friendly farming.

- **Managing a Farmer Cluster.** We developed a series of guidelines on how to start and manage a cluster.
  - Farmer Clusters- An Overview: <https://zenodo.org/records/8142755>
  - Starting A Farmer Cluster: <https://zenodo.org/records/8142741>
  - Managing A Farmer Cluster: <https://zenodo.org/records/8142725>
  - Farmer Cluster Communication: <https://zenodo.org/records/8142698>
- **A Landscape Leaders: Farmer Cluster Training Programme** was developed for those exploring the world of Farmer Clusters and the issues they respond to. This course particularly useful if you're a new farm advisor, or farmer, learning about farm management for biodiversity. The course can be found at: <https://farmerclustertraining-recodo.trainercentralsite.eu/course/farmer-cluster-training-programme#/home>



- **Farming with nature.** The Farmland Ecosystem Assessment Support Tool (FEAST) is accessible to advisors and facilitators wishing to identify farm habitats and management practices to improve farmland biodiversity. This can be found at <https://sitem.herts.ac.uk/aeru/feast/support.htm>.
- **Biodiversity monitoring.** Tracking progress is a powerful motivator and essential for ensuring the effectiveness of your efforts. Whether you're an experienced surveyor or a citizen scientist, there are guidelines available to help:
  - **Guidelines on Monitoring Biodiversity:** <https://zenodo.org/records/13880020>.
  - **Collection of citizen science protocols and materials** for Farmer Clusters. This collection provides more than 70 associated protocols, apps, tools and materials used during and supporting the activities (<https://zenodo.org/records/13832188>).
  - **iNaturalist platform** allows anyone connect with nature and share and explore their observations of the natural world. The FRAMEwork Farmer Cluster Network recorded their own biodiversity observations, which can be found at: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/framework-citizen-biodiversity-observatory>. The platform also provides useful guidelines on, for example, bioblitzes which are a great way to engage the public to connect to their environment while generating useful data for science and conservation. They are also an excuse for naturalists, scientists, and curious members of the public to meet in person (<https://inaturalist.freshdesk.com/en/support/solutions/articles/151000194866#What-is-a-bioblitz?>).
- **Practice Abstracts Database.** Practice abstracts are innovative, practice-oriented solutions for farmers, foresters, advisors and rural communities. We have developed a series of them ranging from the 'use and management of cover crops to conserve soil in olive groves' to the 'support of birds and dormouse through the construction of nesting boxes' and 'the use of flower strips as a tool to reduce aphid pressure in orchard'. The full collection can be found at [https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/projects/farmer-clusters-realising-agrobiodiversity-management-across-ecosystems-framework\\_en#tab\\_id=practice\\_abstracts](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/projects/farmer-clusters-realising-agrobiodiversity-management-across-ecosystems-framework_en#tab_id=practice_abstracts).

### 2.3.3. Tier 3: Knowledge Base

The FWS knowledge base aims to create a two-way connection between the landscape level of the agricultural system and the clusters and cluster resource tiers. As such, it collates evidence on science, policy, markets, and social trends to inform the operation of clusters and the development of cluster resources.

- **Scientific research:** Understanding the ecological and social factors at play is crucial for designing and implementing effective nature-friendly farming practices.
  - **A protocol for Natural Assets profiling and assessment of impacts and dependencies of farming systems on natural capital.** This protocol supports the analysis of natural

capital in the farmer cluster combining qualitative and quantitative approaches (<https://zenodo.org/records/8348052>).

- **Report on the effect of land abandonment on agrobiodiversity and Ecosystem Services.** This report summarises the effect of abandonment on key pests, beneficials, and species of conservation interest in abandoned fields, in adjacent cropped fields and differences between agrobiodiversity in areas with and without abandonment, in the selected study regions in Estonia, Austria and Italy.
- **Policy drivers:** If the biodiversity crisis is on your policy agenda, consider the role of Farmer Clusters in supporting farmland biodiversity. We have some policy notes and tools that will soon become available. This includes:
  - Benefits of Advanced Farmers Clusters
  - Strengthening rural communities and local biodiversity data collection through citizen science
  - Management of land abandonment
  - Combining result-based payments with group contracts – incentives
  - Effect of agri-environmental contract design on farmers willingness to participate
  - Effect of farmer identity on their willingness to participate in agri-environmental contract
  - Lessons learnt from establishing and managing FCs across Europe
  - Advancing systems thinking for biodiversity-sensitive farming
  - The role of a natural capital approach for biodiversity sensitive farming and considerations for policy change
  - Regular sustainability assessments that encompass multiple pillars ensures the agricultural landscape is providing sustainable food production

**Review of existing public incentive schemes plus design options.** This report examines agri-environment schemes as a major instrument for farmers to receive monetary compensation for voluntarily adopting environmentally sensitive farming practices and how selected FRAMEwork clusters use the AES available in their country. Further, it investigates how traditional AES designs might be adapted to provide more distinct support for the FRAMEwork farmers and to align with the cluster concept of landscape-scale management. <https://zenodo.org/records/7115622>

**Report on result-based payments to promote agrobiodiversity.** This report provides the first experimental proof-of-concept of collective result-based schemes to equip farmers across the EU with a supportive incentive framework that promotes biodiversity-sensitive farming under the FRAMEwork System (<https://zenodo.org/records/15088127>).

- **Commercial impacts:** Private incentives and green financing schemes provide businesses with opportunities to support biodiversity. You can find out more below:
  - **Report on current and potential private incentives.** The report presents various types of private incentives identified in the literature and outlines a framework for categorising them and their subtypes in terms of key design features. The many

examples presented illustrate the functioning and variations of such incentives. The current relevance of the different private incentives in the FRAMEwork pilot Clusters is also assessed. <https://zenodo.org/records/7115617>

#### 2.3.4. Recodo

Recodo is an online platform that cuts across these tiers, sharing activities, information, resources and data, between farmers, scientists, policy makers, and citizens.

The Resource Finder section on Recodo draws together a range of relevant online resources for any of the priority target audiences, including Farmers, FC facilitators and advisors, Policy makers, Scientists and researchers and the General public. Please see the resource finder page: <https://recodo.io/resources/resource-finder?resourceType=TextPolicyBrief&page=1>.

### 2.4 Examples of Success Stories

#### 2.4.1 Examples from the Val Graziosa

The Val Graziosa Farmer Cluster, established in May 2021, has become a model of sustainable agriculture in Tuscany's Monte Pisano region. With 15 farms spanning 50 hectares, this cluster is dedicated to organic-certified farming, primarily focusing on olives. By implementing innovative practices to control the olive fly and maintain high production standards, the cluster has successfully minimized environmental impact while boosting productivity. The diverse landscape, enriched with woody elements, flower strips, shrubland, and terraced lands, supports a high biodiversity. In addition, evidence has been collated on the effects of land abandonment on agrobiodiversity and ecosystem services in the region, which showed that abandoned olive groves do not help control the olive fruit fly and may contribute to its population growth. The study is informing further innovation within the cluster, suggesting that diverse management practices are needed to enhance predator biodiversity and control olive fruit fly larvae. It was also established that woodland and shrubland support more diverse parasitoid complexes than abandoned groves, highlighting the importance of native areas for natural pest control and a focus for further policy consideration. Promoted through events like the Local BioBlitz 2024 and the "Lo Stafilinide d'Oro" award, the Val Graziosa Farmer Cluster exemplifies the power of collaborative efforts in achieving ecological and agricultural excellence.



To learn more about the Val Graziosa Farmer Cluster, see <https://recodo.io/cluster/view/3a0b36dc-c4d6-f423-c409-5de43c602285>

## 2.4.2 Examples from the Mostviertel Farmer Cluster

The Mostviertel Farmer Cluster, established in December 2020, has become an example of sustainable agriculture, uniting 12 farms over 300 hectares to support organic farming. This cluster has successfully diversified its agricultural practices, focusing on non-permanent crops, permanent cultures, grassland, and a variety of livestock, including cattle, sheep, goats, and bees. By transforming less productive meadows into species-rich habitats, the cluster has reintroduced well-known meadow flowers, enhancing biodiversity. In addition, through farmers' willingness to participate in interviews, evidence has been collated that Farmer Clusters can effectively create an environment of mutual learning and innovation. These interviews also identify the types of farmers who are most likely to benefit from the Farmer Cluster approach and, consequently, are more inclined to join. Supported by national and EU funding, the cluster's initiatives have been celebrated through various events, such as the "Landwirtschaft pur!" citizen science project and the showcase of the Gallenbacher family farm. The Mostviertel Farmer Cluster stands as a testament to the power of collaborative, eco-friendly farming, driving both environmental and community benefits.



To learn more about the Mostviertel Farmer Cluster, see <https://recodo.io/cluster/view/3a0b897c-cb84-c9ee-85e5-490584f16205>

## 2.5 Wider Promotion

A draft brochure describing the function, and the benefits of the framework has been produced (Appendix 1). This will be promoted through a social media campaign, which will be launched to advertise the framework through our social media channels. Farmer clusters, stakeholders and project partners' networks will also be used to ensure a wide reach. We will also utilise our sister project and relevant initiatives to spread the word.



## References

El Bilali, H., 2019. The multi-level perspective in research on sustainability transitions in agriculture and food systems: A systematic review. *Agriculture*, 9(4), p.74.

Geels, F.W., 2011. The multi-level perspective on sustainability transitions: Responses to seven criticisms. *Environmental innovation and societal transitions*, 1(1), pp.24-40.

## Disclaimer

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## Appendix 1: Brochure promoting our framework for biodiversity friendly farming.

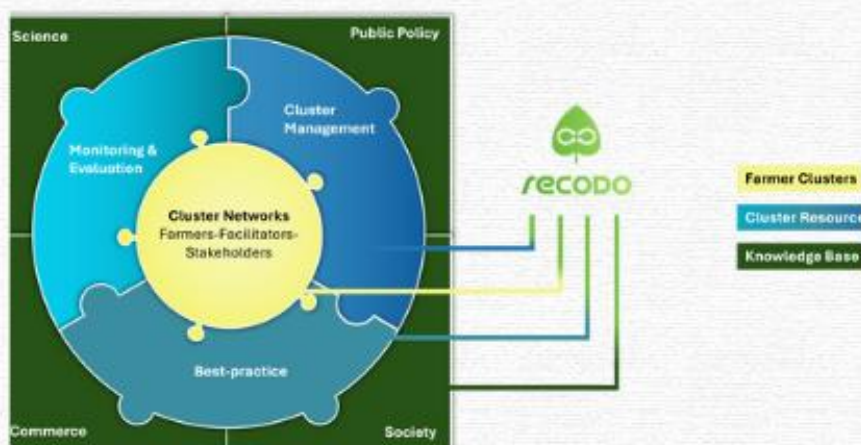


# A Framework for Biodiversity Friendly Farming

**Helping conserve biodiversity and promote  
ecosystem services across the landscape.**

**RESEARCH – INNOVATION – APPLICATION**

for a transition to nature friendly farming



## The Framework at a Glance

### What is it ?

An approach that brings together the elements needed to help farmers conserve biodiversity, promote ecosystem services, and to avoid potential risks. The system is made up of three tiers:



#### Farmer Clusters

Local farmer groups, working together as a collective to deliver landscape scale management.



#### Cluster Resources

Information and tools to help manage and monitor clusters, and implement nature friendly farming.



#### Knowledge Base

The research, policy, and commercial background that influences and informs farming.

#### Recodo

Our online platform for sharing activities, information, resources and data, between farmers, scientists, policy makers, and citizens.

### Who is it for ?

The framework offers an opportunity to anyone who wants to contribute to making farming nature friendly:

- **farmers** wishing to work with others to protect their farmland and the world around them;
- **third sector and government** representatives tackling environmental challenges;
- **scientists** wanting to have a positive impact on the ground;
- **private sector partners** valuing natural capital and the environment in which they operate.
- **anyone** wanting to lend a helping hand.



## Framework Overview

### Tier 1 | Farmer Clusters

A **'Farmer Cluster'** is a group of local farmers who share knowledge, support and motivation to improve biodiversity and the ecological health of their farms, cluster landscapes and beyond! Farmers are supported by a **'facilitator'** who provides environmental expertise and helps with cluster tasks and administration. Clusters can include individual **'volunteers'** and organisations who share an interest in the aims and work of the cluster.



Read inspiring  
Cluster Stories



Check out  
our Clusters  
Resources



### Tier 2 | Cluster Resources

Farming with nature is knowledge intensive and needs resources not usually available to farmers.

- **Managing a Farmer Cluster.** Have a look at our guidelines to find out more about starting and running a cluster and dig a little deeper with the Landscape Leaders: Farmer Cluster Training Programme.
- **Farming with nature.** Need help with planning improvements to farmland ecosystems? Check out The Farmland Ecosystem Assessment Support Tool (FEAST).
- **Biodiversity monitoring.** Tracking progress is a powerful motivator and essential for ensuring the effectiveness of your efforts. Whether you're an experienced surveyor or a citizen scientist, there are guides available to help.

### Tier 3 | Knowledge Base

Farmer Clusters don't operate in isolation. They benefit from scientific research, policy support, and commercial incentives.

- **Scientific Research:** Understanding the ecological and social factors at play is crucial for designing and implementing effective nature-friendly farming practices. Recent studies focussed on Farmer Clusters and collective landscape management are available.
- **Policy drivers:** If the biodiversity crisis is on your policy agenda, consider the role of Farmer Clusters in supporting farmland biodiversity. We have some policy notes and tools that will help.
- **Commercial Impacts:** Private incentives and green financing schemes provide businesses with opportunities to support biodiversity.



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## Recodo

A platform to share **knowledge** and support **action**, integrating different resources: from citizen science training tools and materials for on-farm biodiversity monitoring, to new knowledge and personal stories from across Europe's Farmer Cluster Network.

<https://recodo.io>



The Recodo platform is a service of the **FRAMEwork project** - 'Farmer clusters for Realising Agrobiodiversity Management across Ecosystems'. The project is researching and promoting ways for European farming systems to transition towards conserving biodiversity and leveraging valuable ecosystem services while mitigating agronomic and economic risks.

[www.framework-biodiversity.eu](http://www.framework-biodiversity.eu)



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