



# **Mapping and Assessing Promising Leverage Points amongst Stakeholders Working for Transformative Pathways**

## **Deliverable D2.3**

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### **TRANSPATH**

**Transformative pathways for synergising just biodiversity and  
climate actions**



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## Summary

This deliverable reports on work undertaken within WP2 to explore how agricultural sustainability initiatives across East and West Europe understand what it takes to secure societal support for sustainability transformations, and to undertake and forward their work. Between November 2025-February 2026, we completed 36 semi-structured interviews with representatives of agricultural sustainability initiatives from across 9 countries in the EU: Ireland, France, Poland, Germany, UK, Slovakia, Romania, Netherlands, and Hungary. The report analyses their areas of focus, the strategies by which they seek to achieve meaningful change in the agricultural sector, and their perceptions of the conditions necessary for enrolling broader societal buy-in to sustainability.

This report also revisits, and attempts to verify, how understandings of seven core concepts that arose from D2.2's Fuzzy Cognitive Maps (FCMs) as 'essential' to driving transformative change, differ across Europe. These seven concepts are: collective action, demands for participation and representation, state rules and regulations, conventional behaviour, community, societal appetite for change, and lobbying/advocacy. Recognising that the means and goals of 'transformation' are a moving target, we were explicitly interested in practical and regional variations in practitioners' approaches to the idea of 'transformation' and associated required change, in order to build up assemblage-like understandings of the work and ongoing needs of sustainability initiatives.

We also put together an inventory of 55 actions that composed the work of our interviewed sustainability initiatives. In collating this database, we aim to evaluate i) what kinds of actions are undertaken at different phases of an initiative's development and why, ii) the future needs and aspirations associated with these actions, and iii) where each action 'fits' within a spectrum of relational-reforming-resisting approaches. This inventory provides a basis from which to identify where and how different forms of support - i.e. 'levers' - might be best placed. These will lead to the development of multi-scalar and multi-level pathways at regional and European levels for D2.4. We explicitly focus on the actions our interviewees perceive as creating impact in practice out of a recognition that 'micro-practices' – the mundane and everyday routines of work and life that make up transformations – fundamentally shape how sustainability is enacted, and must be negotiated, reoriented and/or sustained over time to support the activities and values deemed crucial for the realisation of making agriculture more sustainable.

Our findings highlight how agricultural sustainability initiatives operate from distinct starting points, and are shaped by their institutional contexts, historical experiences, and prior attempts to make change. These starting points influence how initiatives understand the possibilities for transformative change, and the strategies required to achieve it. At the same time, there was significant convergence around how initiatives experienced the challenges of their work, and the actions required to undertake it effectively. This suggests that while pathways to sustainability are nuanced and require context-specific insights to initiate and maintain, the enabling conditions, challenges and practical levers for change show important shared characteristics across initiatives in Europe.

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## List of abbreviations

CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
EE	East(ern) Europe
EU	European Union
FCM	Fuzzy Cognitive Map(ping)
IPBES	Intergovernmental Panel for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
TC	Transformative Change
WE	West(ern) Europe

## 1. Introduction

In earlier phases of work WP2 undertook a range of workshops in Czechia and the UK with sustainability practitioners and change-makers, in order to identify the visions and pathways to achieving these individuals' and initiatives' goals and visions of change and advocated reform in the food and agricultural sectors. The outcome of these workshops are summarised in D2.2. These workshops developed a series of 'Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping' (FCM) exercises and outputs that identified seven 'concepts' that participants identified as most important to their work for achieving their desired 'transformative changes' and goals. These seven concepts were: collective action, demands for participation and representation, state rules and regulations, conventional behaviour, community, societal appetite for change, and lobbying/advocacy (see Figure 1).

In this report, we summarise follow-on research where we have attempted to verify and expand on the significance of these concepts to sustainability initiatives across Europe and the UK. To do this, we conducted 36 interviews across eight countries and with attention to the spread of our sample and thus insights from across 'East' and 'West' Europe, as we were interested in whether there were regional differences between conceptions around change or practices in relation to realising sustainability initiatives. Specifically, interviews took place with practitioners from the Netherlands, France, Germany, Ireland, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Romania and the UK. Building from a context- and experience- based understanding of change, it was possible to build an inventory of actions and levers that were identified as crucial in the different stages of work of these initiatives. We were also interested in capturing the needs, aspirations and potential support opportunities to strengthen the work of these stakeholders.

This report proceeds as follows: in the next section, we summarise existing research and literature around approaches to understanding and identifying 'levers' for meaningful societal change, in order to introduce our own approach. Section 3 outlines our interviewees, methodology and analyses to the 36 interviews that we completed, and how we categorised and built our action inventory. Section 4 introduces the results of our analyses: first, we highlight the features of sought-after and perceived change across our interviewees. Section 5 outlines the concept selection choices and variation in their interpretations across Europe. For the purposes of this report, we highlight four concepts that showed the highest selection counts from amongst our sample across East and West Europe (this includes concepts collective action and community) - as well as the greatest variation or spectrum of expressed values and view in relation to a concept, which related to state regulation and lobbying/advocacy.

Section 6 outlines our inventory of actions along a timeline and scale of initiatives' operations, while section 7 summarises needs and opportunities for the continued support of these. We conclude with a summary and our intended future programme of work in section 8.

## 2. Our approach to understanding sustainability initiatives and levers

Approaching sustainability transitions and transformations through ‘systems thinking’ and associated ideas around ‘leverage points’ and ‘levers’ is well established in the sustainability sciences, dating from the days of the environmental thinktank group the *Club of Rome*, and is especially associated with the work of Donella Meadows. ‘Levers’ are defined as potential intervention opportunities or points within given complex systems, where carrying through with an intervention leads to significant (identifiable, and often measurable) progress towards a given sustainability goal (Meadows, 1999). These opportunities for intervention are promoted as useful for planning purposes, as they are ideally discrete and targeted actions that result in significant, systemic shifts towards socio-environmental goals across multiple scales and in deliberately interlinked and connected ways, rather than isolated and incremental, slow changes (e.g., Rosengren et al., 2020).

Leverage ‘points’ build on levers to identify promising intervention opportunities for incentivising and supporting desired change. In this work, our starting point is to begin with those circumstances, actions and needs that are identified and articulated as such by practitioners and change-makers working in these spaces, and who have the capacity to recount and draw from their wealth of experiences and knowledge in the agricultural sector. This is a deliberate commitment to the grounded realities, needs and articulated experiences and struggles of those on ‘the frontlines’ of realising the progressive work of transformative change (TC) in agriculture.

Some of the challenges with leverage points and levers include their necessary oversimplifications, where complexity is reduced to identify and circumscribe the intervention points themselves, as well as fuzziness between what counts as a ‘lever’ and as ‘leverage’. Complexity is often difficult to represent and/or measure, leading to very technical and reductive representations of lived realities and world-systems; further, much debate has been spent on classifying and formulating whether leverage points are ‘shallow’ or ‘deep’, while trying to build in the significant variation around which resources, stakeholders, scales and processes of intervention are meaningful and necessary for change (Haas et al., 2026).

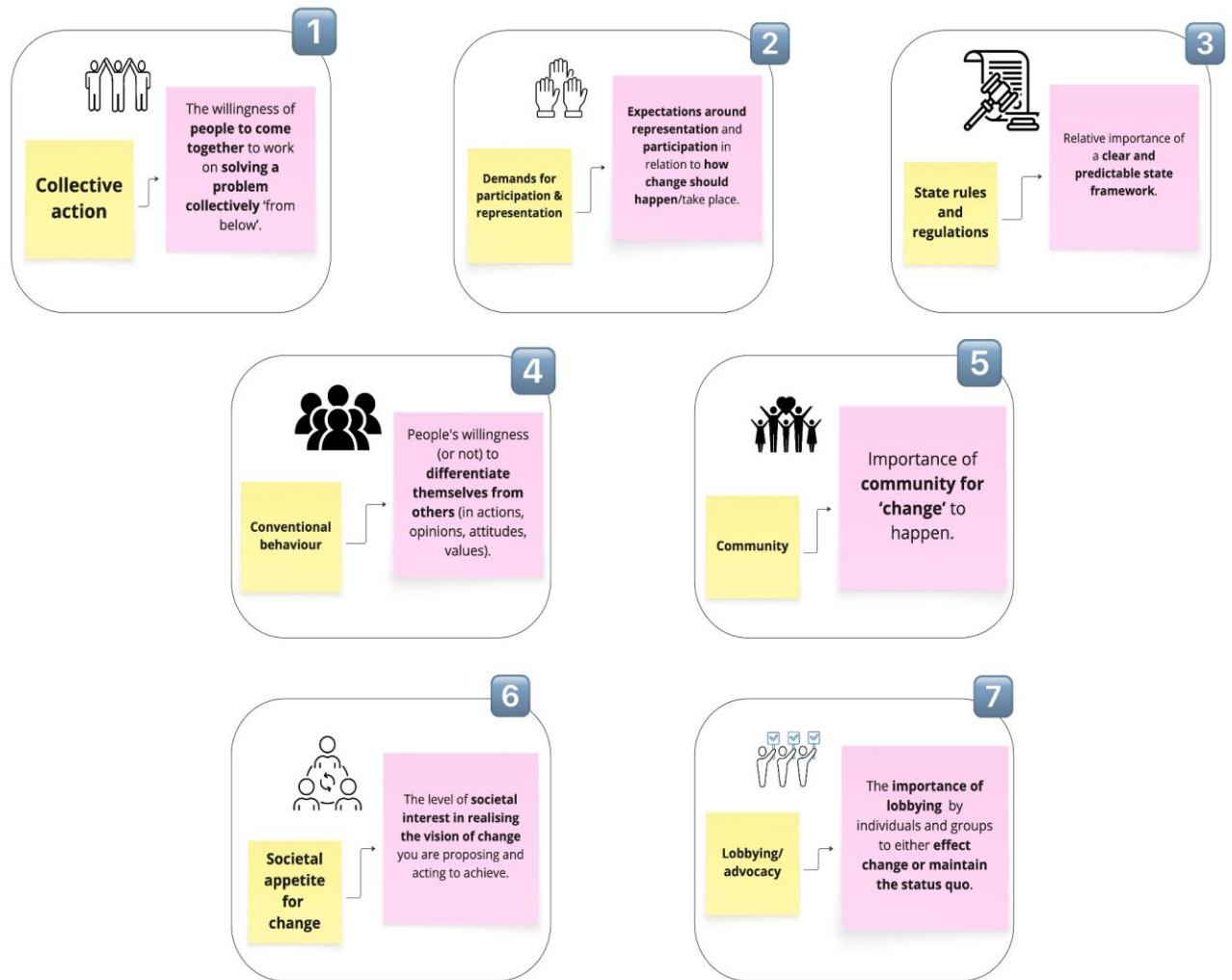
One of the key insights from working with experienced individuals is that the work of systems shifts and transformations needs to extend beyond ‘fixing’, through technical, seemingly apolitical or top-down processes, institutions and rules: instead, transformation consists of both “internal” and “external” elements that require change (Ives et al., 2023). “Inner” transformation research highlights the “interdependence of inner/outer and individual/collective/system phenomena” (Ives et al., 2023). This avenue of work has led to a prominent focus on values and their fundamental role in generating new visions and practices as levers (Horcea-Milcu, 2022).

Assemblage theory originates from critical geographical and social studies work that emphasises relationality, that is, the interconnections between material, social, ecological, economic and political factors - and in this context, as they come together and make up the conditions and work of any sustainability initiative as agency becomes possible or is reformed as a result of new interactions (Anderson et al., 2012; Robbins and Marks, 2010; Hope, 2020). Foregrounding relationality - the interconnections between the where, what,

how, who, why of actions that underpin sustainability initiatives - enables us to understand and envision the actions of these initiatives as deliberate decision-making moments and choices by key stakeholders, playing out within feedback loops and systems dynamics, and not as isolated or even accidental or incidental efforts at achieving change (Riechers et al., 2021).

A significant 'blind spot' to previous research on sustainability transitions has been around the importance of values, personal beliefs, ideologies, world views and how these together shape preferences and perceptions around how we each think that the world does and should 'work'. Yet these personal, community-collective and culturally- informed expectations and notions are pivotal for determining what aspirational and processual changes are legitimate, desirable or even possible. Recognising this, recent work has shifted to articulating stakeholders' explicit 'theories of change' through making evident assumptions and frameworks around how 'change' works. These tie in directly with leverage-oriented research in the sustainability sciences, as deeper system properties are informed and shaped by values and worldviews: theories of change help to explain why some leverage points are prioritised, how they interact, why they are preferred or have societal and normative backing, and under what societal and political circumstances they may become more effective, or be better supported or improved (Horcea-Milcu et al., 2024). For these reasons, in our work below we have expended considerable space in making out sustainability leaders' theories of change and perceptions around societal expectations towards the changes required for systems shifts to sustainability in the food/agricultural sectors.

In the work for this deliverable (D2.3), we have sought to build on our engagements with change-makers and stakeholders from across Czechia and the United Kingdom, to identify promising, shared and divergent actions and challenges of initiatives working for the advancement of meaningful change towards a more sustainable world. For this, we used our results from Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping (FCMs) outlined in Deliverable 2.2, where we identified the core processes and/or concepts that were advanced as crucial for the realisation of initiatives' work and for progress towards 'transformative change' (see Figure 1). For this Deliverable, we have tried to verify the applicability and evaluation of these seven identified concepts across a variety of pan-European stakeholders to better understand the change preferences, visions, desired and practical approaches and their tradeoffs to their work, and to identify their future needs and aspirations. These will lead to the proposal of concrete multi-scalar and multi-level pathways at regional and European levels for D2.4.



**Figure 1.** The seven concepts used for baseline verification and experience-gathering across sustainability initiatives in Europe through our regional interviews.

Acknowledging that the content and even definitions for ‘transformation’ are a moving target (c.f. De Castro et al., 2025), we were explicitly interested in practical and regional variations in practitioners’ approaches to this term and associated required change, in order to build up assemblage-like understandings of the work and ongoing needs of sustainability initiatives. We undertook this to develop a far-ranging inventory of ‘actions’ that those working in this space identified as a part of their ‘everyday’ work. This focus on (experiential and other) knowledge that creates affect - that, in other words, has discernible connection to practice or ‘impact’ (eg., Hertz and Boursquet, 2025) - again emerges from a recognition that ‘micro-practices’, the mundane and everyday routines of work and life make up transformations, and must be negotiated and reoriented to support the activities and values deemed crucial for the attainment of core goals and changes.

For these reasons, ‘action inventories’ can show small practice shifts and the mechanisms of change that are sought-out, developed and influenced by a range of stakeholders across a range of contexts, allowing some insight into common needs and practices for sustainability transformations. Understandings of actions also avoid the development or focus of visions

without practical orientation - where visions risk having no grounding mechanism, connection or starting point. They also allow for insight into how different types of stakeholders - from those involved closely with the development of public policy, research, or from civil and NGO organisations, thinktanks, or businesses and more applied sectors - differentially approach, define, relate, and realise their work around common visions and goals.

There are today a growing number of approaches to documenting and classifying the work of sustainability initiatives and actors, revealing the depth and multi-faceted nature of transformations, where there can be no singular pathway. For example, Chambers et al., (2022) identified four collaborative pathways through the work of dozens of conservation initiatives, where these pathways had to navigate competing agendas between i) different emphases and efforts towards including and elevating marginalised perspectives; ii) questioning power relations and dominant agendas; iii) finding ways to navigate and mediate conflicting agendas; and iv) where a priority was placed on fostering common understandings and mutual work, so that learning and action could be embedded within societal structures.

The elucidation of these ‘pathways’ becomes possible through an initial bricolage-like ‘building up’ of understanding around the actions, values and ways of working of sustainability initiatives, where knowledge of and about individual actions makes it possible to define and potentially delineate or boundarise what consists of ‘leverage points’ or opportunities, that may constitute key elements to transformative pathways. While this depiction here is overly linear and simplified, recent inventories do share this approach and place value on action inventories for these purposes (e.g., Dorninger et al., 2020): actions can be seen as activities that have different objectives, that target different people and scales. Understanding these allows for systems-level insights into “broad realms of leverage” - for example, Abson et al. (2017) distinguish leverage points into three: as opportunities to reconnect people and nature; as ways to restructure institutions and associated practices; and as a way of rethinking knowledge systems, including how we know what we know, and what is valued.

Inspired by Leventon et al. (2021), we have tried here to pose a range of diagnostic questions to our interviews with agricultural change-makers (elucidated in detail for actions in Section 3.3 below), so that history, timing, and even historical ‘conjunctures’ might be understood in relation to the broader contexts and realities of key actions (Linner and Wibeck 2021).

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Interviews with those working to improve sustainability in the food and agricultural sectors across Europe

Between November 2025-February 2026, we completed 36 semi-structured interviews with representatives of agricultural sustainability initiatives from across 8 countries in the EU (for interview count and country spread see Table 1; and for detail on the types of interviewees see Table 2). All our interviews were conducted online using Teams or Zoom software, and transcribed and translated as necessary into English.

**Table 1.** Our interview count and geography of interviewees for this Deliverable.

Country	Interview count
Eastern Europe	
- Hungary	4
- Poland	5
- Romania	2
- Slovakia	4
Total interviews	<b>15</b>
Western Europe	
- France	5
- Germany	4
- Ireland	3
- Netherlands	4
- United Kingdom	5
Total interviews	<b>21</b>
<b>Total interviews</b>	<b>36</b>

Interview threads consisted of four sections (for full interview guides, see **Appendix A**):

1. Questions designed to capture our research participant's perceptions and experiences of whether 'profound' changes were necessary in the European food and agriculture sector, what their vision of 'transformative change' was, and how it should/could be realised, as well as the public debate around their desired vision of change;
2. An evaluation of the seven identified core concepts required for achieving their work for systems-level sustainability changes, where interviewees were asked to choose 3 to explore in detail;
3. Follow up questions asking interviewees for examples from their own work to derive an understanding of the practical actions each initiative undertook and their needs going forwards;
4. (Where possible) questions around how interviewees perceived their work in relation to other initiatives from around Europe, most notably along an east/west (geographical/historical) axis.

To better understand how the perceived challenges and opportunities for realising change across Europe differed by actor type, we interviewed a range of agricultural sustainability actors about their strategies and experiences. These include NGOs (n=20), lobby groups (n=1); formal farmer networks (n=10) and companies (n=5).

**Table 2.** Interview IDs by initiative type and HQ country.

Interview ID	Actor Type	HQ	Established
NGO, 01: Germany	NGO	Germany	1973
NGO, 02: Romania	NGO	Romania	2018
Lobby Group, 01: UK	lobby group	United Kingdom	2024
Network, 01: Slovakia	network	Slovakia	2015
NGO, 03: Ireland	NGO	Ireland	2022
NGO, 04: Slovakia	NGO	Slovakia	1997
NGO, 05: Netherlands	NGO	Netherlands	2020
NGO, 06: Ireland	NGO	Ireland	2000
Network, 02: UK	network	United Kingdom	2002
NGO, 07: Germany	NGO	Germany	1975
Company, 01: Poland	company	Poland	1995
NGO, 08: France	NGO	France	2013
NGO, 09: UK	NGO	United Kingdom	2009
Network, 03: Netherlands	network	Netherlands	2025
Network, 04: Slovakia	network	Slovakia	2018
NGO, 10: Ireland	NGO	Ireland	2025
NGO, 11: Hungary	NGO	Hungary	2014
Company, 02: Poland	company	Poland	2023
NGO, 12: Germany	NGO	Germany	2013
Network, 05: UK	network	United Kingdom	2012
Company, 03: Company	company	Poland	2016
NGO, 13: Poland	NGO	Poland	2023
Network, 06: UK	network	United Kingdom	2018
Network, 07: Germany	network	Germany	2011
NGO, 14: Hungary	NGO	Hungary	2011
Network, 08: France	network	France	2018
Network, 09: France	network	France	1996
NGO, 15: Poland	NGO	Poland	2013
NGO, 16: France	NGO	France	2021

Company, 04: France	Company	France	2010
NGO, 17: Netherlands	NGO	Netherlands	2016
Network, 10: Netherlands	network	Netherlands	2020
NGO, 18: Hungary	NGO	Hungary	1991
Company, 05: Hungary	Company	Hungary	2014
NGO, 19: Romania	NGO	Romania	2004
NGO, 20: Slovakia	NGO	Slovakia	2000

The represented initiatives varied considerably in their size, focus, as well as in the scale and scope of the audiences they sought to engage in order to popularise changes towards sustainability. The largest initiative had 170 employees and the smallest was run by a single owner-operator, though most initiatives employed between 5-40 staff. Although all of the initiatives tackled the problem of how to achieve sustainability in agriculture, their specific areas of focus varied significantly. These included support networks for sustainable agriculture working with hundreds of farmers, organisations working to secure land long-term for agroecological farmers, research institutes and organic producers running community supported agriculture (CSA) schemes with 200 members.

The initiatives also differed in how they engaged their audiences. We were able to code and identify six different ‘ways of working’ in the dataset, as shown in Table 3 to illustrate the spectrum of work focuses of the 36 interviewed initiatives (see **Appendix C** for corresponding quotes). These roles are not mutually exclusive as often an initiative pursued several roles simultaneously, as dependent on the size, aims and capacity of their organisation.

**Table 3.** Interviewees’ six ‘ways of working’, derived from the coding of our interviews when discussing sustainability initiatives’ focuses of work.

Way of working	Description	Examples	Relevant activities
Coordinator/ Curator	Initiatives position themselves as a backbone organisation that convenes actors who would not otherwise collaborate. Their role is to bring together farmers, value chain actors, civil society organisations and public authorities to collectively explore how to best achieve sustainability change.	Network, 01: Slovakia; Network, 08: France; NGO, 02: Romania; NGO, 03: Ireland; NGO, 04: Slovakia	Convening multi-stakeholder groups; facilitating dialogue between farmers, supply chains and policymakers; mediating conflicts; supporting collective strategy development.

Creating Embedded Long-Term Relationships	Initiatives prioritise long-term, place-based engagement with farmers and communities. These approaches emphasise trust-building, repeated interaction, and locally grounded visions of change, often described as farmer-led.	NGO, 16: France; NGO, 02: Romania; NGO, 03: Ireland; NGO, 09: UK; Company, 05: Hungary; Company, 01: Poland	Farm visits and coaching; long-term facilitation; local network building.
Education / Awareness Raising	Initiatives seek to build support for sustainability by increasing knowledge of ecological, political, governance and social challenges.	NGO, 19: Romania; NGO, 16: France; NGO, 15: Poland; Network, 09: France; NGO, 20: Slovakia; Network, 05: UK	Workshops on cooperatives; farmer training; demonstration farms; educational materials; public events and reports.
Movement Building	Initiatives work to develop alliances and coalitions at national or international scales in order to strengthen political influence. Some favour broad coalitions across sectors, while others take clearer political positions about which actors they will collaborate with.	NGO, 19: Romania; NGO, 05: Netherlands; Network, 10: Netherlands; NGO, 01: Germany; NGO, 17: Netherlands; Network, 05: UK	Building national advocacy coalitions; networking across movements; participating in international collaborations.
Evidence Gathering	Initiatives generate or synthesise knowledge to support change efforts, particularly for influencing policymakers, funders and investors.	Lobby Group, 01: UK; NGO, 10: Ireland; NGO, 19: Romania; Network, 09: France	Monitoring and evaluation tools for farmers; drone data collection; pilot projects; knowledge collation and reporting.
Policy Advocacy	Initiatives focus on influencing policy frameworks and addressing structural barriers to sustainability transitions, such as agricultural subsidies or land regulation or may operate as watchdog organisations monitoring policy implementation.	NGO, 01: Germany; NGO, 07: Germany; Network, 01: Slovakia; NGO, 04: Slovakia; NGO, 10: Ireland; Lobby Group, 01: UK	Policy lobbying; coalition advocacy; monitoring legislation; legal action against state institutions; engagement in public consultations.

### 3.2 Analysis approach to interviewee's visions of change and concept reflections

This section summarises our analysis outline for how we coded and analysed our interviews, to build our understanding of interviewees' visions and aspirations of change.

For the reliability and credibility of our coding approach and derived coding categories, we undertook inter-coder triangulation with a randomly selected ten transcripts: three researchers independently coded the same interviews, and then met to compare interpretations and assigned codes and categories to data. In this way, we verified that interview quotes were interpreted in the same or similar ways, and that codes were not singular or idiosyncratic. It also allowed us to refine codes, their definitions and boundaries, and to agree on a code book for the remaining interviews for analysis.

We analysed interviews for respondents' theories of change, where the justification, object and process of transformative change were coded from different interview questions. The 'why' (interviewees' expressed reasons for seeking 'profound' change) and 'what' were derived from responses to individuals' focus of work, as well as responses to the question around what they thought of our research's hypothesis, that change that was systems-wide and deep was necessary. Responses to focus of work as well as explicit questions around societal acceptance/resistance and reflections then informed coding related to context and societal-level narratives and challenges. All coding was undertaken using Atlas.ti.

### 3.3 Analysis approach for the Actions Inventory

For the Inventory of Actions, we were interested in initiatives' practices to realise their work. Together with other main code categories, we coded for the specific actions interviewees mentioned in relation to their mission, focusing particularly on those that are being and/or were done by the initiative, or in case of wider platforms and networks, their members. The full Inventory of Actions can be found at Appendix D.

In terms of coding process, identified actions were first categorised by their time phases: entry, maintenance, and/or cascading. **Entry actions** were those that happened at the beginning of the initiative's establishment, including those that provided an opportunity for the initiative to become established in the first place. **Maintenance actions** were considered as ongoing actions necessary for maintaining initiatives' operations and long-term viability once established. If initiatives started new activities a few years after their establishment - such as new training courses or education programmes, or won funding to develop in a new direction - then these were categorised as maintenance activities, seeing as they required the initiative to already have some reach, reputation and/or experience/insight to undertake these new developments. Lastly, **cascading actions** refer to those that enabled the spread (horizontally or vertically) and scaling of initiatives' efforts to realise change and/or to popularise message(s), often through a "domino-ing" manner. It should be noted that these categories of actions based on their time phases can be blurred, meaning that several actions overlap two or all temporal horizons. For this reason, actions were categorised to more than one phase if necessary.

Based on this first round of analysis, we went further into the specificities of the mentioned actions in order to realise a relational perspective - particularly, their depth/scale of change

(from local to societal), the level of the system an action targeted (operational, institutional, narrative), its target audience (individual to systemic) (e.g., Tàbara, 2023; West et al., 2024). Since the scope of interviewed initiatives was large and the work that they undertook was so varied, including targeting different scales, it was necessary to categorise actions based on the depth or scale of change that they aimed for, as interviewees answered our questions about their activities and scope at different systems levels. These ranged from local, membership, to the wider societal scale, and were often overlapping.

Drawing from the previous Deliverable 2.2, the identified actions were also categorised based on the level of the system that they targeted, specifically the operational (day-to-day, concrete, tangible actions), institutional (governance-level actions), and narrative (discourse around a topic) levels (see D2.2 for more detail). Another interesting aspect was the audience initiatives targeted with their actions (local, community, members, sector, or systemic), as well as the geographical level (local, regional, national, international, general-societal).

We also categorised actions within a spectrum of whether they were relational, resisting, or reforming. Borrowing from Brisbois and Cantoni (2025), this spectrum examines what actions stakeholders take in adapting to or resisting the decarbonisation transition. In our case, we have borrowed and been inspired by the categorisation of actions (that Brisbois and Cantoni 2025 call 'strategies') to better understand the forms of activities that lead to the perceived needs of sustainability transformations. In this spectrum, **relational actions** refer to those promoting relationship/community building and engaging with various people on different levels. **Resisting actions** are those that are challenge-oriented, confrontational and oppositional; while **reforming actions** are those that try to modify or improve existing systems or institutions to effect change. Importantly, all these categories should be seen as a spectrum of different dimensions through which actions can be analysed and understood.

This attempt at holistically gathering and categorising information around actions allows us to build an understanding of what sustainability initiatives deem necessary or worthwhile to do for the realisation of their work in the food and agricultural sectors, when, and how. With the added insights from the contexts and social relations around each initiative that we have collected and analysed here, we will also be able to rethink an approach to 'multi-faceted' levers and pathways to better initiate and support initiatives.

### 3.4 Methodological reflections and limitations

A core part of our interview thread asked respondents to reflect on the seven concepts that were deemed essential to sustainability work by workshop respondents in Czechia and the UK. While we delved in depth into the importance of a selection of these concepts, we also allowed for interviewee feedback around the relevance and potential disagreement that they might have held with these 7 original concepts.

These reflections highlighted a number of limitations of our study, or have suggested fruitful ways forwards for further inquiry. Namely, a key feedback around concept reflections was the difficulty (and sometimes inconsistency) with ideas related to 'community' and 'collective action', with primarily a too- close alignment in definitions being the issue (eg., NGO, 06:

Ireland; Network, 05: UK; Network, 03: Netherlands; NGO, 20: Slovakia), or a lack of clear delineation, as collective action rested on the need for community.

Further meaningful feedback on the seven concepts included a substantial number of respondents noting the clear interrelations between concepts, which meant that they were difficult to interpret or singularly pick as “most important”. For example, several respondents noted that prerequisites for social change require the operation of many dynamics at multiple levels, such that concepts operate at different scales and so build on each other. An example of this was made out well by an UK interviewee in relation to lobbying and advocacy being necessary at ‘*higher levels*’, as these greatly influence in turn what norms and ‘conventional behaviour’ are (NGO, 09: UK; though Network; 04: Slovakia, NGO, 15: Poland; NGO, 20: Slovakia and NGO, 04: Slovakia also expressed similar reservations or difficulties around teasing apart the singularity of concepts around necessary action for transformative change).

The significance of this sort of pushback, where interviewees struggled to delineate or separate out concepts, meant that we had to adjust our interpretation and coding categories such that we did not order concepts in terms of ‘top’ ones. Substantial disagreement and pushback against concepts was also encountered and probed during interviews. Disagreement with concepts could be a sign of divergent theories of change, where selective rejection of some concepts was justified in relation to previous experience that led to interviewees holding the view that some concepts were irrelevant or not essential to transformative change. In a few cases, outright disagreement with the concepts meant that asking interviewees to choose what was “most important” to their work was a forced exercise (one interviewee - NGO, 18: Hungary - outright refused to nominate any concepts as in her opinion the concepts were meaningless without preconditions).

Although we have interviewed a substantial cohort in terms of sample size and regional distribution, out of consideration to interview length and manageability, interviewers did not ask respondents to feedback or evaluate all seven core concepts, only their selected three. Although this gives insight into respondents’ views around change and what is most crucial to achieve or hinder it, it also meant that the feedback and elaboration around concepts tended to be limited to a significantly smaller sample (for example, the most commonly selected concept, collective action, was only discussed by 20 respondents; see Section 5 for exact figures for all concepts). This gap presents a potential opportunity for further research.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Interviewees’ visions of transformative change.

The definition, experience and forms of transformative change are bound to be myriad by virtue of any change’s subjective, responsive open-endedness across different contexts, scales and even personalities (Loorbach et al., 2017; Woroniecki et al., 2024). In recognition of these contested interpretations and goals, we were interested in exploring if and why interviewees thought profound changes were necessary to make European agriculture more sustainable, and how they believed such change ought to be realised.

Across the dataset, interviewees expressed broad agreement with our hypothesis that transformative changes were needed in the food and agricultural sectors. Some examples of this included:

*“We need another kind of farmer or agricultural ‘ways of doing’. It’s so needed if we want to get out of the climate crisis, the social crisis we’re in” (NGO, 17: Netherlands).*

*“We need a fundamental change, a total paradigm shift, because we need to wean ourselves off fossil fuels and take a different approach. We have been undergoing a scientific revolution for the past 15 years. On microbiota, both in the human intestine and in the rhizosphere of plants. And all this can free us from fertilisers and pesticides that are harmful to health. For example, when we stop ploughing and stop applying high doses of nitrogen, plants become less susceptible to disease. [...] It really is a paradigm shift” (NGO, 16: France)*

There was, however, little consensus across our interviews around the type of change, how ‘deep’ it needed to be, nor its timeline. There was considerable variation in interviewees’ views in relation to their theories of change, prioritisation of how to realise sustainability, and the capacities of their contexts and societies to act for change. Reflections around societal attitudes and capacities greatly influenced their assessment of the challenges and likelihood of transformative change. Table 4 summarises the eight distinct, though overlapping ways of framing the need for ‘profound’ transformative change that were prevalent in our sample.

**Table 4.** A spectrum of interviewee’s framings of why transformative change is needed in European agriculture

Typology group	Characterisation of response	Core logic expressed by interviewees	View sources from amongst interviewees
<b>1. System failure → systemic transformation needed</b>	Transformation is required because the current food/economic system is fundamentally failing	Current system “not working”, so structural reform needed	N = 10 (NGO, 01: Germany, NGO, 09: UK, NGO, 16: France; Network, 09: France; NGO, 02: Romania; NGO, 15: Poland; Lobby Group, 01: UK; Network, 02: UK; NGO, 20: Slovakia; NGO, 04: Slovakia)

<b>2. Structural critique of economic system</b>	Transformation needed because economic growth, consumption, or industrial agriculture drives ecological crisis	Critique of economic theory, capitalism, consumption	N = 5 (NGO, 13: Poland; Company, 03: Company; Company, 02: Poland; NGO, 18: Hungary; NGO, 10: Ireland)
<b>3. Ecological necessity / environmental limits</b>	Change required because environmental degradation forces transformation	Soil decline, climate pressures, planetary limits	N = 5 (Network, 01: Slovakia; Network, 04: Slovakia; NGO, 19: Romania; NGO, 02: Romania; NGO, 14: Hungary)
<b>4. Normative agreement with transformation goals</b>	Agreement with premise that transformative change is needed, but without extended justification	The need for transformative change framed as obvious or self-evident	N = 4 (NGO, 08: France; Company, 04: France; Company, 05: Hungary; NGO, 03: Ireland)
<b>5. Narrative / cultural transformation framing</b>	Transformation framed as shifts in narratives, education, or societal values	Cultural change, reframing food systems	N = 4 (NGO, 20: Slovakia; NGO, 17: Netherlands; NGO, 20: Slovakia; Network, 02: UK)
<b>6. Conditional or incremental change orientation</b>	Change may not require profound transformation	Incremental improvements possible	N = 2 (Company, 02: Poland; NGO, 13: Poland)
<b>7. Inevitability framing</b>	Transformation is inevitable due to historical and/or environmental pressures	Change will happen regardless of anything	N = 3 (Network, 07: Germany; NGO, 11: Hungary; NGO, 15: Poland)
<b>8. Skepticism about feasibility of transformation</b>	Agreement or recognition around need for transformative change, but doubt about its possibility	Institutional barriers, lack of progress to date	N = 3 (NGO, 18: Hungary; Company, 01: Poland; NGO, 10: Ireland)

In terms of how such change ought to be realised, all respondents emphasised the importance of networked, bottom-up change such that decision making at initiative, local, national and EU levels reflect societal demands and capacities.

*“we are trying to integrate all voices from the bottom up and therefore we are organised in networks”* (NGO, 07: Germany)

*“We are bringing together different stakeholders... farmers, local authorities, researchers”* (NGO, 02: Romania)

However, the means by which interviewees perceived transformation should take place differed considerably (see Table 5 for the full spectrum). The different avenues for initiating change presented below are not mutually exclusive, as interviewees frequently expressed that change was needed across multiple domains simultaneously. NGO, 13: Poland, for example, expressed the need for bottom-up and grassroots-embedded action for change, so that these demands and collective action could lead to policy-led transformations that represented the demand and will of communities, while Network, 07: Germany also makes clear the interconnections between these domains:

*“I think the movement must be carried by [...] a grassroots movement. [...] But on the other hand, it's the political change that is needed, and at the moment the politics is more on the side of the big scale farms, of the industry, and everything leads, the decisions lead into this”* (Network, 07: Germany)

**Table 5. Interviewees' framings of how change should be realised.**

How to realise the Transformation Vision (the 'how')	Core Idea of Change	Interviewees who suggested this process
<b>Practice-led transformation</b>	Change occurs through new farming practices and local food systems emerging on the ground	NGO, 16: France; NGO, 05: Netherlands; NGO, 15: Poland; Company, 05: Hungary; NGO, 09: UK; Company, 02: Poland
<b>Policy-led transformation</b>	Governments and institutions must reshape incentives, regulations, and food system governance	NGO, 13: Poland; Network, 08: France; NGO, 01: Germany

<b>Cultural transformation</b>	Transformation requires shifts in values, awareness, and societal narratives around food	NGO, 18: Hungary; NGO, 08: France; Network, 01: Slovakia; NGO, 20: Slovakia
<b>Economic transformation</b>	The underlying economic system of agriculture must change (e.g. markets, value chains, growth logic)	Network, 04: Slovakia; NGO, 10: Ireland; Lobby Group, 01: UK; Company, 01: Poland
<b>Network / grassroots transformation</b>	Change emerges through civil society networks and bottom-up collaboration.	NGO, 02: Romania; NGO, 13: Poland; NGO, 03: Ireland; NGO, 06: Ireland; Network, 10: Netherlands; NGO, 16: France

Interestingly, there was some pattern in what interviewees thought most important for realising change that was based on where they were working. The preferred orientation of interviewees were as follows:

- Structural transformation was discussed most by NGOs and civil society stakeholders;
- Economic critiques and the need for economic systems transformations were advanced by those with affiliations to policy-making and research;
- Ecological justifications and foregrounding were made out by farmers and agroecology practitioners
- Cultural and education points most by NGOs, researchers and farmers/practitioners
- Incremental, cautious or 'realist' positions were forwarded by policy-oriented actors and farmers

## 4.2 Societal responses to transformative change visions

We made a concerted effort to understand the societal response and reception to our interviewee's work and visions for change, so that we could better understand how sometimes seemingly progressive, niche actors in this space were faring and forging their outreach and futures.

A significant number of interviewees thought that there was generally increased and increasing awareness of the need for change and sustainability (n=13). However, despite the increased name-recognition of food sustainability issues, a number of concerns were raised around fragmented understanding, where generally problems were not understood by broader society in relation to each other, systemically, but seen in isolation. So there was a tension between people identifying that there is "something wrong", but interviewees identifying that generally people do not think in terms of interconnection, or understand "the system", and so their societies cannot be said to be 'on board' with the extent of deep changes that are required to ameliorate the conditions and unfairnesses at the heart of our contemporary food systems. For example,

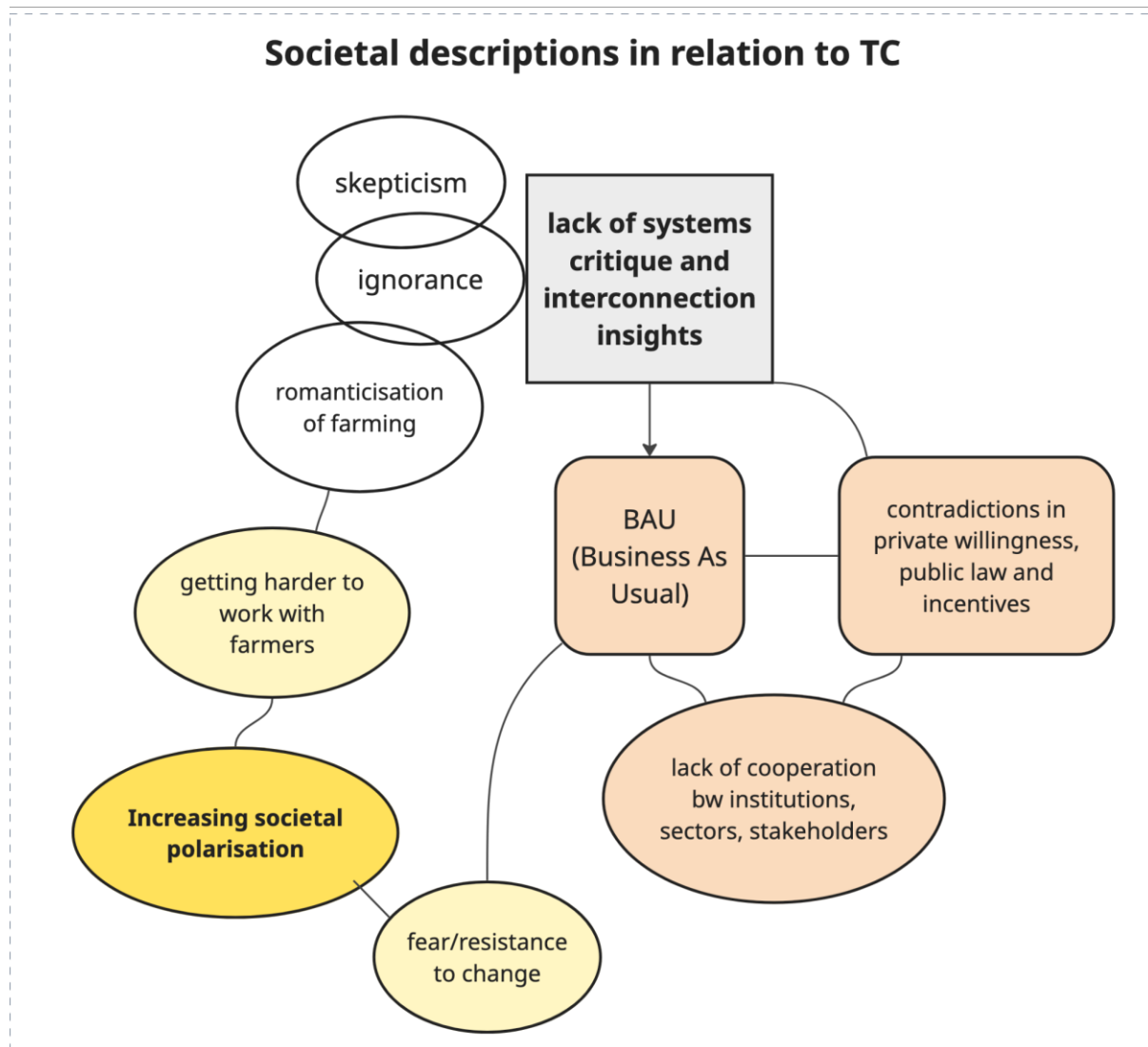
*“A majority of the population understands that there are problems linked to pesticides and intensive production models... However, a significant proportion of the population does not necessarily connect all of these issues together” (Network, 09: France).*

The increased awareness was often linked to the younger generation:

*“It's mainly the younger generation, who are constantly connected to all their digital devices and read a lot... I think that awareness is growing overall... But maybe it's more on a small scale. It's not on a national level” (Network, 01: Slovakia).*

This lack of systems' interconnections awareness at societal levels leads to identified practical issues and processes, such as ongoing contradictory and divergent public policy-incentives that undermine the agro-ecological transition and the efforts/work of several interviewees. This leads to the status quo, 'business-as-usual' way of doing things, which includes a lack of alignment and cooperation across institutions and their goals, as well as contradictions in public law and (policy and economic) incentives. We have tried to represent these described societal features and their interrelations in Figure 2.

A further substantial element to societal reflections concerned the issue of growing societal polarisations. Such polarisations were perceived to either: (1) make other issues more pressing and prevalent, thus decreasing the public debate and perceived primacy of sustainability concerns; or (2) increase the divisions and distances between stakeholders. The features and sources of polarisation were myriad across the 12 interviews that noted this: Interviewees characterise polarisation in the agricultural transition debate as multifaceted, encompassing cultural divides between farmers and environmental actors, epistemic conflicts over what counts as valid knowledge, and political dynamics in which sustainability narratives are strategically mobilised within broader ideological struggles. The societal divides that such polarisation represents means that it is difficult to get stakeholders to work together, as there is difficulty communicating and speaking to one another, let alone being on the same page in terms of shared visions and desired actions.



**Figure 2.** Interviewees' descriptions of their societies' responses to ideas around transformative change and the need for it.

### 4.3 Variation in responses to transformative change across Europe

Our interview thread posed a series of targeted questions in relation to different experiences and perceptions across east/west Europe, as well as societal variation generally. A number of common categories arose from these questions, including the role of history in shaping identity and perceptions around the need and forms of change, where differences between east and west remain by virtue of this history and corresponding structural economic and political legacies. There was also the perception amongst some interviewees in Eastern Europe that Western Europe was generally civically stronger, with more cohesive grassroots and bottom-up organisation or collective action. These points are explored in further detail below.

### 4.3.1 The role of history

History has a significant role in shaping and helping to explain agricultural governance, attitudes and trajectories, and was often used as an explicatory factor for why things are the way they are today. Relevant reflections from history include post-communist transitions, regional economic and development histories, and land reforms generally. From within our dataset, Eastern European countries were often suggested to be similar to each other by interviewees based in the region (though this might be a result of bias in how the questions were posed around shared histories and post-socialist legacies) in a way that was not present amongst the reflections of Western European interviewees. A few examples of this phenomenon are given below:

*“There is a lack of such [collective action] movements in Eastern Europe, mainly because of communism... everyone owns everything but doesn't want to share anything... We learned the mechanisms from the French, but we have to adapt them to the Eastern European context”* (NGO, 02: Romania)

*“Elsewhere history has not fragmented economies [as they have here], and there are more motivating tax and regulatory environments... EU legislation provides a framework, and then applies it after local consultation, where the goal is to let farmers survive, (unlike here in Hungary)”* (NGO, 11: Hungary)

*“In France it is much more socially accepted [...] most of the agricultural land... belongs to the aristocracy... they own the land as their kind of generational heritage... So there's also a very different cultural understanding around that, which also has a different historical background”* (NGO, 12: Germany)

The continued legacy of a pre-1991 divided Europe continues to shape understandings of why there are continuing structural economic differences between East and West, which is particularly stark in the agricultural sector because of differences in financial support amounts disbursed to farmers country-to-country, and the value differences in land and assets associated with the sector between East and West. These have ramifications in the perceived capacity of farmers to participate in the common European market, where higher levels of support to the West despite increasingly similar input costs and difficulties means that the sector remains skewed.

*“The average inheritance in west Germany is more than 250,000 euro... in eastern Germany... around 20,000 euro... that speaks to a great failure that happened when those two countries were united”* (TK, Germany)

*“Our farmers have about 30% less income compared to the Western because of policy”* (NGO, 19: Romania)

*“We are aware that the social position of farmers is completely different in France than in Poland”* (NGO, 15: Poland)

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*“When you compare subsidies or financial instruments, Western farmers are in a much stronger position... we are competing in the same market but not with the same conditions” (Network, 01: Slovakia)*

### 4.3.2 Similarities and differences within Europe

There was some prevalence in the dataset that Western Europe was institutionally and civically “stronger” amongst Eastern European interviewees, pointing to an East-West perception gap, and with France especially held up as a model example of strong land laws and customs by both Western and Eastern European interviewees. These are well-represented by the following examples:

*“Perhaps in the West, they function as stronger bottom-up organizations... they have greater leverage... whereas in the West they see a good idea and they have no problem debating and accepting it relatively quickly... we are very slow in this respect” (Network, 01: Slovakia)*

*“We hear that in France there is much more Community Supported Agriculture... the social position of farmers is completely different, and even the cultural approach to food is different than in Poland” (NGO, 15: Poland)*

*“There are more farmers' markets abroad... it is easier to appear and sell locally...” (Company, 05: Hungary)*

There were a number of institutional and cultural barriers that were discussed from within the Eastern European region. This might have arisen only in Eastern European interviews as a result of the targeted questions in the interview thread that focused on their experiences. The self-societal reflections included societal-institutional fragmentation, regulatory confusion and high levels of bureaucracy, and a general distrust of institutions in the East (which requires some further exploration as a number of interviewees also emphasised the extent to which EE was ‘top-down’ in terms of preferred authority arrangements). A few examples of these views include:

*“When you want to push something through, it takes a very long time... you go to a meeting with one CEO and two weeks later there’s a new one... this instability at the political level... this is how it works in Central and Eastern Europe” (Network, 01: Slovakia)*

*“Another issue I think is the bureaucracy out here... they are not doing so much with anyone on the ground... it’s all about the paper” (NGO, 19: Romania)*

A number of our interviewees also recognised and emphasised the shared goals, issues, approaches, and needs of stakeholders involved in sustainable agricultural work across Europe, disagreeing with our question as to whether they perceived meaningful or consequential differences in how agricultural sustainability was approached differently between East and West Europe. This view was made through an emphasis on the shared difficulties and needs experienced by farmers regardless of where they were:

*“We have different problems... starting with the weather, but also with regulations... problems are there, they are different, but they are also the same” (Company, 03: Poland)*

*“Farmers everywhere struggle to make a living from farming alone... this is why many look for other income sources” (NGO, 19: Romania)*

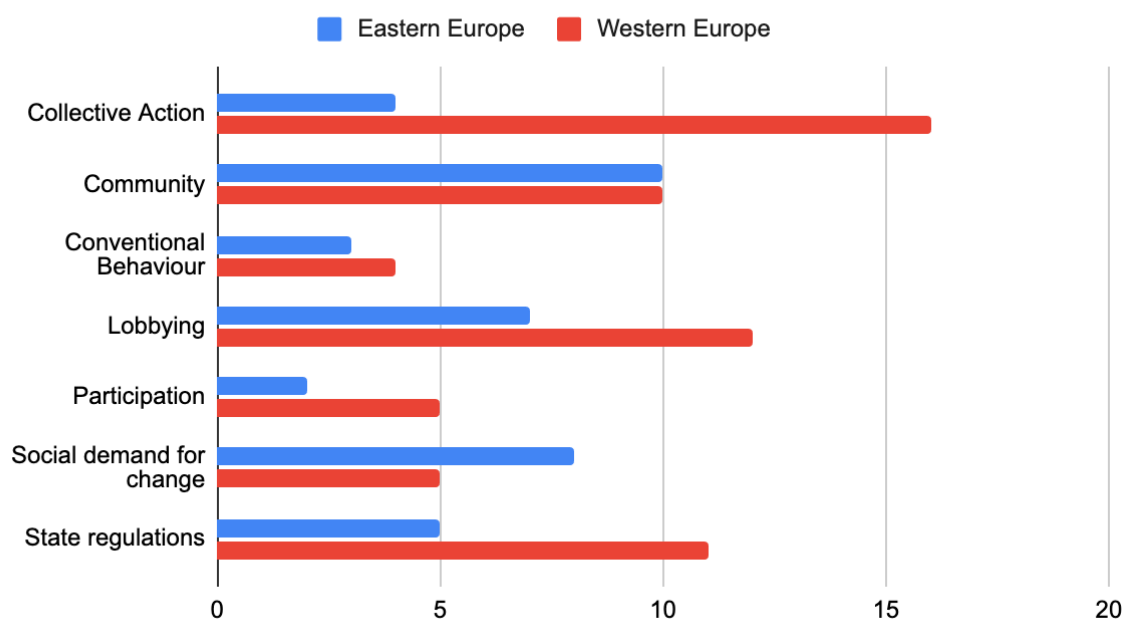
*“Farmers are always the weakest actors in the chain... they have to adapt to what the market demands” (Network, 08: France)*

## 5. Concept reflections

In the following section we examine four of the seven concepts selected and explored by interviewees as most important to their work and visions for transformative change: State Rules and Regulations, Lobbying/Advocacy, Community, and Collective Action.

We present this subselection because they displayed the greatest variation in how they were defined, discussed and argued to be relevant to sustainability initiatives across Europe, and were among the highest ranking concepts in terms of what interviewees deemed to be important for change (see Figure 3). Due to time and capacity constraints the results of the remaining three concepts will be reported on in later deliverables. By identifying and analysing how these four concepts were discussed across our sample, we aim to highlight how agricultural sustainability initiatives operate from distinct ‘starting points’, shaped by their institutional contexts, historical experiences, and prior attempts to make change.

### Concept choice across Eastern Europe and Western Europe



**Figure 3.** Concept choice by number across Europe.

## 5.1 Concepts 3 and 7: State Rules and Regulations, and Lobbying/Advocacy

The concept 'State Rules and Regulations' referred to the relative importance of a clear and predictable state framework in driving changes towards sustainability. Across the dataset, interviewees understood the concept to refer to state institutions with the power to propose laws and regulations and sanction non-conformers, and highlighted the relevance and reach of not only national governments but also EU institutions, regional and local authorities when asked which levels of the state were important to their initiative. This multi-level governance framing reflects the structure of agricultural laws and incentives in Europe, where policy is largely established at the EU level and subsequently implemented, translated and enforced through national, regional and local institutions:

*'all levels matter. Agriculture has a very local dimension, because these are activities that cannot be relocated, rooted as they are in specific territories. At the same time, the framework is largely defined at the national and European levels, and even internationally, with global trade rules'* (Company, 04: France).

The concept Lobbying/Advocacy referred to the ability of individuals and groups to lobby for and affect change, or lobby for maintaining the status quo. The majority of interviewees understood the concept as *'the other side of the coin'* to state rules and regulations (Network, 02: UK) in the sense it was an important mechanism to keep the state in check, demand new regulations or policy instruments, counter the destabilising effects of corporations interested in prioritising shareholder profit over sustainability goals. However, occasionally the concept was interpreted as also referring to more local, place-based efforts to garner support.

Across the sustainability initiatives, interviewees frequently invoked the need for 'common rules' to guide producers, consumers, and investors that were able to maintain their independence from corporate lobbying efforts. There was significant variation around why this was important, based largely according to the different concerns of individual sustainability initiatives. For example, farmer membership organisations' primary justification for the need for state refereed standards was the need for *'fairer market organisation'* to prevent farmers from *'being forced to sell under production costs'* to remain competitive (NGO, 01: Germany), while an NGO working to organise and direct supply chain finance in farmland conservation highlighted the importance of common voluntary and legally-binding regulatory frameworks in motivating private sector investment: *'regulatory requirements for GHG protocols and the TNFD, those things are very powerful motivators for those businesses'* (NGO, 09: UK). Despite these differing rationales, for all interviewees the key criteria for making these common rules effective was that they should be predictable and stable to enable long-term planning and provide a sense of security. Frequent policy changes were seen as undermining confidence and making it more difficult for initiatives to plan or advocate for change.

However, despite broad agreement with the idea of stable common rules and regulations, interviewees diverged significantly over the state's role in creating and enforcing standards. Interviewees' understandings of the acceptable place and authority of the state speak to their different 'theories of change' for realising sustainability work in European agriculture

(outlined in Section 4), past experiences of whether the state can act as a reliable partner, and the challenges of effectively engaging with state apparatuses in contexts perceived as having weak traditions of civic participation, low levels of transparency and/or predictability, and dwindling institutional trust.

Two notable variations stand out from the dataset: i) interviewees' preferences for how policy should be set, and ii) the extent to which the state is perceived as a reliable and legitimate partner in change.

### **i) preferences around origins for policy**

Interviewees described a spectrum of views regarding the 'right' balance between state-led and more decentralised approaches to governing changes towards sustainability.

For one French interviewee top-down policy was acceptable as the magnitude of the change required meant that the state was *'the only actor that combines both legitimacy and capacity'* to operate at the required scale and therefore *'should indeed be the most exemplary actor in addressing these issues'* (Network, 09: France). By contrast, one interviewee in Slovakia (NGO, 04: Slovakia) expressed wariness of state overreach and questioned where responsibility ought to lie for dictating and directing behaviour change:

*'When it comes to these issues, my inner convictions clash with the level of work we need to do, and a solid legislative framework with some enforceability is certainly a useful thing. But I'm a little afraid that we are actually raising a population... I probably believe more in societies where not everything has to be commanded and prohibited, where people have some basic discernment about what is right.'*

Most interviewees, however, occupied a position between these two poles. While they recognised that the speed and scale of change required made some degree of state involvement and priority setting unavoidable, they emphasised the importance of linking policy decision-making more closely to the grounded realities of farmers and sustainability actors to redress 'out of touch' regulations that oversimplify the complex day-to-day needs of practitioners (e.g. NGO, 01: Germany; NGO, 19: Romania; Company, 02: Poland; NGO, 09: UK; Network, 08: France). As one Polish interviewee put it:

*'I believe that farmers and agricultural organisations should be the main drivers of agricultural law... My idea is that it should start with grassroots initiatives, not top-down initiatives. The path [should be] as follows: farmers, agricultural organisations, the ministry of the country concerned, and therefore the government of the country concerned, and only then, at the national level, discussion among Member States and EU directives. Of course, at the moment, my observation is that it is exactly the opposite, i.e. discussions take place at the level of EU specialists, and then the whole ladder, everything goes down. And farmers, i.e. the main stakeholders, those who are mainly affected, so to speak, are the last to be included in the process.'*  
(Company, 02: Poland)

### **ii) whether the state is a reliable partner**

Interviewees' perceptions of the state's social acceptability, trustworthiness and capacity to direct sustainability transitions varied considerably across the dataset.

The importance of working in close proximity to (or with the support of) the state was most frequently emphasised by NGOs, campaign groups and membership organisations based in Germany, France, Ireland, the UK and Poland. For many interviewees in this group, the rationale for working with the state was primarily pragmatic: securing state support was perceived as necessary to scale initiatives and address larger structural challenges that could not be addressed by single organisations alone. As one Irish interviewee explained: *'we could, you and me, come up with the best idea [...] But if we have no buy in from the state, we have nothing. We just have an idea'* (NGO, 10: Ireland).

Importantly, these "pragmatic" arguments were simultaneously underpinned by a broader confidence in the state's ability and willingness to act in the public interest, combined with trust in the capacity of independent legal systems to hold institutions accountable if they diverged from commonly agreed goals:

*'we need all the actors on the different levels of state and also civil society, economy, that all the people accept the agreed rules in which we work together. And now we see they don't. And this is the reason why we have to use more and more legal instruments to bring them back to the way they agreed'* (NGO, 07: Germany)

This institutional trust was particularly pronounced among French interviewees. All 5 described the continuing importance of a 'Jacobin tradition' to their initiatives, whereby the state is broadly expected to guide and resource societal change and is perceived as having the legitimacy and capability to do so. For example:

*'we're quite Jacobin, so we tend to answer, yes, of course the state can and must do things ... [in France] there are high expectations of the state. In fact, when asked who should take priority, the state usually comes first. So there is clearly an expectation that the state should do something, but that it should do so intelligently'* (Company, 04: France)

Despite this relatively high institutional trust and expectation, one concern consistently raised by this group was the perceived outsized and destabilising influence of lobby groups representing industrial farming (e.g Network, 08: Germany; Network, 05: UK; NGO, 07: Germany). Interviewees described these lobbyists as exerting significant pressure on politicians in both national and European parliaments, leading to policies that shift frequently, unpredictably and unfairly.

*'You know, the resources they have, it's just absolutely huge ... You know, at some points, it's been hard to feel that it's not kind of like, just obvious corruption.'* (Network, 05: UK)

Importantly, these concerns did not translate into a rejection of the state as an important partner in sustainability transitions. Rather, interviewees tended to frame their challenge as

one of restoring the state's capacity to act in the public interest through stronger regulatory frameworks and institutional safeguards.

*'in Germany, state secretaries are now chief secretaries or members of boards in big industries, and that means for politicians who should be independent, there seems to be an offer: if you are ever not re-elected because your political practise is oriented to our interests, then if you are not re-elected, you will find a new position in our lines for sure ... And so I think we really have to get back to the conventions and rules we had and independence should be a more valued issue in lobby work.'* (Network, 08: Germany)

Representatives of businesses and NGOs based in the UK, Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia demonstrated significantly more scepticism towards state-led governance of sustainability transitions. Several interviewees pushed back strongly on the concept arguing that engagement with the state was futile due to low institutional capacities, unnecessary bureaucracy and the influence of powerful corporate lobbyists arguing for the status quo. For example, one farmer in Poland noted:

*'I no longer believe in legislation, because recent events have proven that by creating some kind of legal framework while simultaneously opening the door [for people to circumvent it], we will achieve nothing. It is simply deceiving the public...'* (Company, 01: Poland)

*'One professional lobbyist can do more than 1,000 people who lobby socially. The power of corporations and politicians - which, according to the encyclopedia, can be defined as organised crime - has a stronger influence than social lobbying. So I no longer believe in social lobbying.'* (Company, 01: Poland)

While an NGO in Romania argued the concept should be excluded based on his prior experience of trying to work with state institutions to enable conditions to allow Romanian farmers to farm more sustainably: *"we tried to improve the laws, but then barely achieved anything. So I think these don't work. You can make very small advances, which then collapse, like the Green Deal"* (NGO, 02: Romania)

Most interviewees in this group did not disavow a role for state rules and regulations entirely, instead highlighting that stable laws and frameworks could, in principle, play an important role in establishing an enabling environment and providing financial support. However, previous experiences of inconsistent implementation, limited transparency, and poorly adapted regulation tempered their expectations of what governments were realistically able (or willing) to deliver. In the UK and Romania, interviewees described feeling that engagement and regulatory processes lacked transparency or clear rules, making it difficult to build trust in the practical role governments could play in enabling change:

*"it all ends up feeling like a big manipulation, that you've participated in something that is not on transparent terms or rules because the government is not open [...] it's*

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*our job to motivate these groups of farmers even if there is no clear or secure state framework and that's too hard" (NGO, 19: Romania)*

*"I became very sceptical about the role of government [...] I wouldn't touch any of them with a barge pole [...] I still believe in them providing policy and funding support but that should be given to entrepreneurs and community groups to go and get shit done" (Network, 02: UK)*

Interestingly, this disillusionment was particularly strong where smaller, ecologically-oriented farmers were expected to comply with administrative and reporting requirements designed with large-scale industrial farmers in mind. As one Slovak interviewee working closely with small-scale farmers put it:

*"I see it in the farmers, how terribly tired they are [...] it's understandable that we need regulation for everything, but then from my perspective, both work and professional, when I get up and go to eastern Slovakia, I go to central Slovakia and visit those small farmers, and I really see that a person who has a family, a farm, and needs to comply with essentially the same regulations as a cooperative with 200 employees, I understand that these people are giving up, and in my opinion, this is not the path to sustainability" (NGO, 20: Slovakia)*

## 5.2 Concepts 1 and 5: Collective Action and Community

As discussed in Section 3, interviewees often found it difficult to clearly distinguish between the concepts of community and collective action. In many cases, community was described as a precondition for collective action, making attempts to separate the two conceptually incoherent. For this reason, the following analysis considers these two concepts together in order to capture the full breadth of discussion and to explore more closely how interviewees understood their relationship in practice.

Across the dataset, the main difference in definitions between collective action and community was that 'community' was generally described loosely, referring to feelings of closeness, shared responsibility, and a common vision for change. Interviewees mobilised this concept to describe the strengthening of social bonds and mutual commitments to sustain collaboration over time. By contrast, collective action was more often associated with the act of scaling out to lever greater political change, irrespective of the depth of existing relationships between participants. For example, if collective action was possible at local group levels, then this could in turn lead to lobbying or political pressure for meaningful demands for representation. However, some interviewees describe collective action as a pre-condition to community – so bringing people to act together in the hope that a deeper sense of closeness and responsibility would follow – or the reverse, where community was the underlying web of relationships, and collective action as the next step for broadening/strengthening change. This heterogeneity in interpretation demonstrates how the two concepts were frequently treated as overlapping and mutually constitutive, with their meaning shaped by the particular focuses of the interviewed sustainability initiatives and contexts in which they operate.

Interviewees rationale for why fostering community and collective action were important to their work were twofold. First, several participants described a desire to foster greater connection amongst those who shared their vision of change, highlighting the importance of countering rural isolation and the power of the group to inspire confidence in acting on sustainability challenges and enable ideas to travel more quickly between practitioners and wider society.

*“Farmers and land workers are often very isolated, they’re the weirdo who’s using all these sustainable practices and none of their neighbours know what they’re up to. So I think that the community aspect is super important to our Members. And I think when we’re talking about land, like there’s a lot of strength in kind of community organising. And historically as well, I feel like communities coming together have been the biggest force of resistance”* (Network, 05: UK)

*“Community is relationships, that’s strength ... [it] also allows us to build greater awareness, which influences the direction we’re heading. I’m thinking here of people who share more or less the same goal, for example: we want high-quality food, that’s our goal. And we can pursue that goal from different angles, but this community is crucial, because then, when there’s community, there’s also pressure for various other solutions, political ones, and how lobbyists and entrepreneurs will view them, because they simply have to tailor the product to this group”* (NGO, 13: Poland)

Others expressed their desire for community and collective action through hardship and coping strategy narratives. In contexts where public or private support was perceived as insufficient or unreliable, building strong bonds of mutual aid was described as a practical strategy for sustaining initiatives and continuing their work.

*“what we’re seeing more and more is that we cannot rely on the government and we actually just need to start with the community, with philanthropists, with the people who are willing”* (Lobby Group, 01: UK)

*“I was a lobbyist as the president of a small agricultural association, we tried to improve the laws, but we barely achieved anything. So I think these don’t work. You can make very small advances which then collapse, like the Green Deal. And then what is left? The community”* (NGO, 02: Romania)

Across our dataset, fostering community and collective action was framed as desirable and constructive for advancing agricultural sustainability, and in some cases translating local struggles into broader political demands. Nevertheless, the reality of realising community and collective action was replete with challenges, and perceived/experienced by interviewees as both difficult and time-consuming. Below we outline the two most common constraints: i) practical and ii) socio-cultural.

### **i) Practical**

Businesses and farmer membership organisations in particular highlighted the difficulty of funding facilitation roles to sustain action over time, and emphasised the challenge of

balancing farmers' already demanding schedules with efforts to bring stakeholders together and strengthen community bonds.

*"I know I'm waxing lyrical about the power of community, but that peer-to-peer support in the absence of paid professionals to facilitate it has withered a lot. It has kind of petered out because people are just busy [...] I don't see it bursting back into life without someone's time paid to deliver that."* (Network, 02: UK)

A more common practical barrier to realising ideas around community and collective action in practice was the difficulty of bringing together and mediating between individuals with different (and sometimes competing) viewpoints, worldviews and preferences.

*"I think that in some of the places that we've done things there has been quite extreme disharmony in the local community, and that can stand in the way of collective action. But it hasn't been so much that people think that they want to go and do their thing alone [...] they want to be part of a collective, so that isn't the issue, it's just that sometimes there is tensions within communities."* (Network, 05: UK)

As the majority of interviewees ascribed to a networked, bottom-up theory of change (see Section 4), their accounts suggest that developing approaches to build consensus and the capacities to make collective decisions remains an ongoing and largely unresolved need.

## ii) Socio-cultural

Our dataset also highlighted how broader socio-cultural contexts shape the possibilities for and preferred terms of realising community and collective action. There was significant regional variation in how both concepts were discussed and mobilised. In particular, while interviewees in Western Europe described a pervasive sense of individualism as hampering their efforts to build and sustain deeper social ties, interviewees in Eastern Europe also reflected on how historical experiences with state socialism continue to influence societal attitudes towards cooperation, trust, and civic participation.

*"I believe that we can act in a community only and not in scattered groups but we still have the communist generation that doesn't want to work together and there is no trust between people."* (NGO, 19: Romania)

*"We are really out of practice with it. We are not a society that believes that our opinion matters, that it is valued, that it is taken into account."* (Company, 05: Hungary)

Notably, several interviewees identified a shift in these dynamics, suggesting a need to update common conceptions around the difficulties of working collectively in former state-socialist countries. Younger generations, in particular, were described as showing renewed interest in fostering community, cooperative models and collective mobilisation. Several interviewees reported adapting their strategies accordingly, in some cases focusing

collective efforts primarily on younger participants while recognising that the historical experiences of older generations may continue to shape their willingness to engage in such forms of collaboration.

*“Now that people are going abroad, their perspective has changed through exposure to other cultures in Italy, Germany, Britain, anywhere... in the Netherlands, in Scandinavia. And then they come back with a certain personal transformation and then they are the bearers, the potential bearers of change [...] Bolshevism kind of...pushed us all into the background. And in terms of social change, we have a very similar situation in Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia, it is precisely these people, whom I call the drivers of change, the movers and shakers, who, despite the circumstances, are moving towards a new paradigm” (Network, 04: Slovakia)*

*“In the environments we operate in, in Warsaw, and among the younger generation, there is some interest in cooperatives again, and I even know that there are various people who talk about a new wave of cooperatives and so on, and that this concept is coming back in a new light, so to speak, and with a new understanding. So that's okay, although yes, there are certainly some people who are a little cautious. Exactly, they are aware that operating in such a large democratic community and so on involves many challenges, because it requires time, patience, and sometimes compromises, and that it is not as simple as, for example, running a company, which is also not simple, but of course a cooperative has this additional layer of cooperation and democracy, and so on. And that is labor-intensive and time-consuming, but from my point of view, very valuable.” (NGO, 15: Poland)*

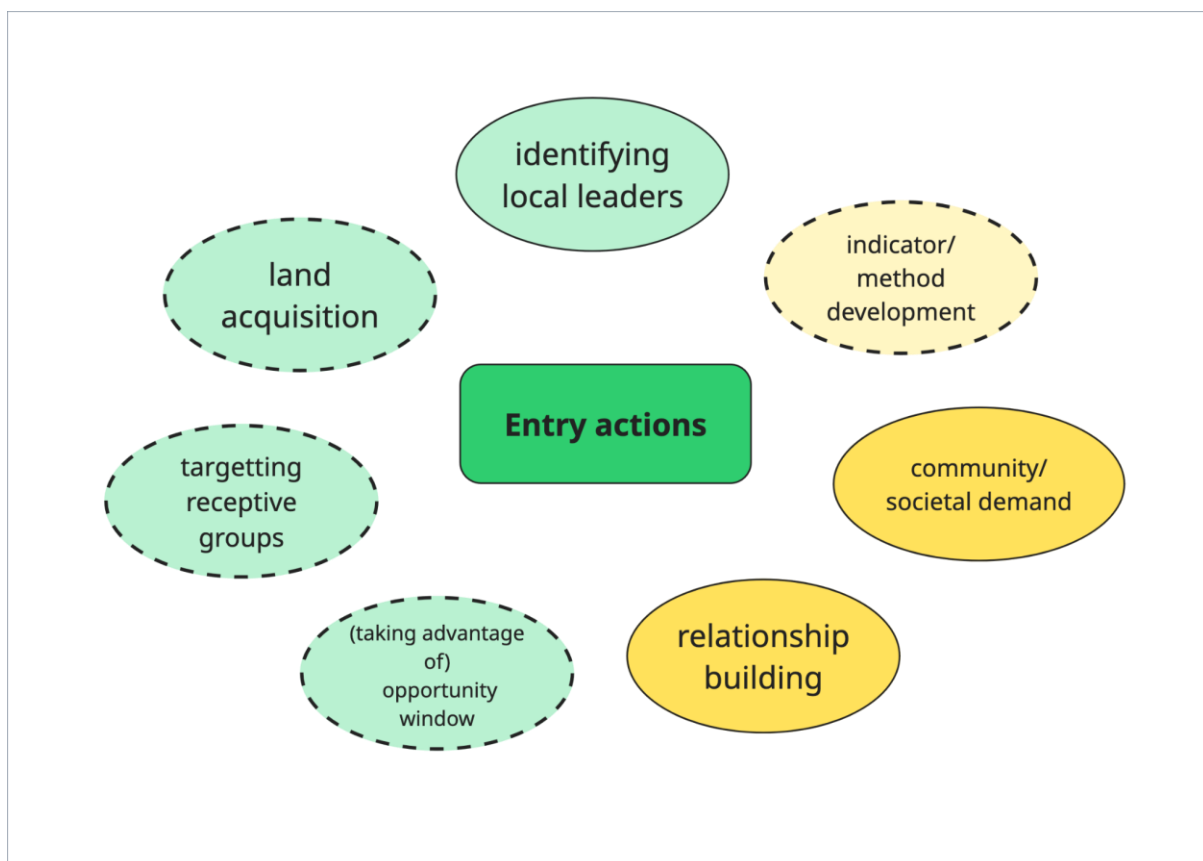
## 6. Inventory of actions

Following the methodology described in section 3.b., we analysed 83 identified actions in total, which through coding and triangulation were refined and merged where appropriate, resulting in the total of 55 actions (Entry n=7; Maintenance n = 41; Cascading n=9); (see Appendix D for the whole list). The reasoning behind merging some actions with others was twofold: first, significant thematic overlap with another action; ii) and marginal occurrence of the specific action across interviews. For example, the original action “lobbying for CAP reform,” which appeared in only one interview across the whole sample, was merged with the action “policy lobbying.”

### 6.1 Entry Actions

Entry actions refer to the activities that initiatives undertake at the start of their work, in order to enter the scene take the necessary first steps to becoming established and acknowledged. We also classified actions for the intent, in terms of what they wanted to achieve in relation to the existing system along a spectrum of reforming, relational, and resistance.

Interestingly, no entry actions were identified as resisting; they were either reforming or relational (see Figure 4). For example, buying land back for the local community that can take care of the land in an agro-ecological way, developing a new set of innovative indicators for agroecology assessments, emphasising different aspects of their topic that are more tangible (e.g., health of their children rather than nature) to spread their message towards receptive groups, and taking advantage of various opportunities to realise their vision of change through, e.g., available funding, newly established policy framework, are all reforming actions that embrace or propose an alternative way in the food-land sector. Relational actions from amongst the entry activities concerned an initial scoping process of identifying relevant local leaders working for deep sustainable change, who share the same vision of change and could be supported by the initiative (e.g., within bioregioning), leveraging an already existing societal/community's (e.g., farmers') demand for a new initiative or cluster to represent their interests, and relationship- building to provide space for relationship- and community- building, bringing like-minded people together that share the same vision necessary for an initiative to be established in the first place.

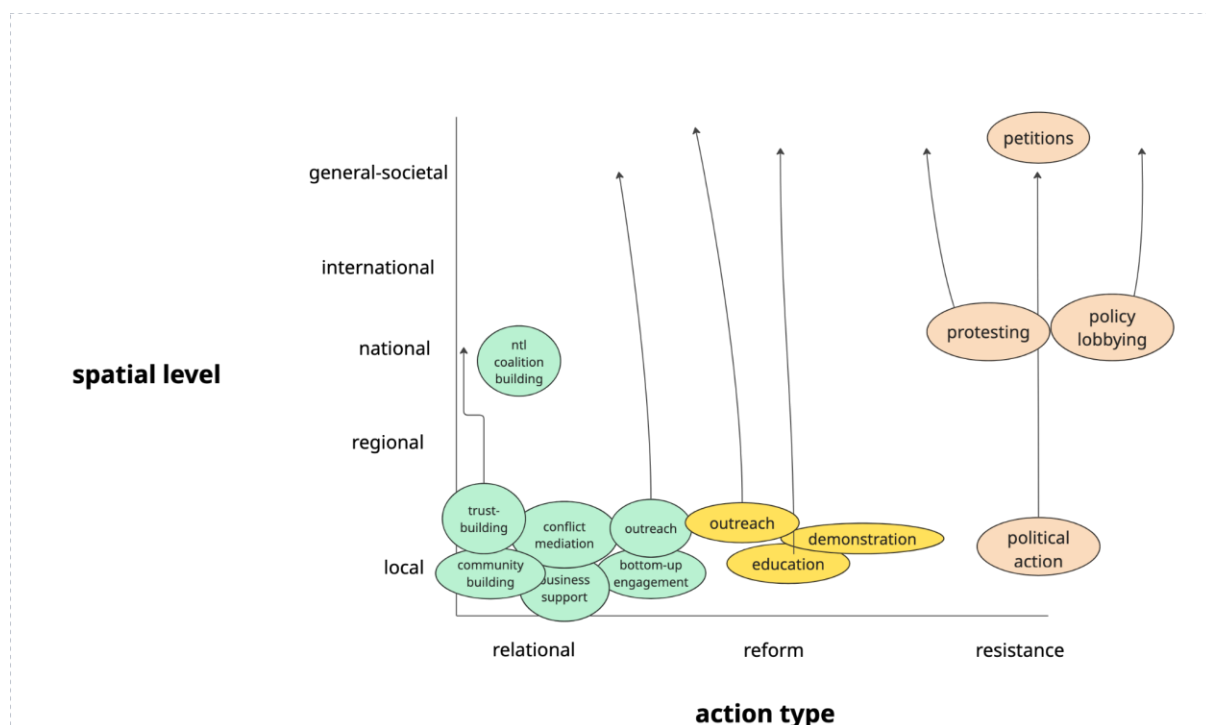


**Figure 4.** An example of entry actions undertaken in the earlier stages of establishment by sustainability initiatives. Code to boxes: yellow-coloured boxes are most widespread in sample in terms of numbers of times actions appeared amongst interviewees; bold line around actions correspond to 'relational' activity, while dotted lines are 'reforming'.

The depth/scale of these entry activities were mainly aimed at members, both already existing and potential new ones, with few instances of impact on wider society (e.g., societal demand and targeting receptive groups). This is reflected in the target audience (usually community and members) and the geographical/spatial level (local to regional). Nearly all of the entry actions targeted the operational level within the system, suggesting that an effective way to gain initial support and establish oneself in the transformative movement space is to start with concrete, practical steps. This is also supported by the fact that the entry actions fall on the relational and reforming side of the spectrum rather than the resisting side, where wider acceptability could be diminished by their confrontational (resisting) nature aimed at changing the status quo. As for the challenges related to these entry actions, interviewees encountered, for instance, greenwashing practices, insufficient funding that led to difficulties in setting up new projects even though significant societal demand was present, and member engagement that was problematic.

## 6.2 Maintenance actions

The majority of actions were categorised under the maintenance time phase, and referred to those activities that were ongoing and necessary for the initiative to be operational. The most frequently mentioned actions across the interviews in this context were (1) relational: concerning specifically bottom-up engagement along with community, relationships and trust- building, and (inter)national coalition building, where the latter overlapped with the cascading phase, as well as (2) reforming: demonstration (e.g., projects or farms), events, outreach, and policy lobbying (which could also be categorised as a resisting action).

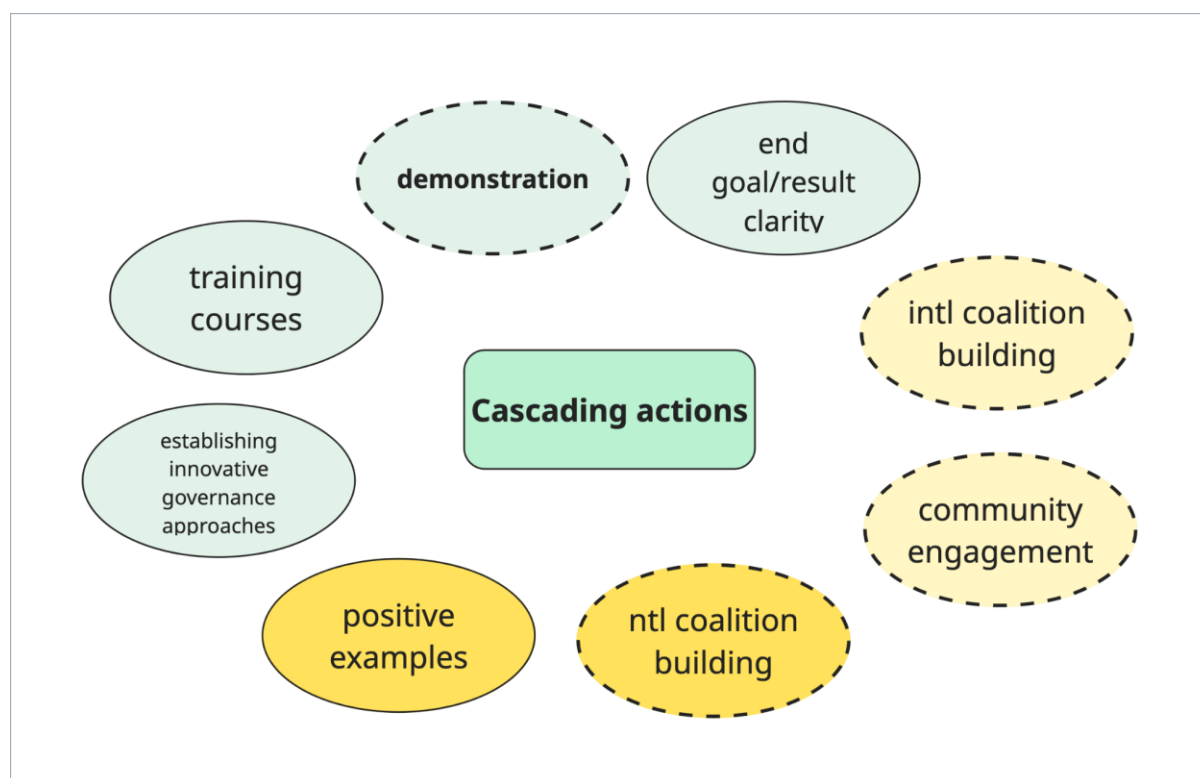


**Figure 5.** Most popular maintenance actions and their categorisation based on action type (relational, reforming, or resisting) and their targeted spatial/geographical level.

The intended depth/scale of these actions primarily related to the initiatives' members, but was also perceived as scalable to wider society, which many initiatives aspired to reach. This was reflected at the spatial level and target audience of the actions (local to societal, individual to systemic). Apart from actions that primarily targeted the operational system level, a few actions were identified that aimed to influence the narrative around sustainability and transformation-related topics. For example, bringing people together based on a shared cause (e.g., polluted water threatening people's health), or communicating and demonstrating best practices and undertaking public education, which then have the potential to lead to a mindset shift. Other examples included the ways in which some initiatives deliberately tried to undertake their work, adopting new ways of working. An example here is of engaging with people/members with a hopeful rather than fearful tone, or emphasising that, e.g., sustainable food systems are more resilient (strengthening the discourse around food security), which provides a more positive and potentially convincing and popular narrative around promoting agroecological farming practices than public health or environmental-decline- evidenced arguments.

### 6.3 Cascading actions

Cascading actions were defined as activities that initiatives undertook in stages after their establishment, usually to try new activities to scale and spread their efforts to realise change. These activities could not be as clearly categorised or delineated as entry actions. Only a few actions were assessed as temporally cascading; a few examples included demonstrating positive examples, establishing innovative governance approaches, and providing training courses. These actions were possible for the initiatives only after they had been operational for some time and already had the necessary resources, know-how, relationships, expertise, track record, and capacity to cascade their efforts further. This is reflected in the assessed depth/scale of these actions - most of them aimed at promoting their efforts either within their current membership or scaling them toward wider society. A few types of actions, however, were perceived as both an ongoing action to maintain their operations as well as intended to expand their influence and outreach, such as international and national coalition building or local community engagement. Demonstrating (and developing) 'best practices' was established as a crucial activity across all time phases and initiatives (see Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** A selection of cascading actions undertaken by sustainability initiatives. Key to figure: yellow boxes correspond to most abundant actions in sample; unbroken circles correspond to reforming actions, dotted lines to relational, where bold text (in relation to 'demonstration') signifies that this action was prominent across entry, maintenance and cascading phases of the work of sustainability initiatives.

Similar to entry actions, most cascading actions were also relational and reforming, with no identified resisting actions within this time phase. There is a big emphasis on relational actions in terms of building coalitions to scale up their representation and impact, draw inspiration to take their efforts further, while also engaging with local communities, which is essential for the continued support of locally active initiatives and potential deepening of their efforts and activities within a certain community. Some interviewees noted that these relational actions can be challenging, especially in large coalitions, leading to confusing messaging when visions are not clearly aligned, inter-coalition conflicts, and, in some cases, the need to manage problematic partners. Again, most of the identified cascading actions targeted the operational systems level, covering a wide range from local to national spatial levels and individual to societal/systemic audience levels.

## 7. Sustainability initiatives' unmet needs

Based on our analyses, our interviewees' unmet needs could be categorised along three broad domains: i) those that seek input and support towards the material transformation of food systems; ii) those that identified structural changes as necessary for the transformation of the farming and food sectors; and iii) those that required and desired cultural and social

transformations. These broadly map on to the practices, structures and views ‘needs’ of transformative change identified by IPBES’ Transformative Change Assessment (2024).

**i) Unmet needs for the material transformation of agriculture** focuses on a suite of quite practical strategies and requirements to achieve change, and are associated with how food is produced and distributed, rather than with explicitly political or cultural dimensions of these changes. The primary stakeholders that spoke about these were usually practitioners within agriculture/farming, so in farm management or vegetable box organisation-type schemes, and organised education and awareness-raising activities associated with these farms.

The range of listed unmet needs and welcome support to initiatives that fall into this category include:

- Value chain reconfiguration, especially in terms of relocalising and making these shorter, closer to producers
- Farmer control and participation in value chains
- Financial support for farm-level transitions, where governments and their incentives have a clear role to play
- Access to land
- Knowledge and skills for regenerative practices
- Reduced dependence on fossil-fuel-based agriculture

As evident from this list, many of these requirements were expressed in general, sometimes sweeping, ways, where there are clear cultural, social and political elements that must undergird change towards “agro-ecology” or “regeneration”, even if the specifics of these transitions were not made out by the interviewee.

**ii) the need for support to structurally and culturally transform agriculture** were predominantly expounded by civil society and NGO actors, where cultural change, public awareness and collective mobilisation were key requirements. To achieve these, support and interventions were identified through needs around:

- Values change that resulted in fairer economic conditions and prices for farmers, which was often cited as the outcome of - (next point)
- a drastic societal values change towards food, environment relations, and farmers, which included thinking of food as a right (rather than as a commodity, in a rush to the bottom in terms of monetary value), enabling farmers’ empowerment in the food prosecution system and societally,
- Education and awareness-raising
- The need for networks and stakeholder collaboration, relationship and trust-building, especially around strengthening civil society networks and their connections to farms/farming
- To improve the social status and viability of farming

**iii) Policy and governance transformations** formed the third category of identified ‘needs’ domain, wherein interviewees emphasised policy reform and institutional change, be this through policy changes, regulatory changes, or institutional reform. These are necessary for “deep” rather than temporary, or incremental, changes.

- Reform of formal agricultural policy networks through government action and legislation; policy mandates for ecological forms of farming
- Institutional support, for example through institutional backing, farmer access to information, and supportive policy instruments
- Governance frameworks that better support local food systems

## 8. Conclusions and next steps to D2.4

This report analyses 36 interviews with sustainability leaders and practitioners from across 9 EU countries. Building on our earlier FCM work, we were interested in validating the relevance and experiences around seven core change-related concepts in the work, philosophies and experiences of our interviewees. We found that interviewees were largely aligned around the need for deep, systems-level ‘transformative’ change, where most views justified this need in terms of contemporary systems failure and critique around the negative socio-economic and ecological consequences of current agricultural practices. Interviewees expressed a strong preference for embedded and networked ‘ways of working’, where higher policy and governmental levels reflect the realities, demands and experiences of those undertaking the work of food production, to be achieved through strengthening farmers’ empowerment and representation in the food system.

There was substantial variation in our dataset for how interviewees’ preferred change to happen, that was related to the type of organisation or institution within which they worked, and where they were, in terms of their societal context. Some of the most significant shared issues that prevented TC visions from progressing related to the increased polarisation of our times; the lack of recognition or insight into the interconnections between issues (agricultural-economic-cultural values, for example), and so the maintenance of a ‘business-as-usual’. For these reasons, future demands and unmet needs of most initiatives focused around cultural and structural transformation of the agricultural sector in the form of awareness- and education, training programmes for achieving these, coupled with policy and governance frameworks supportive of these shifts.

In terms of verifying the relevance and experiences with our seven initial core concepts related to change processes, this report documented reflections around the four most popularly chosen: collective action, community, state regulations, and lobbying/advocacy. Acknowledging some limitations to the spread and coverage of these concepts from within our sample, we found that the role of the state was still looked to as a necessary provider of frameworks and common rules. However, it is also experiencing a reorientation in whether it was seen as a dependable, stable partner capable of not only representing farmers’ interests, but able to act as a partner in times of increased mistrust in formal institutions. Interviewees’ understandings of the acceptable place and authority of the state speak to their different ‘theories of change’ for realising sustainability work, past experiences of whether the state can act as a reliable partner, and the challenges of effectively engaging with state apparatuses in contexts perceived as having weak traditions of civic participation, low levels of transparency and/or predictability, and dwindling institutional trust.

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In relation to collective action and community, fostering community and collective action was framed as desirable and constructive for advancing agricultural sustainability, and in some cases translating local struggles into broader political demands. These activities came replete with shared challenges around bringing people together, how to align and prioritise around goals, how to keep memberships engaged, and so on. An emphasis of our work, reflected in our interviewing sample and design, has been around better understanding the persistent differences in experiences between East and West Europe when it comes to undertaking the work of sustainability in the farming sector. While there were features to experiences and debate that were unique to East Europe in particular (especially around the continued forms and impacts of historical legacies on current societal mindsets), there was also optimism from this sample around the potential of younger generation to engage in ways and work that was deemed as having high potential for transformative change - namely, the willingness and increased openness of younger people in post-socialist societies for collective action and community.

For this deliverable, we have also compiled an exhaustive inventory of what has been undertaken by sustainability initiatives in different phases of their work (in their beginnings, ongoing/as maintenance, and when they seek to cascade and popularise their messages). At this stage from our analysis, we have tried to highlight both what these actions consist of (in terms of what 'assembles' them through the stakeholders involved and targeted, their practical and material needs, and institutional supports), and in our next phase of work, we intend to elaborate and translate the processes and supportive requirements of these actions so that actions, initiatives and ideas that have been evaluated as successful may be better fostered and strengthened.

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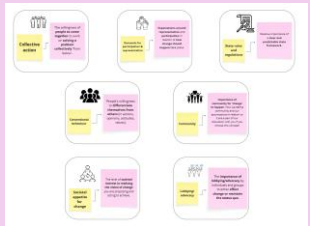
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## Appendices

### A. Final version of the interview guide

THEME	QUESTIONS	Notes
<b>Introduction</b>		
About their activity (broadly)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the focus of your organisation or network?</li> <li>2. What is your role?</li> </ol>	Questions to ease the respondents into the conversation
Visions/ imaginaries/ directions of desired change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Our project is based on the assumption that profound changes are necessary in the food and farming sectors to achieve sustainable and positive outcomes for both society and nature. What do you think about this assumption? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- [Why do you think this?]</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. What do you think needs to be a part of this 'profound change'? Can you give us an example?</li> <li>5. Are you working towards this in your own work/initiative? [How do you see your initiative in relation to your overarching vision of change?]</li> <li>6. How does the public debate look around this vision of profound change?</li> <li>7. How does it influence your work?</li> </ol>	Exploring the understanding of transformative change & their self-understanding as change-makers
Validating concepts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. In our previous research, we developed a list of ideas and concepts chosen by individuals working in the food/farming sector as important for achieving change. We would like to explore these further with you now. <p><i>[[Present interviewees with a list of concepts and ask them to rank their top 3 concepts that they feel are most relevant to realising the change they are trying to achieve.]]</i></p> </li> </ol>	<p>Present the concept list for ranking</p> <p>Unpack concepts in 2-3 questions to get more detail on what they mean and their experiences/ expectations in relation to it</p>

THEME	QUESTIONS	Notes
	<p>9. From the concepts that you didn't rank as most important/relevant are any of those irrelevant/not that relevant for your work?</p> <p><i>[[Interviewees chose 3 out of those 7, discuss the chosen concepts at length, following the concept interview guide]]</i></p>	<p>Visualized concepts and definitions in Miro</p> 
How does this compare with other national contexts in Europe?	<p>10. Do you work internationally /do you have insight into the regional/international workings of your network/company?</p> <p>11. Do you think you/your international colleagues (from Western/Eastern Europe) have different experiences in relation to the concepts we discussed today? Why? Can you give an example?</p> <p><i>[[If they talk about a specific person, ask to be put in touch. We'd like to ask them about their experience (for snowballing purposes)]]</i></p>	
<b>Conclusion</b>		
What to add	Would you like to add anything that you feel is important?	
<b>Recommendation for other respondents?</b>	Can you think of anyone relevant (actor/network/initiative) who could be interviewed on this topic?	

## B. Final List of Concepts from FCM work

Concept	Definition	Questions
<b>Community</b>	Importance of community for 'change' to happen. How we define community and our assumptions in relation to it are a part of our discussion with you if you choose this concept!	<p>Why have you selected 'community' as important to your initiative?</p> <p>Could you describe the features of this community? What does the term mean to you?</p> <p>From your experience, what is the general attitude of society (in your country) toward the word (or meaning of the word) "community"?</p> <p>Do you have views on/have you encountered issues with 'community' within your context?</p>

Concept	Definition	Questions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Why do you think it's contested?</li> <li>- What do you think is specifically triggering ("budít vášně"/ evoke strong feelings) about this word for people in your country?</li> </ul> <p>If difficult: what is difficult about it, how is it resisted or unpopular? Can you give us an example from your own work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does history have a role in this – if so, how can this be overcome/how do you navigate it?</li> </ul> <p>{Optional: In your experience, do you think it's more efficient to use a different narrative to avoid public backlash/resistance?}</p>
<b>Demands for participation &amp; representation</b>	<p>Expectations around representation and participation in relation to how change should happen/take place.</p>	<p>How is this concept important to your initiative/vision for change?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can you give an example from your own work?</li> </ul> <p>What is your experience in your country/in your initiative in relation to participation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are there expectations 'from below' or from your membership around how the initiative should be run?</li> <li>- How responsive is the initiative/company to requests for change/representation?</li> <li>- Do you think the extent to which these demands are present or absent are an issue?</li> <li>- When you are reaching out to new people or existing</li> </ul>

Concept	Definition	Questions
		<p>members, is it generally easy or hard to get people to engage, and why?</p>
<b>State rules and regulations</b>	<p>Relative importance of a clear and predictable state framework.</p>	<p>Why did you pick ‘state rules and regulations’ as a concept that is highly important for your initiative?</p> <p>What do you mean by the state? E.g your local gov, national gov, the EU? Do these different institutions matter to your initiative? If so, how? If not, why?</p> <p>Do you think that the state should be the prime leader in realising the vision/change?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For e.g., by proposing laws and regulations; state institutions with powers to sanction non-conformers.</li> <li>- Why? Can you give an example of how the absence or presence of a dependable state-led framework has affected your work?</li> </ul> <p>Do you think {insert country} society generally prefers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I) a strong state?</li> <li>II) A strong market/private sector?</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Please elaborate/explain for each</li> </ul>
<b>Societal appetite for change</b>	<p>The level of societal interest in realising the vision of change you are proposing and acting to achieve.</p>	<p>Why did you pick ‘societal appetite for change’ as a concept that is important for your initiative?</p> <p>Can you give us an example of how this comes through in your work?</p> <p>If supportive:</p>

Concept	Definition	Questions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do you go about enrolling more societal support? Do you have a strategy for this in your initiative?</li> <li>- What forms of work are people willing to do? E.g., attend events, get involved with promoting the initiative, provide an interview, etc etc.</li> <li>- What challenges do you face with this?</li> </ul> <p>If conservative vis a vis change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What exactly does society resist? And why?</li> <li>- How exactly does it impact your work/network?</li> <li>- Have you found any strategies that work to navigate this challenge?</li> </ul> <p>[If they mention active citizenship -&gt; unpack it some more: e.g., How does society in your country relate to active citizenship? What forms of active citizenship are people willing to engage in?]</p>
<b>Conventionality/Conventional behaviour</b>	People's willingness (or lack thereof) to differentiate themselves from others in actions, opinions, attitudes, values.	Why did you pick 'conventional behaviour' as a concept that is important to your initiative/work?  In what sense do people prefer to be conventional? Could you think of an example? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is this true for both individuals, groups and institutions? When and where do these preferences around conventionality matter?</li> <li>- How are expectations around conventionality - not wanting to stand out - communicated and enforced, do you think?</li> </ul>

Concept	Definition	Questions
		<p>How does this willingness (or lack thereof) to differentiate oneself influence your work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- [Do you find it helps or hinders the change you are trying to achieve?]</li> </ul> <p>What is the effect of this conventionality (or lack thereof) on society? What does it enhance/block?</p>
<b>Lobbying/advocacy</b>	The importance of lobbying and advocacy by individuals and groups to either effect change or maintain the status quo.	<p>Why is lobbying an important factor in your ability to realise change?</p> <p>Who lobbies for/against the work that you do? Can you give us some examples?</p> <p>What kind of structures/structural mechanisms allow them to lobby efficiently?</p> <p>How can this lobbying be strengthened/broken down in your experience?</p>
<b>Collective action</b>	The willingness of people to come together to work on solving a problem collectively, 'from below'	<p>What forms/types of collective action are prominent/evident in your work? Can you give us some examples?</p> <p>In your experience, are people willing to work together to realise (X goal)? Is it easy or difficult to get people to come together as a group? Why?</p> <p>If collective action is contentious/not popular, can you explain why this is?</p> <p>What do you think about societal expectations around being able to solve issues individually or independently versus collectively? How do they affect your work?</p>

Concept	Definition	Questions
		<p>In your experience, what kinds of evidence motivate people to act together most effectively?</p> <p>Do you see value in building coalitions with others? If so who, and why them? Who don't you see value in building coalitions with?</p>

### C. Interviewee roles/ways of working

Examples of different initiatives' prioritised roles and ways of working

#### Curator roles

- "We see ourselves as an entity that initiates things from the bottom up, brings experts together [...] if we don't push for it from below, nothing will ever happen. The officials won't come up with it themselves." (NGO, 04: Slovakia)
- "We are really taking action for living agriculture on all fronts. We work with many different stakeholders: farmers, of course, but also members [...] of upstream sectors, such as cooperatives or traders, [...] downstream sectors, i.e. players in the agri-food industry, right down to retailers, such as large retailers. It's really all these chains that are involved in creating this new model." [Network, 08: France]

#### Creating embedded, long-term relationships

- "We visit each farm an average of six times a year. It's a really very intensive coaching. ... We often receive call from the farmers when they start their tractors for instance, asking: 'Am I doing this right?'" – [NGO, 16: France]
- "Everybody says, you know, is this a three-year project and you're doing? No, we're here to stay." – [NGO, 03: Ireland]

#### Education and awareness-raising

- "we prepared various lesson plans and conducted workshops in vocational schools on setting up cooperatives and cooperativism [...] because we can see that cooperatives are a great response to many of the challenges we are talking about." [NGO, 15: Poland]
- "Once farmers realise that they are trapped in a system that is preying on them and that they don't know how to get out of it, they need support. They need support to take them by the hand and help them implement solutions on their farms [...] The pioneers fell flat on their faces 20 or 30 years ago. They made lots of mistakes. Today, we know how to do it." [NGO, 16: France]

#### Movement building

- “we are also very actively engaged in alliances with societal organisations, and that is in terms of advocate advocacy on cap” [NGO, 01: Germany]
- ‘We've had in the last few years a rise of the right, a horrible and nationalist ... and so they do events now on how we need to get sovereignty and looking at the programme, it looks like something we would do you know, the language we would use. And when you go in, it's like anti-immigrants and anti-climate and it's horrible. So we have to sort of approach this re-localization ... we really need to make sure it's about diversity, inclusion, openness and in solidarity.’ [NGO, 06: Ireland]

#### Evidence Gathering

- “There's no point in even going to any of these politicians or lobbies unless you have reams and reams of data. That's what we're doing. We're doing what we can while doing without before we actually need to get permission to do the big stuff.” [NGO, 10: Ireland]
- “That's why we have been always accepted because they (policymakers) have seen that we work with farmers and also now with the concrete actions or through farmers meetings or participating to the communities, all of these in the end they they can see it as an activities and they know then that we have also the knowledge and the experience to be able to get messages through in the policy development, because they know that we have all the information from the farmers. The only problem or challenge that we have is that we are not a national NGO. I mean we are working in other regions, but we are not national and this could be also sometimes a weakness.” [NGO, 19: Romania]

#### Policy advocacy

- ‘our main focus is on trying to change the political framework’ [NGO, 01: Germany]
- ‘we are a kind of watchdog organisation, in the sense that I am talking about a coalition that makes sure that the laws that are being drafted are still reasonable, so that they are not changed under the table somewhere.’ [NGO, 13: Poland]

**D. Actions Inventory**

original code name	ground edness	Action	Time phase (entry/maintenance/cascading)	Change depth or scale (local/membership/wider society)	Description & examples	Needs & challenges around actions	System level (operational/institutional/narrative)	Geographic level (local, regional, national, international, general-societal)	Target audience (individual to systemic)	Relational/resisting/reforming actions	Comments/notes
entry	47		entry								
entry: buy land	1	land acquisition	start of the process/initiative	membership	necessary first step is to buy land to give back to the community, which will take care of the land properly, in this case, in an agroecological way; also trying to buy land need large farms to create biodiversity rich zones (to counter the impact of monocultures)		operational	regional	community	reforming	

<p>entry: identifying local changemaker s</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>identifying changemakers</p>	<p>start of the process/initiative</p>	<p>local, membership</p>	<p>an initial scoping process of identifying relevant local changemakers that share the same vision of change and could be supported by the initiative (e.g., within bioregioning)</p>		<p>operational</p>	<p>local, regional</p>	<p>community, members</p>	<p>relational</p>	
<p>entry: own indicators, m&amp;e, fwork, quality expectation</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>indicator/met hod development</p>	<p>start of the process/initiative</p>	<p>membership</p>	<p>right after being established as an initiative, they developed a new set of indicators for agroecology assessment</p>	<p>facing challenges around greenwashing</p>	<p>operational</p>	<p>regional, national</p>	<p>members</p>	<p>reforming</p>	
<p>entry: reflection of community/s ocietal will demand</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>community/so cietal demand</p>	<p>start of the process/initiative</p>	<p>membership, wider society</p>	<p>there was an existing societal demand for the initiative to be established; both society as a whole and community demand (e.g., farmers); demand for an initiative/cluste r/new projects;</p>	<p>in one case, the initiative was hesitant to start a new project because of lack of funding (demand is not enough unless you got the money to start)</p>	<p>operational/narrati ve</p>	<p>from local to societal</p>	<p>members, community</p>	<p>relational</p>	

					demand for representation					
entry: relationship building	11	relationship building	entry + maintenance: initiative needs people at the start and then to keep the initiative/project going	membership	identifying people/community that is interested in the topic and taking them on board as a process that needs to be tackled at the beginning of initiative establishment; providing space for relationship and community building, bringing like-minded people together that share the same vision -> that inherently creates the initiative and makes it functional; very closely linked to coalition and trust building; a supportive community	open to include everyone, but very wary of potential greenwashing efforts	operational	local	members	relational

<p>entry: start poss due to money, framework</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>opportunity window</p>	<p>start of the process/initiative</p>	<p>membership</p>	<p>an opportunity window (e.g., available funding, newly established policy framework) that the initiative took advantage of for the purpose of formal establishment or new project initiation; taking advantage of the momentum at the EU level when different clusters were emerging; also taking advantage of the "fancy new concept bioeconomy", which was trending and enabled them to join the cluster scene</p>		<p>operational</p>	<p>local to national (depending on the initiative's scale)</p>	<p>members, community</p>	<p>reforming</p>	
<p>entry: target outreach to receptive groups</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>targetting receptive groups</p>	<p>start of the process/initiative</p>	<p>local to societal</p>	<p>focusing on receptive groups to spread their message; emphasizing different</p>		<p>operational/narrati ve</p>	<p>local to societal</p>	<p>individual to systemic</p>	<p>reforming</p>	

					aspects that are more tangible (e.g., health of their children rather than nature)						
<b>maintenance</b>	<b>342</b>		<b>maintenance</b>								
maintenance: administrative/legal support	2	legal consultancy	ongoing	local, membership	providing a legal support for members/other initiatives (e.g., mapping and analysing all relevant regulations to make sure a school can grow their own produce and serve them to students)	biggest challenge is to review the regulations and make sense of it; very time-consuming	operational	local	individual	reforming	

<p>maintenance: bottom-up engagement</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>bottom-up engagement</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>local, membership, wider society</p>	<p>providing a space/infrastructure to systematically support bottom-up efforts; belief that change comes from the bottom up; bottom-up efforts as effective in realizing change; leveraging people's experience to push for change (e.g., farmers' experience and know-how to create position papers); supporting other bottom-up initiatives, grassroots; bottom-up engagement as a necessary strategy to getting to know their farmers/members (having conversations with them about farming);</p> <p>being very mindful of who they engage with to avoid any potential conflict; a lot of community tensions (especially in land-related efforts); challenging to find a common cause a community/people could be engaged by; narrative around environmentalism and sustainability is co-opted, need another narrative</p>	<p>operational, narrative</p>	<p>local societal</p>	<p>to individual, community</p>	<p>relational</p>	
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					it enables a sense of collectiveness, which strengthens people's determination to realize change; engaging with the wider society to gain public's interest (e.g., informing consumers on food prices); setting up public protests to push for a bottom-up agenda; getting people together based on a shared cause (e.g., polluted water threatening people's health)					
maintenance: bringing new topics	1	bringing/developing new topics	ongoing	local, wider society	introducing new topics (e.g., natural cemetery) even when there is no demand (own initiative); developing a policy roadmap	operational, institutional	local societal	to individual, community	reforming	

					the initiative was pushing for for a long time (e.g., circular bioeconomy roadmap at the national level)						
maintenance: bringing together different SHs	5	bringing together different SHs	ongoing	membership	bringing together different stakeholders to talk to each other and collaborate (from different sectors, public/private, across the production chain,...); SHs with different perspectives, values; connecting e.g., farmers with policymakers scales the impact	HOW to bring together different SHs is challenging, especially if they are competitors	operational	local, regional	individual	relational	

<p>maintenance: business support</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>business support</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>membership</p>	<p>supporting business (e.g., farms) and/or members (e.g., farmers) in achieving their vision of change through training courses, providing advice, partnering with local suppliers/producers; but also receiving support (e.g., financial) from other sectors, companies; supporting cooperatives and start-ups; businesses/start creating a -ups/any type of portfolio of initiative needs projects for support investors to especially in the beginning</p>	<p>operational</p>	<p>local</p>	<p>individual, community</p>	<p>relational</p>	
<p>maintenance: citizen science</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>citizen science</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>membership, society</p>	<p>members themselves actively participating in e.g., data collection, to further their efforts; also engaging civil society</p>	<p>operational</p>	<p>local societal</p>	<p>to individual to systemic</p>	<p>reforming</p>	

					(establishing citizen science monitoring schemes)						
maintenance: combine financial support with relationship/trust building	6	securing funding	ongoing	membership	initiatives looking for various streams of funding for their activities and members (e.g., through relationship and trust building with different actors, sectors, public and private institutions) sometimes initiatives need to be pragmatic to find funding partners	operational	local	members	reforming		
maintenance: community building	11	community building	ongoing	local, membership, society	building and maintaining communities that are supportive of TC vision (e.g., local government, local farmers, civic initiatives etc.), sometimes even a necessary precondition for change to happen it is challenging to make any changes without a community (e.g., getting funds relies on consistency, which is provided by people who support that vision of change)	operational	local societal	to individual to systemic	relational		

					(collaboration across sectors and supply chains in establishing e.g., agroecological practices); festivals as effective tools for community building (people get together, engage in different activities - e.g., educational workshops); building school communities					
maintenance: conflict mediation	8	conflict mediation	ongoing	membership	initiatives working with people often frame themselves as facilitators/mediators when conflicts inherently arise among members or groups of people (e.g., farmers and community groups/environmentalists etc.); different people have different opinions, which is always challenging; nothing works perfectly all the time; wide polarisation within the farming sector already ("finger pointing generally doesn't help" - need for a lot of diplomacy); need for	operational	local, sectoral	individual, community, sector	relational	

					even across different organisations due to direct subsidy competitions (if they work for the same TC vision then they need to avoid these conflicts and work together, interventions are sometimes necessary); the goal is to agree on the fundamentals, other less important things do not need a clear consensus	deliberately non-ideological tone when mediating conflicts								
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<p>maintenance: context sensitive engagement</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>context sensitive engagement</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>local (community)</p>	<p>one initiative's strategy to connect environmental issues, which don't seem too pressing, with an urgent topical issue a community is facing (e.g., linking a housing crisis to environmental /agricultural problems) - a way of changing the narrative to be accepted by the community; knowing the sociocultural and historical context of the place where the initiative is finding the right engaging is language/narrative crucial for people's acceptance and support (e.g., a place where engaging with "regenerative environmental farming" with NGOs is less triggering socially</p>	<p>operational/narrative</p>	<p>local</p>	<p>community</p>	<p>reforming</p>	
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					unacceptable even though they agree/support the cause); modifying the language used based on the context (e.g., not using the terms "regenerative farming" when talking to farmers, some of them are triggered by them)					
maintenance: cooperatives on the curriculum + create cooperatives	1	promoting cooperatives	ongoing	local societal	to and their benefits	operational/institutional	local societies	individual (students), community	reforming	
maintenance: coordination	6	coordination	ongoing	membership	providing a space to coordinate, collaborate, build relationships;	operational	local national	members, communities	relational	

					coordinating activities within the initiative and across different ones as well (coordinating their efforts, capacities, resources to achieve the change collectively)					
maintenance: corporate engagement	3	corporate engagement	ongoing	local, membership, society	collaborating with corporate firms to realize their vision of change, usually in terms of funding opportunities	operational	local national	to members, systemic	relational	
maintenance: create farmer groups	5	create farmer groups	ongoing	membership	creating groups for farmers to get together, collaborate, help each other and be more effective; creating inclusive, diverse groups (e.g., including queer farmers so that they are represented) otherwise farmers are very isolated, they need a sense of collectiveness to stick with unconventional/agroecological practices	operational	local regional	to members, community	relational	

maintenance: create new tech	1	innovation	ongoing	membership	being innovative, experimenting with new materials, introducing a new product on the market	operational	national	systemic	reforming	
maintenance: demonstration	21	demonstration (overlaps with cascade above)	ongoing cascade	+ local, membership, society	demonstrating initiatives' best practices (e.g., demonstration farms...) leading to awareness raising and educational outreach; a strategy how to convince people something is possible, it works; people need to experience it to believe it (paradigm shift potential); e.g., demonstrating that receiving basic income is possible (economic example from a successful trial run from Ireland); demonstration potential need for wider outreach options (e.g., involvement of the media)	operational narrative	+ local societal	to individual to systemic	to reforming	

					of best practices through storytelling (a powerful tool); demonstrating permaculture techniques as a form of education						
maintenance: education	20	education	ongoing	local, membership, society	creating and promoting their educational programs (e.g., toolkit for public authorities to enable transition); raising awareness and educating wider society about the negative impacts of conventional agriculture on biodiversity; creating educational fact sheets about the specific examples of best practices,		operational, narrative	local societal	to individual to systemic	to reforming	

					actions that work and can be applied; publishing reports/research; education on supply chains and seasonal produce; organizing webinars; educating about organic agriculture and produce; education through different activities (e.g., on a festival) - learning through experiencing; educating especially the younger generation; learning by doing						
maintenance: events	11	events	ongoing	local, membership, society	organizing events that provide a space for different groups of people to get together and talk (e.g., bringing together policy	operational	local societal	to individual to systemic	to reforming		

					<p>makers and farmers); events as a form of organising (e.g., farmer fires); peer-to-peer learning events to learn about sustainable farming practices; conferences for knowledge sharing; online meetings/webinars to learn about bioregioning; giving lectures</p>					
<p>maintenance: farmer-led communication</p>	<p>6 n</p>	<p>farmer-led communication</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>community</p>	<p>making a farmer a spokesperson for the cause; farmers' stories as powerful tools for realizing change</p>	<p>operational</p>	<p>local to regional</p>	<p>community</p>	<p>reforming</p>	

<p>maintenance: highlighting risks and dependencies</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>highlighting risks and dependencies/ motivational awareness-raising</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>membership, businesses, sector</p>	<p>a form of awareness-raising that highlights the potential risks and intricate dependencies related to environmental issues, especially when action is not taken; motivating stakeholders (those benefitting from natural resources: businesses and actors along the agricultural supply chain) to enact change because it serves their interests (e.g., local whiskey business that relies on water should be interested in keeping their water sources by, for example, promoting resilient solutions and making their</p>		<p>operational</p>	<p>local, regional</p>	<p>individual, company, sector</p>	<p>reforming</p>	
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					business more sustainable)					
maintenance: indicators, unique m&e, evidence, data	2	evidence-, indicator-based work	ongoing strategy of their work	local, membership	initiative's work strategy which relies on data, evidence, indicators, opinion polls, and standards; sometimes used for e.g., assessing societal opinions on certain issues		operational	national, societal	members, society	reforming
maintenance: international coalition building	14	international coalition building	cascading + maintenance: important both as an ongoing action to maintain their operations as well as spreading their influence abroad	membership	joining powers to raise awareness for their common cause, increasing their "bargaining power"; a means to express solidarity with other members/initiatives/farmers	see cascade above	operational	international	members, society	relational

					etc.; crucial for knowledge sharing; see cascade above for more examples						
maintenance: long-term engagement	3	long-term engagement	ongoing	local, community, membership	initiatives prefer long-term engagement with their members and the area/community they are active in; more of an enabler of their activities (e.g., being able to be part of a 10-year project, which brings new opportunities to realize their vision of change)		operational	local, regional	individual, members, community	relational	

<p>maintenance: make economic case for change</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>make economic case for change (framing of change)</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>local societal to</p>	<p>making a case for agricultural transformation since the current conventional system is unsustainable even from the economic perspective - farmers are not reimbursed adequately for their work (although their work is essential for the society); also advocating for sustainable farming practices by emphasizing their profitability (in the end higher yields due to healthier soils); emphasizing that sustainable food systems are by definition more resilient (food security) - friendlier and more</p>	<p>narrative</p>	<p>national</p>	<p>farmers, governments, policy makers</p>	<p>reforming</p>	
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					convincing narrative					
maintenance: making well-being case for change	1	making well-being case for change/awakening intrinsic values (framing of change)	ongoing	membership	highlighting intrinsic values/well-being in their communication with members (e.g., farmers - motivating farmers to keep up their sustainable/agroecological practices once they see more biodiversity on their fields-> building on the momentum)	first, basic needs have to be met (e.g., bills must be paid) before tapping into well-being/intrinsic values	narrative	local	individual, community	reforming
maintenance: M&E support	2	monitoring & evaluation support	ongoing	membership	what can be monitored and measured that can be influenced; having real evidence that something works (based		operational	local, regional, national	members	reforming

					on monitoring and evaluation) motivated people in realizing change (e.g., assessing the effectiveness of public spending on environmental projects and showing public authorities it has a real impact on the ground)					
maintenance: national coalition building	26	national coalition building (see cascade above)	cascading + maintenance: engaging throughout and once established, scaling up and outwards	membership, society	national coalition building not only connects relevant actors/initiatives together allowing for experience sharing, drawing inspiration, and learning (maintenance) but also for scaling up their outreach possibilities (cascading); this approach enables larger-scale	having too big of a coalition can backfire if there are too many confusing messages (coalition building needs to be done right); managing inter-coalition conflicts; avoiding any labels that could be problematic for coalition building (e.g., political/ideological labels); avoiding any potentially problematic	operational	national	individual, local/regional/national level initiatives	relational

					<p>impact through partners (e.g., the unification tobacco of voices; industry); need creating new for economically partnerships as interesting a bridge to partnerships policymakers (essential for (e.g., approaching connecting policymakers; an farmers with example of an policymakers alliance and allowing strategy); a role their voices to of trust in be heard); a creating new shared partnerships vision/goal/ide (e.g., really ology as an thinking through enabler of if a potential unlikely partner can be partnerships trusted in (e.g., bringing keeping up with together the their mission, Church and values, environmental standards etc.) initiatives); coalition building as a means to join forces and support collective action; coalition building not only with other organizations/i initiatives but also cities and various other</p>					
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					actors (e.g., mayors)						
maintenance: outreach	10	outreach	ongoing	membership, society	presenting their activities to their members, wider public, through different channels, including various events (see action "events"); education and awareness raising through outreach	people's interest depends on the outreach channel (sometimes unsuccessful)	operational	local societal	to individual to systemic	reforming	overlaps with "education" and "events"
maintenance: petitions	2	petitions	ongoing	society	petitions as a tool to support their cause (sometimes combined with		operational	societal	systemic	resisting	

					email campaigns); also a means to demonstrate societal appetite for change; simple but effective					
maintenance: policy lobbying	17	policy lobbying	ongoing	wider society	<p>lobbying for improving CAP (better conditions for small farmers), promoting CSA, organic sustainable practices, representing farmers interests, lobbying for land reforms; usually a result of insufficient state and policy support</p> <p>opinions on what should the network lobby for can differ among member organizations; lobbying on the EU level requires a lot of resources (reason why many org/networks don't do it) - one initiative's strategy is to lobby at the national government level, which is then reflected at the EU level (way to save resources); organizing lobbying events (e.g., CSA day in Germany for CSA promotion); administrative and</p>	institutional	regional, national, international	government s, EU, policy makers	reforming, resisting	

						bureaucratic challenges linked to lobbying; challenges around sharing resources and working with other organizations for effective lobbying					
maintenance: political awareness	1	building on a momentum	ongoing	membership, community (farmers)	assessing the right moment to act - building on a momentum, when putting which escalates something out initiative's publicly (e.g., a efforts (e.g., policy report), publishing a the initiative report during needs to be farmers' way about protests possible leading to a cooptation or bigger support that the media than otherwise could frame it in a non-desirable way		operational, institutional	community, society	community (farmers)	reforming, resisting	
maintenance: political education	4	political action/awareness raising	ongoing	membership	raising awareness/educating members (e.g., farmers) around relevant	challenges around finding relevant information (e.g., which politicians voted for the Mercosur	operational	community, regional	community (farmers), society	reforming, resisting	

					<p>policies, current political agendas, motivating members to engage in the current state of affairs; "politicising farmers"/"political education"; taking a political stance (e.g., against the far right)</p>	<p>deal, which is very unpopular among EU farmers)</p>					
<p>maintenance: position papers</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>publishing &amp; reporting</p>	<p>&amp; ongoing</p>	<p>membership, society</p>	<p>publishing reports and position papers (e.g., based on farmers' experience) to strengthen their evidence-base when advocating/lobbying for change; helps with being recognised in the field</p>	<p>dealing with policy makers and bureaucrats is sometimes challenging; reports and evidence-based research is usually not enough to convince someone</p>	<p>institutional</p>	<p>national</p>	<p>policy makers, governments</p>	<p>reforming</p>	
<p>maintenance: protest</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>protesting</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>membership, society</p>	<p>mobilising members/people to protest against laws that harm nature/with</p>	<p>protesting alone is not enough, but at least it gets some media coverage</p>	<p>institutional</p>	<p>national, societal</p>	<p>governments, systemic</p>	<p>resisting</p>	

					hidden agendas (e.g., farmers' protests)							
maintenance: relationship building	38	relationship building	ongoing	local, membership, wider society	building relationships as an essential action for transformative initiatives to realize their vision of change; connecting farmers; connecting producers with consumers; involving municipalities and citizens to support their farmers; building a community; getting people together to communicate and build a common narrative; it also leads to knowledge sharing and best practice demonstration; building relationships based on a	relationship between farmers and the rest of society has been severed and it's hard to build that relationship again (current problem of agriculture)	operational, narrative	local societal	to individual to systemic	to relational		overlaps with "coalition building", "bottom-up engagement", "trust building"

					shared narrative (e.g., healthy children); a big advantage is to have relationships with decision-makers (e.g., someone from the government)					
maintenance: responsive to demands/critical	4	responsiveness to demands/critical	ongoing	membership	being responsive to member demands and supporting them with the initiative's resources; a strategy how to promote friendly, supportive atmosphere within the initiative/platform; active listening as a way how to support their members ("people want to be heard"); responsiveness to members' critical		operational	national	members	relational

					feedback and learning from it						
maintenance: shared vision	1	thorough membership process	ongoing	membership	having a thorough process new membership applicants need to go through to ensure complementary goals and shared vision of change (to "advance the movement")		operational	national	members	relational, reforming	could be seen as a way of working/strategy
maintenance: support first movers	1	support first movers	ongoing	membership	supporting and prioritizing those actors/initiatives that are already realizing change in the field	challenge around big (e.g., food and drink) companies trying to be "transformative" - it takes a lot of capacity for initiatives to include them	operational	national, international	members	relational	
maintenance: systems mapping	1	systems mapping	ongoing	membership, society	applying systems mapping as a tool to explore the network		operational	societal	members, society	reforming	

					points for change, "what can and can't be changed" in the society and focusing on that					
maintenance: tie change to history	5	reframing change through history	ongoing	society	linking transformative change with national historical legacies; reconnecting the society with national traditions, relationship to land and country; emphasizing patriotism; building on existing foundations (e.g., leveraging a foundation of existing cooperatives and expanding; "re-indigenizing innovation" for sustainability); using patriotic stories around historical national	narrative	societal	society	reforming	

					resistance and applying it to the current context					
maintenance: trust building	18	trust building	ongoing	local, membership	building trust in people for new/innovative/alternative solutions (e.g., insect protein); building trust through continuous support (of members/farmers etc.); trust building through close, personal relationship building; being transparent is essential, even when mistakes are made; reciprocity; building trust as a starting point; also necessary to demonstrate that the initiative/netw	takes a lot of time and effort to build trust	operational	local national	to individual, members	relational

					ork values their members' trust by representing their interests						
<b>cascade</b>	<b>58</b>		<b>cascading</b>								
cascade: demonstration events	5	demonstration	ALL PHASES: later phase, when the initiative is already established and can demonstrate their best practices	membership, society	demonstration farms that can educate other farmers, spreading their best practice within members and wider; taking members to see farms themselves (education, demonstration, awareness raising)	operational	local, regional		relational		
cascade: end goal clarity	1	end goal/result clarity	later phase, when the initiative is established and has members that eventually need more thorough guidance on the vision/end goal	membership	clarity on the end goal or result of a vision can serve as an opportunity to také/scale the idea further; figuring out why the goal is important in the first place	narrative	within the initiative (so probably national)	members	reforming		

<p>cascade: international coalition building</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>international coalition building</p>	<p>cascading + maintenance: important both as an ongoing action to maintain their operations as well as spreading their influence abroad</p>	<p>membership</p>	<p>scaling up representation and impact, their interests, spreading their influence abroad, strengthening their existing ties and relationships while reaching out for new ones; being part of the international conversation needs (in one and decision-making; an opportunity to get new insights, experience sharing and learning sometimes difficult to align national and international needs (in one case, the initiative needed to prioritize national needs over building new coalitions because of lack of capacity)</p>	<p>operational</p>	<p>international</p>	<p>initiative, other international initiatives/platforms</p>	<p>relational</p>	
<p>cascade: local community engagement</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>local community engagement</p>	<p>cascading + maintenance: engaging throughout and once established, scaling up and outwards</p>	<p>from local to society-wide</p>	<p>engaging with local communities to maintain their operations but also scale their outreach and impact by strengthening and following up on these interactions; crucial for overcoming working in silos and strengthening collaborations; precondition for new opportunities/scaling up their efforts and impact; festivals, events, awareness raising; LCE leading to new funding opportunities</p>	<p>operational</p>	<p>local to societal</p>	<p>local but ultimately leads to systemic</p>	<p>relational</p>	

<p>cascade: national coalition building</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>national coalition building</p>	<p>cascading + maintenance: engaging throughout and once established, scaling up and outwards</p>	<p>membership, society</p>	<p>national coalition building not only connects relevant actors/initiativ es together allowing for experience to sharing, drawing inspiration, and learning (maintenance) but also for scaling up their outreach possibilities (cascading); this approach enables a larger-scale impact through the unification of voices; creating new partnerships as a bridge to policymakers (e.g., connecting farmers with policymakers and allowing their voices to be heard); a shared vision/goal/ide ology as an enabler of</p>	<p>having too big of a coalition can backfire if there are too many confusing messages (coalition building needs to be done right); managing inter-coalition conflicts; avoiding any labels that could be problematic for coalition building (e.g., political/ideolog ical labels); avoiding any potentially problematic partners (e.g., tobacco industry); need for economically interesting partnerships (essential for approaching policymakers; an example of an alliance strategy); a role of trust in creating new partnerships (e.g., really thinking through if a potential</p>	<p>operational</p>	<p>national</p>	<p>individual, local/region al/national level initiatives</p>	<p>relational</p>
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					unlikely partnerships (e.g., bringing together the Church and environmental initiatives); coalition building as a means to join forces and support collective action; coalition building not only with other organizations/initiatives but also cities and various other actors (e.g., mayors)	partner can be trusted in keeping up with their mission, values, standards etc.)					
cascade: positive examples	12	positive examples	later phase, when some work has been done and positive examples can be demonstrated	local to wider society (depending on the example, sometimes it's just for other farmers, sometimes to promote ideas to the wider society)	showing that solutions are scalable (convincing people sth works); a noninvasive and nonimposing way of motivating/inspiring people to embrace new/alternative ways/solutions (e.g., using sustainable hemp materials for building insulation that supports circularity); a means to spread a vision of change; showing that a more just and sustainable world is possible (e.g., through cooperatives), broadening people's imagination; highlighting the potential of	operational; to a certain extent, even narrative (showing alternative ways of doing - building a new narrative)	from local to societal	individual to systemic	relational		

					positive examples being adopted and scaled up, elaborated further, etc.; e.g., model schools that can be further replicated in other cities/regions; setting an example of how to organise					
cascade: setting up sociocratic working groups	1	establishing innovative governance approaches	later phase, when the initiative is established and can experiment with new ways of (self)organizing and (self)governance		establishing new ways of (self)organizing and (self)governance that are more desirable and inclusive (e.g., sociocracy circles), that could be scalable and adopted elsewhere	operational	local (within the organization/network)	within the organization	reforming	
cascade: training course	4	training courses	later phase, when the initiative is established and can provide new services with the resources and skill set it operates with		providing new services, such as training courses, to spread their message and scale up their efforts; this is enabled by acquiring sufficient resources (time, skills, finances) to pursue this new stream of action; e.g., courses on how to set up cooperatives, media training for farmers to sometimes facing difficult (e.g., angry participants to council member in one of the trainings)	operational	local (within the organization/network) to societal (in the case of media training that can spread farmers' message across the society)	individual (farmers), systemic (society)	reforming	

					spread their message, community organising for activists						
<b>Merged actions</b>											
entry: cluster	1	cluster establishment	start of the process/initiative	membership	taking advantage of the momentum at the EU level when different clusters were emerging; also taking advantage of the "fancy new concept bioeconomy", which was trending and enabled them to join the cluster scene	operational	international	EU level networks and members	reforming	merged with action "opportunity window"	
entry: demonstration	3									merged with "cascade+maintenance: demonstration"	

<p>entry: enabling grassroots</p> <p>1</p>		<p><i>I consider the coded segment as "ways of working" rather than an action; quote: "because it's farmer-led, we're not pushing an agenda"</i></p>
<p>entry: hopeful tone</p> <p>1</p>		<p><i>merged with "maintenance: positive/hopeful engagement"</i></p>
<p>entry: neutrality</p> <p>1</p>		<p><i>I consider the coded segment as "ways of working" rather than an action; quote: " In these coalitions, we position ourselves as a trusted third party, with a relatively neutral stance."</i></p>

<p>entry: socio-ecological scale - policy coherence</p> <p>2</p>		<p><i>I would put this under "future need/aspiration" code rather than actions</i></p>
<p>maintenance: catchment approach to problem solving</p> <p>1</p>		<p><i>merged with "highlighting risks and dependencies/motivational awareness-raising"</i></p>
<p>maintenance: consumer demand</p> <p>1</p>		<p><i>this code is rather about educating people to support consumer demand -&gt; merging with code "maintenance: education"</i></p>
<p>maintenance: create cooperatives</p> <p>1</p>		<p><i>merged into "promoting cooperatives" above</i></p>
<p>maintenance: creating a portfolio of projects for</p> <p>1</p>		<p><i>merged into "business support" above</i></p>

investors to support		
maintenance: deliberately non-ideological tone	4	<i>merged with "conflict mediation" - I think it's rather their strategic way of working and also an identified need in conflict mediation</i>
maintenance: enforced member commitment/expectation	2	<i>merged with "long-term engagement"</i>
maintenance: learning by doing	1	<i>merged with "education"</i>
maintenance: lobbying for CAP reform	1	<i>merged with "policy lobbying"</i>
maintenance: methodological support/guid	1	<i>merged with "education"</i>

ance > maintenance										
maintenance: modifying language to context	4							<i>merged with "context sensitive engagement"</i>		
maintenance: platforming under- represented voices	1							<i>merged with "create farmer groups"</i>		
maintenance: Policy roadmap	1							<i>merged with "bringing new topics"</i>		
				engaging with people/especial- ly members in a hopeful, positive manner, which is perceived as better and more effective than engaging based on fear; hope seen as a "motivator" for people to change something						
maintenance: hopeful tone	1	positive/hopeful engagement	ongoing strategy how to engage people/members	membership		narrative	local, societal	members, society	reforming	<i>considered as "ways of working" - engaging with people with a hopeful tone</i>

maintenance: publications 2		<i>merged with                  "publishing                  and reporting"</i>
maintenance: resolve conflict of interest between consumer and producer over price 1		<i>merged with                  "evidence-,                  indicator-                  based work"</i>
maintenance: state support 1		<i>merged with                  "relationship                  building"</i>
maintenance: taking a political stance with outreach 2		<i>merged with                  "political                  action/awareness                  raising"</i>
maintenance: transparent pricing 1		<i>merged with                  "trust                  building"</i>
maintenance: using the law to drive change 3		<i>merged with                  "policy                  lobbying"</i>
maintenance: working groups 2		<i>merged with                  "bottom-up                  engagement"</i>

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cascade: setting an example of how to organise 1		<i>merged with "positive examples" above</i>
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