



ATTER (Agroecological Transition of Territorial food systems) is an EU-funded project for scaling up agroecological transitions for territorial food systems through cross-case studies, relying on 16 territorial case studies anchored in five countries (France, Italy, United Kingdom, Brazil and USA) and on the complementary skills of the 19 participating organisations.



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Taking into account the plurality of visions of ecologisation in the support of territorial agri-food transitions

Guidelines for action and reflection (short version)

Projects and collective dynamics around territorial agri-food transitions are multiplying, boosted by public policies around the Territorial Food Projects in France, but going far beyond them. This booklet proposes and illustrates through concrete examples some principles aimed at encouraging a better taking in account of the plurality of visions of ecologisation in the approaches for supporting agri-food transitions. This issue, which is not yet well addressed in the available guides and current approaches, is nevertheless central because it has a strong influence on the transition process. Indeed, the greater or lesser extent to which the plurality of visions is taken into account will promote or, on the contrary, weaken both the ambition and the scope of the transition.

Introduction

Territorial agri-food transitions are by nature multi-actor dynamics since they involve actors, networks and organizations embodying the different «links» of agri-food systems. An agri-food transition with an ecologisation ambition requires systemic transformations of territorial food systems. However, actors generally have different and sometimes opposite visions of the desirable transition and of ecologisation, which is often remain implicit behind other transition issues considered to be priorities (e.g., relocalization).

In the support process, this diversity of views is often seen as a reality that needs to be «overcome». Above all, it is associated with divergent interests and plural values, and is perceived as necessary but potentially generating conflicts or obstacles, and therefore rather problematic. The aim of accompanying is to manage this tension between necessity and risk by inviting a diversity of actors to the debates, and by taking care to anticipate conflicts. On the one hand, this often leads to equating the diversity of visions with the diversity of actors, by associating actors or categories of actors with certain visions, or even by identifying and involving actors on the basis of the vision they are supposed to defend, without seeking to explain these visions and their plurality. On the other hand, if the diversity of stakeholders is considered positive, there is often a tendency to try to reduce the gaps between the visions and to work out a compromise, which is seen as the guarantee of a project's success.

Bringing plurality into play rather than hiding it

The challenge is to put these visions in their diversity back in the foreground, as a shared object around which collective learning can take place, and without being naive about the tensions that this can generate. This implies introducing into the support process a work of clarification of visions, and of sharing and recognition by all of the diversity of these visions.

It is this challenge of bringing this plurality into play in and for the transition processes that is at the origin of the idea of this booklet, built and discussed within the Ecosyat (Inrae Metabio Metaprogram) and ATTER research projects. It proposes some general principles illustrated by concrete examples, to be adapted to each support situation, in order to give a role to the plurality of visions and to make it play a role in favor of ambitious ecologisation process. It is not a matter of finding «the» right way to do things, applicable everywhere, but rather to create the conditions and spaces so that the visions present in a given territory, in their diversity, can be recognized and «enrolled» in the transition processes. It is based mainly on two action research projects, L'Assiette et le Territoire.



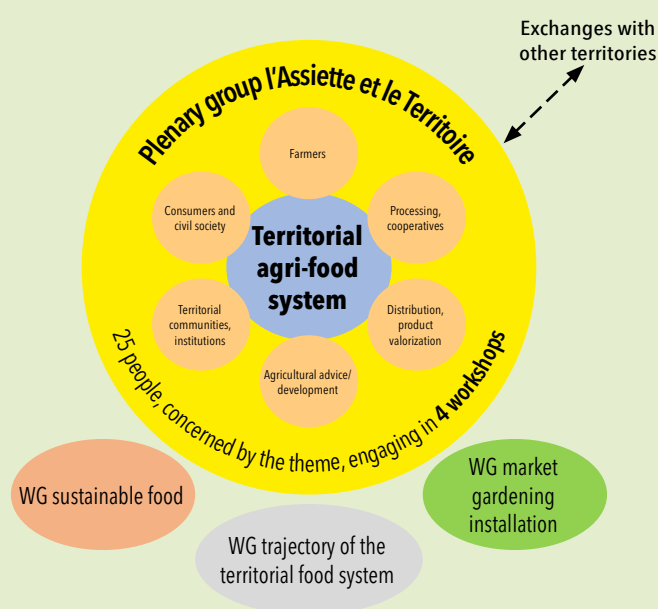
1 • Create arenas for debate including mandated and concerned actors

How to allow a wide expression of needs, proposals and visions in their diversity?

- By ensuring a balance between mandated and concerned actors (not «sent» by a structure) in the composition of the bodies and arenas for multi-stakeholder debate (monitoring group for a territorial food project, local food council, etc.).
- By conducting a detailed identification of these actors to be associated, attentive to the issues of balance (gender, age, social origin structures, themes, etc.) and the risks of exclusion.

To compose and make live a multi-actors group - L'Assiette et le Territoire project

L'Assiette et le Territoire project (coordinated by Inrae) is structured around a «**plenary**» group of 25 people whose composition has been thought out to include diversity of actors (research, farmers, civil society, agricultural civil society, agricultural movements) and to associate actors and concerned actors (farmer, citizen, restaurant owner, shopkeeper not representing any structure), each invited «as a person». The challenge was to put around the table people who were not all used to working together, with different, sometimes contradictory, sometimes even competing for resources. This group has initiated three thematic working groups, involving external actors, and facilitated exchanges with other territories. In 2022, it has been transformed into a local council for sustainable food.

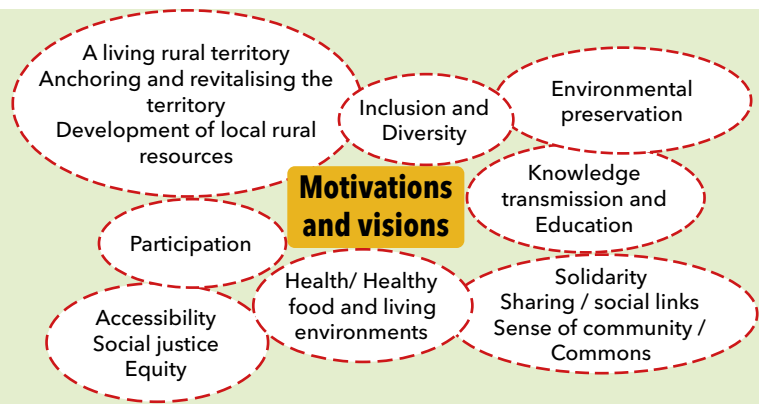


2 • Sharing the plurality of visions

- Organize time for debate and reflexivity on the visions at stake. This work can be done using different methods and tools: prospective approaches, narratives, mapping of visions, etc.
- Plan these times at different moments to understand the dynamics of these visions, discuss their articulations and/or confrontations.
- Assume that there is a conflict of visions that must be expressed, but that a common base must be shared, which will be defined precisely in and through the sharing of visions.

Explain the motivations of all to build the collective (Teaser-lab project)

In the Teaser-Lab project (coordinated by Inrae) the animation worked on revealing and building the values shared by the collective, as well as to debate and formalize a common ambition on the agri-food issue. A work of clarification of motivations and visions at the source of the existing or planned actions allowed the collective to establish a base of «shared values» and to re-specify the common aim: *to promote healthy, local food for all, based on a based on organic agriculture.*



3 • Varying the debate arenas and animation formats

- Articulate different debate arenas in terms of their scale and degree of openness with times and modalities of meetings that allow everyone to express themselves.
- Vary and innovate the formats and objectives of the discussion (for example, share knowledge, build analyses together, etc.) expressing one's values and attachments through popular education methods, etc.). Having different facilitators can facilitate this.
- Identify the possible dominant discourses in order to try to rebalance and facilitate speaking out.

Diversified supports for animation and co-construction



In «L'Assiette et le Territoire», the local food forum brought together about a hundred local actors around thematic workshops, a workshop training workshop on food kitchens that prepared the the closing buffet, a photographic exhibition, intervention of artists improvisers etc.



An «inspiring tree ideas for the territory», fed by the the participants of the plenary group after presentations and exchanges with other territories.

4 • Welcoming new and emerging ideas

- Propose multiple ways of contribution (new actions or concrete initiatives, spaces for debates and discussions, formal events and informal meetings) to allow newcomers, with their own visions, to find a place in the in the dynamic, according to their skills and competences.
- To imagine tools and supports to, on the one hand, allow a tracking of the stages of the dynamics, of the main achievements (in order to help newcomers to appropriate the dynamics and position themselves); and on the other hand, to make visible the novelties and how they contribute to the transition process and perhaps also to the expression of other visions.
- To be nourished by what is already being done: elsewhere, by going to meet other territories, other collectives to exchange on the ways of understanding ecologisation in different situations; but also on the territory by identifying and integrating initiatives and visions perhaps perhaps marginal or ignored.

A progressive enrichment of the collective through multiple multiple ways (Teaser-Lab project)

The enlargement of the circle of partners has been done in different ways : by a regular visibility of the initiatives in order to attract and involve new people with proposals (monthly newsletter; organization of meetings-debates; presence on markets etc.), from interpersonal relations between associations, neighborhood effects, or even shared activities around the production of vegetables.

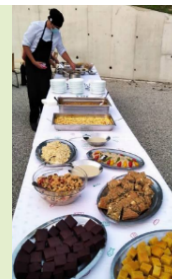


5 • Reaching out to the eaters and inhabitants

- Invite commitment and mobilize creativity through sensitive means: beyond the classic concertation meetings, rely on cooking workshops, landscape reading, forum theater, cartography drawn together, artists, etc.
- Create convivial times to share in a concrete joint way food practices and visions of ecologization and of transition.
- Experiment with new ways of informing residents, allowing them to express their needs and proposals: for example, designate a pair «transition referent» in each municipality of the territory, composed of a municipal councillor and a non-elector who together would play the role of relay and intermediary with the leaders of a territorial project.

A workshop of nourishing cuisines to cook, comment, taste together

In "L'Assiette et le Territoire", a training workshop on nutritious cooking was organized during the local forum in 2021 and again for the 2022 edition. About fifteen cooks from the territory prepared the closing buffet of the forum, according to the principles of nutritious cooking and using local products. The buffet allowed these cooks to present the dishes prepared, the principles of nourishing food, and of course to create a moment of conviviality with the hundred or so participants in the forum.



6 • Translating plurality into action

- Diversify the actions/initiatives within the approach or the project, to allow the expression in acts of the plurality of visions: The stake here is that each one finds an action that makes sense for him/her with regard to his/her vision of ecologisation.
- To make the cohabitation of different visions bearable or even desirable through cooperation around common actions: these actions can make sense for each person for slightly different reasons.
- To combine more radical actions and others more «consensual», and to claim it explicitly.
- Confront, in the action, the visions with the realities of the field: «doing» and especially «doing with others» allows to put visions in discussion and to make them more concrete and to re-evaluate them if necessary. This can also legitimize minority visions, sometimes still difficult to formulate. This can also legitimize minority visions, which are sometimes still difficult to formalize but which, by finding a concrete expression, also acquire a form of legitimacy.



Vegetable production at the heart of the joint action.

In the TEASER-lab project, a strong will was expressed, from the beginning to start very quickly concrete actions involving people who are usually excluded, such as migrants and/or allophones. It is around the production of vegetables that this action was organized (in family gardens, shared gardens and a plot of field vegetables made available by Inrae), and with collective workcamps (planting, harvesting sorting), co-design workshops (choice of varieties, improvement of the organization etc.) and regular meetings.

7 • Modulating the rhythms and temporalities

- Guarantee, at certain stages, time for reassurance in a smaller and more «conforting» group of actors with more congruent visions, in order to be able to make them explicit and translate them into action with greater transformative impact before confronting them to other.
- Take the time for regular reflective assessments (which can be designed within different arenas); these reflective pauses, which constitute breaks in the rhythm of the action, can also be a means of re-launching the dynamic and of making decisions for the next decisions for the further steps. ■■■



Resources

<https://www.assiette-territoire.com>

For a longer version of the guide, with more examples, contact claire.lamine@inrae.fr

Some guides on agri-food transition approaches

Co-construire votre Projet Alimentaire Territorial : Repères et points de vigilance ([RnPAT, 2018](#))

Construire un projet alimentaire territorial – Méthodologies croisées – Mode projet d'IUFN et Mode Labo M'21 ([2016](#))

Vers la résilience alimentaire – Faire face aux menaces globales à l'échelle des territoires ([Les Greniers d'Abondance, 2020](#))

Guide pratique – Devenir acteur de la gouvernance alimentaire de son territoire ([Chiffolleau Y., Akermann G., Baron J., 2018](#))

Some articles from the cited projects

Transformations du système agri-alimentaire territorial en sud Ardèche: co-construire une périodisation du passé... qui fasse sens pour l'avenir. Lamine C., Dodet F., et al., *Géocarrefour*, 96, 2022

Considering the Diverse Views of Ecologisation in the Agrifood Transition: An Analysis Based on Human Relationships with Nature. Madga D., Lamine C., Billaud J.-P., *Environmental Values*, 31(6), pp. 657-679, 2022

À Mirecourt, l'autre façon de vivre la transition. Coquil X., Barataud F., Fèche R., billet publié sur le site Visionscarto le 5 janvier 2021

TEASER-Lab: faire l'expérience d'une transition agri-alimentaire par la coopération autour d'actions fédératrices. Barataud F., Coquil X., *Géocarrefour* 96/3, 2022

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