



What motivates people in biodiversity projects? A first encounter.

BIOMOT is a European project that focuses on understanding people's diverse motivations to act for biodiversity, and the way they are connected with social norms, institutions, legislation, as well as economic and political context. To do this, BIOMOT partners have carried out 350 interviews with farmers, volunteers, people from NGOs, local and regional administrations, policy-makers, academics etc. Several biodiversity-related initiatives have been selected for in-depth analysis in each partner country and, for each initiative, several interviews have been carried out with different types of stakeholders (initiator, contributor, policy-maker, participant, user). Our aim is to better understand the motivational mechanisms that can support effective action for biodiversity at local to global levels. In this newsletter we present some preliminary findings, illustrated by three initiatives from Belgium, Slovenia and the United Kingdom.

Three successful projects

1. Walloon Network of Fruit Diversity (BE)

The Belgian initiative concerns the development of a multi-stakeholder network for the preservation and promotion of fruit variety. It has been initiated by the Centre Wallon de Recherches Agronomiques (CRA-W) in Gembloux, in 2005. The primary goal is the preservation and valorisation of varieties of fruits by (1) developing a network of orchards (in situ conservation) where the traditional landraces are cultivated and maintained as wild specimens, and (2) preserving the traditional fruit seeds by the CRA-W, ex situ.

The network comprises local municipalities, regional authorities and nature protection NGOs. At present, there are 60 orchards with more than 4200 trees that encompass 1500 landraces of apples, plums, pears, cherries and peaches. The preliminary analysis of the case reveals the importance of local knowledge, traditions and social norms, as landraces are



Participating orchard in Nismes, BE

attached to particular family or community histories and to specific areas and cultural practices (local cuisine etc) and the role of non-instrumental values (e.g. beauty, curiosity, connectedness, intergenerational concern) across different participant profiles.

2. SloWolf (SL)



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Gray wolf (*canis lupus*)

The Slovenian initiative focuses on the conservation of the wolf population and a better wolf species management and coexistence with human activities. The initiator is Ivan Kos, professor at University of Ljubljana, who managed to gather a group of students around him and obtain funding through different EU projects. What they are trying to do is finding a better balance and convergence between different stakeholders (farmers, hunters, sheep-breeders, foresters, dog-breeders etc.) and the general public concerning wolf management. Therefore they raise awareness of the problem, provide scientific information and facilitate its integration into policy-making and establish monitoring, assessment and advisory methods applicable to the case. While many stakeholders, for instance volunteers, are involved due to non-monetary motivations (related to group belonging or intrinsic values), for some other participants (e.g. sheep breeders) economic benefits provide the dominant motivation.

3. HayTime (UK)

The third initiative, from UK, is about restoring 200 hectares of hay meadow in the Yorkshire Dales. The project is an initiative of a charity, the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (YDMT) and involves statutory



Hay meadow. Photo copyright of Don Gamble, the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust.

authorities (the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Natural England) and farmers. Bringing these partners together has facilitated the development of new techniques and arrangements for meadow restoration. The initiative engages the general public through annual festivals celebrating hay meadows; involves school children in visits to meadows; and preserves memories of the traditions of hay making through interviews with farmers. As a result, it mobilizes a wide range of motivations, going from the aesthetic value of this kind of traditionally managed ecosystem and the heritage value of hay making, to the economic incentive to farmers of entering the available agri-environment schemes.

What do we learn?

Despite the differences between the governance and institutional contexts of these three initiatives, some common points emerge from the preliminary analysis. We draw three tentative lessons:

(1) Diversity of actors

All three cases engage a diversity of actors, from different sectors and at different decision levels, in the design and/or implementation of the governance process. Two of them (the Walloon Network of Fruit Diversity and SloWolf) are initiated by the academia and involve public authorities, NGOs, professional associations and interested citizens in a joint effort to address problems of sustainability, protection and nature valuation. The third one (HayTime) is led by an UK charity and mobilizes statutory authorities, the charitable sector and private landowners in a project that harnesses motivations related to the economic benefit and the viability of upland farming, biodiversity and cultural heritage. This common feature is all the more significant given the transdisciplinary dimension of BIOMOT methodology. Transdisciplinary research for biodiversity tries to integrate scientific and extra-scientific expertise and go beyond technocratic, expert-driven studies and policy advice (more information available in BIOMOT policy brief #3, on www.biomotivation.eu).

(2) Much more than economic motivation

This multi-stakeholder approach facilitates the elicitation of different types of values and valuation processes, without requiring that they are reducible to a single metric or assessment criterion. BIOMOT approaches valuation processes through a plurality of methods, including structured and semi-structured interviews, Q-method and narrative analysis. These methods enable the expression of a diversity of values (intrinsic, group-related, institution-related, economic). In doing so, they are taking critical distance from the current emphasis on economic motivations and the corresponding methods of monetary valuation based on cost-benefit analysis. More information on the limits and risks of using monetary valuation as a general policy tool are available in BIOMOT policy brief #1, on www.biomotivation.eu).

(3) Success is grounded in genuine stakeholder involvement

Intuitively, all three projects can be considered 'successful'. However, their success is not reducible to public visibility and participation, political impact or economic viability. Rather, it could be characterized as a combination of genuine stakeholder involvement, which goes beyond formal consultation, as well as long-term strategic vision and sustained action of highly motivated individuals who succeed in mobilizing others.

More information is to come through the on-going formal analysis of all BIOMOT's governance case studies. The project website is www.biomotivation.eu. For comments and other communication: wapbiomot@science.ru.nl.