

Launch of « Soils of Brittany »

SUPPORTING FARMERS TO REGENERATE SOIL & BIODIVERSITY

The Livelihoods Carbon Fund (LCF), the Brittany Region, the Regional Chamber of Agriculture and Sols d'Armorique association are joining forces to help farmers in the region of Brittany (farthest West region of France) make a successful transition to regenerative agriculture.

“Soils of Brittany” project (“Sols de Bretagne” in French) will accelerate the transition of 11,000 hectares throughout the region to regenerative agriculture. This innovative approach will restore soil health, increase biodiversity, and capture carbon in the soil. But also maintain yields and reduce production costs for farmers. Co-financed by the Brittany Region and the Livelihoods Carbon Fund, the project will sequester 140,000 tons of CO₂ over its 10-year duration.

REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE: A PIONEERING INITIATIVE IN THE BRITTANY REGION

As the leading agricultural region in France and the third largest in Europe, Brittany has put agroecology at the heart of its economic, social, and environmental strategy. Also known in the region as "conservation agriculture" because its main objective is to preserve the organic properties of the soil, regenerative agriculture places the soil at the heart of its system. It is based on agricultural practices whose primary objective is to regenerate the soil, in other words to increase its organic content to improve its fertility.

Although 4% of farmers in France practice regenerative agriculture today, the Brittany region is a pioneer. About 20 years ago, a handful of farmers in the Finistère department embarked on this new approach, convinced that there was a new way to reconcile preservation of natural resources, profitability, and soil fertility. The "Sols de Bretagne" project aims to extend this model of agriculture to a larger scale in the region.

ACCOMPANY EACH FARMER IN THE TRANSITION TO REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

Set up for a period of 10 years (5 years of transition followed by 5 years of maintenance of practices), "Sols de Bretagne" project aims to support farmers who wish to commit to the transition and adopt the fundamental principles of regenerative agriculture: reduction of tillage (reduction of ploughing), permanent soil cover (plant cover to continuously nourish the soil), diversification of crop rotations that allow the regeneration of soil biomass and thus increase its fertility.

"Sols de Bretagne" has set itself the goal of supporting about a hundred farmers. The project is open to plant production (cereals, vegetables, etc.) in the region, as well as to animal production, regardless of the size of the farm (regional average is 53 hectares). It will be of particular interest to a young generation of farmers who wish to set up and adopt these practices.

AN INNOVATIVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP TO SUPPORT FARMERS OVER 10 YEARS

The project is based on a unique investment model. It brings together an impact investment fund - the Livelihoods Carbon Fund (LCF2), the Region of Brittany, the Regional Chamber of Agriculture and local association Sols d'Armorique, which brings together a network of farmers and technicians who are

passionate about regenerative agriculture and who want to learn and share new practices. The association will mobilize its network throughout the region to recruit farmers for the project.

The Region and the Livelihoods Carbon Fund are co-financing the support of the farmers provided by the Chamber of Agriculture from the start of the contract and during 10 years. The total amount of this support is six million euros, which will be paid directly to the farmers involved in the project in the form of financial aid. Reinforcing their entrepreneurial approach, they will be free to invest in the management of their farms according to their needs (acquisition of equipment, risk-taking, etc.). This aid also aims to reward their environmental services.

On the other hand, this investment will finance the technical support and training needed to make the transition a success. Farmers will be guided by agricultural advisors and technicians to establish a diagnosis of their farm, to structure their project and to put in place practices adapted to the realities of their farm (for example, defining which crop rotations).

During the first 5 years of the project (transition phase), the Region and Livelihoods are committed to paying the beneficiaries €80 per hectare annually. Then, over the next 5 years, committed farmers will receive €46 per hectare to maintain their practices. The Livelihoods Carbon Fund will also measure the carbon stored in the soil per year as well as the reduction of carbon emissions through reduced fuel consumption and reduced chemical fertilizers.

*"We discuss daily about the climate, global warming issues and how agriculture can contribute to storing carbon in the soil. The soil is a living environment, rich in a phenomenal biodiversity that must be taken care of. The richer the soil is in organic matter, the more fertile it is, the more we contribute to storing carbon. However, making a successful transition to living and fertile soils requires technical knowledge and time. The objective of the Brittany region was to find the financial models that would support this transition over the long term." **Olivier Allain**, Vice-President in charge of agriculture and agri-food, Brittany Region*

*"In the Finistère department, we have farmers who are pioneers in regenerative agriculture and our challenge is to find a way to support farmers in this approach. With benefits that go beyond the environmental ones. Because once we are in a model of effective and permanent soil cover, more diversified rotations, this brings more life to the soil, but also allows us to reduce the use of fuel, chemical inputs, and work time. This represents a real economic interest for the farmer". **André Sergent**, President of the Regional Chamber of Agriculture of Brittany*

*"The core of our thinking was to put the soil at the center of the agricultural system and no longer consider it as an inert support. Our model works because there is a duality between the soil and the plant: the plant captures solar energy through its leaves. This plant brings the sugars that the soil microbiota needs (bacteria, fungi, yeast, carabid beetles, earthworms...). In return, the microbiota provides the plant with the mineral elements it needs, through its roots. The objective is to feed the soil, which feeds the plant, which in turn feeds the animals and humans. Our approach is to optimize the soil's structure and make it as resilient as possible. **Roland Hallégouet**, President of the Association Sols d'Armorique*

"The Livelihoods Funds finance agricultural transition projects in various countries around the world. Whether in Indonesia, India, Kenya, or France, we face a common challenge: how can we work with the soil to feed our fellow human beings? In Brittany, we have found partners who are very committed to making this transition a success: on the one hand, farmers who have demonstrated the benefits of the model over several years, and on the other hand, institutions that are highly committed to scaling up this regenerative agriculture model. "Soils of Brittany" project will support farmers over 10 years to make the transition a success. We will

*directly support farmers who commit to the approach and finance their technical support". **Bernard Giraud**,
President and Co-Founder of Livelihoods Funds*

About the Livelihoods Funds:

The Livelihoods Funds are impact investment funds created by French and international companies that are committed to transforming their value chains and fighting global warming to restore degraded ecosystems and improve the livelihoods of millions of rural and agricultural communities around the world. The companies that support the Livelihoods funds to date are: Danone, Firmenich, Groupe Caisse des Dépôts, Hermès, Groupe Crédit Agricole, Crédit Agricole Midi-Pyrénées, Groupe La Poste, Mars Incorporated, Michelin, SAP, Schneider Electric, Veolia, Voyageurs du Monde and Eurofins.

The Livelihoods Carbon Fund, which is involved in the "Sols de Bretagne" project, has been financing regenerative agriculture, agroforestry, and ecosystem restoration projects in developing countries for the past 10 years. These projects are implemented by local partners (NGOs, project owners, etc.) and generate carbon credits with high social, economic, and environmental value. Placing the farmer at the heart of its strategy to build more resilient agricultural models, the Livelihoods Carbon Fund is investing for the first time in Europe to support a pioneering regenerative agriculture model in the Brittany region.

Learn more about the Livelihoods Funds: <https://livelihoods.eu/>

About the Brittany Region:

The Brittany Region is a territorial authority composed of the Regional Council of Brittany (an assembly of 83 elected officials who decide on the major orientations of the regional policy) and the regional administration that applies these orientations at the territorial level. As the leading agricultural region in France and the third largest in Europe, the Brittany Region has placed the agroecological transition at the heart of its agricultural policy. It devotes an annual budget of 100 million euros, mobilizing regional and European funds to build virtuous production models for farmers, consumers, and the environment.

Learn more about the agroecological transition of the Brittany Region and its actions:
<https://www.bretagne.bzh/actions/economie-emploi/agriculture-agroalimentaire/>

About the Chamber of Agriculture of Brittany:

The Chamber of Agriculture of Brittany is a public institution that accompanies the agroecological transition of the region. Present throughout Brittany, its missions are to anticipate economic developments, innovate, support farmers in adapting their businesses through training and advice, represent the interests of the agricultural sector and collaborate with all professional agricultural organizations. It is composed of 180 elected members who represent the agricultural professions, 650 engineers and technicians who implement actions in the field with over 51,000 farmers and 25,000 employees. It is chaired since 2019 by André Sergent, farmer at the head of a pig and dairy farm in Finistère and former President of the Chamber of Agriculture of the department.

Learn more about the Regional Chamber of Agriculture and its actions in the field:
<http://www.bretagne.synagri.com/synagri/accueilRegion>



About the association Sols d'Armorique:

Sols d'Armorique association gathers a network of motivated Breton farmers who are passionate about regenerative agriculture and who are eager to get together to better understand soil dynamics and experiment with new practices. Convinced that there is a third way to reconcile soil health and better yields, the association focuses on the promotion of soil as a living and central heritage of the farmer. It organizes groups to share good practices, innovate and pool learning in the field, but also to promote these practices to society through awareness activities. It covers a network of committed farmers, advisors, and technicians throughout the Brittany region. Sols d'Armorique is also a member of the APAD network (Association for the Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture) which gathers more than 1,000 farmers and technicians committed to living soils throughout France.

Learn more about APAD and its actions to promote regenerative agriculture: <http://www.apad.asso.fr/>

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