The Future of Abandoned Agricultural Lands
An inventory of alternative trajectories in Europe

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the **different trajectories** that can be observed after agricultural abandonment?

2.What are the **drivers** of these different trajectories?

METHODOLGY

Literature review:115 papers selected - 135 trajectories (24 countries)

Coding and analysis → Conceptual framework of post-abandonment trajectories. Drivers of trajectories.

Expert interviews (10): additional insights and validate information obtained across case studies

RESULTS

1 ABANDONMENT TRAJECTORIES

Most abandoned lands transition towards **revegetation** (115, so 85% of all cases), especially with spontaneous vegetation succession leading to Semi-natural landscapes.
A minority return to **different agricultural uses**.

2 DRIVERS OF TRAJECTORIES

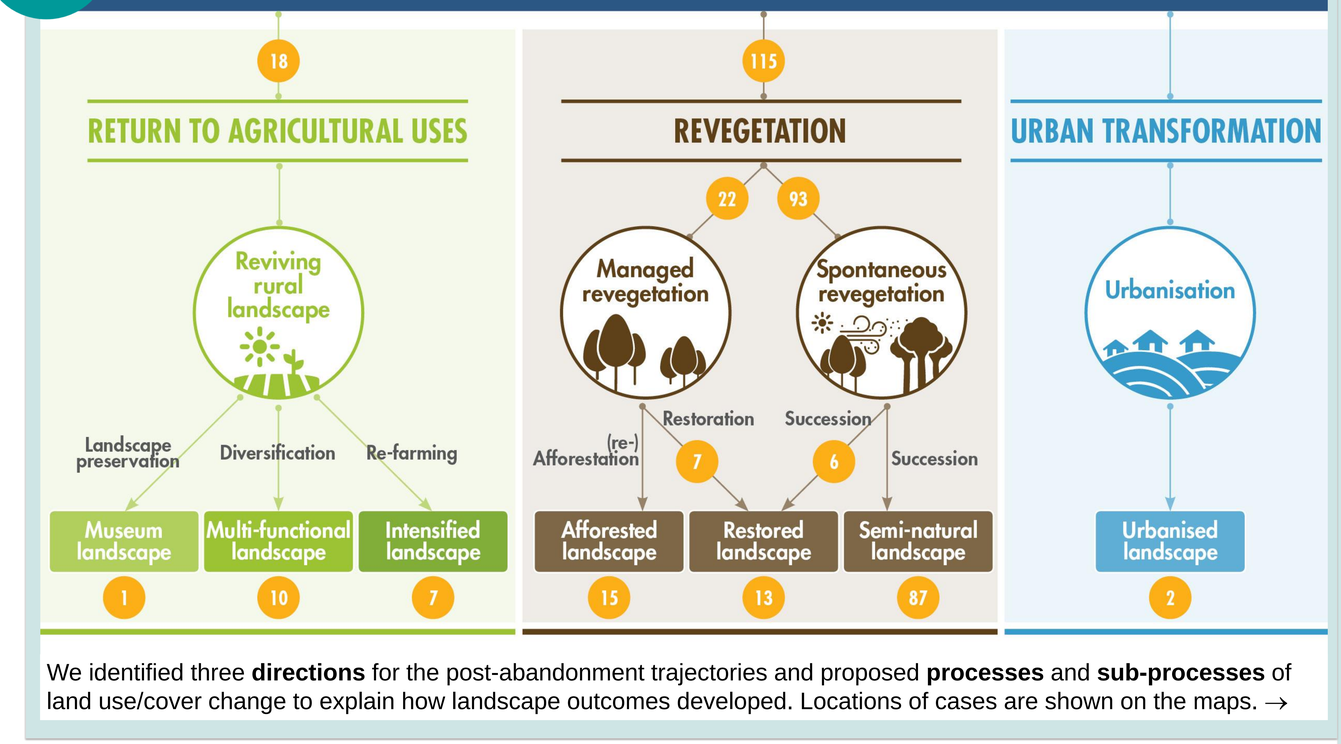
Passive trajectories (a):

Withdrawal of land management is the main driver of passive trajectories (Semi-natural landscapes) and mainly related to limited economic interest and institutional support.

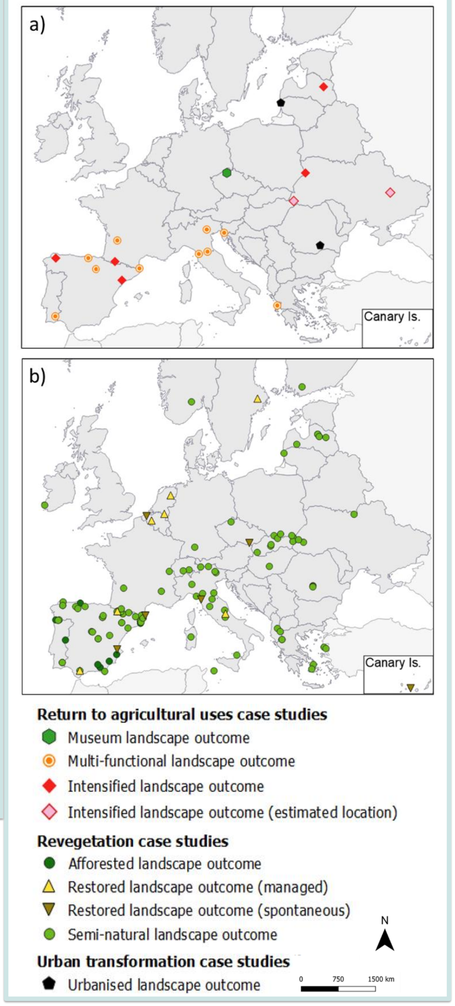
Active trajectories (b) and (c):

Always involve institutional (*at least*) and **socio-economi**c drivers that **support the (re-) management** of abandoned lands, enabling the development of alternatives to secondary succession (e.g., re-afforestation, re-farming, and multi-functional uses).

1 ABANDONMENT OF AGRICULTURAL LAND



We identified three **directions** for the post-abandonment trajectories and proposed **processes** and **sub-processes** of land use/cover change to explain how landscape outcomes developed. Locations of cases are shown on the maps. →



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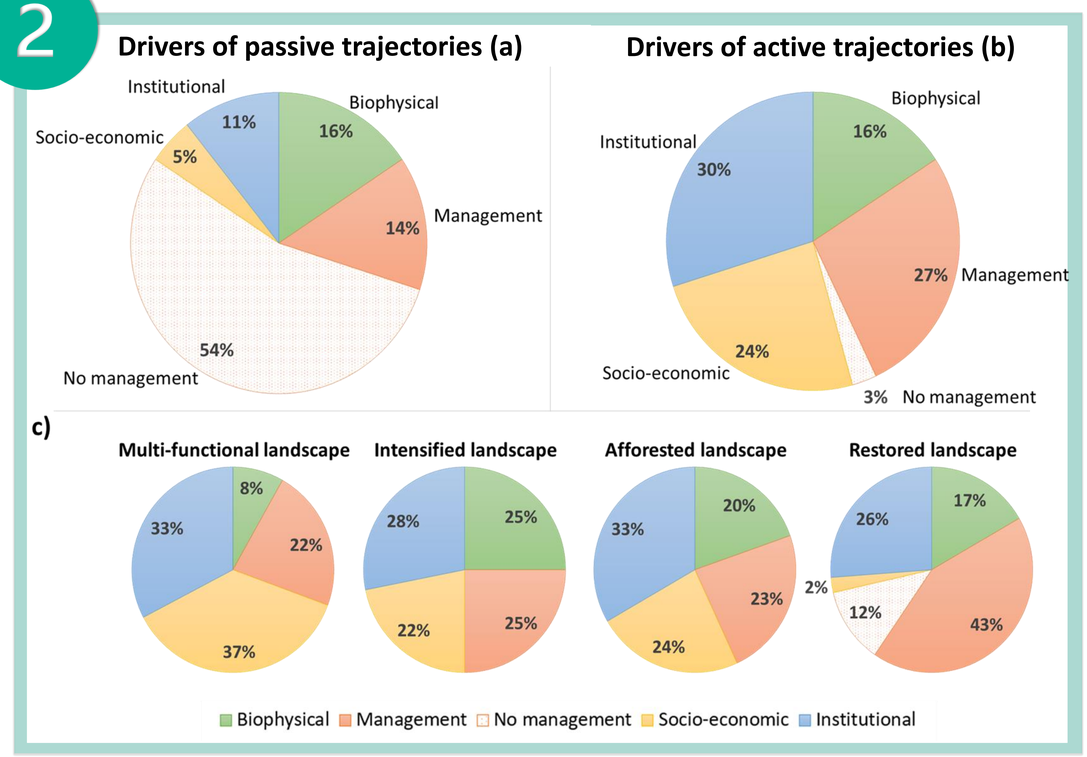

KEY FINDINGS

- **Abandoned farmlands can contribute to biodiversity** and other **environmental policy goals**.
- Environmental policies need to **provide the right institutional and socio-economic conditions** that help move abandoned lands in sustainable directions (sustainable reuse / "healthy" vegetation succession).
- **Assessing local context is key to mitigate potential trade-offs** of different abandonment trajectories (e.g., avoid negative impacts on biodiversity, loss of cultural landscapes).

On Sustainability