

# Maintenance and restoration of terraced crops

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Traditional terraces are almost flat platforms built along the contour lines of slopes, usually supported by stone walls (often dry stone), but sometimes also by simple grassy embankments, and used for agriculture on hilly terrain.

By reducing the effective slope of the land, terraces can reduce erosion, slowing down rainwater to a non-erosive speed. This also reduces runoff and increases the degree of infiltration, thereby improving soil moisture.

This measure focuses primarily on maintaining and restoring terraces where they have historically been part of the agricultural landscape. The creation of new terraces in areas where they did not previously exist is not covered by this fact sheet.

Beyond their agricultural value, terraces also represent a local and landscape heritage that should be promoted.

## Implementation and management

Traditional terraces are used in hilly regions. They are suitable for a wide range of slopes and on land at risk of soil erosion.

Maintaining traditional terraces involves regular maintenance of embankments or retaining walls, as well as erosion control, which is essential to preserve the integrity of the terraces. Only small machinery is compatible with these cropping systems, which means that their operation may require a large workforce.

## Scale of implementation

This measure is designed for a group of plots that originally had steep slopes. The extent of the terraces varies from one location to another, depending on the historical layout of the plots.

## Information on implementation costs

The financial costs associated with maintaining or restoring terraced crops are significant and vary depending on several factors.

Costs can fluctuate considerably depending on the topography of the land, the materials used and the labour required.

Regular maintenance of terraces involves recurring expenses.

## Key players

**Institutional actors:** local authorities, river basin authorities, national and regional parks, government departments responsible for agriculture (Regional Directorates for

Food, Agriculture and Forestry - DRAAF) and the environment (Departmental Directorates for Territories (and the Sea) – DDT(M), Regional Directorates for the Environment, Planning and Housing - DREAL)

**Professional and technical stakeholders:** Chambers of Agriculture, agricultural advisory associations (e.g. Departmental Associations for the Development of Agricultural Structures and Farms - ADASEA), nature conservation organisations, experts and researchers

**Local stakeholders and civil society:** farmers, agricultural cooperatives, landowners, local associations, residents

**Economic stakeholders:** specialised companies, tourism stakeholders

### **Some bibliographical references for further information**

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- [Les Restanques, Guide to best practices for the preservation of terraced landscapes](#). Pays de Grasse, CASA, PNR des Préalpes d'Azur and CAUE Alpes-Maritimes. 44 pages. (2017) *[in French]*
- Traditional terracing, [NWRM project description sheet](#) (2015)
- [From agricultural water to environmental water. Chapter 18 – Terraces and water on Mediterranean slopes](#). Danièle Larcena. Pages 241 to 252. (2012) *[in French]*
- [Agricultural terraces](#), French National Parks. 36 pages (2000) *[in French]*

