

# *Wine Tourism, Agroecology and Biodiversity*



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# The wine context in France

Since the 1950s => **industrialization of agriculture, urbanization + changes in consumption patterns, global competition**, opening of vineyards to **tourism**.

Today, new concerns: **climate change, preservation of biodiversity**.

Gradual **transformation of production methods, adaptation of cultivation practices, modification of vineyards** => landscapes reflect these changes and wine tourists are the privileged spectators.

# Environmental context in France

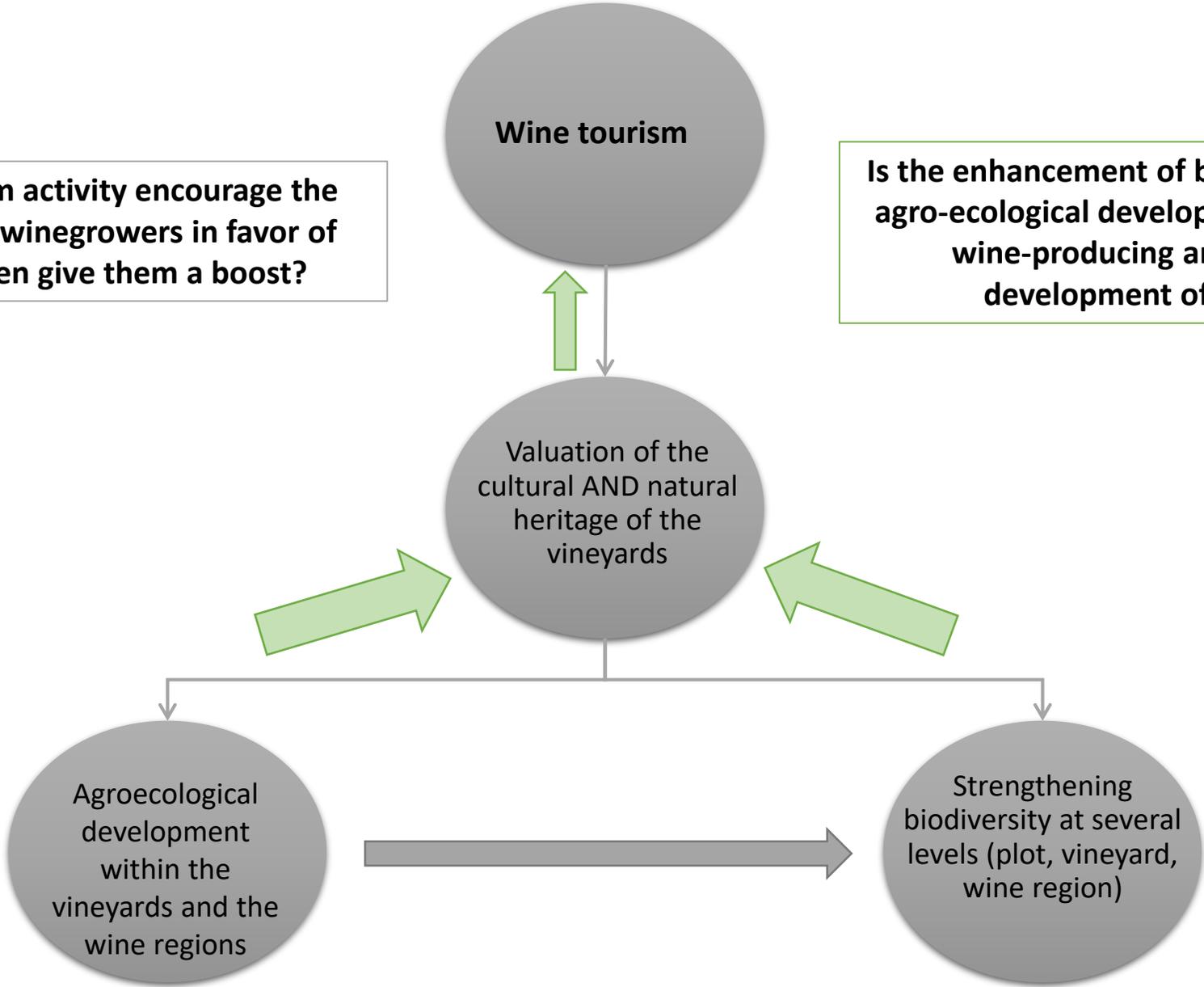
- The environmental dimension is becoming **increasingly important in the wine sector**
- **Winegrowers are questioning the integration of agro-ecological measures in their production strategy, especially under AOC specifications**
- Reflection on the management of changes in practices in order to be part of approaches that are **more respectful of the environment while preserving the quality of products**
- **Biodiversity** is the subject of particular attention in many vineyards (Guenser et al, 2012)
- **Terroir"** includes specific characteristics of soil, topography, climate, landscape and

# Wine tourism context in France

- Wine tourism: "all tourist, leisure and free time activities dedicated to the discovery and **cultural** and oenophilic enjoyment of **the vine, wine and its terroir**" (Lignon-Darmaillac, 2009).
- Necessary **adaptation to welcome tourists** and offer them **relevant services** (Robert, 2017) construction of an attractive offer **valorizing the know-how of the actors**
- Wine tourists are privileged spectators of the changes.

Can the wine tourism activity encourage the efforts made by the winegrowers in favor of biodiversity, or even give them a boost?

Is the enhancement of biodiversity through the agro-ecological development of vineyards and wine-producing areas a tool for the development of wine tourism?



# Aims involving research issues

1

**Identify the promotion or lack of promotion of the biodiversity within the framework of the wine tourism offer.**

- Oral promotion, landscaping, marketing, diversification of the offer
- Possible difference between independent winegrowers and cooperative wineries / between environmental certifications and conventional ones?

2

**Identify the expectations within the framework of the wine tourism demand and the place of those related to biodiversity.**

- General interest in biodiversity
- Impact of biodiversity on wine tourism choices
- Impact of the media on wine tourists' choice of destination

3

**Identify the means to develop levers to promote biodiversity in the wine tourism offer**

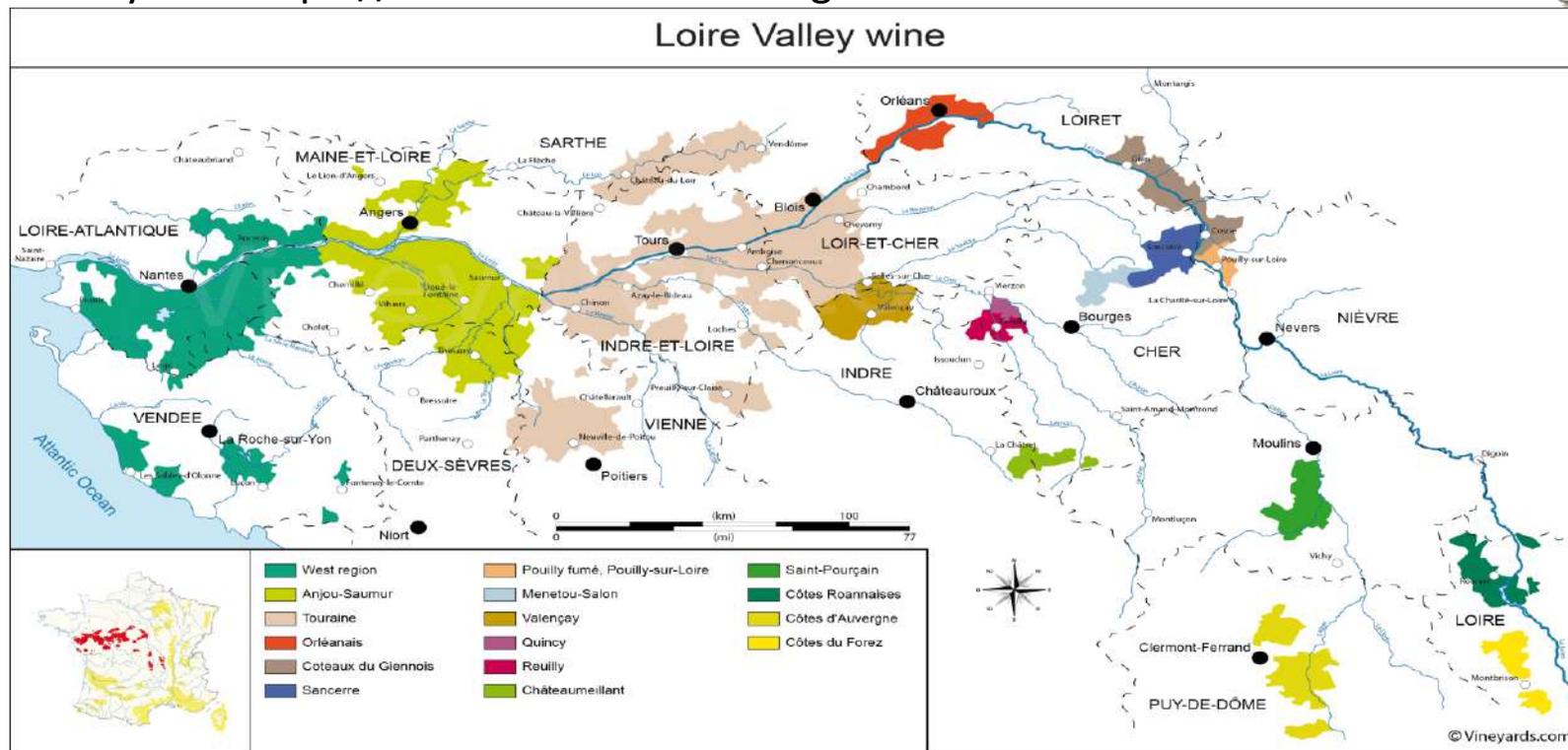
- Challenge of individual / collective strategies
- Identification of the limits (question of the act of purchase, question of investments, etc.)

# Field study in the Loire Valley

The Loire Valley wine region is the largest French wine-growing region.

It includes several French wine regions situated along the Loire river from the Muscadet region on the Atlantic coast to the regions of Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé to the east.

=> Loire Valley landscape // UNESCO World Heritage

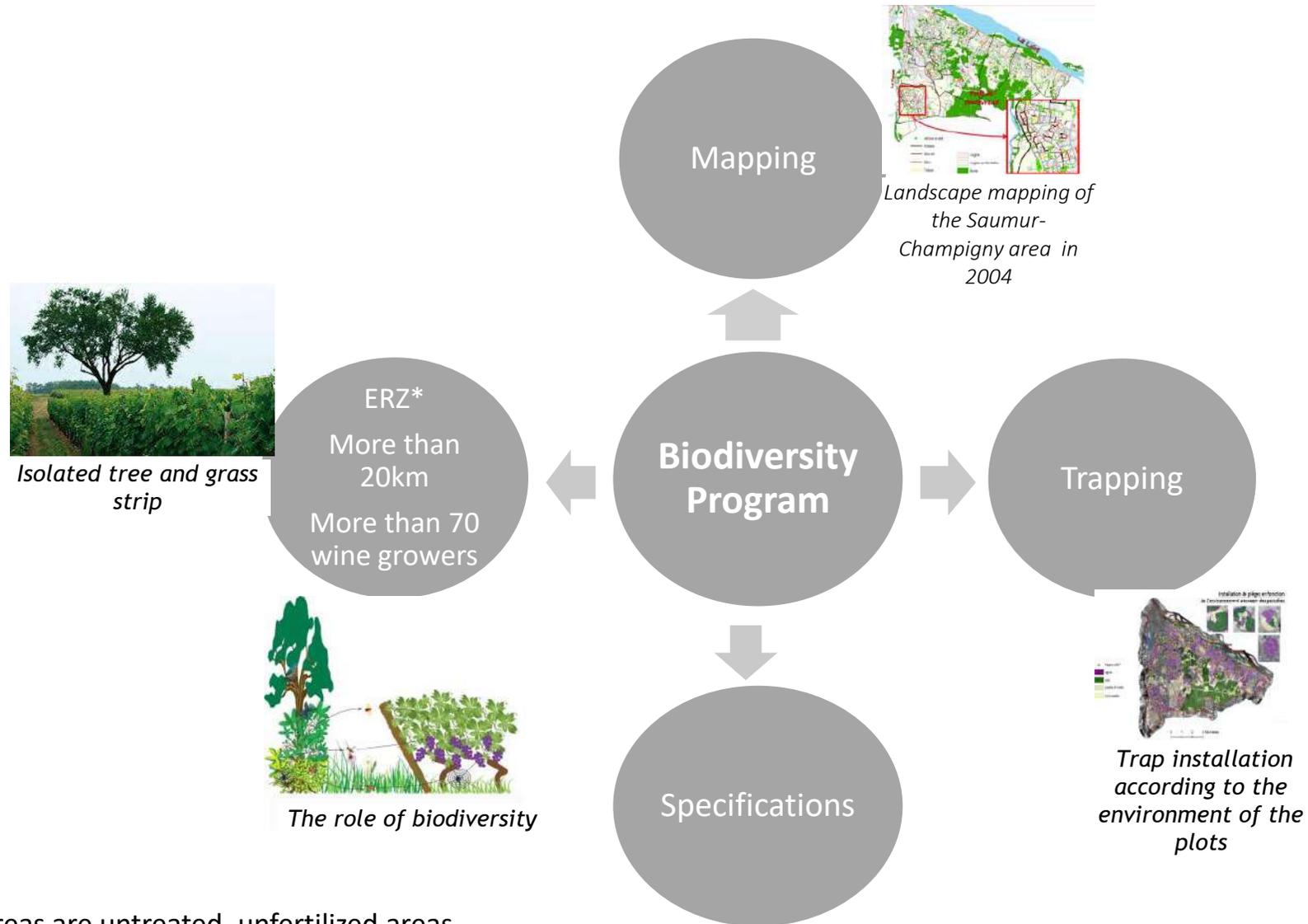




*A first fieldwork within the framework of the project led by the students of ESA in Saumur-Champigny => AVATEC PROJECT*

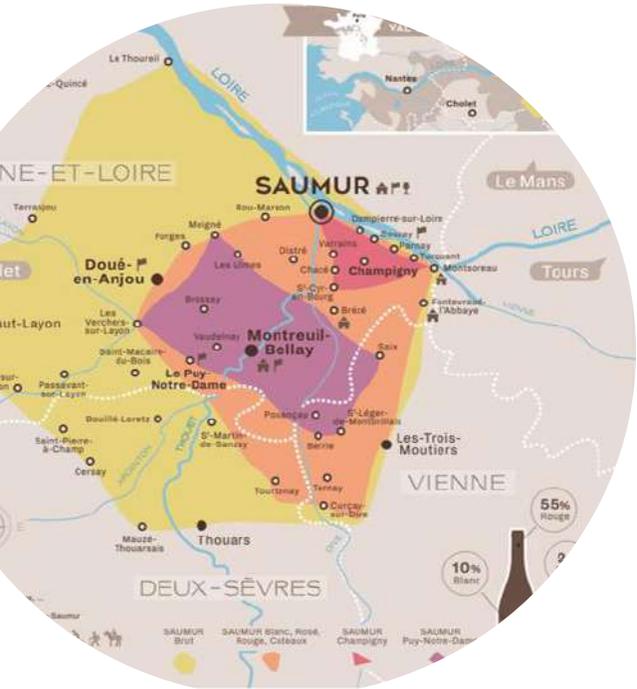


# An AOC renowned for its collective actions in favor of biodiversity in the vineyard and their promotion in wine tourism



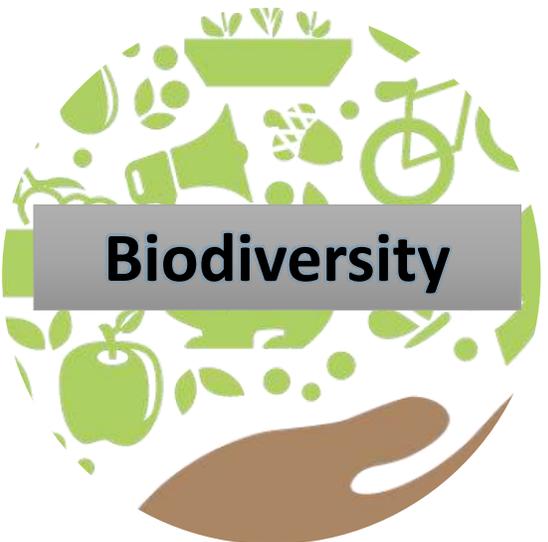
\*Ecological Reservoir Areas are untreated, unfertilized areas, generally not used for agricultural production

## A three-month study focusing on wine tourism actors



- **Issue:** How are practices in favor of biodiversity perceived by wine tourism actors and how are they promoted in the Saumur-Champigny appellation?
- **Objectives:** To study the perception of biodiversity by wine tourism stakeholders. To have levers to better promote winegrowing practices that are favorable to biodiversity within the AOC
- **Method:** Interviews with wine and tourism professionals in Saumur Champigny: 25 semi-directive interviews

# Biodiversity is a complex concept



Fauna and  
flora

**"Biodiversity is the richness of the fauna and flora"** Winegrower.

Landscape and  
environment

**"Paying attention to biodiversity means paying attention to our landscapes and not denaturing them. "**  
Actor of tourism.

Wine growing  
practices

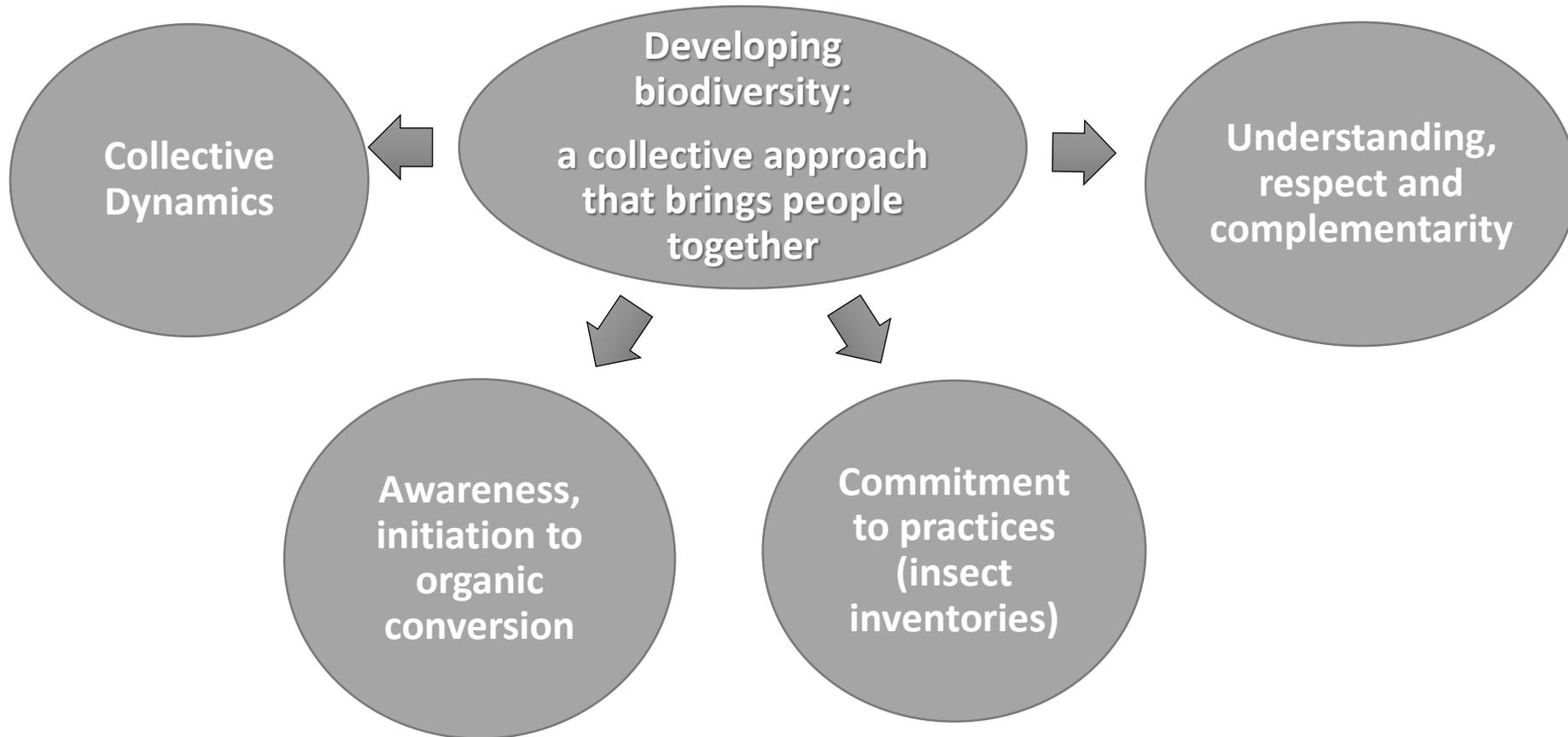
**"For me, it's the grass cover".**  
Winegrower



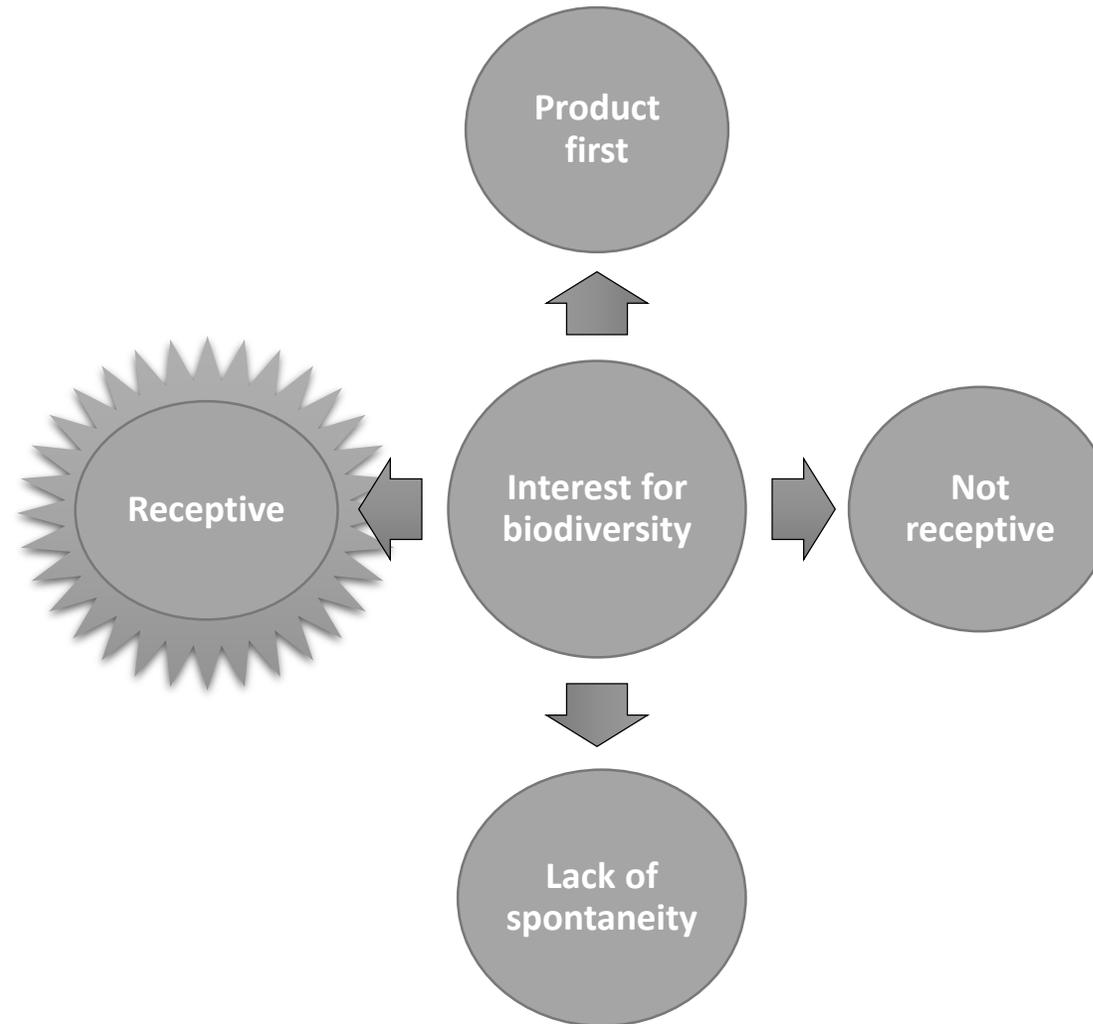
**Confusions**



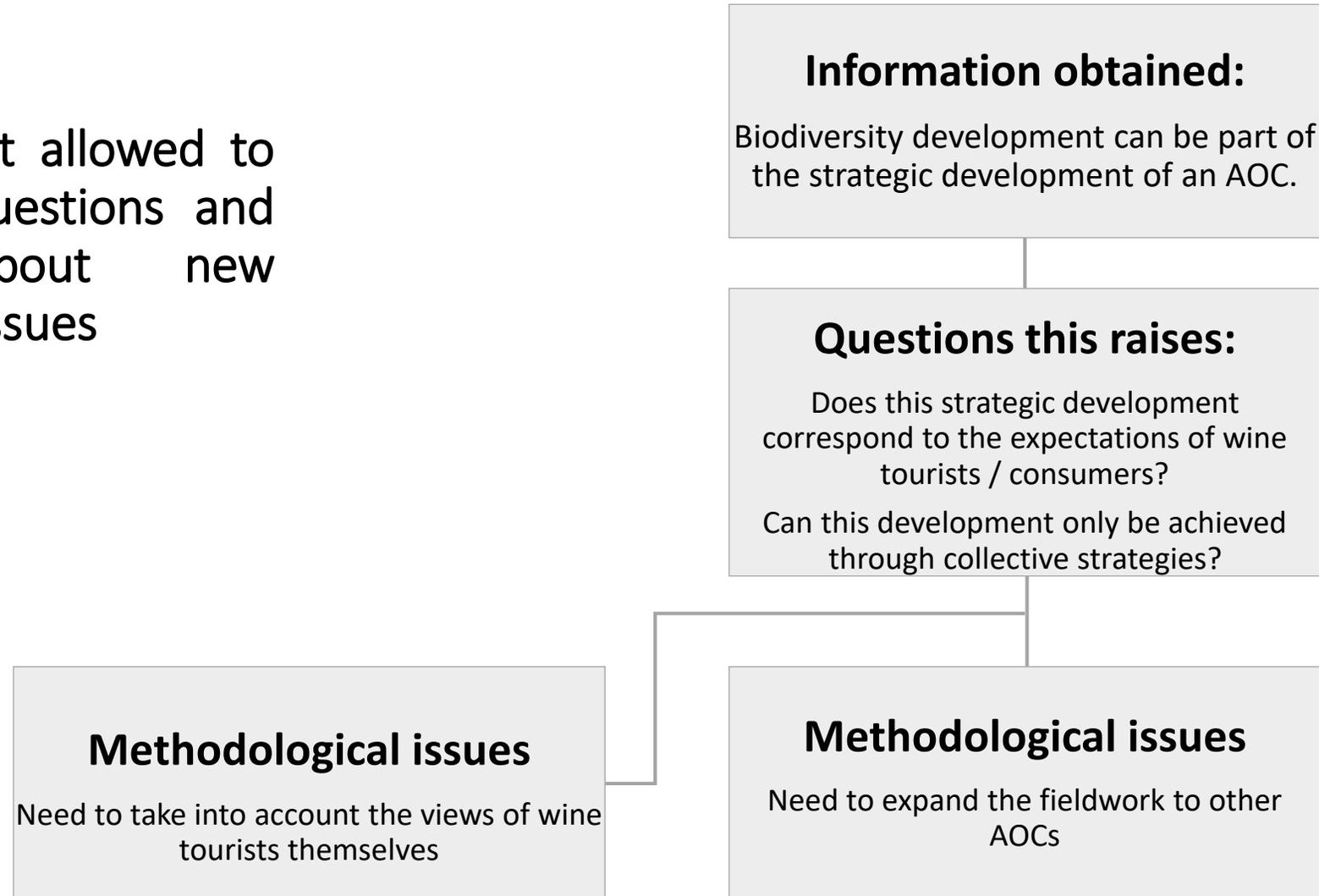
# The importance of collective approaches



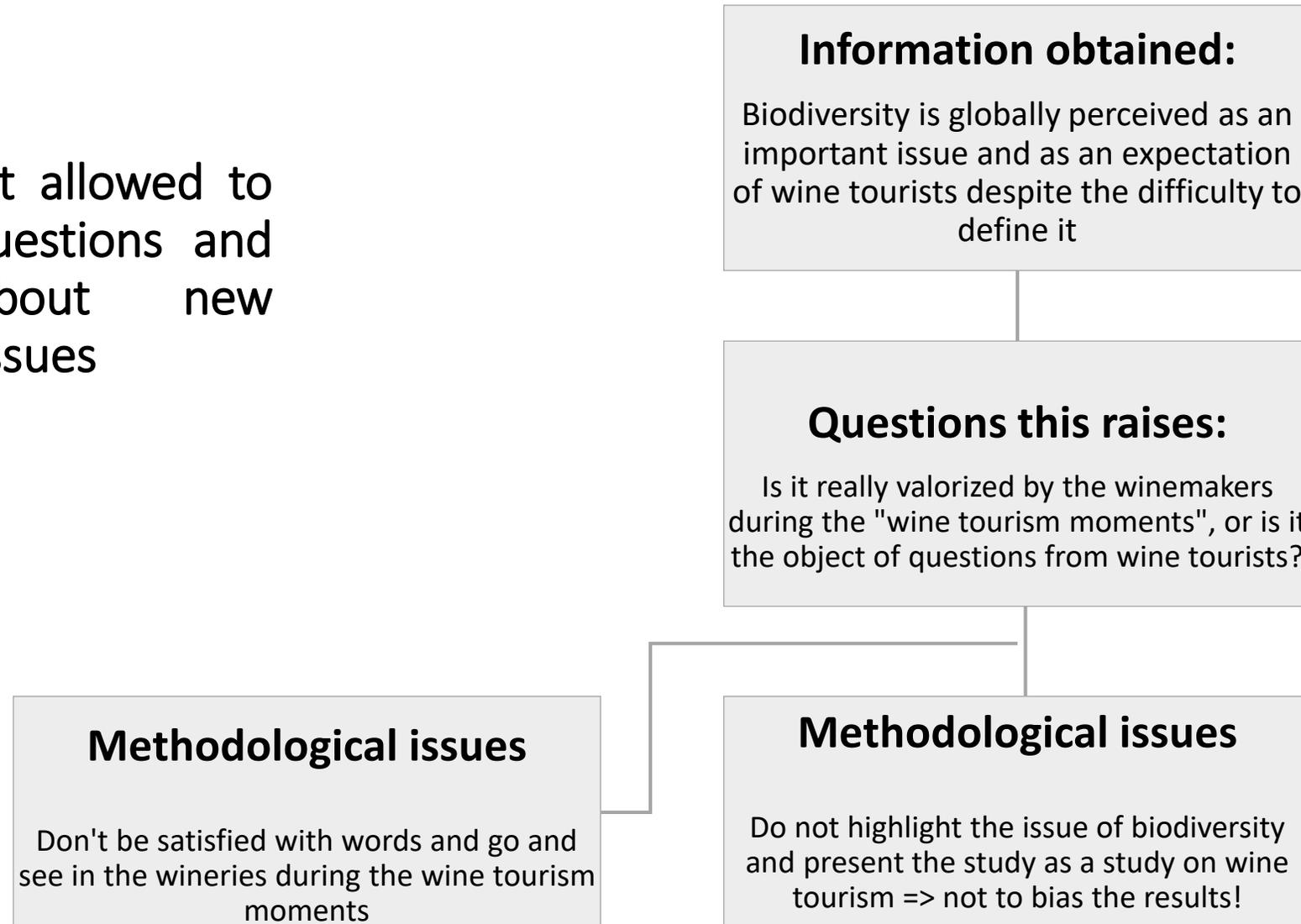
# A variable perception of wine tourists' interest in biodiversity



A first study that allowed to answer some questions and to think about new methodological issues



A first study that allowed to answer some questions and to think about new methodological issues



# Field study in the Loire Valley



Wine tourists  
/ Wine tourism actors



*Field*

Local



*Quarts de Chaume Grand Cru,  
Coteaux du Layon Premier Cru  
Chaume, Savennières, Cabernet  
d'Anjou, Rosé d'Anjou, Rosé de Loire*

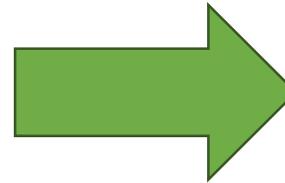


*Method*

- ✓ Qualitative
- ✓ Participant observation
- ✓ Interviews (wine tourists/ professionals)

# Observational approach during wine tourism moments and events

- Observations during "wine tourism moments"  
=>visits / tastings
- Observations during more exceptional wine tourism offers (wine festivals, etc.)
- Observations during visits with wine tourism providers
- Observations in Tourism offices
- Analysis of the tools used to promote wine tourism offers (Flyers, website...)



## **Type of structure**

**2 to 4 half-day observations in each of the 10 tourist wineries**

7 independent winegrowers

2 cooperative wineries

1 Wine House

4 events for the general public related to wine = Vitiloire (2 days), Translayon (2 days), Tempo Vigne (1 day), VVR (2 days)

**2 wine tourism providers**

**2 tourism offices** (Angers, Brissac-Quincé)

## **AOC represented**

4 Savennières

9 Rosés

2 Coteaux du Layon 1er Cru Chaume

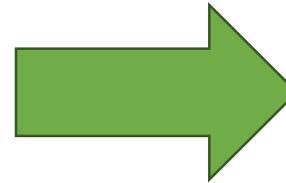
1 Quarts de Chaume Grand Cru

## **Environmental certification**

4 estates in organic farming

# Interviews with tourists and wine tourism actors.

- Questionnaires and semi-directive interviews with wine tourists
- Semi-directive interviews with wine tourism actors



## **Tourists**

112 interviews / questionnaires (~30 questions, 10 of which are open) following the visit

## **Wine tourism actors**

3 interviews of 1h30 with tourism managers/actors

3 interviews of 1h30 with wine tourism providers

10 interviews of 1 hour with wine tourism managers of the visited wineries

For the wine tourist: desire to discover and understand a "know-how", a "profession".

*"We want to know and understand what we are tasting and to give another value to what we are tasting. It's important to discover and better understand the know-how, to find a taste and to grasp everything that's behind the product, the work that it represents. "*

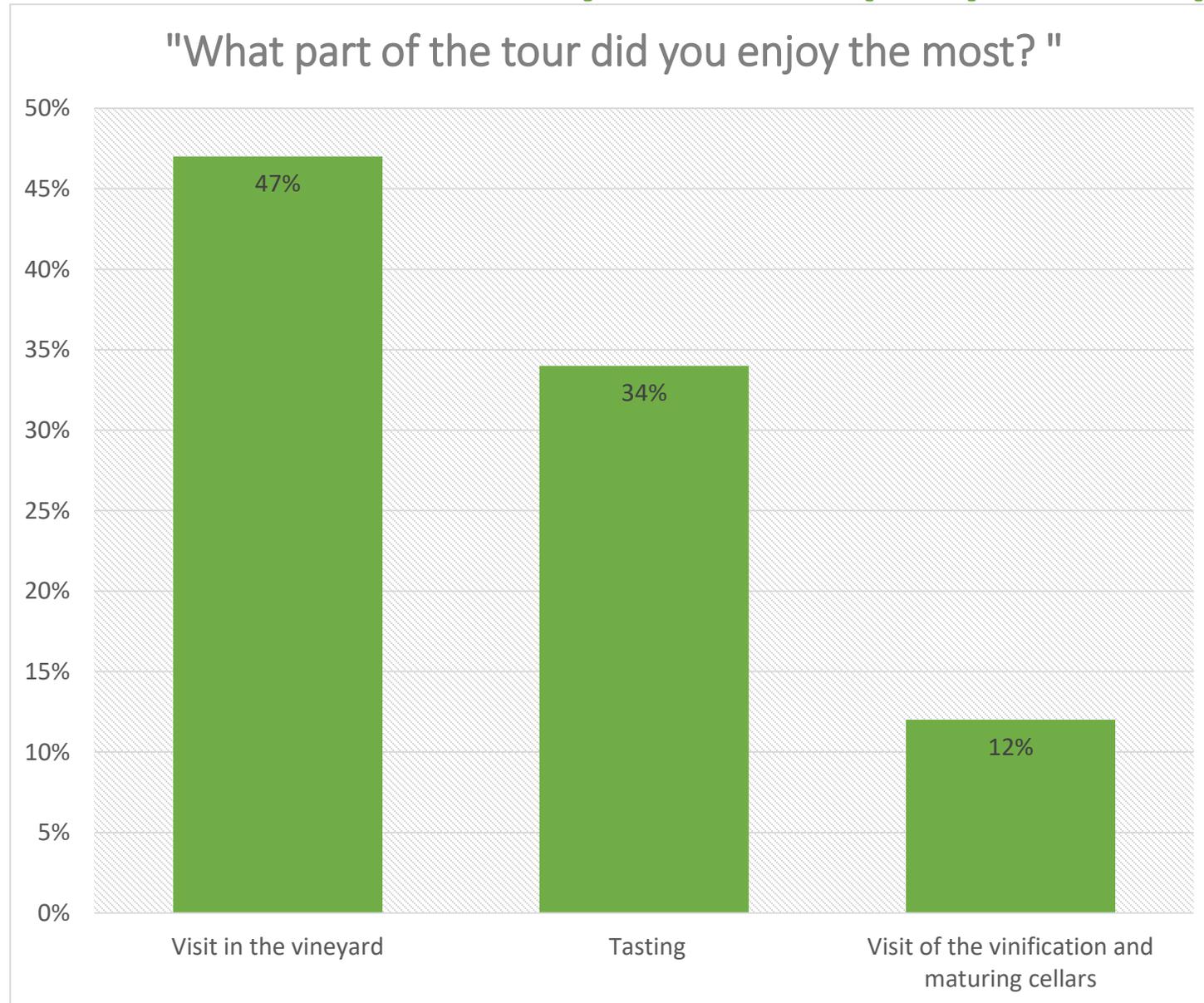
(Fabienne, 51 years old, Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur)

For the wine tourist: desire to discover and understand a "know-how", a "profession".

The words most used by wine tourists to answer the question "What did you enjoy about this visit? "



# The visit of the vineyard, a popular passage



# The promotion of agroecological initiatives



# Wine tourism and « transparency »

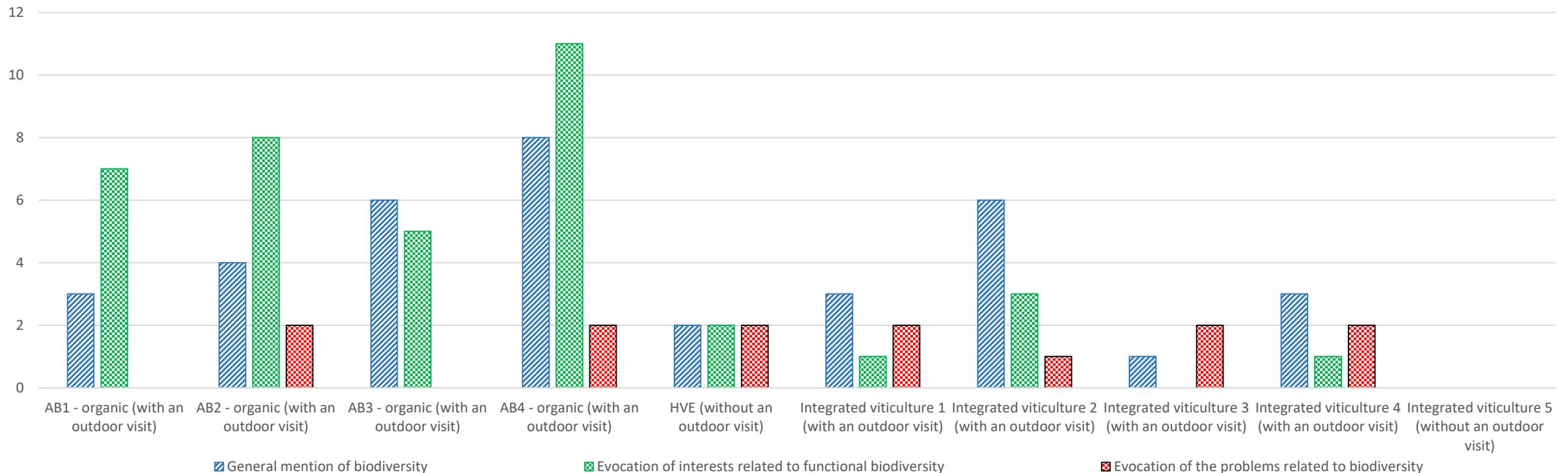
The outdoor visits, in the vineyard, allows them to have a **better understanding** of the wine and the work it requires, and as a **guarantee of transparency** from the winemaker:

*"It's important to see where the product comes from. Here we were in the heart of the vineyards, we saw the source directly. You can't cheat!"* (Catherine, 33 years old, Brittany).

As for the guides (winegrowers or wine tourism staff), there were two invariable elements during this outdoor visit: explanations related to the **terroir** and those related to **technical elements related to viticulture** (vine size, type of grape variety, yield, cultivation practices, choice of certification if applicable, etc.).

# An adaptation of the speeches according to the environmental certification of the wineries

**Average mentions of biodiversity-related topics per visit according to the environmental certification of the winery**



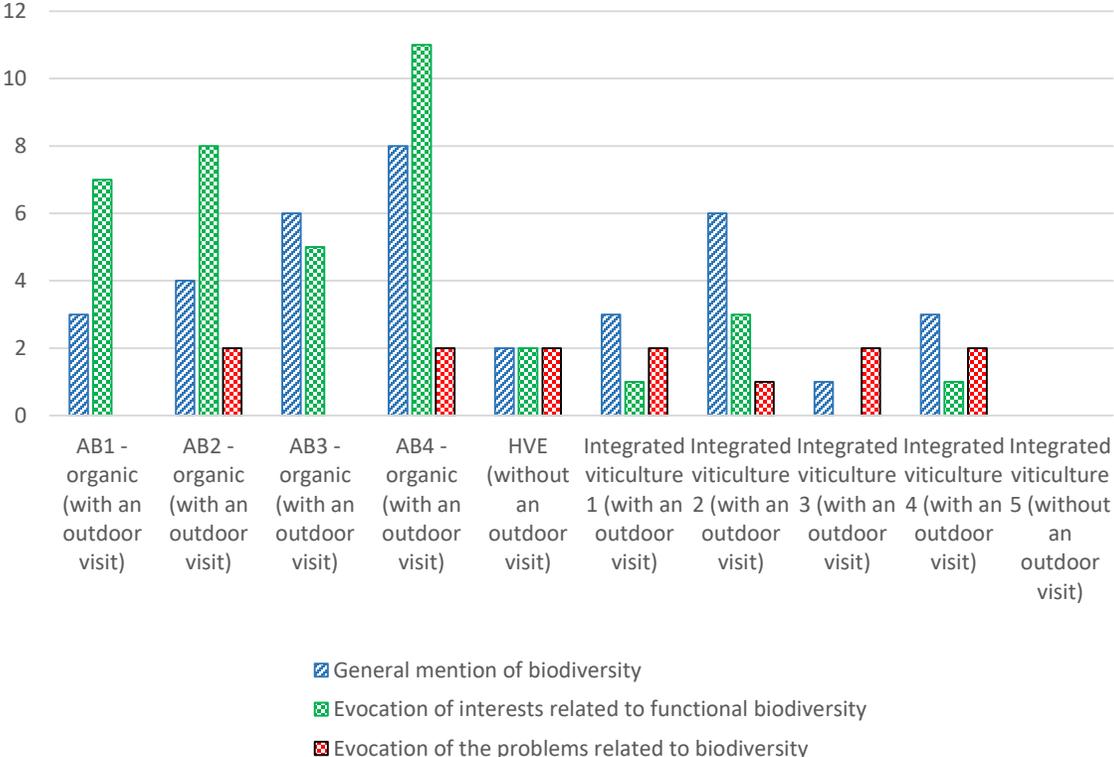
# Highlighting of biodiversity receptacles or biodiversity facilitators

**Roses at the beginning of the plot or nesting box in the trees in the vineyard paths: elements triggering exchanges on biodiversity and biocontrol**



# Communication difficulties in some vineyards

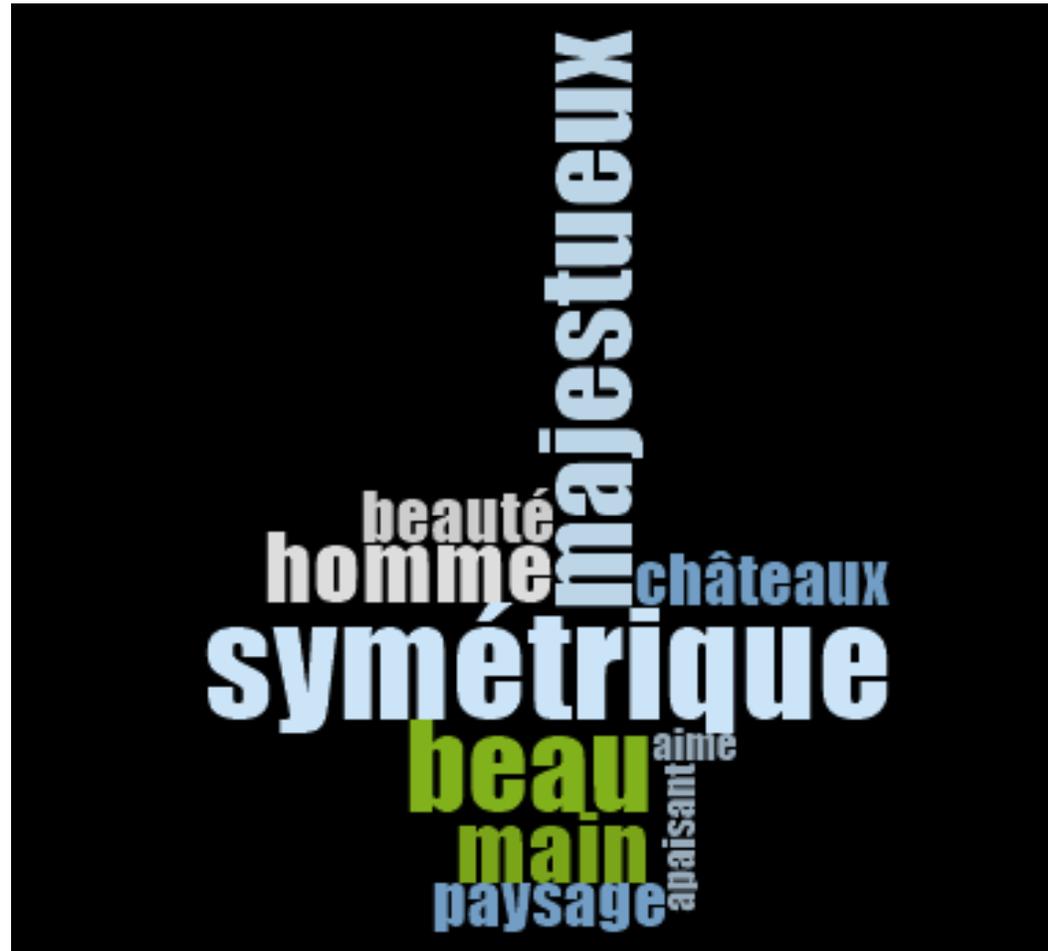
**Average mentions of biodiversity-related topics per visit according to the environmental certification of the winery**



*"We have problems with rabbits, deer and sometimes even wild boars. That's why we have to fence off certain plots, and we also protect our youngest vines. It's a real scourge!" Pierre, Winegrower Integrated Winery 1.*

# The demand for diversified vineyard landscapes

*"How would you describe the vineyard landscapes? "*



# Valuation of "small vineyards" and diversified vineyard landscapes

⇒ in addition to the vines, **presence of trees, wooded areas, wild lands, hedges, even watercourses, but also elements of the built heritage such as walls, low walls, vineyards cabins** is required.

⇒ The presence of **trees** in the landscape is necessary to make it an **attractive vineyard landscape**. Trees are considered as markers of "respect for the environment", "proof" of a "diversified and natural landscape", of a "balance between human activities and nature".



For wine tourists, biodiversity is above all "respect for nature",  
it is also an "awareness"

- What is biodiversity ? Initial **difficulty** in responding
- **Confusion with "organic"** (bio), but change in the answers during the fieldwork => "Biodiversity conference" in Paris at the beginning of May 2019. Important media coverage of the concept.
- **Reduction of chemical pesticides and herbicides is the first environmental concern, biodiversity being perceived as a consequence**

A word cloud of French terms related to biodiversity and environmental awareness. The words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern. The most prominent words are 'nature' and 'respect', both in a large, bold, green font. Other words include 'conséquence' (top), 'différentes cultures' (top right), 'chimique' (left), 'terre' (right), 'vie' (bottom left), 'variété' (bottom right), and 'prise conscience' (bottom). The words are in various shades of green and grey, with varying font sizes and orientations.

conséquence  
différentes cultures  
chimique terre  
nature  
respect  
vie variété  
prise conscience

For wineries: collective strategies have a major role to play, which implies a change of scale and a synergy of actors

### **Biodiversity**

- Implementation of an awareness and support program for winegrowers by the LPO in particular.
- Importance of the referents of the Chamber of Agriculture for the accompaniment.

### **Wine tourism valorization :**

- Real place for the emergence of other actors in the development and valorization of biodiversity at other levels: Interprofessions, AOC, Winegrowers' Unions, Tourism Offices, Municipalities.

# Conclusion: wine tourism, a tool for the agroecological development of vineyards?

- 1. The wine tourism offer allows to promote agroecological practices and dynamics (+ functional biodiversity).**
- 2. Agroecological practices and dynamics valued by visitors, assets for the development of tourism and the enhancement of wine-producing areas**
- 3. Inherent link between agroecology and wine tourism?**

*"It is certain that when you agree to show your vineyards, it means that you are ready to be transparent about your practices. This is also why our wine tourism approach went hand in hand with a restructuring of the winery. We have planted trees, we work with the LPO, and this is part of our values and the image we want to put forward.*

(Sophie, in charge of wine tourism at the AB4 - organic vineyard).

*Thank you for your attention*



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