

Integrating agroforestry into regenerative farming systems using living labs: the REFOREST project

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1. The role of trees in regenerative farming systems

Diversification of cropping systems is a core principle of regen agriculture (RA), but inclusion of trees is not commonly listed as an RA practice. Trees can deliver multiple ecosystem services including C sequestration and biodiversity. The REFOREST project is a coalition of farmers, scientists and industry stakeholders working to promote uptake of agroforestry within European farmed landscapes.



Fig. 1 Poplar trees in an arable field in the LL at Cockle Park Farm, Northumberland



Fig. 2 REFOREST LL locations in Europe

3. Baseline assessment of living labs

In REFOREST our goal is to build living labs that meet the five “CRAMS” criteria (Fig. 3). A kick-off workshop was held in February 2023 where LL leaders assessed the current status of their LLs against the CRAMS criteria and identified strategies to improve their scores (Fig. 4).

2. Living Labs in the REFOREST project

Living Labs (LL) are user-centred, open innovation ecosystems, that allow the integration of research and innovation processes in real life communities and settings. REFOREST will use a network of 7 Living Labs to provide data to modellers and for agroforestry case studies (Fig. 1, Fig. 2).

C	• Co-creation, co-design and co-development of solutions
R	• Real-life conditions for testing and experimentation
A	• Active involvement of the (end-) users in living lab activities
M	• Multiple methods and tools are used originating from a range of disciplines and domains
S	• Stakeholders from a range of sectors

Fig. 3 CRAMS criteria for LL

4. Next steps for Living Labs

Partners across the network are now having kickoff meetings with their LL members to co-create research and learning activities. A northeast England LL is forming to explore opportunities and challenges for agroforestry in RA farming systems in the region.

For more information on REFOREST visit: <https://agroreforest.eu/>
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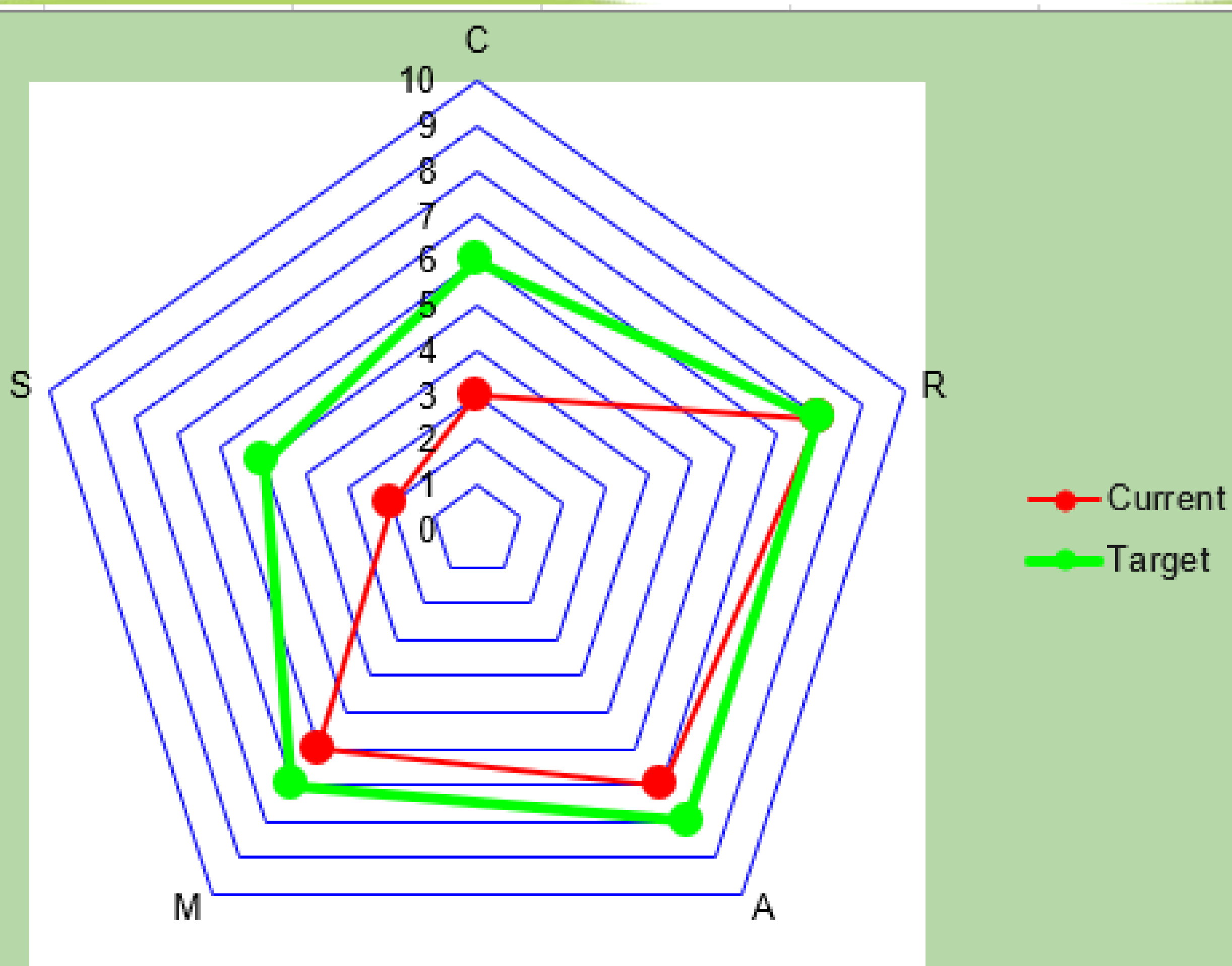


Fig. 4 LL self-assessment - Belgium