A BIODIVERSITY PROGRAM FOR GOLF COURSES

A national study program to improve the knowledge about biodiversity, its conservation, fostering its establishement on French golf courses

Aurélie LACOEUILHE [1], Thomas CHARRIER [2], Philippe GOURDAIN [1], Océane ROQUINARC'H [1], Pierre LASFARGUE [2], Katia HERARD [1]

1- National Museum of Natural History (MNHN)- UMS 2006 Patrimoine naturel, 36 rue Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire 75005 Paris, France   2- French Golf Federation,

Contact : aurelie.lacoeuilhe@mnhn.fr

Study context

In France, the total surface occupied by golf courses is of 30 000 ha. On most of golf courses, playing areas represent about 1/2 of the total surface. The remaining areas are usually natural ones such as meadows, ponds, hedges, etc. Golf courses can thus host a wide range of unrecognized and therefore **underestimated biodiversity**.

Since 2016, the French Golf Federation (ffgolf) and the National Museum of Natural History (MNHN) have entered a partnership. One of the objectives of such a collaboration is to design a **methodological support to develop a database and a tool to assess and monitor biodiversity at golf course scale** :

The Biodiversity Program on French golf courses was born.

Objectives

Assess the ecological issues on golf courses at a national scale, to improve the knowledge, the management and the conservation of biodiversity on golf courses.

1. Develop and share **knowledge** relating to nature and **increase awareness** about the natural heritage in order to foster its value.
2. Promote the **conservation of biodiversity** on golfing areas, improving its integration and developing hosting areas.
3. Raise **awareness** for **ecological issues**.
4. Build constructive **partnerships at a local scale** with biodiversity stakeholders.

Method & Results

Through **3 progressive levels**, this **voluntary approach** helps golf courses to take into account biodiversity.
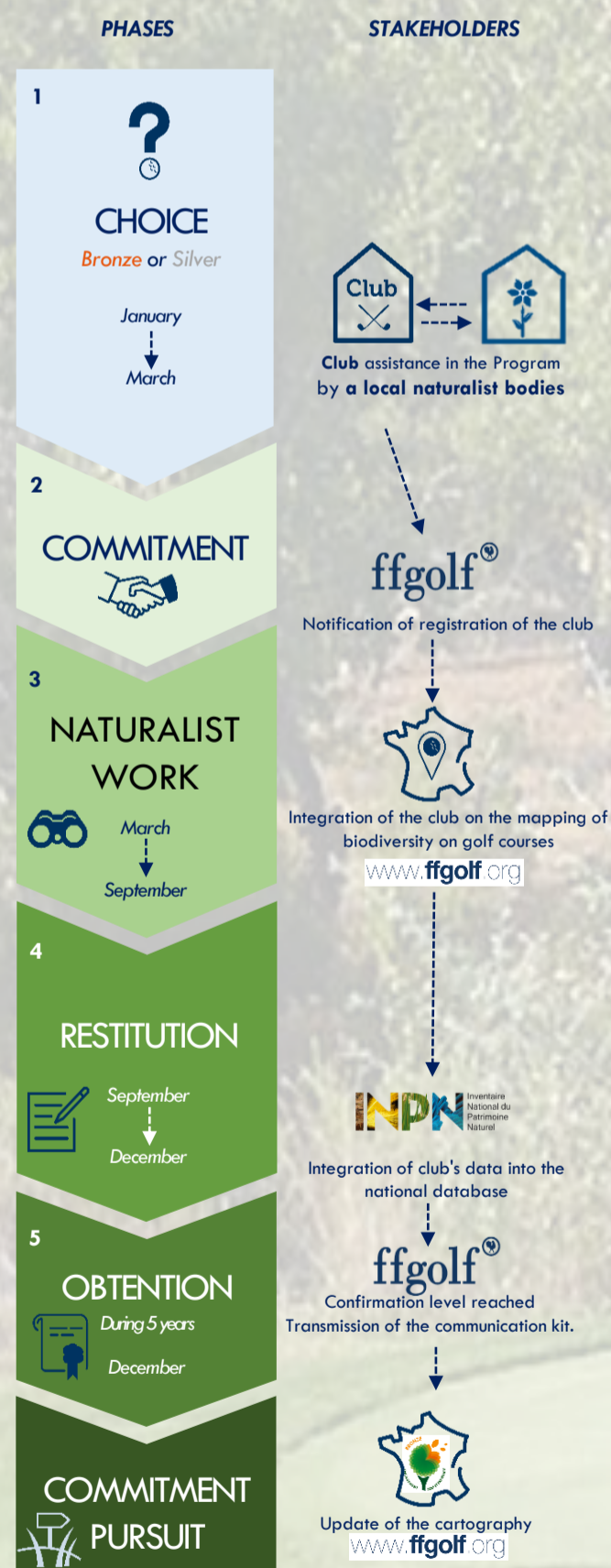The Program **coordinates** the implementation of naturalist studies, with the support of local naturalist bodies.
All **naturalist standardized data** will be integrated into the French natural heritage data platform (INPN: https://inpn.mnhn.fr).
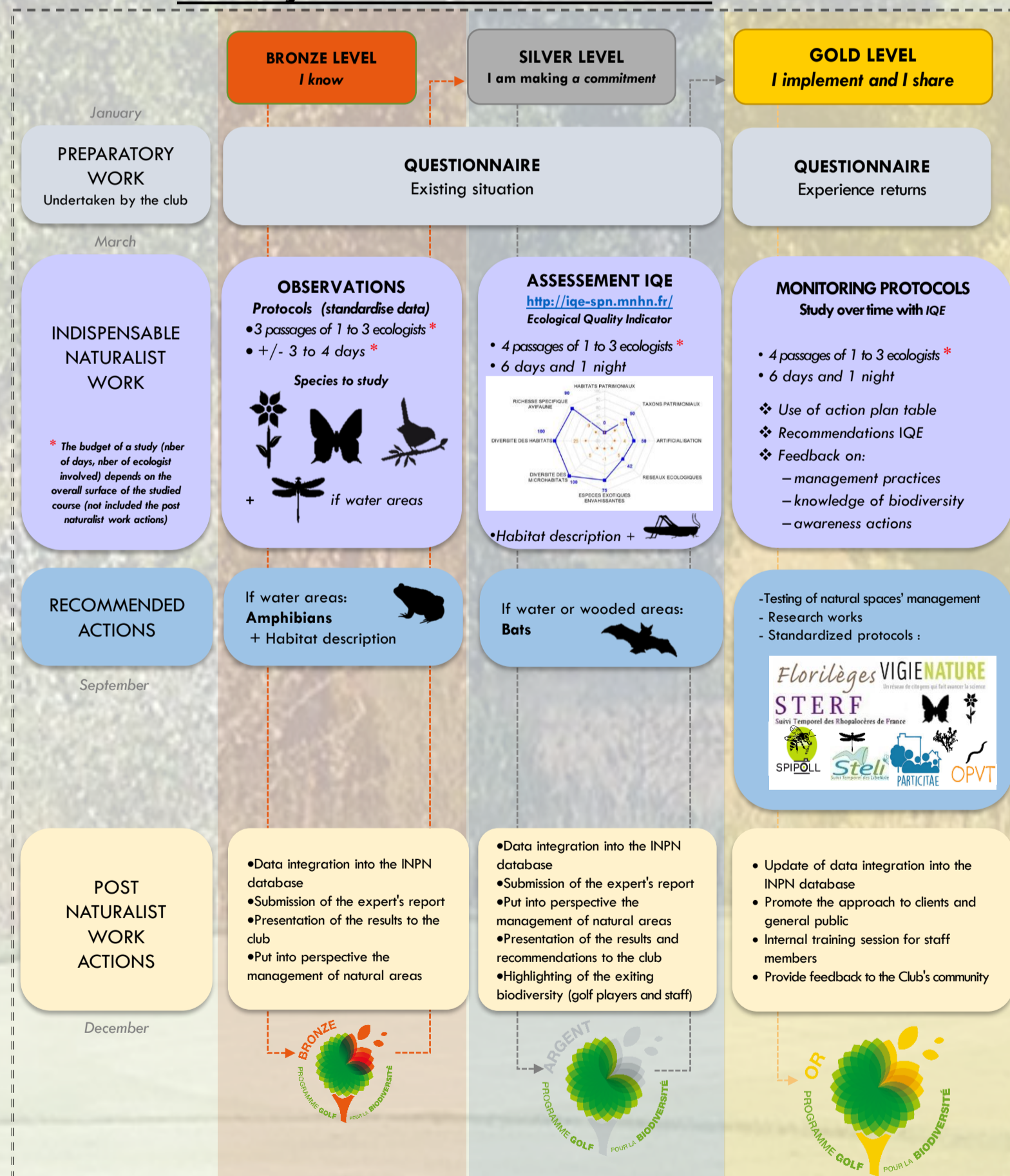Identified **ecological issues** put in perspective with golf courses' management teams who are encouraged to improve their practices applying the recommendations. The Program has already been tested with success on 4 different golf courses.

Conclusions - Perspectives

2017 has been the 'pilot' year of the **Biodiversity Program for Golf courses**.
2018 will be the official kick-off year of the Program and we are confident to commit a great number of French courses.
We are already considering to develop a similar Program for French Overseas Territories with a deployment to foreign countries and many other sports federations.