

## NBSOIL Project: Nature-based Solutions for Soil Management

**NBSOIL, the project set out to change the soil narrative and bring soil health to the forefront through the creation of a strong network of experts and leaders.**

Barcelona, 15 December 2022 - Soil is crucial for sustaining life on earth and combating climate change. Despite its relevance however, it tends to take a backstage seat in the policy sphere.

**NBSOIL, a four-year EU funded project**, wants to change this and reposition soil health as one of the core topics in food systems discussions.

The project is coordinated by **the Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation (IUNG) in Poland** and aims to create and test a learning pathway for existing and aspiring soil advisors. It will equip participants with the necessary tools and knowledge to develop a holistic vision of soil health, with **Nature-based Solutions (NBS)** being the overriding theme. **“We must integrate an NBS approach throughout the project activities and emphasise the importance of soil monitoring and soil literacy”**, highlighted Grzegorz Siebielec, the NBSOIL Project Coordinator.

The **NBSOIL Project will develop a two-year hybrid training course designed around existing soil knowledge, with over 300 participants** expected to take part. It will be available in up to six languages (English, Polish, German, Dutch, French, Italian and Spanish) and will be comprised of both online and field sessions, as well as opportunities for participants to engage with a variety of soil related stakeholders. **“In the process of recruiting the 300 soil advisors, we will ensure that we have a diverse group of participants with different backgrounds and skills-sets that can complement each other and enrich the project”**, stressed Javier Montellano, project manager at REVOLVE – lead communication partner of the project –.

***“We must integrate an NBS approach throughout the project activities and emphasise the importance of soil monitoring and soil literacy”.***

– Grzegorz Siebielec, NBSOIL Project Coordinator –.

The two-year training programme will offer an immersive, interactive and flexible learning experience. It will include an introductory MOOC (Massive open online course) and four advanced modules: soil and NBS; living labs facilitation; digital tools for soil health monitoring, and improving soil related decision-making in business and policy.

Beyond this scope, the project also aims to contribute to the achievement of **different EU Soil Health mission** objectives and to raise a general awareness on the importance of soil. It also seeks to mainstream NBS as the exemplary practice for lowering the environmental impact of soil management

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and to promote improved assessment, mapping and monitoring of soil methodologies. All this with the hope that soil care can be embedded across all land-related policy and decision-making processes.

## NBSOIL kick-off meeting

The sixteen project partners of NBSOIL gathered this week for the first time in a virtual meeting to kick off the four-year project. The NBSOIL Project consortium is integrated by the Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation (IUNG), Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinowie (CDR) and the Institute of Aviation Lukasiewicz (ILOT), from Poland; the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry in Styria (CAFS) and Alchemia Nova, from Austria; Soil Association, from the United Kingdom; the Basque Centre for Climate Change (BC3), Agrisat, REVOLVE and Instituto Técnico Agronómico Provincial (ITAP), from Spain; Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), from Switzerland; the Centre National d'Agroécologie (CNA), from France; the University of Torino, from Italy; and Aeres University of Applied Sciences, from the Netherlands. All project partners are European organisations working to lead the transition towards healthy soils by 2030.

Grzegorz Siebielec – senior researcher at IUNG and NBSOIL Project Coordinator – shared the project overview during meeting and celebrated NBSOIL being **amongst the nine soil projects that will be part of the new Soil Deal for Europe**. Siebielec drew attention to the six leaves in the project logo, pointing out that they represent the six different NBS groups that the project will tackle: cover crops, organic fertiliser, paludiculture, forest diversification, bioremediation, and green-blue infrastructure in urban areas.

Christof Weissteiner – Project Officer at the European Research Executive Agency (REA) – gave some recommendations from the European Commission, placing a strong emphasis on the “next generation of soil advisors” aspect of the project. Weissteiner reminded the project partners that NBSOIL’s principal objective is to create a positive impact.

The Project Officer stressed that **“we should avoid results getting lost in a draw and instead plan ahead for a proper communication and dissemination strategy that goes beyond the project timeline”**. Following the same line of thought, Weissteiner urged partners to make the most of the results generated within the project, and to exploit them as much as possible. As a final side remark, he encouraged partners to make an effort to keep their organisation’s carbon footprint low and activities as sustainable as possible.

In a closing statement, Christof Weissteiner reiterated that **“soil has started to gain more visibility in recent years, from the funding side as well. Project participants should make the most of this momentum and create something great that can really have a lasting impact”**.

## About NBSOIL

The Nature-based Solutions for Soil Management – NBSOIL – project is a four-year EU funded project coordinated by the Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation in Poland. It aims to create and test a learning pathway for existing and aspiring soil advisors – providing them with the necessary tools and knowledge to develop a holistic and Nature-based Solutions approach to soil.

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