



SOILCRATES 4th General Assembly in Ireland Celebrates Living Labs, Farmer-Led Innovation and the Launch of 52 Soil Health Pilot Projects Across Europe

PRESS RELEASE



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Limerick, Ireland — The SOILCRATES consortium gathered in Limerick, Ireland, from 18 to 21 May 2026 for its 4th General Assembly, hosted by Technological University of the Shannon, bringing together farmers, researchers, Living Lab coordinators, project partners and advisors to strengthen collaboration around soil health, sustainable farming and practice-based innovation.

The General Assembly marked a key moment for the Horizon Europe project, combining strategic project discussions with field-based exchanges across the Irish Living Lab and the broader announcement of the final selection of 52 pilot projects under the SOILCRATES Financial Support to Third Parties programme. With a total budget of €1.6 million, the FSTP programme will support locally driven soil health experiments across France, Ireland, the Netherlands and Spain.



**Funded by
the European Union**

The selected pilots, coordinated through the four SOILCRATES Living Labs, will receive financial support ranging from €20,000 to €60,000 per project. Over a period of 12 to 24 months, farmers, land managers, research organizations and local actors will test, adapt and monitor innovative practices under real-life conditions, contributing to a shared European evidence base for healthier soils, biodiversity, carbon storage and climate resilience.

From European Milestone to Local Practice

The 4th General Assembly opened with a welcome and networking dinner in Limerick before moving into a full day of field visits across the seven Irish selected pilots. Participants split into two groups to meet local farmers and project partners, exchanging practical knowledge on soil health challenges and solutions in real farming contexts.

Visits included farms and community-based initiatives exploring reduced tillage, biochar, deep-rooting multispecies crops, circular agriculture, marine-based soil enhancers, compost, microbial bio stimulants, grassland soil fertility, community-supported farming and farmer-led innovation.

Among the sites visited were Loop Head (SOILCRATES partner), Pat Liddane, Kraken Seeds, Eoin Hennessy, Jim O'Donnell, Sean O'Farrell, Maurice Deasy and Cloughjordan Community Farm. Participants also learned about local approaches such as the use of comfrey to produce potassium-rich fertilizer, Korean natural farming techniques to support beneficial fungi and soil microbiomes, and the trialing of calcified seaweed to rehabilitate acidic soils in intensive dairy systems.

These exchanges demonstrated the central role of Living Labs in SOILCRATES: connecting scientific knowledge with local experience, enabling peer-to-peer learning and co-creating practical solutions with farmers and communities.

Strengthening Living Labs, Data and Collaboration

The working sessions at TUS Campus focused on the next phase of SOILCRATES implementation, with workshops and discussions dedicated to the lifecycle of Living Labs, soil data management, ethics, stakeholder communication, exploitation of key results, the use of artificial intelligence, government engagement and the FSTP process.

Partners explored how Living Labs can better support long-term farmer engagement, inclusive participation, knowledge sharing and capacity building. Discussions also highlighted the importance of strengthening collaboration with policy makers and local governments to ensure that project results can contribute to wider soil health transitions.

Dedicated sessions led by project partners also focused on improving soil data quality, integration and usability across the project, including demonstrations and workshops on the SOILCRATES data platform and the management of soil-related information generated through Living Labs and pilot activities.

A Diverse Portfolio of experiments dedicated to Soil Health

The selected pilot projects reflect a broad diversity of agricultural practices, environmental conditions, and soil management approaches.



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The portfolio includes initiatives focused on:

- Regenerative and conservation agriculture practices
- Soil structure improvement and erosion prevention
- Cover cropping and intercropping strategies
- Soil biodiversity and microbial enhancement
- Organic amendments, including compost and biochar
- Grassland management and pasture-based systems
- Nutrient cycling and fertilization optimization

These projects are deeply rooted in local contexts, addressing specific soil challenges while contributing to a shared European effort to improve soil health and resilience.

Below is a full overview of the selected projects:

	Project Name	Entity	Country	Province of the experiment
1	Evaluating Organic Living Mulches	John Kavanagh	Ireland	Tipperary
2	CoverChar2627	Ballyhoura Rural Services CLG	Ireland	Limerick
3	Intercropping with Field Margins proposal	Eleanor Glesson Cussen	Ireland	Tipperary
4	Crawford's Farm	Crawford's Farm	Ireland	Tipperary
5	Maximizing Organic Potential	James M O Donnell Trading	Ireland	Limerick
6	Biochar & Deep Rooted plant for Decomposition	Joe Bonfil	Ireland	Clare
7	Local Soil Fertility Solutions	Sean O'Farrell	Ireland	Tipperary
8	Soil Improvement with Gypsum Optimisation (SoilGo)	Golden Vale Research	Ireland	Tipperary
9	Doonaha Fort Soil Health	Pat Liddane	Ireland	Clare
10	Multi species and application of gypsum to tackle compaction	Michael Patrick O Callaghan	Ireland	Limerick
11	Gortglass Organic Farm Woodchip & Biochar soil experiment	Keith Ranalow	Ireland	Clare
12	Soil Deal for Europe	Carmel O Sullivan	Ireland	Limerick
13	Lurra Bio Soil Living Lab	Lurra Bio Limited	Ireland	Tipperary
14	Considine's Farm soil structure improvement	Seamus Considine	Ireland	Clare
15	Combining the Miyawaki Method with Silvopastural Agroforestry	Declan Houlihan	Ireland	Tipperary
16	Adoption of digestate application and diverse swards to improve soil health on grassland	William Burchill-Sole trader	Ireland	Limerick

17	Groenbedekking in pompoenen	Mts S. en C. Anema	The Netherlands	Fryslân
18	Pasture Cropping NL - CropsInGrass Meer uit Grasland, meer voor de Bodem	KAIROS Regenerative Agri & Food Systems B.V.	The Netherlands	Drenthe
19	SPNA Ebelsheerd als Light House Soilcrates & Experiment Waterbergend vermogen irt groenbemesters	SPNA Agroresearch	The Netherlands	Groningen
20	Veerkracht van de bodem en het effect van mechanische bodemverdichting in grasland	Melkveehouderij Dekker	The Netherlands	Drenthe
21	Effecten van Kopros toepassing in rundveemest op bodem- en gewaskwaliteit	van de Lageweg CV	The Netherlands	Fryslân
22	Identificatie van indicatoren voor mestkwaliteit	Maatschap Aalbers	The Netherlands	Groningen
23	SoilCycle – Nutriënten uit mestvergisting als meststof: een praktijkvergelijking met gangbare bemesting	Maatschap H. van Kuiken	The Netherlands	Fryslân
24	Invloed van productief kruidenrijk grasland op bodemprocessen en benutting binnen de vruchtwisseling	Maatschap T.Hof en G.H. Ruitenbergh	The Netherlands	Fryslân
25	Beter Onderzaaien voor Betere Bodems	Maatschap H.G. Wollerich, H.A. Wollerich-Piest en H.W. Wollerich	The Netherlands	Groningen
26	Vlinderbloemige als onderzaai in zomergraan	Akkerbouwbedrijf H.J. Luth	The Netherlands	Groningen
27	Silicium telen	Mts van der Bos-Weidenaar	The Netherlands	Fryslân
28	Alternatieve vormen van bemesting en bodemstimulatie	Mts. Noordhoff	The Netherlands	Groningen
29	Compostthee voor gezondere bodems en planten	Regeneratieve Landbouw Valburg	The Netherlands	Fryslân
30	La Gelouze Farm	Ferme La Gelouze	France	Landes
31	Améliorer la qualité des sols : Etude de cas sur 3 fermes en maraichage biologique	Ferme Solidaire de l'Ecolieu Lacoste	France	Landes
32	RIVOIRE Jérémie Soilcrates	Rivoire Jérémie	France	Landes
33	Travail Extra-réduit / Régénération / Agronomie - 3D Décompacter / Désheer / Diversifier (TERA-3D)	EARL LAHUQUE	France	Landes
34	Optimisation du Cycle de Vie des Couverts Végétaux d'Interculture en sol sableux dégradé (OCVCI)	Entreprise Individuelle MOULY Romain	France	Landes
35	Pâturage de couverts végétaux d'intercultures (PCVI)	GAEC Ferme de Libat	France	Landes
36	Réduire la phase de transition du semis direct en apportant massivement des matières organiques	ALPAD	France	Landes
37	La diversification au service de la transition agroécologique du Seignanx : expérimentation de nouvelles cultures et pratiques	CPIE SEIGNANX ADOUR	France	Landes
38	COVER'LANDES	GRCETA-SFA	France	Landes
39	Nourrir le sol pour nourrir les plantes (LaNDSoil)	EARL du Biaou	France	Landes



40	CHANVRE : Protocole d'essai pour la lutte contre l'invasion de Souchet des parcelles biologiques et la dépollution des sols	CHANVRE DES LANDES	France	Landes
41	Amélioration globale de la qualité des sols grâce la production à la ferme de semences d'engrais verts et de couverts végétaux pour en optimiser la couverture	EARL BARAT	France	Landes
42	Co-creating sustainable Management Practices for Integrated soil and ecosystem health for woody crops in GRANada province (COMPIGRA)	IFAPA	Spain	Granada
43	Sustainable Soil Management in Mediterranean Vineyards: Cover Crops, Pruning Residues, and Microbial Biostimulation (SOIL-VITIS)	BODEGAS SEÑORÍO DE NEVADA S.L.	Spain	Granada
44	MESIAS - Mejora de la Estructura del Suelo y de la Infiltración en Agroecosistemas Sostenibles	Francisco Javier Roman Marin	Spain	Granada
45	SoilHeroic - Assessing soil resilience of heroic mountain vineyards through drones and sensors in terraces and steep slopes	Bodegas Calvente Sociedad Limitada	Spain	Granada
46	Biochar-Enhanced Compost for Soil Restoration and Agricultural Sustainability COMPOSTCHAR	Estación Experimental del Zaidín-Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (EEZ-CSIC)	Spain	Granada
47	Targeted grazing with Andalusian donkeys for soil health improvement in the Vega of Granada - PAAS-VEGA	Descubrir La Vega para la investigación y difusión cultural de la Vega de Granada	Spain	Granada
48	SpongeSoil - Soil hydraulic bioengineering for salinization prevention and water conservation in subtropical crops	VitaNtech Biotechnology SL	Spain	Granada
49	Soil Architects	ASOC OPERACION ENCINA	Spain	Granada
50	Living Soils Sierra Nevada: Practical Regeneration Model for Mountain Agroecosystems (REGEN-SN)	Antonio Yebra Cabrera	Spain	Granada
51	Enhancing Soil Health in Poplar Systems through Compost, Industrial Hemp Cover Cropping and Low-Impact Biomass Management (POP-SOIL)	AGRUPACION DE PRODUCTORES DE CHOPO MARJAL, SC	Spain	Granada
52	Regeneración del suelo y del olivar centenario (Raiz Lenta)	Niwalas rural SL	Spain	Granada

The General Assembly took place shortly after the completion of the SOILCRATES FSTP Request for Applications process, coordinated by Cnam. The selected portfolio reflects a wide diversity of agricultural systems, environmental conditions, and soil management approaches.

The pilot projects include initiatives focused on regenerative and conservation agriculture, soil structure improvement, erosion prevention, cover cropping, intercropping, soil biodiversity, microbial enhancement, compost, biochar, grassland management, pasture-based systems, nutrient cycling and fertilization optimization.

By embedding these pilots within the SOILCRATES Living Labs, the project will support practical experimentation while also generating comparable knowledge across regions. The results will feed into tools, recommendations, and policy-relevant outputs aimed at accelerating the transition to sustainable soil management in Europe.

The strong response across the FSTP application rounds highlights the engagement and innovation capacity of farmers and rural stakeholders. With 52 projects now underway, SOILCRATES is building a robust, practice-oriented knowledge base to support healthier soils and more resilient farming systems.

Shared Learning for Sustainable Farming Systems

Throughout the General Assembly, partners underlined the importance of collaboration, inclusion, and shared learning in addressing soil health challenges. The Irish field visits and working sessions showed how local experimentation can inform wider European strategies, while the FSTP pilots will expand SOILCRATES' capacity to test and scale promising practices across different regions.

The event concluded with feedback from the SOILCRATES Advisory Board, closing remarks and a networking session, reinforcing the consortium's shared commitment to supporting farmers, land managers and communities in the transition towards sustainable soil management.

Details of selected pilot projects are subject to evolution. Updates will be available on the SOILCRATES website through the pilot project pages.

About SOILCRATES

SOILCRATES is a Horizon Europe project committed to promoting sustainable soil management practices that enhance soil health, biodiversity, and carbon storage, while supporting farmers and land managers in adapting to climate change.

For more information, visit [SOILCRATES.EU](https://soilcrates.eu).

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