



Community Management Guidelines



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Introduction

The **SOILL Community Management Guidelines** – intended for Mission Soil Living Labs (LLs) and their project coordinators and support partners – outline the key stages of collaboration between LLs and SOILL, providing clarity on expected actions and processes to support effective planning, engagement, and collaboration.

SOILL is funded under the Mission “A Soil Deal for Europe” (hereafter Mission Soil) of the Horizon Europe Framework Programme which aims to establish a network of 100 Soil Health LLs and Lighthouses (LHs) to lead the transition towards healthy soils. In this context, the SOILL Framework Partnership Agreement has been established to coordinate, support, expand, and promote this network through different implementation projects.

SOILL-Startup is the first implementation project within the SOILL framework which aims to work closely with the first waves of Mission Soil LLs and LHs and key stakeholders to co-design and launch the SOILL one-stop structure.

SOILL's driving principles (Figure 1) define its core approach to achieving its mission. These principles guide the project's strategy, fostering collaboration, innovation, and sustainability across the Living Labs and Lighthouses.

Figure 1. SOILL Driving Principles

Efficiency and effectiveness

The support structure will be designed and governed to ensure the effective and efficient implementation through functional decision-making, clear definition of roles, communication, and control procedures, avoiding any duplication of effort.

Diffuseness

Through SOILL partners and their members, the partnership will need to ensure a diffuse geographical reach to all Europe to ensure the necessary support to the Soil LLs in their own local/regional/national ecosystems, as well as to further promote the creation of Soil LLs and transnational clusters across Europe.

Transdisciplinarity

The partnership has been designed to ensure high competence and expertise in the key themes and actions to be performed by SOILL through a complementary set of transdisciplinary skills that will be put at disposal of the Soil LLs.

Fairness

In parallel, SOILL will thrive on a fair treatment of all Soil LLs – irrespective of their focus, country, or other peculiarities – ensuring no biases, conflict of interest or discrimination when providing the planned services and support.

Agility

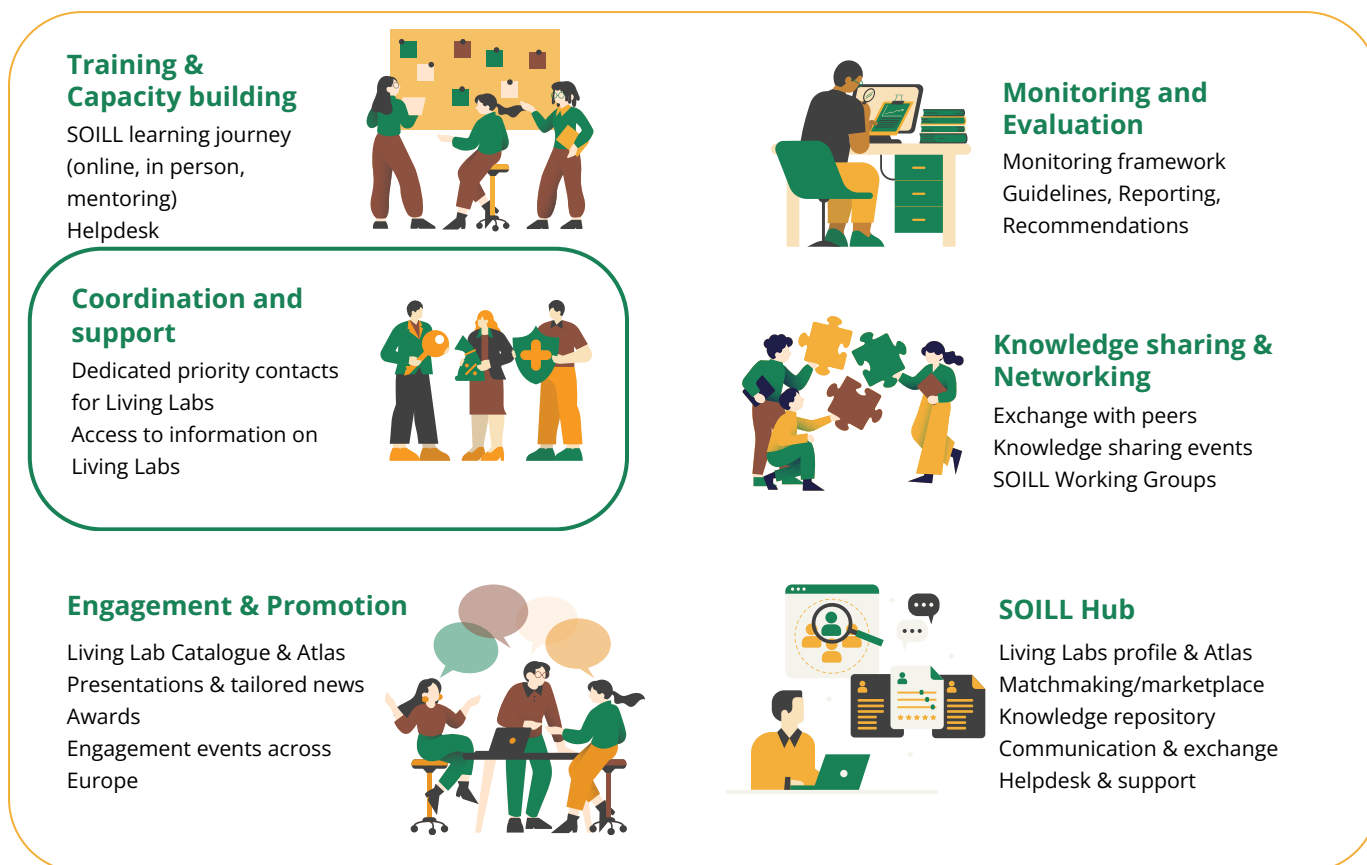
The uncertainty on the characteristics and specific needs of the Soil LLs requires a dynamic and agile approach, to allow co-creation of the services to be provided in alignment to the actual needs and feedbacks.

Openness

SOILL will implement an inclusive approach, expanding the 3Os principles (Open Science, Open Innovation and Open to the World) by ensuring Open Dialogue and exchange with all relevant actors. SOILL will support the conditions for long-term collective action for which all actors and elements of the innovation ecosystem need to be involved in the transition for an inclusive co-development of new Soil LLs and LHs.

Furthermore, SOILL-Startup structures its efforts around six main action areas: Training and Capacity building, Coordination and Support, Engagement and Promotion, Monitoring and Assessment, Knowledge sharing and Networking, and the SOILL Hub (Figure 2).

Figure 2. SOILL Activities & Services



These guidelines are developed as part of the Coordination and Support group action area, focused on managing and coordinating the network of Mission Soil LLs.

Intended as a **living document**, the guidelines will be regularly updated based on SOILL's experience engaging with new waves of Mission Soil LLs, partner feedback, and evolving project's needs. This initial version was developed by analysing the needs of the first wave of Mission Soil LLs funded by the 2023 dedicated funding opportunities, and drawing on SOILL-Startup's first year of implementation. These guidelines will be applied to manage the second wave of Mission Soil LLs funded under the 2024 topics, but as new LLs are funded and onboarded, they will be further refined to address their specific needs and emerging challenges.

Mission Soil Living Labs

COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Phase

01

Onboarding



- Exchange with coordinators
- Miro exercise with Living Labs
- Consortium and preliminary data mapping
- Onboarding survey distribution
- Specific Points of Contact assigned
- Presentation of SOILL at Kick-off Meeting

Phase

02

Project Implementation



- Communication and Coordination
- SOILL Hub
- Trainings
- Monitoring
- Engagement and knowledge exchange

Phase

03

Post-project support



- Under development

01. EXCHANGE WITH COORDINATORS

This phase involves initial meeting(s) and exchanges with coordinators of the LLs projects invited to Grant Agreement Preparation and possibly with the active participation of Mission Soil LL representatives. Facilitated by the European Research Executive Agency (REA) and Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI), such meetings are crucial for aligning expectations and clarifying commitments. During these meetings, SOILL-Startup activities and the planned support for Mission Soil LLs are introduced. Additionally, the meetings serve as a platform to address and clarify any questions or concerns from the Mission Soil LLs or their support partners.

02. MIRO EXERCISE WITH LIVING LABS

Following the initial exchange, a structured exercise with the LLs projects using a Miro board takes place. The main objectives are identifying challenges foreseen for LLs, understanding expectations regarding SOILL-Startup support, aligning Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) outlined in

Grant Agreements, and exploring the interest of the LLs to collaborate with other Mission Soil LLs within the SOILL Working Groups.



03. CONSORTIUM AND PRELIMINARY DATA MAPPING

SOILL-Startup collaborates with project coordinators to collect key and preliminary data and contacts at both the LL and project levels. For LLs, this includes, among other main contacts for communication, land use type, biogeographic region, and targeted Mission Soil objectives. At the project level, Coordinators are asked to provide contact details of the coordinator(s) and supporting partners (e.g., communication, LL implementation, monitoring), along with a full list of project partners. These data will be included in the LLs SOILL database, facilitating structured engagement and efficient communication.

04. ONBOARDING SURVEY DISTRIBUTION

A SOILL onboarding survey is distributed to Mission Soil LLs to gather more detailed information on key focus areas, needs, and interests. The results inform the development of training activities and SOILL-Startup support services. At the same time, the collected data contributes to the SOILL Mission LL catalogue and serves as the basis for the first draft of the LL page on the SOILL Hub LL atlas.



05. SPECIFIC POINTS OF CONTACT ASSIGNED

To enhance communication efficiency, specific points of contact (SPOCs) within SOILL are assigned to each LL within the same project. These contacts serve as a single reference point for each LL within the entire SOILL framework, fostering a sense of dedicated support and ensuring clear and efficient communication.

06. PRESENTATION OF SOILL AT KICK-OFF MEETINGS

SOILL-Startup representatives are available to attend the Kick-off Meetings of the LLs projects upon invitation, joining only the non-sensitive sections to avoid interfering with internal exchanges. These meetings provide an opportunity to introduce SOILL actions, explain available support services, and foster collaboration.

Phase

02

Project Implementation

Once the LL projects start, the engagement and collaboration between SOILL and the LL community evolves into a new phase. Phase 2 of the Community Management indeed focuses on effectively providing support actions.

This phase thus involves different key services and activities available to support Mission Soil LLs:

01. COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

Communication with the LL network as well as with the project coordination team is an essential element of the SOILL-LL collaboration.

Communication from SOILL may come from the SOILL coordinator (SOILLcoordinator@enoll.org) or any other SOILL partner, depending on the topic and relevance. To distribute messages effectively, dedicated mailing lists are used: one for all LL contacts of each project (PROJECTNAME_LL@soill2030.eu) and one for the coordination team of each project (PROJECTNAME_coord@soill2030.eu).

These lists are managed by the SOILL coordinator, set up with the contacts provided in Phase 1, and kept updated over time with any changes communicated by project coordinators or LL managers. Messages are primarily tailored for and addressed to LLs, ensuring that the coordination teams are always kept in copy for information. When needed for coordination purposes, specific emails are addressed only to coordination teams to streamline project management and decision-making.

For inquiries and communication towards SOILL, LLs can reach out through multiple channels: via the project coordinator (SOILLcoordinator@enoll.org), via their appointed SPOC (PROJECTNAME-SPOC@soill2030.eu), or via the SOILL Helpdesk on the Hub (see below).



This structured approach enhances information flow, promotes engagement, and strengthens collaboration throughout the project.

02. SOILL HUB

The SOILL Hub is a web-based collaborative platform that serves as the one-stop shop for all support services provided by SOILL. It is open to Mission Soil LLs, LHs, LL project supporting partners, and the wider soil health community, facilitating access to key resources, collaboration opportunities, and capacity-building initiatives.

- **User Profiles:** Each individual involved in an LL or LL project, including LL managers, coordinators, and support partners, is requested to create a profile on the SOILL Hub to facilitate networking and collaboration.
- **Interactive Atlas:** Each Mission Soil LL is requested to set up a LL profile page pre-developed by the SOILL team using information from the onboarding survey. LLs must register on the SOILL Hub, review their profile, and keep it updated to ensure accuracy and visibility. These individual pages are then compiled into an interactive atlas providing a comprehensive overview of the Mission Soil LL network.
- **Other key features:** The SOILL Hub provides a range of tools to support LLs, including Helpdesk, Events, Discussion Feed, Chat, Groups, and Knowledge Repository. LLs and individuals involved in LL projects are encouraged to use these tools actively to enhance engagement, collaboration, and access to resources.

03. TRAININGS

Mission Soil LLs are invited to participate in tailored training sessions designed to address operational challenges and support their long-term development. These trainings are part of the SOILL Learning Journey (Figure 3), a structured pathway that provides LLs and LHs with the necessary tools, knowledge, and frameworks to thrive.

Figure 3. SOILL Learning Journey



Training topics are based on insights from Phase 1, including onboarding surveys and the Miro board exercise. Ad-hoc requests will be evaluated based on available resources. Training notifications are sent at least two months in advance for online events and three months for the in-person ones. While SOILL aims to align training sessions with key LL and project timelines, it may not always be feasible to meet everyone's availability. Recordings and support materials from online events are made available to LL actors on the SOILL Hub, ensuring continuous access to key resources. The Hub also hosts an evolving catalogue of tools and materials to support LLs in their development.

04. MONITORING

A structured Monitoring and Evaluation framework is integrated into the SOILL Hub to help LLs track progress, assess performance, and support continuous learning. In line with the Monitor, Evaluate, and Learn approach, the framework enables LLs to track progress and alignment to Mission Soil objectives (Monitor), identify challenges and assess performance trends (Evaluate), and translate insights into strategies for continuous improvement and better soil health outcomes (Learn). This assessment cycle is mandatory for all Mission Soil Living Labs and takes place annually in the first quarter of the year. LLs are required to complete a self-assessment survey and qualitative questionnaire on the SOILL Hub to contribute to streamlined data collection and analysis. More information on the SOILL Monitoring and Evaluation framework and process is available in the dedicated SOILL guidelines for LLs.



05. ENGAGEMENT AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Active engagement, knowledge exchange, and collaboration are essential to maximise the benefits of SOILL activities and contribute to their co-design. LLs and project coordinators are invited to actively participate in key engagement activities to foster collaboration, share knowledge, and strengthen coordination across the network.

- **Annual Engagement Events:** Mission Soil LLs and LHs are invited to the SOILL annual engagement events, often held alongside major gatherings like the European Mission Soil Week. These events provide opportunities for LLs to network, exchange knowledge, and showcase their initiatives and results, fostering collaboration and strengthening engagement within the community.
- **SOILL Working Groups:** From the end of 2025, LLs and LHs will have the opportunity to join and, where relevant, coordinate thematic SOILL Working Groups to engage in cross-project collaboration and peer learning.
- **Regular Meetings with Project Coordinators:** Held every three months, these meetings allow project coordinators to review progress, address challenges, and refine support strategies for Mission Soil LLs, ensuring continuous alignment with project objectives.

Phase

03

Project Implementation

Under development



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WELCOME TO THE SOILL COMMUNITY

Check our website to find materials and resources to support the Mission Soil Living Labs and Lighthouses and foster collaborations with stakeholders.



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