



**FACTSHEET**

# EU Soil Mission Living Labs and Lighthouses for Soil Health: ***Funding Opportunities***



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the European Union



## EU Mission 'A Soil Deal for Europe'

Life on Earth depends on healthy soils. Soils are not only the foundation of our food systems. They also provide clean water and habitats for biodiversity while contributing to climate resilience. Between 60 and 70% of EU soils are unhealthy; one centimetre of soil can take hundreds of years to form but can be lost in just a single rainstorm or industrial incident.

### European Commission

The European Commission launched the Mission 'A Soil Deal for Europe' - Horizon Europe programme - **to create 100 Living Labs and Lighthouses** to lead the transition to healthy soils by 2030\*.

## The Mission will

- Create knowledge and solutions for soil health,
- Advance the development of a harmonised framework for soil monitoring in Europe,
- Increase people's awareness of the vital importance of soils,
- Support the EU's ambition to lead on global commitments, notably the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and contribute to the **European Green Deal** targets.

## The 8 Mission Objectives

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ① Reduce desertification                             | ⑤ Prevent erosion                                     |
| ② Conserve soil organic carbon stocks                | ⑥ Improve soil structure to enhance soil biodiversity |
| ③ Stop soil sealing & increase re-use of urban soils | ⑦ Reduce the EU global footprint on soils             |
| ④ Reduce soil pollution and enhance restoration      | ⑧ Improve soil literacy in society                    |



User-centered, place-based, and transdisciplinary research and innovation ecosystems, which involve land managers, scientists, and other relevant partners in systemic research and codesign, testing, monitoring, and evaluation of solutions, in real-life settings, to improve their effectiveness for soil health and accelerate adoption.



Places for demonstration of solutions, training, and communication that are exemplary in their performance in terms of soil health improvement.



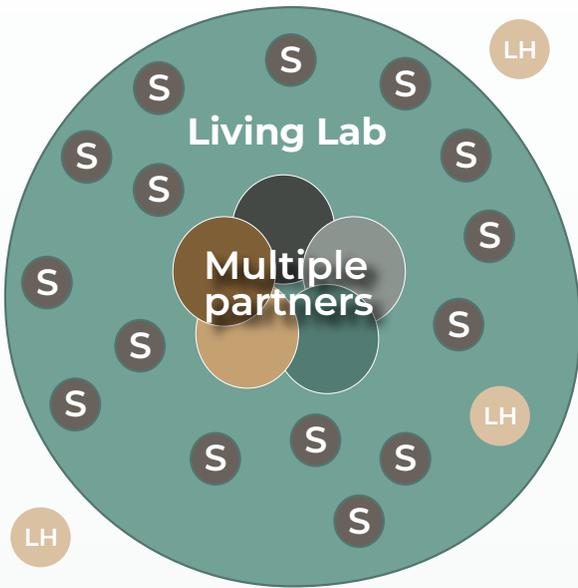
\*For more information on the Soil Mission Implementation Plan

## Why Living Labs?

Living Labs and Lighthouses are key to accelerating the adoption of sustainable practices by users and developing solutions adapted to local conditions.

- involvement of the (end-) users in living lab activities so that they can have a clear impact on the innovation process;
- co-creation, co-design, and co-development of solutions;
- testing and experimentation in real-life conditions;
- participation of a multiplicity of stakeholders (land managers, technology providers, service providers, relevant institutional actors, professional or residential end users);
- use of multiple methods and tools from a range of disciplines and domains.





LH = Lighthouse  
S = Living Lab Experimentation Site



Collaborations between multiple partners that operate at the **regional or sub-regional level** and coordinate experiments on several sites within a regional or sub-regional area.

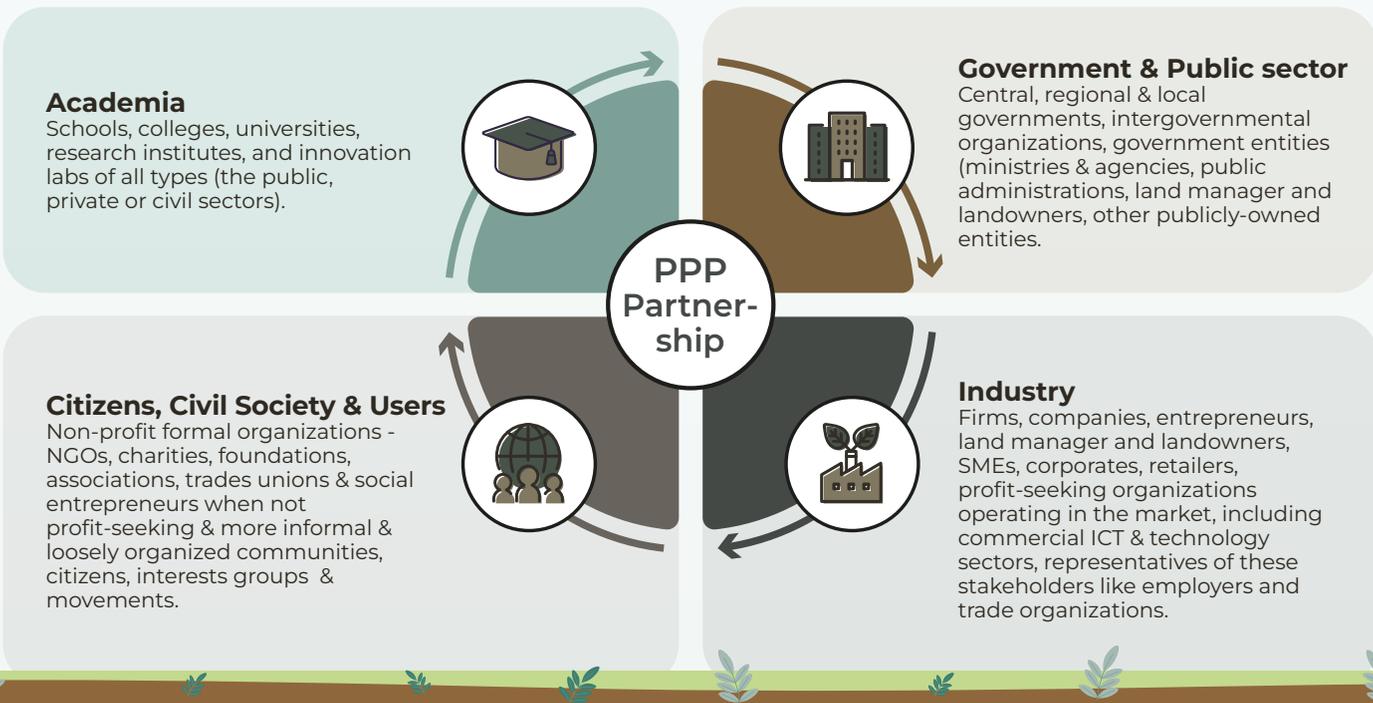


**Local sites** (one farm, one forest exploitation, one industrial site, one urban city green area, etc.) that can be included in a Living Lab area or be situated outside a living lab area.

## The Quadruple Helix

An essential characteristic of the Living Lab methodology is the **user-centric approach**, with the involvement of all relevant actors and end-users. While the specific actors will differ according to the Living Lab focus, objective, and context, all the actors can be classified according to the Quadruple Helix Model which is an extension of the typical Public Private Partnership.

The Quadruple Helix Model involves representatives from all members of society. These together form what we call **Public Private People Partnership (PPPP)** that enables real co-creation and impact.



## Types of Living Labs



### Criteria to identify: Living Labs

<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Innovation, co-creation, formal learning</b></li> <li>• Contribution to <b>societal challenges</b></li> <li>• <b>Improving soil health and related ecosystem services</b> (mission objectives)</li> </ul>
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Co-creation, co-development &amp; experimentation</b> of innovations improving soil health and related ESS</li> <li>• <b>Research on the impact of these innovative practices on ecosystems</b></li> <li>• <b>Networking and knowledge</b> exchange</li> <li>• <b>Demonstration</b> (in particular Lighthouses)</li> </ul>
<b>Participants</b>	<p><b>Public Private People Partnership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Real soil managers</b> (farmers, advisors, foresters, city greens managers, allotment holders, etc.) to be at the center of the innovation process.</li> <li>• <b>Other stakeholders:</b> Associations and organizations with interest in soil health, local or regional government, scientists from variety of fields outside soils (natural sciences, social and behavioral sciences), wider public.</li> </ul>
<b>Context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple disciplines (transdisciplinary, inc. social sciences), <b>methods, dimensions</b> (technical, economic, social)</li> <li>• <b>Place-based</b> approach and <b>real-life context</b> = real farms/forest/urban sites</li> <li>• <b>Robust scientific setup for ecosystem assessment</b></li> <li>• <b>Openness</b>, communication, dissemination</li> </ul>

### Criteria to identify: Lighthouses



As Lighthouses are sites achieving exemplary performance in terms of soil health improvement, the criteria for selecting them will be based on the **mission objectives**, indicators, and thresholds as defined by the monitoring programme:

- **Demonstration, dissemination, and promotion** to soil managers, the public, and the policy arena, at the landscape scale and beyond, of land-use systems that satisfy criteria for sustainable development, in particular in terms of soil health and related ecosystem services.
- Reaching out to the **policy arena** linking results of the Lighthouses to environmental rules and regulations. This is in line with science-based policy support and governance.



## Research and Innovation and other actions to support the implementation of mission A Soil Deal for Europe

### Soil health (0101) HORIZON-MISS-2024-SOIL-01-01: Co-creating solutions for soil health in Living Labs

**Expected Outcomes:**

- Increased capacities for participatory, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary R&I across EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries, allowing for effective cooperation and collaboration among research, practice and policy to co-create and test solutions for soil health.
- Enhancement of soil health in rural or urban areas where living labs are deployed, based on an established monitoring framework.
- Practice-oriented knowledge and tools are more easily available to land managers and contribute to an enhanced consideration and uptake of effective solutions for soil health and related ecosystem services across territories and sectors, in regions where the selected living labs are operating.
- Policy makers in the EU and Associated Countries are more aware of local needs and differences with regard to soil health and can use this knowledge to design more effective policies.

**Budget: 36 M€ (12M€ per project)**

**Three projects expected to be funded**

### Urban Areas (0102) HORIZON-MISS-2024-SOIL-01-02: Living Labs in urban areas for healthy soils

**Expected Outcomes:**

- Increased capacities for participatory, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary R&I across EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries, allowing for effective cooperation and collaboration among research, practice and policy to co-create and test solutions for soil health.
- Enhancement of soil health in rural or urban areas where living labs are deployed, based on an established monitoring framework.
- Practice-oriented knowledge, tools and techniques are more easily available to urban communities, local city councils/regions and land managers and contribute to an enhanced consideration and uptake of effective solutions for soil health and related ecosystem services across across neighbourhood/communities, territories and sectors, in regions where the selected living labs are operating.
- Policy makers in the EU and Associated Countries are more aware of local needs and differences with regards to soil health and can use this knowledge to design more effective policies.

**Budget: 12 M€**

**One project expected to be funded**

### Deadline for applications:

8 October 2024 - 17:00 Brussels time

- Single-stage submission via the Funding & Tenders Portal.
- Research and Innovation Actions: 100% funding for any actor.
- Set up 4 to 5 Living Labs (or more, as applicable to the land use(s) and purpose of the project) for each application in at least three different Member States and/or Associated Countries.



**For more information, see the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025 - EU Missions**





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## Join the community

We will publish contents and materials and host training sessions to support the submission of high-quality application forms for the EU Mission Soils Open Calls.

