



Delivering soil improvers from circular food production processes to boost soil health



Regional Working Groups as a tool to support adoption of circular soil products.

Summary

Regional Working Groups (RWGs) were established within the DeliSoil project to support stakeholder cooperation around soil improvers and fertilisers produced from food industry side streams. The practice was implemented in regions connected to Living Labs in Finland, Denmark, Germany, Italy, and Spain. The main outcome is a replicable methodology for setting up RWGs that can be applied by advisory services, public authorities, producer organisations, or project coordinators. The method consists of several practical steps: (1) stakeholder mapping using the Quadruple Helix model to ensure balanced involvement of farmers, industry, policy, science, and civil society; (2) targeted outreach based on regional relevance rather than open calls; (3) clear definition of roles, expected level of engagement, and time commitment; (4) GDPR-compliant registration using information sheets and consent forms; and (5) appointment of a neutral regional facilitator responsible for moderation, follow-up, and continuity. RWGs are designed to complement Living Labs and existing networks, avoiding duplication while creating a dedicated space for dialogue on soil health and circular fertilisers.

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Farmers
Farmer organisations
Agri-food and recycling
companies
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Regional and national
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Researchers
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Practical Recommendations

Practitioners can apply this methodology to quickly organise effective multi-actor cooperation without creating complex formal structures. Key recommendations include starting with a small, relevant core group, using simple engagement tools, and allowing RWGs to grow gradually. The main benefit is improved trust, clearer communication, and early identification of practical barriers related to soil improvers. RWGs help ensure that future recommendations, action plans, or innovations are based on real farming conditions, increasing acceptance and usability at regional level.

Needs addressed by the practice

Providing a structured, replicable method to organise multi-actor collaboration around sustainable soil management and circular fertiliser solutions.

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About DeliSoil

The EU-funded DeliSoil project is a four-year initiative that aims to transform food industry byproducts into safe, sustainable, and tailored soil improvers. This project addresses two pressing challenges: the poor recycling of industrial food processing byproducts and the degradation of soil health.

By harnessing a circular approach, DeliSoil will contribute to improving soil health and productivity, supporting the EU Mission "A Soil Deal for Europe" and the Farm to Fork Strategy, as well as other Circular and Bioeconomy Strategies and Plans.



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