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MEMBER

SV Agro Ecology COP

Living Lab SV | Netherlands



Soil Valley

SV Agro Ecology COP is a Living Lab focused on enhancing soil health and promoting biodiversity in agricultural landscapes. It functions as a transitional ecosystem facilitating cooperation and cocreation among farmers, scientists, policy makers, businesses, and citizens. Thereby striving to transform the whole value chain into a sustainable system, from the policy to the producer and the consumer. A healthy system creates healthy food, healthy people, and a healthy economy.

Aim

The Living Lab aims to foster a resilient and sustainable agricultural system by encouraging farmers to adopt practices that enhance soil health, promote biodiversity, and conserve water. Through applied research, they seek to deepen the understanding of soil life and evaluate the impact of various farming methods. The results, both practical and academic, are actively shared to support informed decision-making.

The initiative targets tangible outcomes by 2028: ten successful farm transition projects, the development of five new start-ups, and the active involvement of 60 participants. Soil Valley works towards a future where healthy, high-quality food production is secured, climate challenges are mitigated, biodiversity is restored, and emissions are captured in the soil. Soil Valley aims to do this by drawing greater attention to soil life, promoting healthy economic growth, and inspiring the younger generation.

Background information

The terrain and location of Soil Valley was purchased in 2018 by Royal Eijkelkamp (<https://www.royaleijkelkamp.com/nl/>). The development of Soil Valley and its network started in cooperation between Royal Eijkelkamp and Hal24K in 2022. This was formalised through the funding of Soil Valley in 2024. Soil Valley is based in the Dutch province of Gelderland. At the moment, Soil Valley is cooperating with 38 participants and partners, but the network is continuously growing. The goal is to get to at least 60 participants in 2028. SV Agro Ecology COP is part of the foundation.

Funding structure

At the start, the activities of Soil Valley were largely funded through investments by the partners themselves. Nowadays, funding is acquired through contributions from the participants and partners, donations, and public calls.

Activities

- Facilitation and building transitional projects for farmers;
- Applied research in test and demonstration projects;
- Stimulating and supporting start-ups;
- Hosting events to spread knowledge, generate discussion, and inspire;

- Lobbying to reduce bottlenecks in laws and regulations;
- Education activities for youth and students;
- Fundraising.



Source: SV

Methods, stakeholder engagements and tools

SV Agro Ecology COP uses a multi-method approach to address complex challenges like soil degradation, climate change, and food security. The two methods used for these challenges are the Natural Step method and the Regional Resilience Journey. Besides these methods, Soil Valley also functions as a full quadruple helix organization by integrating diverse fields and recognising the importance of both formal and informal sharing of knowledge. This is done by fostering collaboration between scientists, farmers, policymakers, and community members. This holistic approach enhances the quality of the research outcomes and ensures that the solutions are practical, relevant, and widely accepted by the community.





Healthy soil, healthy food, healthy people, healthy economy

Achievements

- Acquired 6,5 ha of land for test and demonstration projects.
- A regenerative vegetable garden has been established (<https://www.bodemliefde.nl/>).
- SHAPE: an Interreg project about monitoring and sensing soil biodiversity and carbon sequestration (<https://deutschland-nederland.eu/en/projects/shape-soil-health-check-and-practices/>).
- Regio Deal Gezonde Groene Groei Arnhem Nijmegen, to develop Soil Valley and two transition projects (<https://www.gmr.nl/projecten/regio-deal/>).
- Pathways2Resilience, a project in cooperation with the Green Metropolitan Region to create a strategy and a roadmap for a climate resilient region (<https://www.pathways2resilience.eu/>). →
- National Growth Fund ReGeNL, giving a boost to regenerative agriculture (<https://regenl.nl/>).
- AFaktive, agroforestry for better water management (<https://www.royaleijkkelkamp.com/projects/afaktive-climate-adaptation-through-agroforestry/>).

Contact



Website: <https://soilvalley.eu/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/soil-valley/posts/?feedView=all>

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E-mail: info@soilvalley.eu



agroecology.ps@ilvo.vlaanderen.be

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Coordinator: Projektträger Jülich (Germany) | Co-coordinator: Agence nationale de la recherche, ANR (France)
