SOILSTICE

Strengthening Our Institutions and Localities for Soil Transformation, Inclusion and Civic Engagement

Project Briefing

What it means for our territory



Funded by the European Union

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Most of Europe's soil is no longer healthy

60–70%

of EU soils are in an unhealthy state

61%

confirmed degraded by the JRC EU Soil Observatory

53%

affected by loss of soil organic carbon

€50 billion

lost to soil degradation across the EU each year



Sources: EU Soil Strategy 2030; JRC EU Soil Observatory

What is SOILSTICE?

SOILSTICE helps local and regional authorities put soil health into practice through **Territorial Management Agreements** — co-created, participatory commitments between a community and its land. It pairs citizen engagement with hands-on support for municipalities.

Three things SOILSTICE is built around:

- **Engaging citizens and stakeholders** in how land is managed
- **Building the capacity of local authorities** to act on soil
- **Raising awareness** among the public and policymakers

40
Territorial Management Agreements co-created across Europe

30
Local & regional authorities taking part so far

11
European countries, including Albania and UK

Why this matters for municipalities

Fully grant-supported

Participation is funded under Horizon Europe — expert support comes at no cost to the municipal budget.



Citizens on board

A structured, facilitated way to engage residents and stakeholders in decisions about our land.



Capacity that stays

Staff gain training, tools and a peer network that outlast the project.



Ahead of the law

Get out in front of the EU Soil Monitoring Law and align with our existing climate and green commitments.



A concrete result

One operational Territorial Management Agreement on our own land.



Visibility & leadership

Recognition as one of 30 European front-runners on soil, with a replicable model to show for it.



What is a Territorial Management Agreement?

A voluntary, co-created agreement

A defined territory
The specific land it covers — public or private, urban or rural.

The people around the table Residents, landowners, farmers, associations and the authority.

A TMA is a shared commitment between a local authority, citizens and stakeholders on how a defined area of land will be cared for.

Agreed soil actions
Concrete measures to protect and restore soil health.

A governance model
Who decides, who acts, and how progress is tracked over time.

Four ways of working, in every territory

Citizen & stakeholder engagement

Inclusive co-design of agreements puts the community at the centre of land governance.

Capacity building

Tailored training, peer learning and ready-to-use toolkits for municipalities and communities

Awareness-raising

Creative storytelling and policy dialogue connect local action to the EU Soil Monitoring Law

Open knowledge sharing

A TMA Studio and Community of Practice so the work lasts, scales and can be replicated

The participation journey



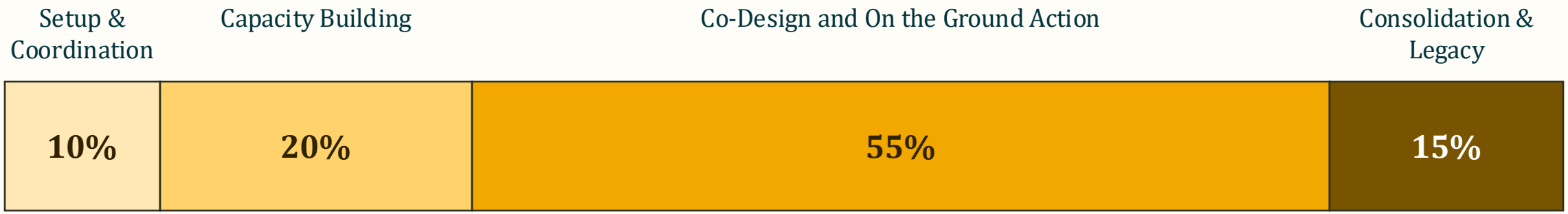



Engage and mobilise	**Co-Design the TMA**	**Implement on the Ground**	**Sustain, share and scale**
Name a local coordinator, map our soil challenge and convene citizens and stakeholders	Run participatory workshops to agree priorities, actions and a governance model	Put the agreed soil-friendly actions into practice and monitor them with project tools	Embed results in local policy and feed the open toolkit and Community of Practice

Delivered in two cohorts: Authorities start in either Cohort 1 or Cohort 2; our start date is confirmed when we join, so we can plan staff time around it.

Most of the effort goes to action

Across the 38 months, the plan concentrates our time where it matters — engaging citizens and building the Territorial Management Agreement on the ground. Only the initial setup touches internal coordination.



Over half of all effort — 55% — is Phase 3: co-designing and implementing the TMA with citizens on 1–2 real pilot sites. The plan is built so our time flows to engagement and action on the ground, not paperwork.

What taking part involves, phase by phase

The shared journey for every authority — September 2026 to October 2029.
Effort concentrates in Phase 3: co-designing and implementing the Territorial Management Agreement.

Phase 1: Understanding & early co-design

M1–M6 Sep 2026 – Feb 2027

10% of effort

You deliver:

- Set up local team & coordination
- Map soil, policy & stakeholders
- Feed inputs to co-design tools

Phase 2: Preparation & toolkit testing

M7–M12 Mar – Aug 2027

20% of effort

You deliver:

- Onboarding and facilitator training
- Soil-governance training
- Test toolkit – Join the Community of Practice

Phase 3: Co-Design and Implementation of the Toolkit

M13–M28 Sep 2027 – Dec 2028

55% of effort

You deliver:

- Co-Design the TMA: actions, roles, governance
- Sign & run 1-2 pilot sites
- Iterate with practical feedback

Phase 4: Consolidation, policy uptake & scaling

M29–M38 Jan – Oct 2029

15% of effort

You deliver:

- Share results with policymakers
- Upload to the TMA Studio
- Line up follow-up funding

Two delivery cohorts



What municipalities commit to

SOILSTICE asks for engagement and staff time, no financial contribution. Here is what taking part involves:

Name a local coordinator

A staff point-of-contact to lead the work — the main time commitment we are taking on.

Convene the community

Host and help run citizen and stakeholder engagement on our territory.

Co-design & adopt one TMA

Work with residents to agree, then formally adopt, a Territorial Management Agreement.

Put actions into practice

Implement the agreed soil measures on a defined area of land we manage or influence.

Share learning & data

Contribute results to the network so others can learn from and replicate our work.

A consortium built for this challenge

PROJECT COORDINATOR

ECOLISE

EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

ECOLISE

Leads the consortium and the network of authorities and communities across Europe

Cooperative Oasis

Facilitation · French-speaking LRAs

ELARD

LEADER & rural outreach

GAIA Education

Participatory training

GEN Europe

Community pilots & innovation

ICLEI Europe

Local authority engagement

IUCN

Biodiversity policy

REVOLVE

Communication & Storytelling

University of Aveiro

Policy & governance

Wageningen University

Soil science, monitoring & tools

We don’t do this alone – the support behind us

Facilitation & training

Hands-on participatory training from Gaia Education — and Cooperative Oasis

Policy & Governance

Guidance from University of Aveiro, with biodiversity alignment from IUCN.

A peer network

Connection to fellow authorities via ICLEI Europe, plus rural and LEADER outreach through ELARD

Communications support

EU-wide storytelling and campaign support from REVOLVE to reach residents and decision-makers

Soil science & tools

Monitoring methods and digital tools from Wageningen University to track real soil outcomes.

EU funding

Expert time and resources are grant-funded under Horizon Europe Mission Soil.



Expected outcomes for each municipality

One operational TMA



A live Territorial Management Agreement on our land, with a governance model the community owns.

Soil literacy that lasts



Citizens, staff and decision-makers who understand soil and why it matters here.

Policy alignment



Local action mapped to the EU Soil Monitoring Law
and to SDGs 11 and 15.

A reusable toolkit



Open-access methods we can apply again — and that other authorities can replicate.

This aligns with where policy is already going

Joining SOILSTICE puts us ahead of obligations that are arriving anyway.

EU-Soil Monitoring Law

In force since 16 December 2025.
For the first time, EU soil health will be monitored systematically.
SOILSTICE helps us respond on the front foot, with citizens already engaged.

Mission 'A Soil Deal for Europe': Healthy soils by 2030 through living labs and local action

European Green Deal & Biodiversity Strategy 2030: Soil is central to the EU's climate and nature goals.

CAP Strategic Plans: Connects with rural and agricultural funding priorities.

SDGs 11 & 15: Sustainable Cities (11) and Life on Land (15).



Thank you for your attention