

SOIL VALUES

MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE SOIL MANAGEMENT IN THE SAHEL

AIMING TO ADDRESS SOIL FERTILITY CONSTRAINTS AND TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF SOIL FERTILITY IN A WAY THAT CONTRIBUTES TO ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE IMPROVEMENTS IN FOOD PRODUCTIVITY AND TO INCREASED RESILIENCE OF SMALL-SCALE FOOD PRODUCERS (CROPS AND/OR LIVESTOCK) IN THE SAHEL.

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PATHWAYS FOR CHANGE

FACT SHEET

THE MEANING OF SOIL VALUES

The Soil Values approach is characterized by its focus on the small-scale food producers at the heart of the program intervention areas in the four implementation countries of Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and northern Nigeria. These producers struggle to fulfill their essential role in food security for their countries due to poor soil fertility, climate instability, a lack of access to markets, and more. Underlying all these challenges is poor soil health. However, the investments needed to support producers to address soil health face several gaps:

- ◆ **Temporal gap:** Short-term economic gains prevent long-term investment in soil health.
- ◆ **Spatial gap:** Farm produce is consumed far from the fields.
- ◆ **Non-commodity:** Soil is not traded as a commodity and is valued indirectly through the food and non-food products it provides.
- ◆ **Awareness gap:** Consumers and stakeholders in the value chain know little about soil health.

This leads to ambiguous responsibilities among actors along the food value chain and low valuation of soil functions. The burden of long-term soil fertility management cannot be carried solely by farmers. Policymakers, business actors, and other stakeholders are responsible for creating viable conditions

for sustainable soil management and developing mechanisms that lead to proper soil valuation.

The Soil Values coalition will develop strategies around this concept. By organizing the work into interlocking solutions and always building on existing in-country initiatives, consortium partners will contribute to each of the intervention areas in their own unique ways, effectively applying their technical expertise and experience.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH

The program will foster a holistic approach, operating through **three strategic pathways**:

1. **Agro-ecological pathway:** Targets small-scale food producers and farming systems and the landscapes and watersheds around them.
2. **Inclusive market development pathway:** Focuses on the private sector (markets, investment, business models) in ways that overcome market barriers and strengthen the relevant markets.
3. **Enabling environment pathway:** Addresses the capacity of public sector institutions, policies, and governance structures to support long-term soil health.

...in **five intervention areas**:

1. **Bundling** of agro-technical and socio-economic interventions into packages adapted to on-site farm conditions.

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IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS



- 2. Optimizing** landscape and watershed management through participatory planning for an integrated efficient use of soil, water, and biodiversity.
- 3. Brokering** financial instruments to provide financial and other incentives for farmers to sustainably manage soil fertility.
- 4. Convening** of parties to collectively develop conducive policies on sustainable soil fertility management practices for stakeholders to adopt.
- 5. Scoping** of potential solutions worldwide and learning from proven technologies and approaches to arrive at innovative agro-technical and socio-institutional interventions.



...following **six fundamental principles**:

1. Working through national **partners** (governments, development programs and civil society organizations) to scale Soil Values interventions.
2. Prioritizing gender **equality** and social **inclusion** (GESI) in all partnerships.
3. Building national **capacity**.
4. **Leveraging** large regional and multi-lateral programs.
5. Using private sector **involvement** as a major driver for soil fertility investments.
6. Managing the program with a **conflict-sensitive** approach.

THE SOIL VALUES CONSORTIUM AND TARGET COUNTRIES

The Soil Values program coalition has **three core consortium partners**: International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC, the program lead), SNV, and Wageningen University & Research (WUR).

The consortium is complemented by **five convening and knowledge institutions**: AGRA, World Agroforestry (ICRAF), the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), ISRIC – World

Soil Information, and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), all of which are recognized leaders in their respective fields.

These partners will collaborate with the **World Bank's Food Systems Resilience Program** and other programs from governments, coalition partners, and donors to reinforce soil fertility management at the local, national, and regional scale.

