



Strengthening systems for healthy soils and food security

The Soil Values Programme contributes to improving soil fertility, land productivity, and climate resilience across 2 million hectares in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria. Three consortium members are steering the implementation: IFDC (lead), SNV, and WUR. With our knowledge partners (IWMI, ICRAF, IITA, ISRIC, and AGRA), we are building institutions, markets, knowledge, financing mechanisms, and incentives to strengthen sustainable agricultural systems. The goal is to enable 1.5 million smallholder farmers, especially women and young people, to collaboratively manage land and water resources for greater food security.

Challenge and opportunity

Over [41 million](#) people in West Africa and the Sahel face acute food insecurity, while increasing land degradation threatens the sustainability of agricultural livelihoods. While [80–90%](#) of the population is engaged in agriculture, increasing land degradation is making farming unviable.

Restoring soil fertility can help address these challenges. Since healthy ecosystems are a prerequisite for fertile soils, an integrated approach encompassing land, water, and biodiversity is essential. Supportive institutions, markets, and financial incentives are equally important to create an enabling environment for long-term adherence to sustainable agricultural practices.

Our approach

Farmers with small landholdings face interconnected environmental, economic, and social challenges, constraining their ability to improve agricultural productivity and livelihoods. These include:

- Limited access to agricultural inputs (seeds, compost, etc.), finance, markets, and advisory services.
- Inadequate dissemination of sustainable agricultural and irrigation practices.
- Competition for scarce water and land resources.
- Social and gender inequities.

The Soil Values programme follows an integrated land management approach focusing on soil fertility, water availability, ecosystem health, institutions, markets, services, and knowledge. Soil Values collaborates with governments, community organisations, the private sector, and financial institutions to:

- Strengthen coordination at the watershed and landscape levels, and alignment with relevant regional and national initiatives.
- Combine ecosystem diagnostics, watershed and land mapping, conflict resolution, and participatory planning to guide context-specific initiatives.
- Train farmers, pastoralists, local authorities, and businesses in climate-resilient agriculture and integrated soil fertility management.
- Mobilise markets and investments to make sustainable practices economically viable.
- Promote gender equity and social inclusion by creating safe, accessible spaces for women, youth, and people with disabilities, and enhancing their economic agency.

Soil Values contributes directly to land restoration, climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and resilient food systems, supporting national commitments under the Rio Conventions and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Soil Values advances the following SDGs:



Project snapshot



Project

Soil Values



Countries

Burkina Faso, Mali,
Niger, and Nigeria



Duration

2024-2033



Value

EUR 100 million

Funding partner

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Netherlands

Implementation partners

IFDC (Lead), SNV, WUR, national governments,
local organisations, and knowledge partners

Building momentum

The Soil Values programme has strengthened systems to restore landscapes, improve community resilience, and create lasting value for people and nature. It has built momentum towards its goal by:

- Embedding integrated landscape management and soil restoration practices in national monitoring frameworks and advisory systems.
- Conducting training on agroecological practices and integrated water resources management for over 45,000 farmers, government officials, and agricultural advisers.
- Enabling smallholder food producers in 11 watersheds to follow sustainable agricultural practices and equitably share resources.
- Developing a digital platform to consolidate spatial data, monitoring indicators, and analytical tools, and translate complex information into accessible insights for decision-making.
- Selecting 12 local implementing organisations, including six women-led and one youth-focused, to improve under-represented groups' access to land, agricultural inputs, finance, advisory services, and decision-making platforms.

- Establishing 12 committees comprising 50% women and 30% young people to strengthen local watershed governance, encourage meaningful participation of diverse groups, and reinforce community ownership of programme activities.

Looking ahead

The programme will develop a standardised, scalable model for integrated landscape management across the four countries and strengthen national partners' capacities to design, implement, and monitor projects. Sustainable practices, such as compost enrichment, agroforestry, crop rotation, and crop-livestock integration, will make agriculture more climate-resilient. Community platforms and participatory planning will boost social cohesion and reduce conflicts.

By developing a scalable model for integrated landscape management, the programme aims to demonstrate how healthy soils, resilient ecosystems, and inclusive governance can contribute to long-term food security and climate resilience across the Sahel.

About SNV

SNV is a global development partner rooted in and working across Africa and Asia. With 60 years of experience and over 90% of our team coming from and working within the countries where we operate, our mission is to strengthen capacities and catalyse partnerships that transform agri-food, energy and water systems to enable sustainable and more equitable lives for all.

Contact SNV's Soil Values project team

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