



SOILveR Management paper

From knowledge to solutions

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1. Introduction

SOILVeR strongly believes in the need for integrated soil and land research in Europe. We acknowledge the added value of coordinating, co-funding and disseminating cross-border soil and land management research. We are a self-financed platform with members that have an interest in sharing and implementing integrated multidisciplinary research. We build on our experiences from other funding networks such as SNOWMAN, and address knowledge needs identified by e.g. the Horizon 2020 project INSPIRATION and other initiatives as well as those proposed by the members of SOILVeR.

2. Vision, Mission and Strategy

Vision

From knowledge to solutions - A Platform for European knowledge development and knowledge exchange on soil and land management

Mission

It is SOILVeR's mission to improve our use of soil and our management of land, to sustainably protect societies and ecosystems for future generations.

There is a growing sense of urgency that unless we improve our use of soil and management of land, societies will suffer and ecosystems will be damaged.

- Soil provides humans with key services related to several of the global Sustainability Development Goals formulated by the United Nations. While many severe threats to this resource have been recognized, soil and land degradation goes on.
- The majority of European countries are building inventories of contaminated sites, and the estimate of the potential number of sites affected is growing every year.
- Stakeholders in Europe have identified many knowledge needs related to soil and land – these were e.g. compiled in the Strategic Research Agenda by INSPIRATION and are now calling for action.
- Soil and land research needs coordination across regions, disciplines and stakeholder groups to properly address these transnational knowledge needs.

Strategy

Form a targeted platform around knowledge **development** and **exchange** is key to leverage cross-country collaboration around soil and land management. Our intention is to fund integrated soil and land research aimed at addressing the knowledge needs identified in the INSPIRATION SRA and by others, and of joint interest of members funding the calls. We believe that transnational collaboration provides an added-value to the research and its impact.

Avoid excessive administrative processes and ensure flexibility in research funding coordination.

Fund implementable research and focus on its uptake by end-users, at all levels both national as local.

Contribute to cross border and cross disciplinary knowledge exchange by organizing and participating in events and by sharing knowledge in other ways.

Welcome exchange and cooperation with other initiatives for the benefit of better soil and land management in Europe and elsewhere.



3. Organisation

Platform Steering Committee

The Platform Steering Committee (PSC) consists of representatives of all full members. Full membership entitles to one representative in the PSC. The PSC members chose a chairperson amongst themselves. The chairperson is supported by the platform secretariat. The day-to-day business is handled by the Executive Committee, consisting of the Chairperson and secretariat.

Role of the Platform Steering Committee

- Maintain/update the Research Agenda.
- Start discussions on relevant topics for the platform. Based upon these topics, decide to start platform knowledge development activities, knowledge exchange activities or both.
- Annually determine the membership fee.
- Accept applications for memberships and determine on the conditions for membership.
- Amend/change the management paper.
- Manage the SOILveR external dialogue.

- liaise with the EU.
- Decide on contacts with other network delegations, participation in conferences etc.

Knowledge development

The PSC supports knowledge development activities and therefore launches calls to stimulate transnational knowledge development.

Once a call is announced a call steering committee will be installed, which will manage the coordinated call. The steering committee members will be nominated by the funders in their letter of commitment. The steering committee will be appointed before the evaluation process begins and will disband only after it has accepted the final project report. A call secretariat will support the call steering committee.

The role of the call steering committee and call secretariat is described in the Call principals. For each the principals are laid down in call principals, specific to that call.

Knowledge Exchange

The PSC selects during the November meeting the relevant topics for the following year. The members are invited to deliver elaborated ideas/action plans for exchange activities. In the January meeting are chosen and the involved members are asked to execute their plans. During this execution phase, the SOILveR Platform Secretariat will provide administrative support to the activity.

The nature of the activities is not fixed. These can range from organizing webinars, online meetings, writing white papers, policy briefs etc.

Platform Steering Committee meetings

The PSC annually meets monthly online and once per year in November face to face.

The course for the coming year will be decided during the November:

The agenda for the November meeting:

- Election of the chairperson for the following year.
- Selection of interesting topics for the following year.
Discussion what activities could be developed regarding the topics. In a call for proposals or in a knowledge exchange activity (or both).
- Determine the membership fee for the following year.
- Discuss long-term course of the platform.
- Up-date/revise research agenda.
- Discuss communication strategy/plan for following year.

The January meeting (online):

- Welcome to new chairperson, new members.
- Approval of action plans for the exchange program.
- Approval to start preparation phase for a call.

The May meeting (online):

- Progress meeting

All other meetings, agenda to be determined on current affairs.

4. Membership

SOILveR is a self-financed platform. The general costs for the platform are shared by the platform members.

SOILveR platform has **two** forms of membership:

- Full member
- Affiliate member

Full members

Full members pay an annual fee and are represented in the Platform Steering Committee.

Affiliate members

Affiliate members can be active in a single call as a funder or in a single exchange activity. They are not a member of the PSC. Affiliate members are expected to contribute either to a project in a call and the call secretariat or to a knowledge exchange activity. The duration of an affiliate membership is limited to the duration of the call project or the exchange activity.

Other ways of participation in the platform

Observers

Organisations that are interested in the activities of SOILveR, but are not able to join as a full member are invited to the Observer-status. This offers the possibility to join in meetings, follow discussions and experience how the SOILveR Platform functions. In return an in-kind contribution is appreciated. The observer-status is limited to one year.

Third party funding and Third party money

These forms of participation are specific to a call. It is possible to join as a funder in a call after the announcement of the call as a third party funder. Funders that are interested in a specific project can join as third party money. For both forms of participation, a financial contribution is requested for the call secretariat.

Table 1. Overview of rights and obligations related to the forms of membership or participation in the Platform and its activities.

Rights and obligations	Full member	Affiliate member	3 rd party funding	3 rd party money	Observer
Define platform strategy	X				
Provide overall direction and coordination of the platform	X				
	X				

Initiate joint calls					
Pays fee for the general platform secretariat	X				
In kind contribution expected		X			X
Time limited membership		X (limited to a single call)	X (during call execution only)	X (during project execution only)	X (1 y)
Projects call peer review*	X	X			X
Selection of granted projects in the call	X	X			
Fee associated to participation to a call for the call secretariat	X	X	X	X	
Participation in knowledge dissemination task team	X	X			X

* Provided there is no conflict of interest.

5. Finances

Expenditures

It is assumed that all members pay their own membership costs for travel and subsistence and their time for the execution of their task in the network.

The costs of the network are:

- The Platform secretariat
- The travel and subsistence costs of the advisory group

Income

The incomes of the network are the annual fees for membership. The fee should be fixed by the PSC in the November meeting.