



Soil Matters

Innovations for Soil Health and Agroecology in Africa



OBJECTIVES

To contribute to a climate-relevant, productive, inclusive and sustainable transformation of agriculture and food systems in sub-Saharan Africa.

Innovations for soil health and agroecology are scaled in selected partner countries, at regional, continental and global level.



LOGIC OF INTERVENTION

To sustainably improve soil health and agricultural productivity in the long term, proven agroecological innovations must be available, accessible, or scaled, especially for smallholder farmers.

Building on best practices and successful approaches from the BMZ Global Programme "Soil Protection and Rehabilitation for Food Security" (ProSoil) and the EU-BMZ funded Action "ProSilience: Enhancing soils and agroecology for resilient agri-food systems in sub-Saharan Africa", the project aims to improve access to agroecological inputs (e.g. climate-resilient seeds, lime, organic fertilisers, small-scale machinery, irrigation technologies) and uptake of agroecological farming practices (e.g. crop rotation, reduced tillage, agroforestry, integrated soil fertility management).

Sustainable scaling requires more than technical solutions. The action therefore strengthens multi-actor collaboration among farmers, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), cooperatives, research, civil society, and government actors to create catalytic structures that empower local stakeholders, especially women and youth, to participate in co-creation, decision-making, and the enforcement of enabling policies. Circular economy-based business models are developed or expanded to utilise local biomass and nutrients (e.g. on-farm waste, urban organic waste), ensuring economic, social and ecologic viability. These innovations are institutionalised and scaled through:

- strengthening technical capacities of farmers, their organisations and public and private service providers;
- developing viable business models for agroecological inputs and services;
- creating supportive policy environments.

At policy level, the project supports partner countries in anchoring soil health and agroecological innovations within national strategies (e.g. national agricultural investment plans, national fertiliser and soil health action plans), while also contributing to broader continental and global frameworks. The project contributes directly to African and global frameworks such as the Agenda 2063, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Develop-

ment Programme (CAADP), the Malabo Declaration, and supports the implementation of the African Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan (2024-2034) at continental, regional, and national level. By linking local innovation and empowerment with continental strategies and global policy influence, the action serves as a catalyst for sustainable, inclusive transformation of agri-food systems in partner countries.



MAIN INTERVENTIONS/COMPONENTS

Output 1 focuses on strengthening the technical and organisational capacities of key actors, such as small-scale farmers, farmer-based organisations, extension services, and input and service providers, in order to implement proven innovations for soil health and agroecology (AE). It promotes inclusive, demand-driven scaling by improving advisory services across the public and private sectors and by enhancing private sector engagement to increase access to agroecological inputs and services. Innovations are viewed from the farmers' perspective, applying context-specific solutions developed through co-creation. It assumes that, despite economic challenges, farmers are willing to invest in long-term climate resilience.

Output 2 aims to improve the policy and institutional environment at national, regional, and continental levels to support scalable innovations for soil health and agroecology (AE). Evidence from Output 1 will inform policy advice, budget repurposing, and better services. Progress depends on transformative action by public and private sectors, civil society, and academia at all levels, under the assumption that governments proactively support enabling conditions for sustainable agriculture.

Output 3 supports the integration of innovations and lessons learned into policy processes and knowledge platforms at all levels. It promotes knowledge exchange (e.g. South-South cooperation), ensuring experiences from Outputs 1 and 2 inform wider adoption. International knowledge is also fed back into local co-creation processes. This assumes increasing global recognition of soil health and AE as critical to sustainable agri-food

systems will foster multi-actor cooperation in partner countries.



STATE OF PLAY OF THE PROJECT

Cameroon: Recruiting process, mobilisation of partners, official start in January 2026.

Ethiopia: Project staff recruited, project officially launched, consultative meetings held in six regions. Communities started implementation of activities as of 1 July 2025, Ethiopian Fertilizer and Soil Health Roadmap developed and ready for implementation.

Kenya: Implementation Agreement signed by the Government of Kenya, official launch of Soil Matters Kenya (before end of 2025), Staff recruitment ongoing. Strategic collaboration with the Organic Fertilizer and Input Manufacturers Association of Kenya (OFIMAK) and the Kenya National Farmers Federation (KENAFF) for the development of the Kenya Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan, scoping of partners for the field implementation ("real-life lab") and private sector partners.

Regional, continental, global level: Clarification of priorities and necessary support at continental and regional levels, coordination of interventions with other donors (World Bank, NORAD, Gates Foundation), preparation of grant agreement with AUDA-NEPAD (2 years, expected start 01/2026) to improve the enabling environment for investment in soil protection and rehabilitation focusing on anchorage of soil protection and rehabilitation in National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIP), financing mechanisms, African research partnership, Grant agreement with Global Green Growth Institute on lime mechanism in Zambia.

BASIC INFORMATION

Contracting entity: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Implementing partners: GIZ, Ministries of Agriculture (Ethiopia, Kenya, Cameroon), African Union Commission, AUDA-NEPAD, FARA, CGIAR, national research institutions, universities, civil society, farmer associations, cooperatives, community-based organisations, governmental partners, private sector.

Countries: Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya + regional, continental, global activities

Start: January 2025

Duration: 46 months

Funding: The 12M€ project is co-funded by the European Union (10M€) and Germany (BMZ, 2M€). Further funding to GIZ for actions in other African countries provided by BMZ.