

From Soil to Systems: Living Labs and Artificial Intelligence for a Sustainable Future of Agriculture



NCBR Office in Brussels, Rue Belliard 40



13 October 2026

AGENDA

Event concept

Soil is rarely at the centre of conversations about the future of agriculture. We tend to focus on food production, resilience, new technologies, competitiveness and security. Yet all these questions begin with the same basic resource: healthy soil. Its condition shapes biodiversity, water retention, crop quality and the long-term viability of farming systems.

The event will take the EU Mission A Soil Deal for Europe as its starting point. As one of the five Horizon Europe Missions, it has helped bring soil health into a broader policy and research debate. Just as importantly, it has moved that debate closer to practice: to farms, regions, field trials and collaborative projects involving farmers, researchers, businesses, public authorities and civil society organisations.

A central theme of the conference will be Living Labs. Rather than treating them as another Brussels policy term, the event will look at what they mean in practice: testing ideas in the places where they are expected to work. In fields, on farms and within local innovation ecosystems, it becomes much easier to see which solutions can make a real difference, and which remain convincing mainly on paper.

The conference will also look at artificial intelligence and the growing role of data in agriculture. Digital tools can help monitor soils, crops and agroecosystems, support precision farming and improve decision-making.

The event will bring together researchers, practitioners, policymakers, businesses and civil society organisations. It will also refer to ongoing work under European partnerships.

09:30-10:00 | Registration and welcome coffee

10:00-10:15 | Opening of the conference

Tomasz Poprawka

Director, Polish Science Contact Agency PolSCA of the Polish Academy of Sciences

Magdalena Frąć

Chair, Committee on Agricultural Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences

Waldemar Dubaniowski

Director, NCBR Office in Brussels

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Session I: From the Mission Soil to Lasting Innovation Ecosystems: The Future of Living Labs in European Agriculture

This opening plenary session will explore the evolution of the EU Soil Mission from a research and innovation initiative into a catalyst for long-term systemic transformation in agriculture. The discussion will examine how Living Labs have emerged as key instruments for co-creating, testing and scaling sustainable agricultural solutions, while fostering collaboration among farmers, researchers, businesses and public authorities. Looking beyond Horizon Europe, the session will address how Living Labs can be embedded within agricultural innovation ecosystems and what role they may play in shaping priorities and implementation mechanisms under FP10. Attention will be given to governance models, sustainability of funding, and pathways for maintaining impact beyond the lifetime of Mission-funded projects.

10:15–10:30 | Opening speech

Cindy Schoumacher, Policy Officer, DG RTD, Unit B.2 – Bioeconomy & Food Systems, DG RTD

The EU Soil Mission: achievements, lessons learned and perspectives beyond Horizon Europe

10:30–11:15 | Panel Discussion: From Living Labs to Innovation Ecosystems: ensuring long-term impact beyond the Mission

Panellists:

Cindy Schoumacher, Policy Officer, DG Research & Innovation, Unit B.2 – Bioeconomy & Food Systems, DG RTD

Agroecology Partnership (*tbc*)

Joana Falcão Salles, University of Groningen, The Netherlands

Moderator: Magdalena Frąc, Chair of the Committee of Agronomic Sciences, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland

11:15–11:45 | Living Labs in Action – Showcase Session

Shamina Pathan, University of Florence, LEGUMINOSE project

Józef Chojnicki, Warsaw University of Life Sciences, LivingSoiLL project

11:45–12:00 | NCP support for Living Labs in Action

Bożena Podlaska, NCP for HE Cluster 6, NCBR, Poland

Brief presentations of NCP-driven actions under the Mission Soil

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12.00-13.00 | Lunch break

Session II: Smart Agroecosystems: Harnessing AI Tools and Crop Diversification for Soil Health

This session explores the synergy between digital innovation and agroecological practices, focusing on the combined potential of AI tools and crop diversification strategies, such as intercropping and the integration of legumes, to evaluate and enhance soil health. The discussion addresses key policy directives, environmental impacts, and practical on-farm challenges associated with digital agriculture. By examining both the opportunities and risks of intelligent agroecosystem monitoring, this session aims to bridge policy, scientific innovation, and practical implementation. Attendees will gain insights into the European Strategy for AI in Science, followed by an extended, interactive panel discussion featuring agricultural practitioners.

13:00 – 13:40 | Strategic Opening Presentations

Francesco Iadecola, Research Program Officer, Research and Innovation Unit, DG AGRI, European Commission

European Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in Science – Research and Innovation in Agriculture

Bruno Steinkraus, Founder & CEO of Soilytix GmbH, Germany

From Soil Data Collection to Decision Support: The Role of Digital Tools in Modern Soil Science

Jacek Podlewski, President of CGFP, Poland

AI-powered Decision Support system at CGFP Ltd.

13:40 - 14:30 | Panel Discussion: Bridging Policy, AI, and Agroecology: crop diversification and intelligent monitoring in practice

Examining the practical and policy dimensions of combining legumes and intercropping with precision agriculture to enhance soil quality and mitigate environmental risks.

Panellists:

Francisco Castro Alves, Police Officer, Research and Innovation Unit, DG AGRI, European Commission

Guillaume Provoost, INGRO, Belgium,

Jacopo Goracci, Tenuta di Paganico Società Agricola spa, Italy

Moderator: Dr Shamina Imran Pathan, University of Florence (UNIFI), Italy

14.30 -14.45 | Closing remarks

Tomasz Poprawka, PolSCA PAS in Brussels

Magdalena Frąć, Committee on Agricultural Sciences PAS

Shamina Pathan, University of Florence

14:45-16:30 | Networking