



NBSOIL

Nature-Based Solutions
for Soil Management

D7.14 – Gender and inclusivity guidelines 1

Deliverable 7.14

31.01.2025



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¹ R=Document, report; DEM=Demonstrator, pilot, prototype; DEC=website, patent filings, videos, etc.; OTHER=other

² PU=Public, CO=Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services), CI=Classified



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Glossary of key terms (source: IUCN Glossary, <https://genderandenvironment.org/glossary/>)

Gender: Distinct from biological sex (that is, male / female), gender is the sociocultural construct that distinguishes, describes and generally characterises the roles, behaviors and activities that are expected and deemed acceptable for men and women and those of different genders, influencing the relationships between and among them. Generally thought of on a feminine-masculine spectrum, gender has bearing on power dynamics between individuals and groups. Gender is based on social, cultural, political and economic values, beliefs and structures; and thus, gender roles and relationships are dynamic, change over time, and vary widely between and within cultures.

Gender analysis: A gender analysis is a socioeconomic and sociocultural analysis of gender data and gender dynamics in a given context or locale, typically conducted in order to better understand gendered power dynamics between groups and individuals and to inform a given project or programme development and implementation

Gender data: Gender data, or gender statistics, are data that capture information on the lived realities of women and men and those of diverse genders. Gender statistics include data disaggregated by sex (or gender); data pertaining specifically to women or men; and data that captures specific gender issues.

Gender disaggregated (data): Gender disaggregated data is that which is broken down, tracked, and evaluated and communicated by gender (e.g., numbers of women and men receiving direct benefits) for the purposes of illuminating or overcoming gender gaps. Sex-disaggregated data breaks down data by sex (e.g., numbers of males and females in a population, or levels of primary school enrollment)



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Gender diversity: Gender diversity, or those of diverse genders, refers to and recognizes that some people’s identity and self-expression fall outside commonly understood gender norms, including transgender and nonbinary gender identities, which may fall between the masculine and feminine ends of the gender identity spectrum or completely outside the gender binary

Gender equality: Gender equality is the state in which all people, regardless of their gender, have equal rights, freedoms, conditions and opportunities. It does not mean that people – for example women and men – become the same, but rather that they have equal life chances and are valued equally. This applies not only to equality of opportunity but also to equality of impact and benefits arising from economic, social, cultural and political development – as well as opportunity to shape and influence those values, norms and systems.

Gender equality and social inclusion: GESI is a concept that aims to understand and address unequal power relations between different social groups. The GESI approach to development focuses on the need for action to re-balance these power relations and ensure equal rights, opportunities and respect for all individuals regardless of their social identity.

Gender indicators: Gender indicators are those used to measure changes in gender-related issues over time (e.g., the changes in the status or situation of women and men, such as levels of poverty or participation) as a result of a particular policy, programme or activity

Gender responsive: Gender responsiveness is identifying and understanding gender gaps and biases, and then acting on them, developing and implementing actions to overcome challenges and barriers toward improving and achieving gender equality. In comparison to gender sensitive (see below), gender responsive has come to mean more than “doing no harm”; it means “to do better”

Intersectionality: Intersectionality recognises the interconnectedness of socially constructed categories, such as ethnicity, class and gender, which inform a person’s or group’s relative privilege or disadvantage. An intersectional approach aims to understand the complex way in which the historical and ongoing effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism and classism) combine, overlap or intersect and attempts to recognise and improve the impact of these effects on the experiences of individuals.

Inclusive approach: Rather than making certain people or diverse people fit a system, social inclusion or an inclusive approach aims to intentionally and proactively provide for diverse people – and especially those who are commonly disenfranchised or left out – to be meaningfully included in order to shape, influence, and define a given structure or intervention that maximises everyone’s best potential.



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1. Executive Summary

The present document includes the first version of the Gender and Inclusivity Guidelines of the NBSOIL project. The primary objective is to ensure that gender is adequately considered and addressed across the whole project.

To this end, this report identifies and examines tasks that need to be designed and implemented with a gender perspective in mind. For each of these tasks, some recommendations are provided to project partners on how to integrate gender issues into their activities and to produce positive results on gender equality.

It also focuses on understanding past measures taken by project partners to create a safe, inclusive, and gender-responsive work environment in their organizations. The goal is not to evaluate their performance but rather to invite them, through a series of questions, to reflect critically about what could be done to improve organizational policies and practices in order to promote gender balance and meet women's needs.

The second objective of this report is to develop a systematic approach to foster inclusivity and counter any form of discrimination. One chapter is dedicated to the selection of training participants; it stresses the need to identify and choose candidates regardless of their age, class, race, ethnicity, language, sex, and gender and to properly value and promote diversity. Another section focuses on the organization of events and underlines how the choice of the venue, management arrangements, the profile of trainers and participants, and the content should respect gender and inclusivity principles.

Furthermore, this report includes the messages sent by some project partners to explain how the design and implementation of their activities has taken gender and inclusivity into account.

In conclusion, this document should be read and used by the entire NBSOIL consortium to increase its impact and ensure that the project does not miss the opportunity to advance gender equality and social inclusivity.



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2. Introduction

Gender equality and inclusivity are two key aspects for the success of the NBSOIL project. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt a gender-responsive and inclusive approach when reading the project proposal and examining its work packages.

We will first focus on a thorough assessment of NBSOIL tasks, activities, and objectives from a gender perspective in order to shed light on how the project may unintentionally affect women and men differently.

Our aim is to examine and address gender equality from two main perspectives. First, we will analyze which project activities should be more gender-focused. Some recommendations will be provided on how to make such activities contribute to advancing gender equality. Second, we will investigate what plans NBSOIL partners have developed to advance gender balance within their organizations and the teams that will be engaged in implementing the project. During this process, we will formulate questions to gather valuable information and feedback from our partners. The information might be used to generate a brief report outlining the current degree of inclusiveness of the organizations and research institutions involved. This could also turn into a great opportunity for them to showcase their best strategies and practices and exchange knowledge on how to effectively address gender inequalities when it comes to hiring, career progression, organizational culture, decision-making positions, and so on. Feedbacks will be used to identify additional project activities where gender mainstreaming could have a beneficial effect, to develop more precise recommendations for partners on how to integrate gender into their operational frameworks, and to adopt appropriate monitoring and evaluation tools to assess whether project outcomes have been effective in achieving gender equality.

This document will also pay special attention to the selection of training participants and the organization of events to deliver training materials. Indeed, one of the most important objectives of this project is to select and train 300 participants to become soil advisors. Promoting diversity within this group will certainly add value to the project and create more equal opportunities in the short and long term. Furthermore, as training materials could be provided through the organization of workshops it will be critical to take the intersectionality approach as a reference point for outlining steps to be followed to ensure equal access and participation regardless of age, class, race, ethnicity, language, gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

The ultimate goal of this work is to develop a set of simple guidelines that partners can use to guarantee that gender and inclusivity issues are adequately considered in all relevant activities, whether it is in the selection of training participants, the content and design of courses, the management of decision-making procedures, the organization of workshops, or the communication and dissemination of project results.



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3. Gender Mainstreaming in the NBSOIL Project

This section will indicate which tasks/activities of NBSOIL should be more gender-focused and provide advice on how project partners could implement them. Some of these tasks may not have a direct and/or indirect impact on gender equality but they may allow for the collection of data that could highlight how design and delivery of advisory services may benefit women and men differently throughout Europe.

Work package WP1 – Knowledge Base
T1.3 Lessons from Soil management in organic agriculture M1 - M24 Lead: FiBL. Contributors: SA, IUCN.
<p>Task Description:</p> <p>This task will identify agroecological management practices that can be considered NbS for soil health, how they can be optimised and how they can be applied and mainstreamed in support of the Soil Mission and FtF objectives.</p> <p>Recommendations on gender equality:</p> <p>It is necessary to keep in mind that for a practice to fulfil both agroecological values and NbS standards, it must promote and strengthen gender equality by ensuring, for instance, women’s fair and just participation in soil-related agricultural, forestry, urban, and industrial activities. In addition, women and men may have different knowledge about agroecological management practices, so both should be involved in identifying such practices.</p> <p>Task Description:</p> <p>The literature review will be supplemented by interviews with at least 15 and up to 20 farmers and land managers in each partner country that will use a standardized question list that will be developed by FiBL, SA, and IUCN by Month 12.</p> <p>Recommendations on gender equality:</p>



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It would be appropriate to achieve a gender balance in each partner country during the interview process. This would allow us to capture broader and more meaningful views on what socio-political and behavioral elements of our food system might hinder or accelerate the transition to NbS for soil health.

Table 1. Gender equality in WP1

Work package WP2 – Soil and Nature Based Solutions
T2.2 Using the NBS global standard for multicriteria assessment M6 - M36 Lead: IUCN
<p>Task Description:</p> <p>This task will review the NbS categories and assess the use of selected practices through the IUCN Global Standard for Nature Based Solutions (NBS), providing recommendations to better integrate those interventions within the NbS framework, with special attention to identification of synergies and trade-offs, and mitigation for negative side effects.</p> <p>Recommendations on gender equality:</p> <p>Each selected practice will be assessed following the criteria and indicators of the IUCN Global Standard for NbS. These criteria and indicators unequivocally state that NbS must respond to social challenges identified by different genders and that women must be equitably involved in decision-making processes. Therefore, the recommendations that will be provided to better integrate these interventions within the NbS framework should account for the robust social and governance component of the IUCN Global Standard.</p> <p><i>Criterion 1: NbS effectively address societal challenges.</i> The purpose of this Criterion is to ensure that the NbS is designed as a response to a societal challenge(s) that has been identified as a priority by those who are or will be directly affected by the challenge(s). All stakeholders, especially rights holders and beneficiaries of the NbS, must be involved in the decision-making process used for identifying the priority challenge(s).</p> <p><i>Criterion 5: NbS are based on inclusive, transparent, and empowering governance processes.</i></p>



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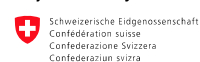
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Indicator 5.2: Participation is based on mutual respect and equality, regardless of gender, age, or social status, and upholds the right of Indigenous Peoples to Free, Prior and Informed Consent.
Indicator 5.4: Decision-making processes document and respond to the rights and interests of all participating and affected stakeholders.

Table 2. Gender equality in WP2

<h2>Work package WP3 – Prototyping the NBSOIL Academy</h2>
<h3>T3.1 Mapping supply and demand for existing advice resources. Challenges and opportunities. M1 - M18 Lead FiBL. Contributors: SA, AERES</h3>
<p>Task Description:</p> <p>The Task will present the current status of soil related Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) in terms of core concepts, processes, responsibilities, procedures and supporting technologies for increased transparency between stakeholders.</p> <p>Recommendations on gender equality:</p> <p>In this regard, it would be good to explore whether gender aspects are considered in AKIS main components. Here are a series of questions that might facilitate the discussion: What is the percentage of men and women employed as soil consultants? Are they trained on gender equality? Do women farmers face specific barriers when trying to access advisory services? Are there specific procedures to ensure that these services reach them? Are the support technologies promoted in AKIS designed to be gender-neutral? What are the technology options that could better support women or reduce their workload?</p> <p>Task description:</p> <p>To gather relevant information, this task envisages that a supply side evaluation (provision mechanisms, delivery, structure, funding etc.) will be conducted by interviews with at least five experts in each partner country. The demand side evaluation will be conducted by interviews with at least 15 and up to 20 soil science practitioners in each partner country.</p>



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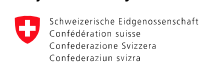
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Recommendations on gender equality:

What criteria will be followed to select the soil science experts and practitioners to be interviewed? Was a methodology established to try to guarantee a gender balanced representation? It would be good to include women farmers/soil science practitioners. On the one hand, the supply side evaluation might shed light on whether the ways in which soil advisory is delivered are easily accessible to women, consider and meet their needs, and are influenced by social perceptions of gender roles in soil-related agriculture, forest, urban, and industrial settings. On the other hand, demand assessment could illustrate whether women and men express different interests, whether they report different access to and adoption of technologies, or whether they have particular preferences regarding the content of training materials and delivery methods.

Task Description:

Finally, to enable generalisation, these results will be collated by FiBL and will lead to the formulation of a survey to analyse the advisory needs of soil science practitioners across Europe. The online survey will be distributed to at least 50 practitioners in each partner country, who will be identified using the existing networks of the project partners.

Recommendations on gender equality:

In this case, it would also be advisable to set out specific targets regarding the number of women to whom the survey will be distributed. This is especially relevant since the advisory needs of men and women might significantly differ from each other as well as their perception of how such services should be offered and provided.

T3.3 Coordinate the design of advanced modules together with stakeholders and all the other WPs M6 - 18 Lead: ITAP. Contributors: CDR, CAFS, AERES, CNA, REVOLVE, SA, FiBL

Task Description:

This task will review available learning programs using a multi-actor approach to engage soil advisors, land managers and other stakeholders through online workshops and live documents to test and evaluate new forms of advice. In addition, it stipulates that, through a series of workshops, learning materials will be co-designed and resources and materials will be developed to support the



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delivery of advanced training modules with a particular focus on the management of nutrients, soil organic carbon and biodiversity.

Recommendations on gender equality:

Workshops require careful organization to advance gender equality. It is essential to ensure the participation of an adequate number of women in the role of speakers/presenters/facilitators and to broaden the female audience through the use of appropriate communication channels to publicize the events. The presence of women attendees is particularly important as they could contribute to the design and development of gender-responsive educational materials, indicate which steps would facilitate the adoption of nature-based solutions for them and why, and emphasize their own perception of soil and soil restoration practices.

Table 3. Gender equality in WP3

<p>Work package WP5 – Business models and Policy framework</p>
<p>T5.1 Soil advice business models, market opportunities and public support (M6 - 42)</p> <p>Lead: CDR. Contributors: IUCN, ITAP, CAFS, CNA, SA</p>
<p>Task Description:</p> <p>This task will first review advisory service delivery model across the EU together with case studies from other countries, and develop a soil business case framework to support implementation of the Soil Health Mission. It will also examine employment possibilities for soil advisors in the private and public sector as well as insights from soil related entrepreneurship initiatives.</p> <p>Recommendations on gender equality:</p> <p>Delivery models in the EU can differ significantly from one another, and one of the elements that might characterize some of them is their degree of inclusiveness. The absolute number of men involved in soil-related agricultural and forestry activities in Europe is higher than that of women (the situation might be different in urban and industrial settings). Therefore, the goal of soil advisory service providers should not necessarily be to reach an equal number of male and female farmers</p>



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and foresters. However, it would be crucial to check whether these providers are aware of the socioeconomic and cultural barriers that women may face when trying to participate in trainings and gain equal access to technology and its adoption. If so, do they have a plan/strategy to reduce and/or address these barriers? How many women extension agents are part of the organization's workforce and what barriers do they face? Do they collect sex-disaggregated data to assess the demand side? Do they set gender-specific goals?

Finally, it would be interesting to investigate whether employment opportunities in this sector are equal for both genders. Do organizations have in place inclusive policy as well as working environment? Are women soil consultants worse off than men in their job search?

Table 4. Gender equality in WP5

<p>Work package WP6 – Communication, dissemination, and exploitation</p>
<p>T6.1. Communication M1-M48. Lead: REVOLVE. Contributors: ALL</p> <p>&</p> <p>T6.2. Dissemination M1-M48. Lead: REVOLVE. Contributors: ALL</p>
<p>T6.1 Description:</p> <p>The first step of the communications activities is to establish the project’s visual identity, choosing a strong logo, colour palette, and visual elements that reflect the project’s objectives and values, and that will be used to create Microsoft Office Word and PowerPoint templates, information leaflets, and banners, which will be shared with all partners at the start of the project.</p> <p>T6.2 Description:</p>



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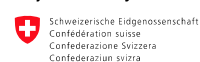
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This task will ensure that the knowledge and results generated within NBSOIL are available and transferred to potential users, so that the use and impacts of NBSOIL’s results are maximised.

Recommendations on gender equality:

For these highly interdependent tasks, it is key to ensure that communications and publications are gender-responsive. It is pivotal to choose inclusive and culturally-sensitive language and expressions in all documents for internal and external use in order to avoid discriminatory interpretations and to guarantee fairness. In addition, communication materials should use positive and empowering images of diverse individuals and avoid harmful stereotypes. Finally, women farmers should represent one of the desired target groups to be reached by the communication and dissemination channels identified and/or developed within the project.

Table 5. Gender equality in WP6

Therefore, it would be important for all project partners to think about how to translate general commitments on gender equality and inclusion into the practical actions mentioned above. Setting clear goals and developing quantitative and qualitative indicators to enable monitoring and evaluation would certainly help move in the right direction.

4. Gender Equality in Project Partners’ Organizations

So far, we have focused on the external impact of project choices and activities. It is now time to examine how NBSOIL partners address gender issues internally and with their own partners. Here, it will be crucial to understand whether they have designed and adopted particular strategies and/or structures to improve their gender equality performance. To this end, we will propose a series of broad, open-ended questions to allow partners to start the conversation and explain how they are trying to advance gender equality.

- Have gender mainstreaming methods been incorporated into existing processes and workflows?
- Does your organization have a gender and social inclusion policy?
- Has your organization developed a gender equality plan?
- Does your organization have a gender equality mission statement?
- Do you offer trainings on gender equality and unconscious gender bias for staff and decision makers?



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- In your organization, are there gender equality-related human resource policies in areas of recruitment, training and development, knowledge and competency management? And policies on the protection from sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment?
- Is the project team gender balanced? Do team members have an appropriate level of gender competence?
- Do you strive to achieve a balanced presence of women and men in decision-making positions? If yes, what measures have you taken?
- What measures do you implement to promote gender balance in workshops and trainings?
- Do your communication and promotion materials (website, news articles, etc.) show and/or represent the views of a wide diversity of people, including gender perspectives?
- Do you have infrastructures that can safely accommodate women's needs (e.g., menstrual health and breastfeeding)?
- Do you carry out gender impact assessment? If so, how do you incorporate the knowledge gained into the planning of future activities?
- In your activities, do you establish gender-sensitive data collection methods (e.g., disaggregated by sex) and objectives?

5. Gender Equality in Soil Advisory Services

Given the scarcity of scientific data and resources available on the relationship between gender and soil advisory services in Europe, this could be a great opportunity to gather partners' perspectives and more precisely identify challenges and opportunities in this area. Considering that project activities will take place in agricultural, forestry, urban and industrial settings, we will also try to assess whether particular sectors/areas perform better than others when it comes to gender equality.

Below is a list of questions that might help to understand how to improve gender equality in soil advisory services and their delivery:

- Could you identify some barriers to the wider participation of women in soil advisory services, both as providers and recipients?



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- Why are men more targeted as recipients of trainings compared to women?
- What is the common definition of "farmer"? Is it the person who works on the farm or the person who receives income from agricultural activities?
- Have you put in place any affirmative action to make possible for women farmers to access advisory services?
- When training courses are offered to male-dominated cooperatives, do women have equal access to them?
- What steps, in your opinion, would need to be taken to improve gender equality in this field?

6. Key Project Activities: The Selection of 300 Participants

Besides the tasks which have been analyzed above, there are several key activities that must be considered from a gender and inclusivity perspective.

The project provides for the selection of 300 training participants who are expected to complete the full 2 years training, to lead and participate in the Soil Mission Living Labs, and to efficiently support existing and aspiring Soil Lighthouse farms. Thus, their training and their future capacity to disseminate and scale up what they have learned during the project constitute one of the very core elements of NBSOIL. For this reason, it is fundamental to stress that participants, who will eventually become soil advisors, will be selected regardless of their age, class, race, ethnicity, language, sex, and gender and that diversity will be properly valued and promoted. Thus, we encourage the development of practices and processes that allow for representation of all groups and perspectives. For example, the use of communication channels capable of reaching a wide and diverse audience could be a first step forward. Sometimes, in fact, communication channels unknowingly target and reach one group to the exclusion of minorities or culturally diverse groups.

One of the objectives of the project should be to ensure that, after the end of the project, female actors involved in soil-related agricultural, forestry, urban and industrial activities will receive as much support, mentoring, and training as men throughout Europe. Increasing the overall proportion of women extension officers and equipping all extension officers with the knowledge and skills to address men and women farmers equitably will definitely help achieving that objective.

Soil-related agricultural, forest, urban, and industrial enterprises/organizations led by women should also be considered when identifying the lighthouses that will be assisted by training participants. On the one hand, this would allow women to receive the same information as men to develop technical and managerial skills.



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On the other, it would enable training participants to understand the structure of rural and urban households headed by women (e.g., average farm size, financial capacity, and available technology), to grasp differences in land perception and decision-making processes, and, in general, the different challenges and opportunities they face. Participants should also be trained to conduct gender-sensitive participatory visits to mitigate potential power imbalances and inequalities in male-led agricultural households, where women often also play an important agricultural role.

7. Organization and Management of Events

Gender sensitivity and inclusivity must be two central pillars of any event organized within the framework of the NBSOIL project. Neglecting these two aspects risks reducing the overall effectiveness of the project, undermining the quality of the training events, and exacerbating existing inequalities. An inclusive approach should seek to address any form of direct and indirect discrimination caused by factors such as age, poverty, class, race, ethnicity, language, migrant or displaced status, HIV status, disability, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation. The ultimate goal is to ensure equitable access to participation and learning.

Regarding the venue:

- Is the chosen venue considered accessible and comfortable for both women and men? Is it accessible to people with physical disabilities?
- Does it have adequate restrooms available for all genders and accessible to people in wheelchairs?
- Does it have prayer spaces where people can safely practice their religion?
- Are there facilities for women to care for their children and/or daycare centers near the venue?

Regarding management arrangements:

- Are women and men equally represented in the team that is organizing the event?
- Is promoting gender equality and inclusivity an overall goal of the event?
- Is the event time accessible to all participants? Could it conflict with parental responsibilities?

Regarding participants and trainers:

- Who chairs the event? Is there a rotation between men and women?



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- Who is invited to speak? Is there a good balance between male and female speakers? How is the speaking time distributed among them? Does it need to be adjusted?
- Is there a balance between male and female participants? Is there sufficient representation of minority or culturally diverse groups? Are age, class, or gender identity factors potentially causing prejudice and discrimination?

Regarding the content:

- Are the topics discussed equally relevant for women and men?
- Does it include any inappropriate sexist language?

7.1 Ensuring Health, Safety, Wellbeing, and Inclusivity in Local Meetings

The NBSOIL project aims to provide holistic and immersive learning experience for soil advisors across eight countries, focusing on Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) for soil management. Given the diverse nature of the participants and the complexity of the training, ensuring the health, safety, wellbeing, and inclusivity of all participants is of paramount importance. This report outlines detailed guidelines for organizers of local meetings to follow, with a focus on health and safety measures, fostering inclusivity, supporting participants from varied backgrounds, including older farmers, people from different educational levels, those with disabilities, respecting LGBTQ+ rights, and addressing issues of racial discrimination.

Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Guidelines

Comprehensive Risk Assessment

Before any local meetings or field trips take place, it is essential to conduct a thorough risk assessment to identify potential hazards. The risk assessment should include considerations of environmental factors such as weather conditions, terrain difficulties, and the availability of emergency medical services. The assessment should also cover the suitability of the venue in terms of accessibility, safety equipment, and emergency preparedness. This careful planning will help in pre-emptively addressing any risks to the participants' physical health and safety.

In terms of logistics, the organizers must ensure that the venues are accessible to all participants, especially those with mobility challenges. This includes ensuring that paths and access points are safe and suitable for those using wheelchairs or other mobility aids. Transportation for field trips should be safe and accessible, with clear procedures in place for ensuring that all participants, regardless of mobility, can participate fully.

Mental Health and Wellbeing



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The wellbeing of participants extends beyond physical health, encompassing mental and emotional health as well. Creating an inclusive and supportive environment where participants feel safe and heard is critical. Encouraging a sense of community among participants can also foster emotional wellbeing. Organizers should structure group discussions and activities that promote interaction and connection between participants, thereby reducing feelings of isolation that might occur, particularly for those attending events far from their usual environments.

Cultural Sensitivity, Anti-Racism, and Gender Inclusivity

To foster a truly inclusive environment, it is crucial that cultural differences are respected, and racial and gender inclusivity are actively promoted. Organizers should ensure that all participants are treated equally, with no room for discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation. This can be achieved by implementing anti-racism policies in line with the United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), which mandates proactive efforts to eliminate racial biases in any setting. Additionally, all facilitators and staff are advised to undergo cultural competence and anti-racism training to ensure that they are aware of the importance of maintaining an inclusive environment. This training should include recognizing unconscious biases and establishing open channels for reporting discrimination.

Gender inclusivity should be a priority, and it is essential that LGBTQ+ participants feel safe, respected, and supported. The Yogyakarta Principles, which outline international standards on sexual orientation and gender identity, provide a comprehensive framework for ensuring the full inclusion and protection of LGBTQ+ participants. Organizers should, when feasible, provide gender-neutral restrooms and ensure that all communication and materials are free of gendered language that could exclude or marginalize participants. Facilitators should also be trained to create a safe space for all participants, encouraging open dialogue and ensuring no one feels marginalized or discriminated against.

Guidelines for Achieving Inclusivity in Participant Selection

The NBSOIL program is designed to attract a wide range of participants from different countries and backgrounds. To achieve this, the NBSOIL Academy has to implement a strategy that ensures inclusivity at all stages of participant selection. A diverse cohort will bring a richness of perspectives and experiences, which is crucial for collaborative learning in NBS.

Balanced Representation

Achieving a balanced representation of participants is critical for fostering an inclusive learning environment. Organizers should strive to ensure that the selection process reflects gender balance and promotes participation from a range of age groups, including older farmers who often bring valuable practical experience. This will require targeted outreach to both men and women and non-binary individuals from different sectors and regions.



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Additionally, efforts should be made to select participants from a variety of ethnic and social backgrounds. This diversity can enrich discussions and lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in soil health management across different contexts.

Targeted Outreach

Outreach materials must be accessible and designed to resonate with diverse audiences. Offering recruitment materials in multiple languages ensures that potential participants can engage with the information comfortably. It is also important to provide clear, jargon-free explanations of the program's benefits to encourage individuals from different walks of life to apply.

Financial and Logistical Support

Economic barriers should not prevent participation. Offering financial support, such as scholarships or stipends for travel and accommodation, would help ensure that participants from lower-income regions or disadvantaged backgrounds can take part in the program. Similarly, providing logistical support, such as assistance with travel arrangements, can help participants overcome practical barriers to attending in-person meetings and field trips.

Ensuring Participation of Older Farmers, Participants with Different Educational Backgrounds, and Participants with Disabilities

The NBSOIL project's success hinges on its ability to support a diverse participant base, including older farmers, people from different educational backgrounds, and individuals with disabilities. Organizers need to create an environment that caters to these groups' specific needs.

For older participants, the pace of the activities should be carefully managed. Physical demands, particularly during field trips, should be considered, and organizers should ensure that the itinerary includes sufficient breaks and opportunities to rest. The project should also provide additional support for older participants who may not be as familiar with digital tools. Offering introductory sessions on using online platforms or digital monitoring tools can help them fully engage with the training program.

Support for Participants with Disabilities and Neurodiversity Needs

Ensuring that the program is accessible to participants with disabilities is a fundamental requirement. Organizers should work closely with disability support organizations to identify the needs of disabled participants and ensure that appropriate accommodations are made. This might include providing sign language interpreters, ensuring that venues are wheelchair accessible, or offering assistive technology for participants with visual or hearing impairments. Field trips should be carefully planned to ensure that all participants can safely and comfortably take part in activities, regardless of physical limitations.

In addition to supporting participants with physical disabilities, it is essential to recognize and accommodate neurodiversity within the program. Individuals with neurodivergent conditions, such as autism, ADHD, or dyslexia, may bring unique perspectives and strengths to the learning process but may also face challenges



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in traditional training environments. Organizers could thus incorporate flexible approaches to communication and engagement, such as providing clear instructions, minimizing sensory distractions, and allowing for breaks to prevent overstimulation. Offering training materials in multiple formats, including visual aids and concise summaries, can further enhance accessibility. By fostering an inclusive environment that respects neurodiversity, the program can ensure equitable participation in learning activities.

Fostering a Supportive Learning Environment

Finally, it is essential to foster a learning environment where all participants feel valued and supported. Organizers should encourage peer mentoring, where participants can support each other, particularly when it comes to navigating the more technical aspects of the training. Creating opportunities for informal social interaction can also help participants build strong connections, making the learning experience more collaborative and inclusive.

Conclusion

By following these guidelines, the NBSOIL project can create a safe, inclusive, and engaging learning experience that empowers a diverse range of soil advisors to implement Nature-Based Solutions for soil health. Organizers must remain proactive in addressing the health, safety, and wellbeing of participants while promoting inclusivity across all aspects of the program. Through careful planning and consideration, the program will be able to meet its ambitious goals, supporting participants from different countries, backgrounds, and abilities to work together towards sustainable soil management solutions.

8. Messages from Partners

REVOLVE, leader of WP6 on communication, dissemination, and exploitation:

“The NBSOIL communication team utilizes gender-sensitive language in all project communications, whether they are internal or external. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), gender-sensitive communication ensures that women, men, and those who do not conform to the binary gender system are treated as individuals of equal importance and dignity.

The communication team employs gender-neutral language in texts, visuals, images, and virtual interactive exhibits, making a conscious effort to avoid perpetuating gender stereotypes. As a notable example within a core element of the project, NBSOIL's visual identity is highly illustrative, featuring characters that personify the project, always representing both men and women. However, the female figures in these illustrations may be slightly more prominent. This can be found across NBSOIL graphic materials.

NBSOIL aims to train the new generation of soil advisors, a role deeply entrenched in the agricultural context, where a significant gender gap exists. For instance, according to Eurostat's 2016 data, on average, 29% of



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farms across the EU are managed by women. Through our communication and dissemination efforts, the NBSOIL team seeks to empower women to participate in our training programs and become part of the new wave of European soil advisors.

The team is also regularly self-evaluating internally, with the support of partners, the communication/dissemination activities and outputs with an inclusive gender lens to assure that diversity (of genders, ages, ethnicities, social backgrounds), inclusiveness and prevention of gender stereotypes are addressed.”

FiBL, leader of T1.3 and T3.1

“In the frame of the NBSOIL project, we will conduct interviews with various stakeholders implementing nature-based solutions as well as actors offering training resources for soil advisors and aspiring soil advisors.

In task 1.3. we are conducting interviews with farmers and land managers who have implemented (or are planning to implement) NBS in order to improve soil health. The interviews will focus on the motivation of the interviewees, their expectations and for those who have already enough experience, how they evaluate their experience.

For this task we will use a standardized open-ended questions list, to enable respondents to develop their arguments. We aim to conduct 15-20 interviews in each NBSOIL partner country. We will use a purposive theoretical sample, seeking for maximal variation among respondents in order to cover a diversity of perspectives with regard to the NBS, area of activity (agriculture, forestry, restoration or industrial) as well as the respondents’ socio-demographics. In particular, we will see whether, age, experience, cultural background or gender play a role in the way motivations and expectations are formulated.

In task 3.1, we seek to assess existing training resource supply for soil advisors, as well as soil advisors demand for such resources.

To assess the existing offer (supply side) we conducted interviews with experts about soil advice (from professional organizations, education and training institutions, research, policy or experienced soil advisors). The sample consisted of 5-8 experts in each NBSOIL partner country. We seek to ensure diversity in terms of the areas of expertise covered (agriculture, forestry, restoration or industrial) and institutional diversity. Interviewees were mainly selected for their area of expertise and institutional affiliation.

Regarding the demand side, we are conducting interviews with 15-20 soil advisors (and aspiring soils advisors) in each partner country, to assess their expectations with regard to training resources on NBS and soil health. Interviews will be semi-standardized and we will use a purposive theoretical sample, seeking for maximal variation among respondents. We will ensure that we have respondents of all areas of activity covered by the NBSOIL project (agriculture, forestry, restoration or industrial), but the primary focus will be on the respondents’ socio-demographics, especially years of practice, education level and gender, to ensure



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that the NBSOIL academy proposes learning formats and content adapted to participants from diverse backgrounds.”

9. Conclusions

The aim of this document is to offer a comprehensive overview of the NBSOIL project from a gender equality and inclusivity perspective and to provide insights and recommendations on how best to design activities that respect these principles. This represents the initial version and will be followed by two updated versions over the course of the project. For now, it is worth noting that this document is intended for all partners to read and brainstorm, and eventually provide us with feedback and information that can help enrich future versions of this same document. The hope is that it will spark conversations and discussions on how to promote a systematic gender-responsive and inclusive approach both within and outside of this project. As highlighted in the previous sections, some of NBSOIL's tasks and activities require special attention, as they will largely determine the success of this project in helping to create a more just and inclusive agriculture, forestry, and post-industrial sectors in Europe. In the short term, this will happen through the fair selection of training participants and their equal treatment in all kinds of events and learning opportunities, while in the long term, this could materialize through the work of soil advisors sensitive to a wide range of social and gender issues.

10. Further Readings

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