SOIL VALUES

MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE SOIL MANAGEMENT IN THE SAHEL



SOIL VALUES PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

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IFDC Developing Agriculture from the Ground Up

SNV

WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

AGRA Sustainably Growing Africa's Food Systems

IITA Transforming African Agriculture

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ADVANCING SOIL HEALTH, SCALING IMPACT

As we continue to advance the Soil Values program across the Sahel and West Africa, this edition of our newsletter offers an important reflection on what it takes to turn investments in soil health into lasting impact for farmers, communities, and food systems.

Across our countries of intervention, we are seeing that healthy soils cannot be addressed through isolated solutions. They require strong partnerships, locally grounded approaches, scientific evidence, and sustained engagement with the people who manage and depend on agricultural landscapes.

This principle is reflected in the range of activities highlighted in this edition. From the DGIS monitoring mission in Nigeria to the development of Burkina Faso's national soil restoration action plan, our work is increasingly connecting field-level results with national priorities and broader development agendas. These actions demonstrate the importance of working across institutions and sectors to create the conditions for sustainable change and scale.

Our focus on young people and rural women is equally central to this effort. In Mali and northern Nigeria, youth are being equipped with practical skills, tools, and entrepreneurial opportunities to produce organic fertilizers and seedlings, creating local services while contributing to improved soil fertility. In Burkina Faso, our engagement in gender-responsive agricultural risk management helps to ensure that women's realities and priorities are integrated into approaches to building agricultural resilience.

We are also investing in solutions that can respond to the complexity of farmers' challenges. The Bundle Box approach, for example, brings together inputs, sustainable practices, extension, finance, and market access to reduce the risks that often prevent farmers from adopting innovations. Similarly, the regional capacity-building around the Zainer demonstrates how appropriate technologies, combined with local technical knowledge, can help accelerate land restoration.

At the landscape level, the partnership established in Burkina Faso's Kou watershed illustrates another important principle: lasting impact depends on collective ownership. Bringing farmers, livestock keepers, women, youth, local authorities, researchers, financial institutions, and development partners together around a shared vision creates stronger foundations for coordinated and sustainable action.

These experiences reinforce a common message: soil health is not only an agricultural issue; it is a foundation for resilience, food security, livelihoods, and sustainable development.

As Soil Values moves forward, we remain committed to learning from implementation, strengthening partnerships, supporting locally led solutions, and translating evidence into action. Our ambition is not simply to demonstrate what works but to help create the systems, capacities, and partnerships needed to sustain and scale solutions across the region.

Thank you to our partners, colleagues, farmers, researchers, policymakers, and communities for their continued commitment to this shared ambition. Together, we are putting healthy soils at the heart of more resilient and sustainable food systems.



ALAIN SY TRAORE

PROGRAM DIRECTOR, SOIL VALUES

IITA: ADVANCING SOIL HEALTH AND CLIMATE-RESILIENT AGRICULTURE THROUGH SCIENCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) is a leading international research-for-development organization dedicated to transforming African agriculture through science, innovation, and strategic partnerships. As a key knowledge partner in the Soil Values program, IITA contributes its expertise to support the improvement of soil health, restoration of degraded landscapes, and the improvement of the adaptation capacity of smallholder farmers across the Sahel.

Working in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria, IITA helps generate the scientific evidence that underpins the program's interventions. Its contributions include climate analysis and identification of innovations for climate change adaptation; digital soil fertility mapping and identification of watershed degradation hotspots to support site-specific fertilizer recommendations and informed land management decisions; and capacity building among stakeholders, including researchers, extension agents, students, private sector agents, and smallholder farmers.

Beyond research, IITA also participates in stakeholder engagement and performance reviews and supports the design and implementation of Soil Values activities to ensure sustainable program delivery. IITA is committed to translating science into practical solutions.

Through trainings of trainers, farmer field demonstrations, impact bundles, and youth-focused capacity building initiatives, the institute equips extension agents, researchers, and farming communities with climate-smart agricultural practices, including Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM), compost production, Bokashi, biochar technologies, and sustainable soil restoration techniques.

These efforts strengthen local capacities while promoting the adoption of environmentally sustainable, productivity-enhancing practices. By combining cutting-edge research with practical implementation and strong partnerships, IITA is helping to place healthy soils at the heart of resilient food systems. Through the Soil Values program, the institute remains committed to delivering innovative, science-driven solutions that enhance agricultural productivity, strengthen climate resilience, and contribute to sustainable development across West Africa.

https://iita.org



View of a crop field at IITA, a nonprofit organization that develops agricultural innovations to combat hunger, malnutrition, and poverty while preserving natural resources. Photo: David Gnaha, Wikimedia Commons, June 7, 2019

DGIS DELEGATION HIGHLIGHTS SOIL VALUES AS A SCALABLE PATHWAY TO FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY IN NIGERIA

A delegation from the Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS), representing the Inclusive Green Growth Department (IGG)/Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) cluster of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, undertook a strategic monitoring visit to Nigeria April 12-22 to assess the progress and relevance of centrally funded FNS programs, including the Soil Values program.

The mission combined high-level policy engagement with field-level validation across Abuja and Kano states, providing an opportunity to review strategic alignment, partnership performance, and on-the-ground results.

On April 13, the DGIS delegation visited the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) office in Abuja for a session dedicated to the Soil Values program in Nigeria. This session provided a comprehensive overview of program objectives, implementation progress, and strategic alignment with national priorities.

Discussions highlighted the program's collaborative delivery model, especially its coordination with major partners, such as Agro-Climatic Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscapes (ACReSAL) and the Livestock Productivity and Resilience Support Project (L-PRES), and the role of local implementing partners in translating joint planning into tangible results at scale. These dialogues underscored how institutional partnerships are strengthening coherence between policy frameworks, watershed-level interventions, and community outcomes.

Following the Abuja meetings, the delegation proceeded to Kano State for field-level validation of program results. A key component of this visit was the inspection of Soil Values demonstration sites implemented in collaboration with the Centre for Dryland Agriculture (CDA) of Bayero University, Kano.

At the demonstration sites, the delegation reviewed ongoing field trials showcasing integrated soil fertility management (ISFM), integrated pest management (IPM), soil and water conservation practices, and fertilizer deep placement (FDP) technologies, particularly within vegetable production systems. The DGIS team noted clear evidence of improved agronomic practices and emphasized the relevance and scalability of the demonstrated technologies, recognizing their potential to support sustainable intensification in northern Nigeria.

The visit also enabled direct exchanges with extension agents and beneficiary farmers, who shared practical insights on technology adoption, productivity improvements, and the benefits of Soil Values-supported practices. These interactions reinforced the effectiveness of the Soil Values implementation model, especially its emphasis on partnership-driven delivery, context-specific technologies, and field-level learning as drivers of adoption and resilience.

The mission concluded with a high-level courtesy meeting between the Soil Values leadership team and Bengt van Loosdrecht, the Ambassador of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN) in Abuja. The meeting provided space to reflect on key observations from the visit, reaffirm strategic alignment, and discuss future directions for strengthening collaboration and scaling impact within Nigeria's soil health and sustainable agriculture agenda.

Overall, the DGIS visit confirmed the strong performance of the Soil Values program in Nigeria, particularly at the watershed level. The delegation recognized the program's technical relevance, collaborative approach, and tangible community-level results, reinforcing confidence in its strategy and its contribution to sustainable soil health, agricultural productivity, and food and nutrition security.

https://ifdc.org/2026/05/14/dgis-delegation-highlights-soil-values-as-a-scalable-pathway-to-food-and-nutrition-security-in-nigeria/

SOIL VALUES EXPANDS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS TO ACCELERATE SOIL HEALTH ACROSS WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

In June 2026, the Soil Values program strengthened its engagement with key agricultural institutions, governments, research organizations, and financial actors across West and Central Africa, laying the groundwork for stronger collaboration on soil health, sustainable agriculture, innovation, and investment.

On June 9, a Soil Values delegation led by Program Director Alain Sy Traoré, accompanied by International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) Togo Country Representative Abalo Adodo, met with Kanfitin Konlani, Executive Director of the Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (ARAA).

Discussions explored synergies with the West Africa Food System Resilience Program (FSRP), the Regional Project to Promote Climate-Smart Agriculture (AIC), and the agroecological project funded by Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeESIRA+), as well as opportunities to strengthen soil health and fertility capacities in line with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Fertilizer Roadmap adopted in Lomé in 2023.

On June 23, the program team visited the AfricaRice M'Bé Research Station in Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire, where they met with Director General of AfricaRice Dr. Baboucarr Manneh. The meeting highlighted strong enthusiasm for collaboration and a shared ambition to move from discussions to the implementation of joint activities on the ground.



On June 9, leaders of the Soil Values program met with members of ARAA to align with key regional initiatives, notably DeSIRA+, AIC, and FSRP

On June 25, the Soil Values team met with Bernard Kini Komoé, Minister Delegate in charge of Food Crop Production in Côte d'Ivoire, to present the program and explore collaboration opportunities. Discussions focused on digital soil fertility maps, capacity building for fertilizer inspectors, strengthening local laboratories, and creating value within the fertilizer sector.

The following day, discussions with members of the Africa Fertilizer Financing Mechanism (AFFM) at the African Development Bank (AfDB) explored a proposed guarantee facility to improve access to finance across the fertilizer value chain. The team also met with Messotigui Diomandé, Executive Secretary of the West African Fertilizer Association (WAFA), to explore opportunities for renewed collaboration.

On June 29, the delegation met with Dr. Cheikhou Oumar Ba, Senegal's Minister of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty, and Livestock, to present Soil Values and explore collaboration opportunities to advance soil health and sustainable agricultural development in Senegal.

The engagements concluded on June 30 with a meeting between the Soil Values delegation and Dr. Moumini Savadogo, Executive Director of the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF).

Discussions focused on soil health, sustainable agriculture, innovation, knowledge sharing, and capacity strengthening to accelerate the adoption of sustainable soil management solutions across West and Central Africa.

Together, these meetings demonstrate Soil Values' commitment to building strategic partnerships that connect research, policy, finance, and implementation.

They also reinforce the program's broader ambition to mobilize investment and accelerate the scaling of solutions that can deliver healthier soils, more productive farms, and more resilient food systems across Africa.



Discussions between Soil Values and Senegalese authorities focused on national priorities regarding soil health, including the finalization of the National Soil Health Program and capacity building at the National Institute of Pedology (INP).

INVESTING €300 MILLION IN AFRICA'S SOILS, FARMERS, AND FUTURE

Healthy soils are the foundation of productive farms, resilient communities, and sustainable food systems. Yet across Africa, soil degradation, climate shocks, and limited access to inputs, finance, knowledge, and markets continue to constrain millions of farmers. Soil Values offers an innovative response by connecting science, practical solutions, local capacity, finance, and partnerships around one objective: turning healthier soils into better opportunities for farming communities.

Across its countries of intervention, the program is already turning this approach into action. Young people are being equipped with skills and tools to produce organic fertilizers and seedlings, creating local businesses while improving farmers' access to essential inputs. Integrated approaches such as the Bundle Box combine inputs, knowledge, finance, extension, and markets to reduce barriers to innovation adoption. Technologies such as the Zainer are making land restoration more efficient, while national- and landscape-level partnerships are strengthening the systems needed for long-term impact.

These efforts demonstrate that investing in soil health can generate benefits far beyond agricultural productivity — from stronger farmer livelihoods and youth employment to land restoration, climate resilience, and food and nutrition security. But reaching millions of farmers requires investment at a much greater scale.

Soil Values aims to mobilize more than €300 million in additional investment to accelerate actions for soil health, land restoration, and resilient agricultural systems across Africa. This ambition goes beyond fundraising; it is a call to align public, private, research, and development finance behind solutions that can deliver measurable and lasting impact. Investing in soil is investing in farmers, communities, and Africa's future. Soil Values is building the partnerships and pathways to make that investment count.



A sorghum stalk growing in a field in Burkina Faso

BUNDLE BOXES: BRINGING THE RIGHT SOLUTIONS TOGETHER FOR FARMERS



Biochar produced from rice residues in Burkina Faso

For many farmers, adopting improved soil management practices depends on having the right combination of not only inputs, but an array of resources. This is the idea behind the Soil Values Bundle Box approach. Rather than focusing on a single solution, the Bundle Box brings these complementary elements together to address the practical constraints farmers face and reduce the risks associated with adopting new practices. By connecting farmers with quality inputs, sustainable soil fertility practices, advisory services, finance, and markets, the approach creates a more enabling environment for investment in healthier soils.

The experience of Soil Values shows that this integrated model can strengthen adoption while creating stronger links between farmers, input suppliers, financial institutions, extension services, and buyers. It also opens opportunities for locally adapted partnerships and business models that can be sustained beyond individual interventions. Ultimately, the Bundle Box is about moving from fragmented support to integrated solutions that respond to farmers' real needs, helping them improve soil health, increase productivity, strengthen livelihoods, and build resilience. As Soil Values works toward scaling proven solutions across Africa, the Bundle Box offers a practical pathway to connect innovation, investment, and farmer impact.

SOIL VALUES STRENGTHENS NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH CO-CONSTRUCTION OF 2026 PLANS

In April 2026, the Soil Values program strengthened collaboration with its national and local implementing partners across Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger through a series of co-construction meetings aimed at improving the quality and alignment of program interventions.

In Burkina Faso on April 13-15, Soil Values brought together Practica, AGRODEV, Fédération des Sociétés Coopératives des Professionnels Agricoles du Burkina Faso (FESCOPAB), Reach Italia, Agro-Input Wholesalers and Retailers Association (AGRODIA), Network for the Promotion and Empowerment of Rural Women (REPAFER), and Chant de Femme in Ouagadougou to review, enrich, and harmonize their 2026 work plans. The discussions focused on ensuring that planned activities were coherent, relevant, and aligned with the program's objectives.

In Niger on April 14-17, the country team engaged with key partners, including the Network of Chambers of Agriculture (RECA) and the Directorate-General for Agriculture (DGA). The discussions supported the refinement and harmonization of Terms of Reference, strengthening the consistency and relevance of planned interventions.

In Mali during the week of April 27, Soil Values held an online consultation with its implementing partners Free Association for the Promotion of Housing and Accommodation (ALPHALOG), Association Malienne pour la Promotion du Sahel (AMAPROS), Elephant Vert, and FITINE Consult. The consultations helped refine and harmonize the 2026 work plans and ensure their alignment with the program's priorities.

Across the three countries, these engagements reflect a core principle of Soil Values: sustainable impact starts with co-construction.

By working closely with national partners, the program ensures that interventions are grounded in local realities, strengthened by complementary expertise, and collectively owned—creating stronger foundations for effective implementation and lasting impact for farming communities.



Farmers share their experiences during the evaluation of the cascade training program in the Yaadga region of Burkina Faso

SOIL VALUES STRENGTHENS FERTILIZER SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE AMID GLOBAL CRISIS

The international crisis in the Middle East has highlighted the vulnerability of fertilizer supply chains and the potential consequences for food security across the Sahel. In response, the Soil Values program brought together key stakeholders in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger to assess risks and identify practical measures to strengthen the resilience of fertilizer systems.

On April 10 in Bamako, Mali, Soil Values convened a national consultation on the effects of the crisis on Mali's fertilizer sector and food security. The workshop validated the crisis assessment, identified emergency mechanisms to secure fertilizer supplies for the 2026–2027 agricultural season, and adopted a draft National Emergency Action Plan. Participants also emphasized stronger monitoring and sustainable soil fertility management to better anticipate future disruptions.

The same day in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, a national information and consultation workshop brought together public authorities, technical experts, and development partners.

Discussions resulted in a Joint Roadmap for strengthening the resilience of the fertilizer sector, including the development of local organic and organo-mineral fertilizer production units and a national system for collecting and sharing fertilizer market information.

Building on these consultations, Soil Values convened stakeholders on April 16 in Niamey, Niger, for a national workshop on the fertilizer situation.

Public authorities, research institutions, private sector actors, and technical partners identified priorities including stronger regional monitoring and early-warning mechanisms and greater investment in sustainable soil fertility management.

Across the three countries, these consultations demonstrate the value of anticipatory action, regional coordination, and locally driven solutions. By connecting governments, research, private sector actors, and development partners, Soil Values is helping strengthen fertilizer systems while promoting more sustainable approaches to soil fertility. The objective is not only to respond to the current crisis but to build fertilizer and soil fertility systems that are better prepared for the next one.



Harouna Zoundi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Cooperative for Marketing Agricultural Inputs and Equipment (COCIMA) in Burkina Faso, shares his guidance on how to respond to the crisis

EQUIPPING 80 YOUNG FARMERS TO EXPAND ORGANIC FERTILIZER AND SEEDLING PRODUCTION IN MALI

On April 8 in Sikasso, Mali, the Soil Values program officially handed over technical equipment to 80 young people from the San, Ségou, and Sikasso watersheds to establish production units for seedlings and organic amendments. Representing Governor of Sikasso Region Kanté Marie Claire Dembélé, Governor's Advisor on Economic and Financial Affairs Ibrahim Mahamane presided over the handover ceremony. Local authorities attended, including Fourth Deputy Mayor of Sikasso Adama Diallo, who represented Mayor Kalfa Sanogo, and Alkassoum Barka, the Regional Director of Agriculture for Sikasso, who also represented his counterparts from San and Ségou.

This initiative is part of an inclusive process led by Soil Values in collaboration with its partners, including the Food System Resilience Program (FSRP), the Agri-Food Program for Integrated Resilience and Economic Development in the Sahel (Pro-ARIDES), and the regional directorates of agriculture in San, Ségou, and Sikasso. The program aims to establish six units dedicated to seedling production and two to the production of organic amendments, for a total of eight units. Each unit will bring together ten young people committed to developing local agricultural services.

The equipment these youths received included three-wheelers, Zainers, wheelbarrows, water tanks, biochar kilns, compost bins, and various production tools. Soil Values also provided fencing to secure sites and help ensure optimal working conditions. According to Soil Values Mali Country Coordinator Niamoye Traoré, these investments will sustainably improve producers' access to organic inputs and quality seedlings. "These units will strengthen soil fertility while facilitating the supply of seedlings in our intervention areas," Traoré said. She also emphasized that this material support complements a broader program that includes training and technical guidance.

Local authorities described the initiative as a practical response to current agricultural challenges. Diallo assured listeners, "This action is perfectly aligned with national programs such as the FSRP and Pro-ARIDES, which aim to strengthen food and nutritional security."

Mahamane praised the initiative, noting that it offers a concrete and innovative response to today's challenges. He added that by focusing on soil fertility and supporting young people, the program helps address rural unemployment while strengthening agriculture's resilience to the effects of climate change.

Recipients also expressed their commitment to making the most of this equipment. "These kits will not be stored away. We will use them fully and set up a management committee to ensure their proper use," assured Souleymane Coulibaly, a participating farmer from Ségou.

Rokiatou Ongoiba, another participating farmer from Sikasso, is also optimistic: "With this equipment, we will be able to significantly increase our bokashi production and meet growing demand."

To support participants and maximize impact, Soil Values also organized hands-on training focused on effective use of the equipment, agricultural entrepreneurship, and market development. This combination of equipment and capacity building is designed to support the growth of youth-led agribusiness services, while also contributing to improved soil fertility.

The program's local partner organizations, together with relevant technical services, will continue to support these youths in using and managing the equipment. Local non-governmental organizations will also provide guidance and monitor implementation. Through this integrated approach, the Soil Values program is supporting more resilient agriculture capable of responding to climate change and reducing rural unemployment.

https://ifdc.org/2026/05/11/equipping-80-young-farmers-to-expand-organic-fertilizer-and-seedling-production-in-mali/



By providing supporting equipment to 80 young farmers, the Soil Values program aims to establish eight organic fertilizer and seedling production units to boost agricultural production in Mali

BOOSTING YOUTH AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ORGANIC FERTILIZER PRODUCTION SKILLS IN MALI

On April 8-11 in Sikasso, Mali, the Soil Values program held a youth training event that drew 22 young people from the country's San, Ségou, and Sikasso regions. The training program helped equip these young people with practical agribusiness and organic fertilizer production skills to strengthen their livelihoods through income-generating activities while supporting soil health and restoration in key production areas.

Hands-On Learning in Agribusiness and Soil Management

Over the four-day program, participants worked through several practical and classroom-based modules on topics such as seedling production, plant production, grafting techniques, and many others. In the agricultural entrepreneurship modules, for example, they learned about building and managing profitable businesses. Attendees also learned and practiced step-by-step techniques for producing organic fertilizers and inputs, such as bokashi, compost, and biochar, suited to local conditions – an approach promoting more sustainable agriculture and encouraging youth self-employment.

Participants said the sessions helped make entrepreneurship more concrete and easier to apply. As Aminata Dissa, a farmer from Sikasso, explained, "The group work we did was aimed at gaining a better understanding of entrepreneurship. It helped explain its benefits and how to put it into practice in order to reap those benefits."

Another farmer, Kadidia Traoré, commented that the entrepreneurial training enlightened her most "regarding income, its proper management, bank deposits, profits."

Some trainees also observed that the sessions filled gaps for them. For example, farmer Daouda Dissa remarked, "There were indirect factors I wasn't taking into account in my operations."

The Soil Values training helped Daouda and other farmers like him better understand management, work organization, access to raw materials, and other factors influencing the smooth running of their businesses.

Training to Address Soil Fertility Challenges

This training initiative also provides a timely response to a widely recognized need for practical soil fertility solutions. Boubacar Traoré, the Soil Values focal point at the Sikasso Regional Directorate of Agriculture, emphasized the urgency: "This training is very beneficial for farmers in Mali and the sub-region. Our soil has become depleted. The techniques participants learned are therefore very useful."

To support real-world adoption after the training, partner organizations including the Free Association for the Promotion of Housing and Accommodation (ALPHALOG) and FITINE Consult are expected to provide follow-up, determine whether techniques are being appropriately applied in the field, and support ongoing mentoring for the trainees.

The initiative was designed to encourage peer-to-peer learning through participatory approaches, including group work, discussions, practical exercises, reviews, and debriefings. This strategy promotes post-training spillover learning once trainees share what they learned with peers from their local associations and cooperatives.

By equipping youth with skills in entrepreneurship and organic fertilizer production, and reinforcing these through post-training support, the Soil Values program is cultivating a new generation of agricultural entrepreneurs poised to strengthen local production systems and advance sustainable practices in Mali.

https://ifdc.org/2026/06/02/boosting-youth-agricultural-entrepreneurship-and-organic-fertilizer-production-skills-in-mali/



Trainees are expected to serve as ambassadors for disseminating good agricultural practices within their communities, contributing to improved food security and soil regeneration in Mali

DEVELOPING A ROADMAP TO IMPROVE FARMERS' ACCESS TO FERTILIZERS IN BURKINA FASO

On May 6-7, the Soil Values program convened stakeholders from Burkina Faso's fertilizer supply chain to develop a national roadmap aimed at improving farmers' access to quality fertilizers. The workshop, held in Ougadougou, brought together representatives from government institutions, regional organizations, producer associations, fertilizer companies, and development partners to discuss solutions to the country's fertilizer supply challenges.

In preparation for Burkina Faso's upcoming agricultural season, stakeholders examined the pressing issues affecting fertilizer availability and explored practical solutions to improve access for farmers. Participants actively brainstormed ways to address the current supply challenges while ensuring that producers can get quality fertilizers in sufficient quantities.

"The participants have been really engaged. They have been actively providing ideas and suggestions on how we can address this crisis and ensure farmers access inputs in a timely and effective manner," said Dr. Jeremiah Rogito, Soil Health Specialist at AGRA. He noted that the workshop generated recommendations that will undergo high-level review, with the goal of ensuring that farmers have access to appropriate fertilizers in the right quantities as the cropping season approaches.

Strengthening Collaboration Across the Fertilizer Value Chain

A central theme throughout the workshop was the need for stronger collaboration among actors involved in fertilizer production, importation, distribution, and use. Dr. Innocent Okuku, Chief Executive Officer of the Africa Fertilizer Industry Development Association (AFIDA), emphasized the importance of joint action among Soil Values consortium members, including AGRA and the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), as well as national stakeholders.

"We have been discussing how to work together to ensure that farmers in Burkina Faso have access to the fertilizers they require, both in terms of quantity and quality," he explained. A roundtable bringing together all relevant stakeholders was recommended to strengthen fertilizer supply for the 2026 agricultural season and to formalize commitments regarding volumes, quality standards, and delivery timelines. This spirit of collaboration was echoed by producer organizations. According to Sam Assane, Secretary General of the Confédération Paysanne du Faso, the workshop provided an opportunity for stakeholders to jointly develop a roadmap to support agricultural production in 2026 and improve fertilizer availability for farmers across the country.

Identifying Solutions for the Upcoming Agricultural Season

Discussions also focused on practical measures that could help address anticipated fertilizer shortages in the short term. Soumaïla Konkobo, Communications and Marketing Manager at the Société d'Exploitation des Phosphates du Burkina (SEPB), explained that the workshop served as a vital platform for discussing solutions to close supply gaps ahead of the upcoming season. He highlighted the need to promote local fertilizer production while also addressing importation challenges to ensure sufficient supplies reach producers when needed.

Learning from Stakeholder Perspectives

The workshop also offered an opportunity for participants to better understand the realities faced by other actors within the fertilizer value chain. Luiza Diaz Gomez Kalmogo, Agriculture Officer at the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), noted that the dialogue provided valuable insights into how stakeholders interact, collaborate, and address challenges on the ground.



Stakeholders collaborated on the development of a national roadmap aimed at improving farmers' access to quality fertilizers and supporting agricultural production during the 2026 growing season in Burkina Faso

Likewise, Adama Ouédraogo, President of the Association of Agricultural Input Wholesalers and Retailers of Burkina Faso (AGRODIA), described the discussions as an important starting point for addressing the urgent fertilizer needs associated with the approaching rainy season.

During the workshop, participants agreed on a series of priority actions aimed at strengthening fertilizer supply systems and improving farmers' access to inputs for the 2026 agricultural season. These actions could include coordinating fertilizer procurement, sharing information on product availability and market needs, harmonizing quality requirements, and planning delivery schedules. Léon Zongo, Soil Values Country Coordinator in Burkina Faso, expressed hope that the recommendations would lead to continued dialogue and stronger cooperation among stakeholders.

He emphasized the importance of working collectively to ensure that producers have adequate access to fertilizers, enabling them to continue their essential role in supporting agricultural production and food security in Burkina Faso.

By bringing together these representatives of Burkina Faso's fertilizer supply chain, the Soil Values program is helping strengthen coordination across the fertilizer sector and supporting efforts to improve fertilizer availability, agricultural productivity, and soil health for farming communities throughout the country.

https://ifdc.org/2026/06/24/developing-a-roadmap-to-improve-farmers-access-to-fertilizers-in-burkina-faso/

LAND RESTORATION AND FOOD SECURITY IN NIGER: SOIL VALUES REVIEWS PROGRESS AND SETS THE COURSE FOR 2026

Making soil health a driver of food sovereignty in Niger was reaffirmed as a key ambition during the Soil Values 2025 Results Review and 2026 Strategic Planning Workshop, held at the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. Institutional stakeholders, researchers, development partners, and representatives of rural communities came together to review achievements from 2025 and validate priorities for the year ahead.

Officially launched in May 2024 under the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in Niger, the Soil Values program is built around a long-term vision for sustainable soil fertility management across the Sahel. Funded by the Netherlands Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS), the regional initiative aims to strengthen resilient and sustainable agricultural systems.

Strong Ambitions for Niger's Farmers

In Niger, the challenge is significant. Soil Values aims to restore 400,000 hectares of degraded land and support 300,000 smallholder farmers, with a strong focus on inclusion, especially women and youth. In 2025, implementation expanded across the program's three target watersheds: Goulbi in Maradi, Korama in Zinder, and Maggia in Tahoua. The approach combines Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM) with participatory landscape management to strengthen productivity, resilience, and sustainable land management.

Building Synergies and Addressing Challenges

The review brought together around 30 participants from decentralized government services, the Faculty of Agronomy at Abdou Moumouni University in Niamey, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), the Network of Chambers of Agriculture (RECA), civil society organizations, and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Participants assessed both progress and operational challenges encountered in 2025. Key achievements include stronger synergies with major initiatives such as the Food System Resilience Program (FSRP) and the Agri-Food Program for Integrated Resilience and Economic Development in the Sahel (Pro-ARIDES), as well as engagement with financial institutions, including the Agricultural Bank of Niger and Salam Finance Islamique (SFI) SA, and private sector input actors, such as the Nigerien Association of Fertilizer Importers and Distributors (ANIDE) and Association of Private Seed Producers of Niger (APPSN). These partnerships are helping create a more inclusive economic and financial ecosystem around sustainable agriculture and soil health.

Looking Ahead to 2026

Following the review of achievements and constructive exchanges among stakeholders, the Soil Values team presented its priorities for 2026. These include scaling up proven soil and water conservation practices, consolidating local partnerships, and strengthening the capacities of rural communities. By bringing together the agricultural ecosystem in Niger, Soil Values and its partners are reaffirming a shared commitment to restoring the productivity of Niger's soils, strengthening rural livelihoods, and building a more sustainable and resilient agricultural future.



Dr. Mariama Boubou Diallo, Lead Bundling for the Soil Values program, presents the guidelines for bundling as part of the program's implementation

SOIL VALUES PROMOTES BUNDLE BOXES TO STRENGTHEN AGRICULTURAL RESILIENCE IN WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL

As land degradation and climate shocks continue to threaten farming systems across West Africa and the Sahel, the Soil Values program is positioning the Bundle Box as a promising way to improve soil health and fertility while boosting smallholder incomes and resilience. On June 11, Soil Values held a webinar on "Bundle Boxes: An Integrated, Practical, and Scalable Approach to Soil Fertility Management?" The 90-minute session served as a space for researchers, field practitioners, and others to explore what it will take for the approach to succeed and scale.

With around 80 participants in attendance, the discussion drew on the expertise of Dr. Esther Ronner, Sustainable Land Use Specialist at Wageningen University and Research, Dr. Alimata Arzouma Bandaogo, Deputy Program Director – Technical of the Soil Values program, and Dr. Mariama Boubou Diallo, Bundling Lead of the Soil Values program.

According to Dr. Bandaogo, the era of fragmented agricultural interventions is coming to a close. For decades, efforts that provided seeds without fertilizer or fertilizer without market access have limited the impact of agricultural development programs. The Bundle Box approach offers a more integrated response by combining complementary services into a single package.

Dr. Diallo explained that the model brings together five core components: quality inputs tailored to local needs, including improved seeds, mineral fertilizer, and biofertilizers; sustainable practices, such as Integrated Soil Fertility Management, soil and water conservation, and crop-livestock integration; ongoing extension support; financial services; and direct access to markets.

The goal is to respond more effectively to the real-life constraints farmers face by bringing together the services and relationships needed for innovation to take hold into one package.

Dr. Ronner noted: "These bundle boxes are about removing uncertainty for all actors involved. For farmers, they ensure that investments and efforts will translate into tangible benefits. For input providers, they help improve sales and logistics by packaging services together."

To illustrate the effectiveness of these bundled packages, Dr. Ronner shared the example of Ousmane Samaké, a farmer in Mali, who lacked sufficient resources to fertilize his soybean fields. His poultry manure was too acidic, and his goats did not produce enough manure to meet his farming needs. The Bundle Box approach addressed this problem by incorporating a contractual arrangement with nomadic pastoralists passing through the area, allowing Samaké to secure access to high-quality organic manure. This example shows how a context-specific solution can involve building practical partnerships with other actors in the local system. In that sense, Bundle Boxes are designed to address the specific barriers farmers face in practice, not to just deliver products.

The webinar also underscored the importance of carefully designing the financial services built into these packages. Dr. Ronner shared findings from a study in Ethiopia showing that, in some cases, offering microcredit can actually slow adoption when farmers perceive a higher risk of debt if their harvest were to fail. The discussion made clear that access to finance on its own does not guarantee adoption. It must be part of a broader package that also reduces the risks related to production and marketing.

In Samaké's case, reducing risks meant integrating a buyer into the package. By ensuring that a processing company would send a collector, provided that volumes and quality standards were met through improved practices and aggregation with neighboring farmers, the arrangement made market access more predictable.



Ziminansan Sieza, president of the Vanoussan Association in the Bankui region, shares his observations on the progress of his plots

Integrating a buyer increased the appeal of the full package, contributing to a technology adoption rate of nearly 80% among producers.

A Model Built on Complementary Roles

The strength of the Bundle Box approach lies in its ability to create trusted relationships in which every actor has something to gain. Farmers can invest with greater confidence when they know their efforts will likely translate into returns. Input suppliers can organize logistics more efficiently by consolidating orders, and industrial buyers can secure a more reliable and standardized supply. Microfinance institutions, in turn, may see a more structured framework for supporting producers. At the same time, the long-term viability of the model depends on strong coordination so that it can become embedded in local market realities.

Research in Action, Grounded in Field Realities

The rollout of Bundle Boxes is backed by close scientific follow-up, including work led by a new generation of African researchers within the Soil Values program. Fadila Saley Garba, a doctoral student in the program, is currently conducting a comparative study across four countries in the sub-region. She stressed the importance of continuous learning and the need to draw on the team's many years of field experience. Garba shared, "Bundle Boxes are not a set-in-stone formula: they will be prototyped, tested, refined, and adjusted in the field based on feedback and community perceptions, which often explain why certain technologies are rejected."

What It Will Take to Sustain and Scale Bundle Boxes

The webinar concluded with group discussions highlighting several major challenges related to the long-term sustainability of Bundle Boxes. Participants identified some practical priorities to ensure the approach outlasts the lifespan of the Soil Values program.

One key requirement is land tenure security, especially for women, to ensure that those working the land can benefit from the long-term returns on their investments. Another is the development of local support systems. To reduce dependence on external technicians, webinar participants recommended training lead farmers, especially young people, who can then serve as peer trainers within their own communities.

Participants also emphasized the need for transparent internal governance and fair partnerships built on a truly win-win model. Service packages should not focus solely on increasing income from cash crops; they must also address farmers' food security and livelihood needs. More broadly, the discussion highlighted that the long-term viability of the approach will depend on strong local anchoring, not just on national policy frameworks.

The webinar also highlighted the importance of building stronger links between research, field experimentation, and dialogue with development actors. That connection is essential for capturing lessons, refining the Bundle Box approach as implementation progresses, and strengthening the prospects for scaling it across diverse contexts.

Through Bundle Boxes, the Soil Values program is advancing an integrated, practical, and adaptable response to agricultural challenges in West Africa and the Sahel.

The approach relies on coordination among actors, risk reduction, and strong local grounding. The webinar made it clear that the approach offers a concrete pathway to support more sustainable adoption of agricultural innovations that can improve soil fertility, strengthen food security, and build producer resilience.

https://ifdc.org/2026/06/26/soil-values-promotes-bundle-boxes-to-strengthen-agricultural-resilience-in-west-africa-and-the-sahel/



Tomato seedlings in a nursery

AN ACTION PLAN TO ACCELERATE SOIL RESTORATION IN BURKINA FASO BY 2030



A group of participants in a working session during the action plan development workshop in Koudougou

Burkina Faso is strengthening its efforts to restore degraded lands, improve soil health, and build more resilient agricultural systems. With the support of the Soil Values program, the General Directorate for Agro-Pastoral Development and Irrigation (DGADI) organized a workshop, held June 8-12 in Koudougou, to develop the action plan for Burkina Faso's National Strategy for Soil Restoration, Conservation, and Rehabilitation (SNRCRS).

Developed collaboratively, the new action plan builds on revisions made to the strategy after an evaluation late in 2024 to address emerging challenges facing the sector and ensure that implementation efforts remain aligned with evolving national priorities. The action plan will provide a roadmap for implementing the strategy while accelerating progress toward sustainable agricultural development and climate resilience.

The workshop represented an important step in moving from strategy toward concrete action. Over five days, members of the technical working group, which includes various agencies of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water, Animal Resources and Fisheries (MAERAH) and the Ministry of Economy and Finance, turned SNRCRS priorities into a set of practical interventions designed to guide its implementation through 2030, in accordance with the strategy's Terms of Reference. The resulting action plan is expected to support restoration of degraded soils, promote sustainable soil management nationwide, and strengthen coordination among government institutions, technical partners, and development organizations.

The initiative comes at a critical time for Burkina Faso as land degradation, declining soil fertility, and climate change exert growing pressure on agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods. Restoring soil health has therefore become increasingly important not only for improving crop production but also for strengthening resilience, protecting natural resources, and supporting long-term economic development.

Throughout the workshop, participants worked to identify priority interventions capable of delivering measurable progress in soil restoration, conservation, and rehabilitation, with a strong focus on practical actions that deliver tangible benefits for farmers and communities. Discussions centered on strengthening coordination mechanisms, improving the management of land resources, sustained investment, and creating conditions for more sustainable and productive agricultural systems.

"Given the current decline in soil productivity, compounded by the effects of climate change, it is essential to develop [an action plan] capable of limiting further degradation while promoting the sustainable management of our land," said Tamani Soharé, a soil scientist at the National Soil Office of Burkina Faso (BUNASOLS).

The workshop also demonstrated the strong collaboration between the Government of Burkina Faso and the Soil Values program in advancing national soil restoration priorities. By supporting the development of the action plan, Soil Values is helping strengthen the institutional and technical foundations needed to scale restoration efforts and improve soil health across the country. "This initiative is being implemented in close collaboration with the ministry to strengthen and accelerate the restoration of degraded lands across Burkina Faso," said Léon Zongo, Soil Values Country Coordinator for Burkina Faso. This partnership reflects a shared commitment to promoting sustainable land management practices that increase agricultural productivity while enhancing the resilience of farming systems and rural communities. It also aligns with broader national efforts to address food insecurity, land degradation, and climate-related challenges through evidence-based and locally adapted solutions.

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants finalized an action plan that will serve as the roadmap for implementing the strategy through 2030. The document outlines priority actions for soil restoration, conservation, and rehabilitation while strengthening collaboration among institutions involved in sustainable land management. It is expected to serve as a tool for guiding investments, coordinating interventions, and ensuring that restoration efforts contribute to broader agricultural and environmental goals.

For Burkina Faso, the action plan provides a practical mechanism for translating national ambitions into coordinated action and measurable results. By establishing a clear path forward for restoring degraded lands and improving soil health, the country is taking another important step toward more productive agricultural systems, greater resilience to climate change, and sustainable livelihoods for rural communities. With the action plan, Burkina Faso is reinforcing the role of healthy soils as a foundation for agricultural transformation, and Soil Values is demonstrating how coordinated action can help address the interconnected challenges of land degradation, food insecurity, and environmental sustainability.

http://ifdc.org/2026/08/03/an-action-plan-to-accelerate-soil-restoration-in-burkina-faso-by-2030/

BUILDING REGIONAL CAPACITY TO SCALE UP THE ZAINER FOR LAND RESTORATION ACROSS WEST AFRICA



The Zainer, a mechanical implement designed to facilitate the practice of zaï in the Sahel

Land degradation remains a major challenge across the Sahel and West Africa, where declining soil fertility, limited water retention, and pressure on agricultural land continue to affect productivity and rural livelihoods. In this context, technologies that are adapted to farmers' realities can play an important role in restoring degraded fields and strengthening the resilience of agricultural systems. This is why the Soil Values program is helping expand access to practical restoration solutions that farmers can adopt at scale.

As part of this effort, the program hosted a regional training event in Burkina Faso on June 24-26, bringing together partners from Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Togo. The training equipped local implementation partners supporting the program as well as agents from the Togolese Ministry of Agriculture with the technical skills required to operate, maintain, and troubleshoot the Zainer, ensuring they can provide effective support to implement the machine in their respective countries.

The Zainer is a mechanical implement with a rotating auger beneath a set of handles designed to facilitate the practice of zaï, a traditional land restoration technique originating in the Sahel that uses pits to rehabilitate degraded land.

These pits stabilize soil structure and promote deep root systems, improving water filtration, controlling runoff, and enhancing agricultural productivity. By reducing the labor required to dig zaï pits, the Zainer has the potential to support wider use of this practice in areas where land restoration is urgently needed. "The machine significantly facilitates the construction of zaï pits in degraded fields. It is fully mechanical and easy to operate and maintain, making it particularly well suited to the realities of farmers in the Sahel," said Abdourahamane Nourou, a local implementing partner from Niger.

Throughout the training, participants gained hands-on experience with the Zainer and discussed how best to support farmers during its introduction and long-term use. Partners familiarized themselves with the machine, ensuring that each country has the technical capacity required to provide local support once the technology is deployed.

These discussions led to the next key outcome of the training event: the development of country-specific implementation strategies. These strategies will serve to guide coordinated deployment, clarify next steps, and support effective use of the technology across participating countries. This approach, with its purposeful training and planning, reflects Soil Values' broader commitment to strengthening the institutional and technical foundations needed to scale sustainable soil management practices across the region.

By investing in partner capacity, the program is helping ensure that the deployment of the Zainer is supported by local expertise, practical guidance, and continued technical assistance. Beyond the training, Soil Values will continue to support partners as they introduce and operate the Zainer in different country contexts.

This support will include remote technical assistance and follow-up to help address operational challenges and promote effective use of the machine. "We remain available through WhatsApp, phone calls, and email to continue supporting the Soil Values program and its partners in operating and handling the machine," said Edmond Rouamba, a trainer at the event.

Through this training initiative, the Soil Values program is laying the groundwork for the sustainable deployment of the Zainer across West Africa.

By combining practical technology, local technical capacity, and country-level planning, the program is contributing to broader efforts to restore degraded lands, improve soil health, and build more resilient agricultural systems in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Togo.

https://ifdc.org/2026/08/06/building-regional-capacity-to-scale-up-the-zainer-for-land-restoration-across-west-africa/



The Zainer being tested during a hands-on training session

BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT IN BURKINA FASO'S KOU WATERSHED



Farmers, livestock keepers, local authorities, researchers, and development partners share experiences and perspectives to shape a common vision for Bama's future

A new community-level partnership is providing a framework for stakeholders in Burkina Faso's Kou watershed to work toward a shared vision for sustainable development through 2033. By bringing together multiple organizations and groups, the partnership aims to strengthen coordination, align investments, and support resilient livelihoods while addressing the interconnected environmental and economic challenges affecting the landscape, such as soil degradation, pressure on natural resources, limited access to finance, and constraints on agricultural and livestock productivity.

On June 1-5, the Soil Values program facilitated a five-day workshop in the commune of Bama to establish the partnership for the Kou watershed. The workshop brought together representatives of local authorities, members of farmers and breeders' organizations, traditional leaders, researchers, financial institutions, development partners, and representatives of women and youth organizations to collectively analyze the landscape, identify key challenges, and define the partnership's shared vision. Participants took an approach that balances agricultural development, environmental sustainability, and local economic opportunities.

The workshop operated through a participatory and inclusive process, actively involving local farmers and livestock keepers along with women and youth to ensure that priorities reflect local realities and respond to the needs of communities across the municipality. Participants developed a common vision for the territory through 2033 and agreed on the foundations needed to guide future action. This process resulted in a clear theory of change, priority actions, stakeholder roles, and monitoring indicators to measure progress over time. Together, these elements provide a roadmap for implementing integrated landscape management activities across the watershed.

A Collective Vision for Sustainable Landscape Management

Local farmers and breeders actively contributed to shaping the partnership's priorities by sharing their experiences and challenges. For local breeder Hassane Sangaré, the workshop provided an opportunity for participants to jointly plan the future of Bama. "We came together to discuss the future of Bama and reflect on the vision we have for the commune over the next seven to ten years," he affirmed.

Breeders emphasized the importance of improving access to animal feed and securing grazing areas to reduce conflicts and support sustainable livestock production, while farmers also highlighted the need for better access to agricultural inputs, knowledge, and financing to increase productivity and strengthen resilience. Women and youth promoted more inclusive development opportunities and solutions that recognize the important role these two groups play in building resilient and sustainable food systems. Local farmer Fatimata Zonou and other women contributed to workshop results, noting that strengthening agricultural development is essential to improving food security and local livelihoods. "We discussed agricultural development to improve production and strengthen food self-sufficiency," she said.

Aboubacar Okana Lougue, Executive Director of the National Youth Coordination for the Environment and Climate (CONAJEC), remarked of the workshop, "We commend the work that has been done to involve all segments of the population, especially women and young people."

Beyond local actors, development partners and research institutions reaffirmed their commitment to contributing technical expertise and aligning their interventions to support the shared vision developed through the partnership. Their engagement reflects growing recognition that sustainable landscape management requires collaboration across sectors and institutions.

A Commitment for Long-Term Impact

The establishment of this community-level partnership reflects the Soil Values program's implementation strategy: bringing together diverse stakeholders around a common goal. Partnerships are central to its watershed-based approach, through which the program supports stakeholders in developing coordinated solutions that combine scientific knowledge, local expertise, and partner contributions to address complex landscape challenges. This commitment to collaboration aligns with Bama's priorities. Felix Bayé, President of the Special Delegation (PDS) of the commune of Bama, encouraged all stakeholders to remain dedicated to the process, emphasizing that Bama and its communities are the primary beneficiaries of these efforts. "We must give our best to live up to the trust placed in us. … When an initiative concerns the municipality, it is important that we commit ourselves and approach it with the utmost seriousness," he said.

Looking ahead, stakeholders are committed to maintaining collaboration over the long term and advancing the priorities they identified during the workshop, such as restoring degraded land, improving access to necessary materials and services, and promoting inclusive natural resource management. With locally defined indicators of success and a shared framework for action, the partnership lays the groundwork for more sustainable management of the Kou watershed, improved livelihoods, and greater resilience for communities across Bama through 2033.

https://ifdc.org/2026/08/19/building-the-foundations-for-sustainable-landscape-management-in-burkina-fasos-kou-watershed/

MALI DEVELOPS ROADMAP TO STRENGTHEN AGRICULTURAL INPUT MARKETS AND SUPPORT SOIL HEALTH



Stakeholders gathered during the national dialogue in Mali to strengthen input markets, improve access to quality products, and promote soil health

Mali has taken an important step toward strengthening its agricultural input supply system. In response to persistent challenges affecting the availability of quality fertilizers and other agricultural inputs, key stakeholders have developed a national roadmap to improve the functioning of agricultural input markets, strengthen coordination among stakeholders, and promote sustainable soil fertility management. This initiative will help support the 2026 agricultural campaign while enhancing the resilience of the country's agriculture sector.

The roadmap is the outcome of the National Dialogue on Strengthening Regional Synergies for Soil Health and Improving Agricultural Input Markets, organized on June 15-16 by the Soil Values program in collaboration with Mali's Ministry of Agriculture.

The event brought together representatives from public institutions, the private sector, professional organizations, technical and financial partners, and stakeholders across the fertilizer value chain.

Discussions focused on the key challenges affecting agricultural input markets in Mali. Participants examined constraints related to fertilizer supply chains, the functioning of import corridors, financing mechanisms, and coordination among the various actors in the sector. These challenges continue to limit farmers' access to quality agricultural inputs and hinder efforts to improve soil fertility and agricultural productivity.

According to Professor Bocar Ahamadou, AGRA Country Director for Mali, the initiative provided an important opportunity to strengthen coordination between public and private stakeholders and develop joint responses to the constraints affecting agricultural input markets.

"Given the challenges surrounding access to quality agricultural inputs, it was essential to create a platform for dialogue to address issues related to trade corridors, financing, and farmers' access to the inputs they need for successful agricultural production," Ahamadou said.

The dialogue's collaborative approach aimed to enhance coordination among institutions, strengthen partnerships across the fertilizer sector, and create a more enabling environment for the supply of quality fertilizers, seeds, and crop protection products.

"Organizing this national dialogue was essential to bring together all stakeholders in the fertilizer ecosystem, identify the challenges related to agricultural input supply, and jointly develop solutions to support the 2026 agricultural campaign," said Niamoye Traoré, Soil Values Country Coordinator for Mali.

At the event's conclusion, stakeholders adopted a national roadmap outlining priority actions to improve access to quality agricultural inputs, strengthen coordination mechanisms, and promote sustainable soil fertility management.

The roadmap will serve as a strategic framework to guide future interventions and support government efforts to build a more efficient and resilient agricultural input system.

The success of the roadmap will now depend on its effective implementation. This will require sustained collaboration among government institutions, private sector actors, professional organizations, and technical partners to translate the dialogue's recommendations into concrete actions that benefit farmers.

Reaffirming the government's commitment, Fatoumata Traoré Coulibaly, Technical Advisor to Mali's Minister of Agriculture, emphasized that the state will support the implementation of the roadmap to sustainably improve access to agricultural inputs across the country.

Through this initiative, Mali is preparing to build a more efficient, inclusive, and resilient agricultural input system. By strengthening collaboration among stakeholders and improving farmers' access to quality inputs, the roadmap lays the foundation for sustainable soil fertility management, increased agricultural productivity, and stronger food security for the years ahead.



Fatoumata Traoré Coulibaly, a representative of the Ministry of Agriculture, reaffirms the government's support for the implementation of the roadmap

STRENGTHENING RESEARCH, LEARNING, AND INNOVATION: SOIL VALUES VISITS WUR AND ISRIC



The Soil Values team, led by Program Director Alain Sy Traoré, visited the World Soil Museum hosted by ISRIC in the Netherlands

On the sidelines of the Soil Values Supervisory Board meeting in the Netherlands, the Soil Values team, led by Program Director Alain Sy Traoré, visited Wageningen University and Research (WUR) in Wageningen on May 11 for a full day of strategic exchanges focused on the program's Scoping and Learning Strategy and PhD program. These initiatives are central to connecting research, learning, and evidence generation with implementation across Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and northern Nigeria.

As a core Soil Values consortium partner alongside the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) and SNV, WUR plays a key role in strengthening the program's learning agenda and supporting the generation of knowledge that informs action on the ground.

The visit provided an opportunity to align priorities, review progress, and identify next steps for research, learning, and capacity development. The agenda featured interactive discussions on food systems transformation in the Sahel, farmer-centered learning approaches, the Participatory Integrated Planning (PIP) methodology, and inclusive landscape management. These exchanges highlighted the importance of translating research and field experience into practical solutions that support sustainable soil management and resilient farming systems.

The visit also included a tour of the World Soil Museum, hosted by ISRIC – World Soil Information, offering participants a unique opportunity to explore global soil resources and the critical role of soil information in supporting evidence-based decision-making for sustainable agricultural development.

The exchange reinforced the shared commitment of Soil Values, WUR, and ISRIC to advancing research, learning, and innovation in support of sustainable soil management across the Sahel and West Africa. The Soil Values team extends its sincere appreciation to both institutions for hosting this valuable day of dialogue and collaboration.

SOIL VALUES LEADERSHIP MEETING STRENGTHENS STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT ACROSS THE COALITION

More than 30 leaders from across the Soil Values coalition came together in April 2026 to strengthen strategic alignment, reinforce a shared vision, and advance the program's commitment to operating as "One Team, One Program."

Held in Nigeria, the four-day Leadership Meeting brought together program leadership, country coordination teams, consortium members, and knowledge partners to build a common understanding of key approaches, strengthen collaboration, and accelerate delivery across the Sahel and West Africa.

The meeting focused on the program's core delivery areas, such as inclusive landscape management, leveraging partnerships, scaling and learning, inclusive markets, convening, communications, capacity strengthening for local implementing partners, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL). Participants worked through technical discussions, breakout sessions, and collaborative exercises to clarify approaches, identify priorities, and strengthen alignment around delivery.

A key theme throughout the meeting was the importance of partnerships as the foundation of the Soil Values approach. Participants reaffirmed the program's role as a catalyst and convener, emphasizing stronger collaboration among governments, farmer organizations, the private sector, research institutions, and development partners to accelerate sustainable soil management and agricultural transformation.

Discussions also highlighted opportunities to mobilize additional investments, strengthen private sector engagement, and expand opportunities for youth participation across agricultural value chains.

The meeting also underscored the critical role of communication, knowledge management, and learning in supporting program impact. Participants identified priorities for strengthening knowledge products, improving coordination and information sharing, enhancing the visibility of results, and ensuring that communication remains audience-focused and evidence-based.

Capacity strengthening for local implementing partners was highlighted as another strategic priority to improve implementation quality, reporting, and long-term sustainability.

A dedicated session on program identity and ways of working encouraged participants to move beyond organizational silos and embrace a shared Soil Values culture rooted in accountability, transparency, collaboration, and mutual support.

These discussions resulted in practical commitments to strengthen coordination, improve information sharing, and ensure consistent program branding and messaging across countries and institutions.

The meeting concluded with a renewed dedication to translating shared strategies into practical action. Participants emphasized that achieving impact at scale will require disciplined implementation, strong partnerships, continuous learning, and a collective focus on results.

A post-meeting evaluation showed exceptionally high satisfaction among participants, with 97% reporting overall satisfaction and 100% confirming the meeting's relevance to their work.

SUPERVISORY BOARD ENDORSES STRATEGIC ACTIONS TO STRENGTHEN PROGRAM GOVERNANCE AND DELIVERY

The Soil Values Supervisory Board held its fourth meeting on May 7 in The Hague, Netherlands, seeking to strengthen program governance, partnership effectiveness, and long-term sustainability. Bringing together coalition partners, knowledge partners, and representatives of the Netherlands Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS), the meeting focused on strategic oversight of implementation progress, governance arrangements, knowledge management, compliance, and the program's digital transformation agenda.

The Supervisory Board reviewed progress against key commitments and discussed lessons emerging from the inaugural Program Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting held earlier that week. Members welcomed the strong participation of governments, regional institutions, and development partners and endorsed efforts to strengthen stakeholder engagement, improve representation, and enhance strategic coordination through more regular PAC meetings.

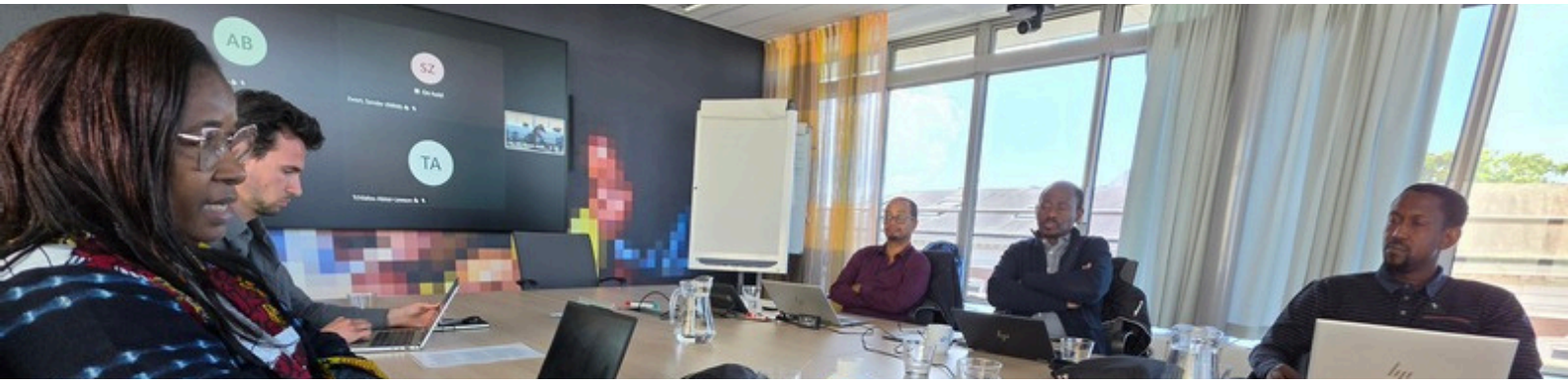
A major focus of the meeting was the review of the 2025 Annual Report. Supervisory Board members commended the program's achievements in building partnerships, reaching farmers through local implementation partners, and advancing sustainable soil management practices across target countries. They encouraged the program to place greater emphasis on documenting challenges, monitoring partner performance, tracking progress toward long-term targets, and strengthening quality assurance systems.

The Supervisory Board also reviewed strategic initiatives designed to support the program's long-term impact. Discussions covered the Soil Values GeoPortal, which is being developed as a shared digital platform to improve coordination, planning, learning, and evidence-based decision-making across partners. Members provided guidance on data governance, ownership, access, and sustainability considerations, recognizing the GeoPortal's potential to become a key knowledge and coordination asset for the program.

Additional discussions addressed audit and compliance requirements, security considerations in fragile operating environments, governance structures, and the need for clearer delineation of roles across the program's various management and oversight bodies. Supervisory Board members emphasized the importance of proactive planning, risk management, and continuous learning to support implementation at scale.

The meeting concluded with a series of agreed actions to advance governance, stakeholder engagement, audit compliance, data-sharing arrangements, and knowledge management.

Through its strategic guidance and oversight, the Supervisory Board continues to play a critical role in ensuring that Soil Values remains well positioned to advance sustainable soil management and strengthen agricultural resilience across the Sahel and West Africa.



Soil Values Supervisory Board members meet in The Hague, Netherlands, on May 7 to review program progress and strengthen governance and partnerships

SOIL VALUES AT THE FOREFRONT OF GENDER-RESPONSIVE AGRICULTURAL RISK MANAGEMENT

Amid the multiple challenges affecting agricultural systems in Burkina Faso, including climate change, insecurity, and economic shocks, the Soil Values program is emerging as a key contributor to sustainable solutions. By actively engaging in efforts to strengthen gender-responsive agricultural risk management, the program is reinforcing its commitment to building the resilience of farmers, especially rural women.

In this context, the Network for the Promotion of Rural Women (REPAFER), a Soil Values implementation partner in Burkina Faso, with support from the Agricultural Risk Management Platform, organized an advocacy workshop on April 2 in Ouagadougou. The workshop aimed to mobilize resources for action-oriented training on gender-responsive agricultural risk management. Discussions highlighted the importance of a differentiated approach that reflects the specific realities of women, who play essential roles in agricultural production, processing, and food security. Through its participation, Soil Values showed its support for inclusive and transformative initiatives.

At the heart of the workshop were presentations given by participants on five innovative modules covering agricultural risk analysis, gender-responsive risk assessment, risk management strategies, practical tools such as compost and biopesticide production, and agricultural entrepreneurship.

Across these areas, Soil Values provided valuable technical input, particularly on agroecological practices and approaches to strengthening farmers' capacities. The workshop also laid the groundwork for a strategic plan to disseminate the training modules, including trainings of trainers, support to women leaders, and post-training follow-up. In this process, Soil Values positioned itself as a potential partner to support implementation, in line with its objectives of promoting sustainable and resilient agricultural systems.

The discussions also opened opportunities for collaboration around flagship initiatives such as National Rural Women's Week, viewed as a strategic platform for visibility, experience sharing, and the development of economic opportunities for rural women. By contributing to the workshop, Soil Values continued promoting more inclusive agriculture that responds to today's challenges.

The program will continue engaging with REPAFER to identify concrete synergies and mobilize the resources needed to effectively support rural women in managing agricultural risks. Next steps will focus on deepening consultations among partners, defining areas of collaboration, and translating these commitments into concrete actions on the ground.



REPAFER and its partners discussed the mobilization of resources for gender-sensitive agricultural risk management during an advocacy workshop held on April 2 in Burkina Faso

PUTTING SOIL HEALTH AT THE HEART OF BURKINA FASO'S FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AMBITIONS

Food sovereignty took center stage during a high-level panel held June 23 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, bringing together a wide range of stakeholders, including government officials, technical and financial partners, the private sector, farmer organizations, researchers, and civil society organizations. Organized by Burkine Bi SARL, ALTM Holding S.A.S, and Sini Gnassigui Afrique NGO Association, with the sponsorship of the Ministries of Agriculture and Foreign Affairs, the panel explored strategies to accelerate the sustainable transformation of Burkina Faso's agricultural, forestry, livestock, and fishery systems.

Achieving food sovereignty in Burkina Faso requires more than increasing production. Panel participants emphasized the need to sustainably manage natural resources, improve access to finance and agricultural services, strengthen value chains, and expand opportunities for agricultural entrepreneurship. Soil health emerged as a cross-cutting issue that influences productivity, environmental sustainability, resilience to climate shocks, and long-term food security. By bringing soil health and sustainable soil fertility management into a national dialogue on food sovereignty, the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) and Soil Values helped reinforce the critical role of healthy soils in Burkina Faso's agricultural transformation. The event provided an opportunity to engage national stakeholders, strengthen ownership of sustainable soil management approaches, and identify pathways for future collaboration that can support the country's food sovereignty ambitions.

As a contributor to the event through Soil Values, IFDC offered expertise on soil fertility, agricultural innovation, and sustainable natural resource management, positioning soil health as a vital component of Burkina Faso's food sovereignty agenda while fostering relevant exchanges.

IFDC and Soil Values played a prominent role throughout the event. Moussa Dionou, IFDC's Director of Growth and Partnerships in the Sahel/West Africa, served as moderator of the technical panel, guiding discussions on agricultural support mechanisms, financing opportunities, and strategies to strengthen youth and women's engagement in agricultural entrepreneurship. His facilitation helped connect diverse stakeholder perspectives around the shared objective of transforming Burkina Faso's agriculture sector. "We have developed strong recommendations for the various stakeholders in Burkina Faso. We believe that the next step will be to work with these stakeholders to provide concrete solutions to the different recommendations that were highlighted during the panels," he stated.

As a panelist in the session on food sovereignty accelerators, financing opportunities, and support mechanisms, Léon Zongo, Soil Values Country Coordinator for Burkina Faso, shared the program's perspective on the central role of soil health in achieving food sovereignty and building resilient agricultural systems.

Calling attention to the importance of sustainable soil fertility management, Zongo underscored the need for increased investment in land restoration, the dissemination of farmer-centered technologies, and the adoption of practices that improve resource use efficiency while boosting productivity. "Healthy soils increase agricultural productivity, improve the nutritional quality of food, and strengthen farmers' resilience to the impacts of climate change," he said.

Zongo further explained that Soil Values promotes innovative solutions that support better water and nutrient management while sustainably enhancing agricultural productivity. He noted that investments in soil health are not only essential for increasing yields but also for securing the long-term sustainability of food systems and the livelihoods of farming communities.

Panel discussions reflected strong alignment between Burkina Faso's food sovereignty ambitions and the objectives advanced by the Soil Values program. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of sustainable intensification, value addition, climate-smart agriculture, and stronger support systems for producers as critical drivers of agricultural transformation.

The Government of Burkina Faso maintained its support for advancing these priorities through strengthened partnerships and collaboration. During the event, Minister of Foreign Affairs Karamoko Jean-Marie Traoré underscored the importance of cooperation in supporting the country's agricultural ambitions.

"International relations play a key role in mobilizing both domestic and external support – including the Burkinabe diaspora – facilitating trade, and creating new opportunities for agribusiness stakeholders," he said.

The Minister's remarks echoed a broader message that emerged throughout the discussions: achieving food sovereignty will require coordinated action among the various groups represented at the panel, including government institutions, development partners, research organizations, and financial institutions.

Representatives from multiple sectors stressed the importance of building the capacities of producers, promoting practical agricultural training, and ensuring that young people and women have greater access to economic opportunities within the agriculture sector. They expressed a need for innovative financing approaches tailored to agricultural realities, especially for young entrepreneurs seeking to invest in production, processing, and agribusiness development.

Participants identified several priority actions to accelerate progress toward food sovereignty, including expanding access to finance, strengthening farm schools and practical training centers, promoting climate-smart innovations, investing in land restoration, and improving agricultural infrastructure. Participants also concurred with Traoré, calling for stronger coordination among stakeholders to maximize the impact of ongoing initiatives and future investments.

For IFDC and the Soil Values program, the event represented an opportunity to share technical expertise, but more importantly, it provided a valuable platform to engage directly with policymakers and other stakeholders, deepen understanding of national priorities, and strengthen relationships that can support future interventions in Burkina Faso. Such engagement is essential for fostering national ownership of sustainable soil management approaches and ensuring that future investments are aligned with the country's development objectives.

The event also demonstrated the growing recognition that sustainable soil management must be part of broader efforts to transform food systems. By providing evidence-based solutions and practical field experience, IFDC and Soil Values helped elevate soil health as a crucial element of Burkina Faso's national discussions on food sovereignty.

Through their active participation in the high-level panel, IFDC and the Soil Values program continued to support Burkina Faso's efforts to build more productive, resilient, and sustainable food systems. The event strengthened dialogue among stakeholders, increased awareness of the importance of soil health, and laid the groundwork for future collaboration aimed at addressing the interconnected challenges of food security, land degradation, climate resilience, and agricultural growth.

By positioning healthy soils as a cornerstone of food sovereignty, Soil Values continues to contribute to a shared vision of agricultural transformation that delivers lasting benefits for farmers, communities, and Burkina Faso as a whole.

https://ifdc.org/2026/07/08/putting-soil-health-at-the-heart-of-burkina-fasos-food-sovereignty-ambitions/



The high-level panel explored strategies to accelerate the sustainable transformation of the country's agricultural, forestry, livestock, and fishery systems

SOIL VALUES CONTRIBUTES TO SOIL HEALTH AND INVESTMENT DIALOGUE AT WEST AFRICA RICE INVESTMENT ROUNDTABLE

On June 2-3 in Accra, Ghana, the Soil Values program helped advance crucial discussions during the West Africa Rice Investment Roundtable, convened by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in collaboration with the World Bank Group and the African Development Bank (AfDB).

Bringing together ministers, development partners, financial institutions, private sector actors, and research organizations, the event marked a significant shift from policy dialogue to investment mobilization and implementation in support of regional rice self-sufficiency.

A major outcome of the Roundtable was the adoption of the Accra Declaration and the launch of a Regional Rice Investment Compact (2026-2035). Participating countries collectively committed U.S. $1.54 billion for the first year, laying the foundation for the sustained investments needed to achieve the region's ambition of rice self-sufficiency.

Soil Values played an active role in advancing discussions on investment readiness, system transformation, and the central role of soil health in achieving sustainable productivity gains across West Africa.

One of the program's most visible contributions was the moderation of the Ministerial Session by Alain Sy Traoré, Soil Values Program Director. The session focused on policy reforms to attract private investment, strengthen regional coordination, and accelerate practical solutions for improving production, processing, and market systems. Discussions underscored that transforming the rice sector requires a functioning ecosystem that combines sound public policies, infrastructure investment, financing mechanisms, and private sector engagement.

Soil Values also contributed to the high-level Partners Dialogue, organized by AGRA in collaboration with the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) and AfricaRice.

These discussions highlighted the need to move beyond stand-alone technical projects toward scalable, investment-enabling interventions that align technical assistance with investment pipelines and long-term system transformation.

The Roundtable further provided an opportunity for the Soil Values team to engage directly with government delegations from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, and Togo, as well as key development partners and financial institutions, including the World Bank, the Gates Foundation, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), AfDB, Ecobank, AfricaRice, the ECOWAS Commission, and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom. These bilateral discussions explored opportunities for collaboration, investment alignment, and the integration of soil health into broader agricultural development strategies.

A notable outcome of the Roundtable was the interest expressed by the Liberian delegation in strengthening collaboration on soil health, recognizing its importance for improving productivity, supporting evidence-based decision-making, and attracting investment in agriculture.

Participation in the Roundtable delivered significant value to the Soil Values program by strengthening its positioning, partnerships, and influence within the regional rice investment agenda. By moderating the Ministerial Session and contributing to high-level dialogues, the program reinforced its role as a trusted facilitator linking policy, finance, science, and implementation.

The event also confirmed that sustainable soil fertility management is a critical foundation for productivity growth, competitiveness, and investment readiness. As momentum builds around the new Regional Rice Investment Compact, Soil Values is well positioned to contribute evidence, partnerships, and scalable solutions that support agricultural transformation across West Africa.



At the West Africa Rice Investment Roundtable in Accra, Soil Values contributed to discussions on scaling investment in the region's rice sector, from ministerial dialogue and partner exchanges to busienss-to-business engagements focused on soil health and soil fertility



Soil Values GESI Strategy

https://soilvaluesafrica.org/resources/resource/soil-values-gesi-strategy

GESI Research Report

https://soilvaluesafrica.org/resources/resource/gesi-research-report

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