

How to get permission and funding for a cooperative composting SHBM

Problem encountered and objective

We developed a network-level business model that connects farms, biogas plants, municipalities, public authorities, research organisations and other actors to transform agriculture and biogas production towards a more circular and resilient system in the region. It is situated in Northern Germany, based on the vision of an existing regional farmer led initiative. It was then catalysed by the scientific projects' resources (scientific guidance, acceptability, process facilitation) and private investments (infrastructure, raw materials, machinery). We encountered significant funding gaps and legal barriers in setting up the required infrastructure for collective composting and biogas production

Main Results and Outcomes

The first phase of the process was about networking, creating a shared vision and understanding of the problem. Trust-building as a result of steady network activities made it possible to convince actors in the administration, at the municipal and regional level to support the SHBM either by their positive vote or later also by their financial support. The early and open co-creative process supported by scientists and a private start-up funding for the first years helped to cope with the critical initial phase of the SHBM.

After a number of applications, the actors of the SHBM eventually managed to achieve public funding. The regional government will now financially support the SHBM over three more years for further testing, demonstrating and scaling the SHBM.

Practical recommendations

- An active coordinator is indispensable: Stakeholders need to be brought together to create trust, identify funding opportunities and accompany the implementation
- Scientific monitoring and support of the whole projects process increases the trustworthiness and acceptance of the project and enhances the likelihood of successful funding applications in the long run
- Telling a comprehensible story is often more important than technical details: approval is given to what is well prepared and where benefits and added value are easily understood
- Visible testing and demonstration of development processes and results are crucial
- Offering a long-term perspective on socially and politically relevant issues like soil health, regional value creation and resilience of agricultural and biogas production systems
- Ensuring the availability of scientific support and monitoring of long-term viability of socially innovative processes and alternative soil management approaches, for instance after 5 and 10 years



ABOUT SOILVALUES

SoilValues is a Horizon Europe project that will contribute to the development of successful soil health business models across the EU to improve soil quality and provide land managers with the necessary incentives.

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USEFUL LINKS



<https://soilvalues.eu/>



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<https://zenodo.org/communities/heuropesoilvalues>

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