

Belgian Testing Ground Regional Support for On-farm Composting

Location

This Testing Ground takes place in Belgium, in the Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe (GGS) region

Goal

Develop a regional cooperation model involving multiple farms, where stakeholders work together to promote environmentally and economically sustainable composting practices

Innovation

Moving from individual farm composting to a collaborative regional composting system that pools resources, expertise, space and biomass.

Soil Health Challenge

Land managers often lack incentive to invest in healthy soils, as they cannot sufficiently capture the value generated by the ecosystem services they produce



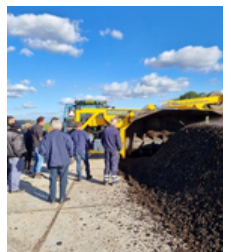
SHBM Description

The Soil Health Business Models consist on a regional network of farmers producing compost from locally sourced biomass, mainly from GGS nature reserves and public spaces. The model coordinates biomass collection, on-farm composting, and technical support for farmers.

It brings together public and private actors to create a circular system that improves soil health and reduces dependence on external inputs.

Actor Network

- participating farmers
- regional coordinators
- contractors
- ILVO
- Province of Zeeland
- ANB
- SBB
- the wider CoP/sCoP constellation



The model also relies on key resources and enabling frameworks, such as biomass flows, composting equipment, monitoring tools, and the regulatory framework.



Value Creation Mechanism

The SHBM creates value by transforming locally available biomass into high-quality compost for agricultural use. This circular approach helps farmers improve soil health, reduce dependence on external inputs, and lower production costs.

Public biomass managers benefit from a sustainable and local valorisation pathway for biomass that would otherwise require disposal. The model generates environmental benefits.



Dominant Value Rationales



Green

Improving soil health through increased organic matter, better water management, and reduced nutrient losses, while preserving the natural areas that supply the biomass.



Market

Reducing input costs, improving farm productivity, and strengthening the resilience and long-term viability of farms.



Industrial

Ensuring high compost quality through monitoring, traceability, efficient logistics, reliable coordination, and regulatory compliance.



Civic

Promoting soil health as a shared responsibility through cooperation among farmers, public institutions, and regional stakeholders.

Main Results

Scaling up the initiative highlighted the importance of coordination, governance, and operational management

Barriers and Challenges

The main challenges relate to legal-regulatory uncertainty, coordination and logistics, particularly when scaling up the network. Long-term financial sustainability also depends on redirecting public funds towards compensating farmers and reaching a **sufficient scale of operation**.

Lessons Learnt

- Requires strong collective organisation
 - ➔ with clear governance structures, and effective communication.
- Demonstrates a high level of farmer interest and engagement in the initiative.



Learn More



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ILVO
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Watch the Testing Ground in action