

22/10/2020

TP Organics participates in EIP-AGRI workshop on the 'mission for soil health and food' – 20-21 October 2020, online

On 20-21 October 2020, TP Organics participated in EIP-AGRI's workshop 'Shaping the EU mission: Caring for soil is caring for life', organised by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) and the EIP-AGRI Service Point. Numerous break-out sessions, writing on Padlet and in Google Docs and other creative exercises made the online event interactive and engaging.

Day 1: Building a better understanding of the mission and R&I needs

Day 1 focused on building a better understanding of the mission and research and innovation (R&I) needs. Soil health is key for achieving the objectives of the European Green Deal and its strategies. Healthy soil is defined as the continued capacity of soils to support ecosystem services. With almost three quarters of European soils being 'unhealthy', better soil protection, the basis of food production, is urgently needed. Soil degradation in the EU is associated with more than 50 billion EUR per year. Degraded soils are caused by poor uptake of existing knowledge, lack of innovation, linearity instead of circularity and too little policy attention.

The mission actions are expected to tackle each of these issues. As a new approach, soils are considered as

dynamic, living systems, part of ecosystems and landscapes, and a community approach is put forward, with living labs and lighthouses as key infrastructures for co-creation and territorial rather than sectorial innovation hubs. Research must consider how the findings can be implemented in practice.

Therefore, the first R&I priority is to get knowledge we already have taken up (through lighthouse farms). The second priority is innovation (through living labs developing innovative solutions and practices). A set of eight indicators will be integrated in a robust soil monitoring programme at EU and Member States level. Training, education, communication, and citizen engagement are to be embedded in all activities, and a supporting environment is needed.

Living labs & lighthouse farms: Shining examples

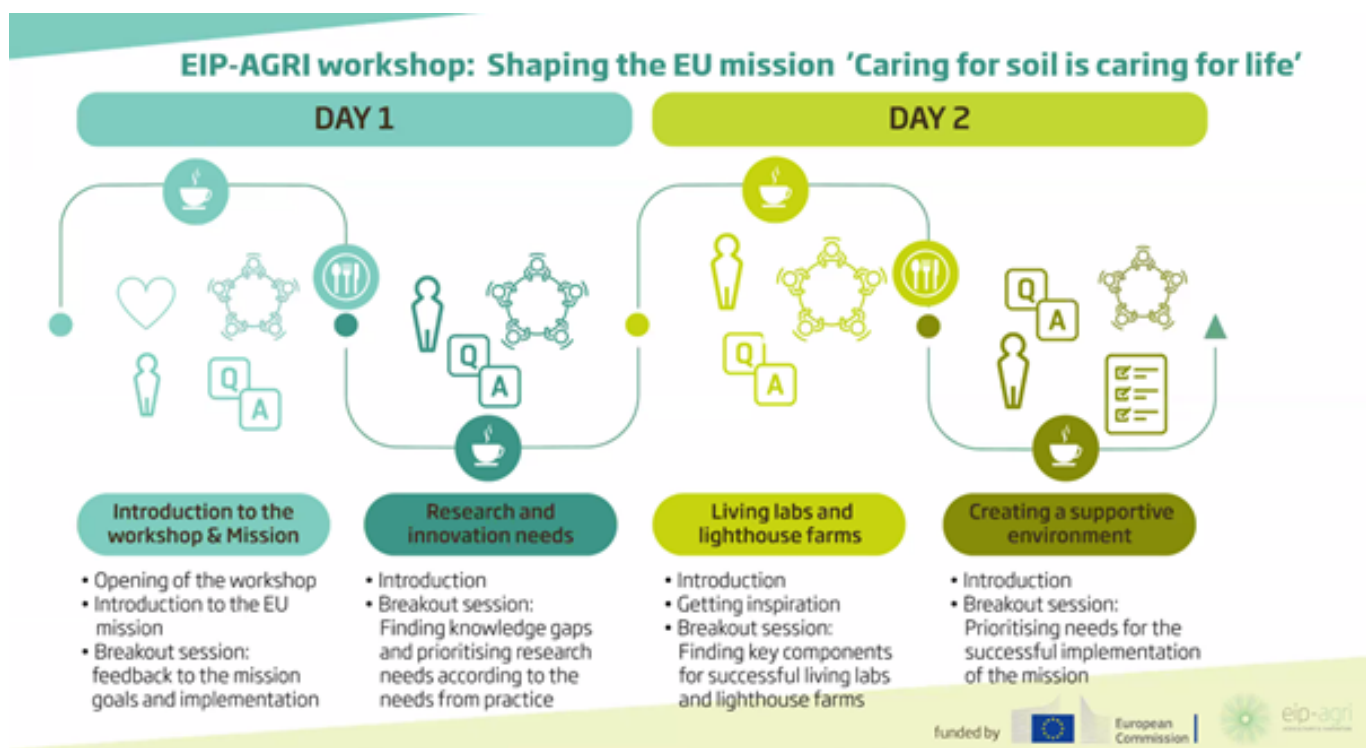
Day 2 was about living labs and lighthouse farms (inspiring examples and key components) and the creation of a supportive environment. Participatory innovation and a stakeholder approach, also engaging citizens and reaching out to the whole society, is at the centre of the mission. The workshop was enriched through the practical knowledge and experience in sustainable, locally adapted soil management of the almost 100 participants, many of them farmers themselves.

Organic farmer and Mission Board member Alfred Grand presented the concepts of living labs and lighthouses, Grand Farm is a lighthouse for research and demonstration

in Austria, combining an organic arable field, agroforestry and market gardening.

In terms of support, the mission proposes that a new Soil Thematic Strategy and Directive should be developed, and new CAP payment schemes should effectively reward practices that improve and restore soil health, while also targeting training, education and engagement.

To reach the 25% organic farmland target of the Farm to Fork strategy and Biodiversity strategies, lighthouse farms demonstrating the benefits that come from organic practices are key. To create a global vision and responsibility for soil health, the mission can draw on the principles of organic agriculture. Relevant material and the presentations will be made available [on the event's webpage](#).

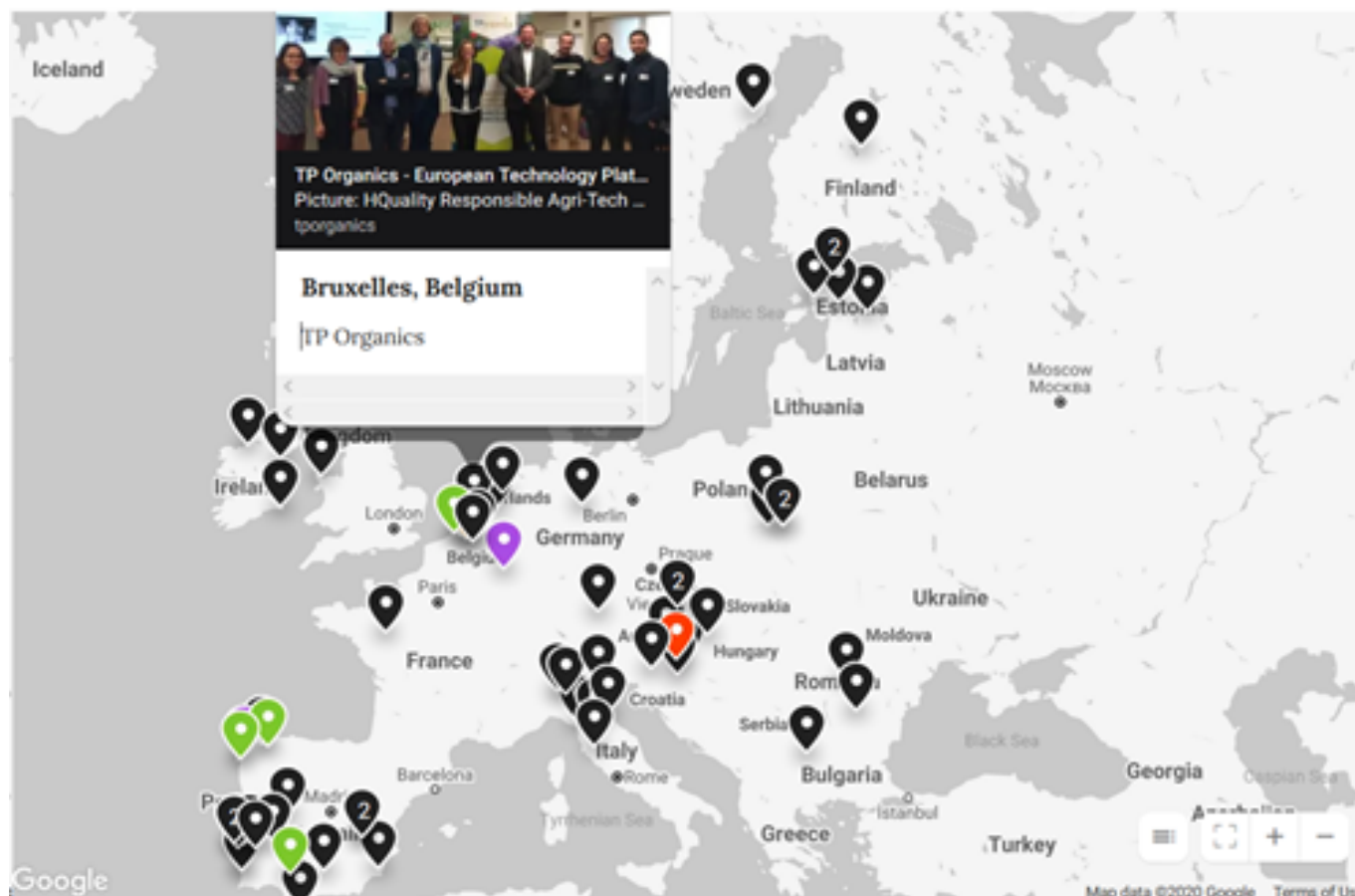


Credits: EIP-AGRI Service Point



Map of participants of the EIP-AGRI workshop: Shaping the EU mission 'Caring for soil is caring for life'

Please identify yourself with a pin on the map! Write your name and occupation in the text box when you click on the pin. You can also add photos to your pin...



Credits: EIP-AGRI Service Point