

BIOservicES - a new Horizon Europe project has started

CARTAGENA, SPAIN, November 20, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The "BIOservicES project - Linking soil biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services in different land uses: from the identification of drivers, pressures, and climate change resilience to their economic valuation", led by the Polytechnic University of Cartagena and coordinated by Raul Zornoza, Professor at the same institution, has begun. With a budget of 7 million euros through the Horizon Europe program, the project will bring together 22 partners from over 11 countries for 60 months.



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By unraveling the connections between soil organisms and ecosystem services in diverse environments, BIOservicES aims to close the knowledge gap and pave the way for informed decision-making.”

Raul Zornoza, the BIOservicES Project Coordinator

The main goal of BIOservicES is to comprehend the connection between various soil organisms such as viruses, bacteria, archaea, fungi, protists, nematodes, microarthropods, earthworms, isopods, millipedes, insects, and spiders, and how they contribute to the delivery of multiple soil ecosystem functions and services at different scales, taking into account different land uses and climate change. This will contribute to the Soil Mission objective 6, "Improve soil structure to enhance habitat quality for soil biota and crops". The project seeks to identify the pressures and drivers affecting soil organisms and their services, perform an economic valuation of their ecosystem contribution, and develop decision-support

tools and models helping to design climate-resilient management practices and monitoring, conservation, and restoration programs.

“Our mission is to spread awareness and provide information about the significant role that soil organisms play in our environment. Although their importance in delivering multiple ecosystem

services is well-established, there is still a lack of research regarding the correlation between key soil organisms and the delivery of crucial ecosystem services in different land uses.

Furthermore, there is a lack of information on the relationships between nutrient cycling, pollution prevention, water infiltration and retention, productivity, soil structure, and soil biodiversity across various land uses. In BIOServicES experimental sites, we will study these relationships,

aiming to develop targeted and sustainable land management practices. By unraveling the intricate connections between soil organisms and ecosystem services in diverse environments, BIOServicES seeks to bridge the knowledge gap and pave the way for informed decision-making", declares Raul Zornoza, the BIOServicES Project Coordinator and professor at the Polytechnic University of Cartagena.



Several pressures are currently affecting soil processes across multiple land uses in Europe. Twenty-five experimental sites, with a range of low, medium, and high soil health owing to management practices, have been selected in different regions, such as Alpine biogeographic regions in Switzerland, Atlantic and Mediterranean regions in Spain, Continental regions in Germany, and Boreal regions in Latvia, covering eight different land uses to study the implementation of sustainable management practices.

The project comprises an interdisciplinary team, from universities to NGOs, private companies, and other entities from different European countries and the USA, with expertise in research, agriculture, social innovation, and communication. The project coordinator is the Polytechnic University of Cartagena, responsible for managing the project and ensuring a smooth collaboration between the partners while considering ethical requirements. Other coordinators include:

- LGI Sustainable Innovation, France - Stakeholder communities for co-creation, co-innovation, and co-learning
- University of Vigo, Spain - Soil biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services across biogeographic areas and land uses
- University of Sussex, United Kingdom - Data analysis for interconnections between soil organisms and ecosystem functions and services, drivers, and upscaling
- Scotland's Rural College, United Kingdom - Economic valuation of the ecosystem services associated with soil biodiversity
- Euro-Mediterranean Center on Climate Change, Italy - Policy and incentives
- June Communications, Romania - Communication, dissemination, and exploitation

The partners involved in the BIOservicES project include the Institute for Agricultural, Fisheries and Food Research - Belgium, Thünen Institute, Federal Research Institute for Rural Area, Forests and Fisheries - Germany, Council for Agricultural Research and Economics - Italy, Zabala Innovation Consulting - Spain, Spanish National Research Council - Spain, The Technical University of Munich - Germany, Wageningen University - the Netherlands, Latvian State Forest Research Institute "Silava" - Latvia, Tuscia University - Italy, Agrocultivate - Spain, Foundation Juana de Vega - Spain, Flächenagentur Rheinland GmbH - Germany, SIA Rigas Mezi - Latvia, Research Institute of Organic Agriculture - Switzerland, and Arizona Board of Regents for and on behalf of Northern Arizona University - United States.

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About BIOservicES

The BIOservicES project, led by the Polytechnic University of Cartagena and coordinated by Professor Raul Zornoza, started in September 2023. BIOservicES aims to understand the interconnection between soil organisms and the delivery of multiple soil ecosystem functions and services at different scales, identifying the pressures and drivers resulting from different land uses and climate change, and performing an economic valuation of the contribution of soil organisms to ecosystem services. BIOservicES aims to provide new insights, indicators, and digital decision-making tools to help design climate-resilient management practices and monitoring, conservation, and restoration programs that are adapted to various European environments. These programs will maintain and enhance the multiple soil ecosystem functions and services in which soil organisms play a critical role. The 60-month project with a 7 million euro budget will bring together 22 partners from 11 countries, ranging from public institutions to universities, NGOs, and private companies.

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