

LANDFEED Project Kicks Off: Transforming Agro-Food Waste into Bio-Based Fertilisers to Support Europe's Circular Economy

The LANDFEED project, co-funded by the European Union, held its official kick-off meeting on 12-13 September in Bilbao, Spain. Coordinated by Miriam Pinto from NEIKER, LANDFEED brings together experts across Europe to implement sustainable, circular solutions to Europe's waste challenges, helping to increase the continent's self-sufficiency in agricultural resources while reducing environmental impact.

LANDFEED will focus on converting under-utilised waste from the agri-food industry, forestry, urban centres, and the natural environment into valuable bio-based fertilisers. This initiative aligns with the European Union's wider objectives of reducing waste, improving soil health, and promoting a circular economy.

Tackling Food Waste and Soil Health

In Europe, over 58 million tonnes of food waste is generated every year, contributing to significant environmental, social, and economic challenges. The European Union is actively tackling the problem through various strategies. As part of the EU's commitment to meeting the Sustainable Development Goal targeting to halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer level by 2030, and reducing food losses along the food production and supply chain. LANDFEED addresses this issue by recovering valuable nutrients from agricultural, forestry, urban, and natural waste. This not only reduces waste, but also supports food security and sustainable agriculture.

LANDFEED aims to develop advanced nutrient recovery technologies and innovative coatings for bio-based fertilisers to improve nutrient release and efficiency. The project's outcomes will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and lessen the environmental impact on water resources. Local use cases will showcase the project's technologies, reinforcing Europe's move towards self-sufficiency and aligning with the EU Soil Strategy by restoring soil health and increasing biodiversity.

"LANDFEED is a transformative step towards a sustainable future," said Miriam Pinto, the project's coordinator. "By turning waste into bio-based fertilisers, we are not only addressing the issue of waste but also contributing to improved soil health, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and better management of water resources."

The Role of Bio-Based Fertilisers in Europe's Future

With much of Europe's agricultural fertilisers coming from unsustainable fossil-based imports, LANDFEED is a crucial step towards building a more resilient, circular bioeconomy. At the heart of the project is the development of cutting-edge bio-based fertilisers, made possible by optimising nutrient recovery technologies. These fertilisers will feature advanced coatings that enable controlled nutrient release, improving their efficiency and reducing the need for excessive fertiliser use.

LANDFEED's approach will directly contribute to the European Soil Strategy's objectives of restoring soil health and enhancing biodiversity. The project will also work to demonstrate the effectiveness of these bio-based fertilisers through a series of use cases, which will act as "lighthouses" to showcase and disseminate the project's results to other regions across Europe.

A Collaborative Effort Across Europe

The consortium of 21 partners from 7 EU countries (Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Poland, Germany, Hungary) will combine their expertise over the 48 months of the project to increase the production of bio-based fertilisers and bring these innovative solutions to the market.. Through the use of advanced technologies and circular approaches, the LANDFEED project is expected to play a crucial role in ensuring a sustainable future for European agriculture and supporting the EU's goals for environmental sustainability.

The LANDFEED project will make a significant contribution to Europe's green transition by demonstrating how circular economy principles can be applied to tackle food and agricultural waste while promoting healthier soils and sustainable farming practices.

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