

Protecting our soil with the RECARE project

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A growing world population has to deal with increasingly urgent issues of food security, flooding and drought, as well as pollution which threaten agricultural productivity and the environment. The answer to all these urgent issues could rest in the soil. In the RECARE project we aim to find and share solutions to protect our soils.

Soil is vital to supporting food production as well as the filtering of water consumed by humans and plants. In addition, soil cycles and stores nutrients which are key to supporting life, as well as holding water to alleviate the stresses of both drought and flooding and storing carbon to mitigate against climate change.

Soils under increasing threat

Due to growing human intervention and unsustainable management, soils are currently under increasing threat from a wide range of processes, such as [soil erosion](#), compaction, desertification, salinization, sealing, contamination and loss of organic matter and biodiversity. They need to be adequately protected and conserved to ensure that their many functions and services to all of society are not lost or diminished.

With the importance of soil in mind, the EU has funded a 5 year research project which will be looking at measures to prevent and remediate soil degradation in Europe.

Researchers from 27 organisations work together

The project, entitled RECARE, will bring together a multidisciplinary team to find ways of assessing the current threats to soils and finding innovative solutions to prevent further soil degradation across Europe, from Iceland to Cyprus. Researchers from 27 different organisations, including Wageningen UR in the Netherlands, will share information regarding the current evidence and approaches to resolve the main threats to soils.

Professor Coen Ritsema, based in Soil Physics and Land Management Department at Wageningen University, part of Wageningen UR and the lead for the project says that 'the exciting thing about this project is that it seeks to look at soils across the whole of Europe. RECARE includes 17 Case Studies of [soil](#) threats that will study the various conditions that occur across Europe and find appropriate solutions using an innovative approach combining scientific and local knowledge".

Results in the RECARE Information Hub

As good communication is essential to optimise the value of research, the [project](#) results will be continuously disseminated through a dedicated RECARE Information Hub. Given the critical state of the environment, it is essential that the research outputs are shared between researchers, but also feed through to those working with and advising on soils, so that soils can function as effectively as possible, to the benefit of all.

More information: For more information, see www.wageningenur.nl/upload_mm/...eLeaflet_MAR31_s.pdf

Provided by Wageningen University

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