

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

SOIL RESEARCH

2026-29

SPECIFICATIONS

TOWARDS BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF SOILS:
ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND INNOVATIONS

1. **The context**

The soil is one of the most valuable matrices on our planet. It supports our buildings and the production of more than 95% of the food we consume. At the interface between the hydrosphere and the atmosphere, it is the site of numerous exchanges of matter and energy that influence the quality of other ecosystems. Through its carbon storage capabilities, which are twice as great as those of the atmosphere, soil also offers a potential to attenuate the effects of climate change.

Agricultural production is highly dependent on soil health, which is measured by various indicators, including organic matter, major nutrients, microbiological and faunal bioindicators, as well as enzymatic activity. Productive soils that resist erosion directly reinforce the resilience of agricultural systems facing climate disruptions.

Our capacity to feed 9.8 billion people in 2050, in a context of global warming, will depend on our aptitude to restore soil productivity and ensure that our soils are able to adapt to the global climate changes currently in progress.

To achieve this goal, this call for proposals focuses on solutions provided by soils in agriculture.



Even though agriculture is affected by climate change, it's an activity that can contribute around 20 to 60% of the potential to attenuate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030. It thus becomes a solution to attenuate climate change by its comprehensive and systematic approach to reducing these emissions thanks to practices like the preferential use of organic nitrogen, the development of legumes, the methanization of livestock effluents, and agroforestry.

These actions aim to meet the triple challenge of food safety, adapting agricultural systems to climate changes, and mitigating anthropogenic GHG emissions by farmers.

2. The Roullier Endowment Fund

Created in 2016 on the initiative of Daniel Roullier, founder of the Roullier industrial group, the Roullier Endowment Fund's (Fonds de Dotation Roullier) statutory mission is to research, encourage, and promote sustainable agriculture in France and around the world. The Fonds de Dotation Roullier contributes to its mission **through two methods of action:**

- **The Minerallium**, an exhibition in Saint-Malo that provides visitors with an understanding of the importance of minerals for plants and animal nutrition in agriculture.
- **The Fonds de Dotation Roullier also supports scientific projects** in France and around the world that encourage sustainable agriculture and preserve the environment and natural resources for the benefit of farmers, consumers, and other stakeholders in the agricultural domain.

For the Fonds de Dotation Roullier, "sustainable agriculture" refers to agriculture that is high performing as far as quality and productivity, that manages the natural resources necessary to all agricultural production (soil and mineral resources, water, air, biodiversity, etc.) in a sustainable manner and allows farmers to earn a decent living from their activity.

In January 2025, the Fonds de Dotation Roullier launched its first call for proposals on the theme of 'Disseminating knowledge about soils through agricultural stakeholders and practices that improve soil quality'. All information about the two winners is available on the Fonds de Dotation Roullier's website (<https://www.fondsdedotationroullier.org>).



3. The Call for proposals soil research – 2026-29

In 2023, the Board of the Fonds de Dotation Roullier chose to focus their funding initiative on **general interest and scientific projects**. These projects will be led by a project proponent¹ seeking to advance the understanding of soils and promote best practices among farmers in order to ensure productivity and quality, thus improving farmer's income while also preparing them for the environmental changes to come. These projects will aim to disseminate and leverage the results as widely as possible within the agricultural research community and its stakeholders.

The projects should focus mainly on the following geographical regions: France and Europe and/or the Maghreb and/or Latin America and/or India and/or North America.

The project must be administered by a French or European entity.

The projects submitted will run for a period of three years, which may be extended to a maximum of five years.

The total financing accorded to each project will be between €200,000 and €400,000 maximum for projects having an overall budget from €200,000 up to several million euros. In addition to financing, the Fonds de Dotation Roullier may offer technical support within the realm of its expertise.

The funding accorded by this call for proposals will support the engineering aspect of the projects.

4. Objectives of the Call for Proposals Soil Research 2026-29

By launching the call for proposals soil research – 2026-29, the Fonds de Dotation Roullier aims to address the following issue: **A better understanding and sustainable management of soils: ecosystem services and innovations**. To address this issue, the Fonds de Dotation Roullier support ambitious initiatives of general interest on the following topics:

- **Ecosystem services provided by soils in agricultural landscapes.** This topic may overlap with several disciplines such as ecology, pedology, sociology, economics, law, agronomy, etc. Soil ecosystem services are classified into four categories: provisioning services; regulatory services; cultural services; supporting or self-maintaining services. Projects may, for example, focus on the assessment/enhancement of these services; the synergies and conflicts between these services; conflicting uses and soil governance, etc.



- **Innovations for soil quality.** This topic may concern precision agriculture, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, biology, etc. Disruptive solutions are anticipated rather than continuity solutions.

5. Target project leaders

This call for proposals is aimed at French and European project leaders. The administrative project leader signing the agreement must be French or European, but the scientific leadership may be international. The project may be carried out primarily in the following areas: France and Europe and/or North Africa and/or Latin America and/or India and/or North America.

Commercial entities and individuals are not eligible for this call for proposals.

To be eligible, project leaders must:

- Have their organisation's headquarters in France or Europe.
- Be a legal entity engaged in research activities, such as a public research organisation, a higher education institution, a university chair, an NGO or association, a foundation or endowment fund, an agricultural research and development organisation, or a French or international institution.
- Submit a project of general interest, i.e. working for the common good. Projects that are for-profit or commercial in nature for the project leader or their partners will not be eligible.
- Have recognised expertise in the agricultural and/or food sector.
- Be eligible for philanthropic funding.
- The project leader may collaborate with partners such as research and/or training organizations, local authorities, public agencies, technical institutes, cooperatives or companies.
- The partners involved alongside the project leader must be part of a formalised partnership.
- The partners must participate in defining and implementing the project. Their role and the value they bring to the project must be described.



6. Project leader's commitments

- The project leader must integrate an active member of the Fonds de Dotation Roullier in the steering committee to regularly follow the implementation and progress of the project and report to the Board of the Fonds de Dotation Roullier.
- The project leader agrees to present the project and answer questions from members of the Fonds de Dotation Roullier, who will make project assessments as part of the review process.
- The project leader will guarantee that the "general interest" aspect is respected.
- The project leader will communicate key success indicators and make regular reports on the project to the Fonds de Dotation Roullier as indicated in the agreement that will link the project leader to the Fonds de Dotation Roullier.
- The project leader will provide communication elements regarding project implementation and results according to the terms defined in the agreement that will link the project proponent to the Fonds de Dotation Roullier.
- The project leader will participate in events, seminars, and conferences organized by the Fonds de Dotation Roullier to present the project and its results.

7. Project selection procedures and criteria

Only projects that demonstrate an effective contribution to one of the two topics in the call for projects will be selected in 2026.

The selection process will take place in two stages:

Stage 1: the project leader must complete the concept note.

After an initial assessment of the concept note, around ten projects will be selected to apply for stage 2.

Stage 2: the project leader must complete an application form that will be sent to them (more comprehensive than the concept note) and will be interviewed by the jury for around 30 minutes. The interview may be conducted in person or remotely, at the discretion of the project leader.

For stage 1, the jury will make its recommendations based on the following criteria:

- **Administrative admissibility** of the application (complete and accurate application: correctly completed, amount of grant requested and duration of projects, etc.), as well as the **eligibility** of the project leaders and partners;
- **Appropriateness to the focus question** and the relevance of the topics raised;



- **Quality of the project:** its innovative nature, its scope, its impact on natural resource management; adaptation to environmental changes; maintaining agricultural employment; the establishment of skills-based, regional and international partnerships, etc.;
- Consideration of previous experiences or the actions of other stakeholders on the same subject and/or in the same region;
- **Feasibility:** technical and financial capacity of the project leader to manage and coordinate the project and of any consortium to carry it out; alignment of the resources to be rolled out, the budget and the schedule; consistency between the general objective, the specific objectives, the planned activities, the expected results and the indicators for those results; consistency between the estimated budget and the financial arrangements;
- **Consideration of possible upscaling** of the initiative: the action's potential for sustainability, capitalization, dissemination, promotion, replication, advocacy, etc.

8. Project funding terms

Funding may be granted for up to €400,000.

There is no set funding rate for projects. However, projects involving co-funding (public, private or working time) with diversified funding will be given priority. Contributions in kind (time valued, use of resources) must be mentioned in the budget. Travel expenses are eligible.

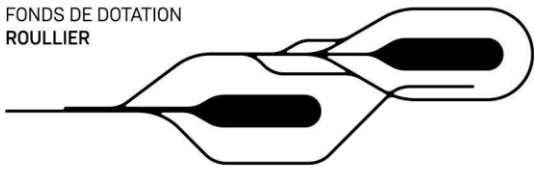
Small consumables are eligible. However, larger investments that can be amortised over many years are not eligible.

9. Schedule for the Call for Soils Research projects – 2026-29

Stage 1:

Project leaders may apply for this call for projects between **January 22, 2026 and midnight on April, 6 2026**. They must complete the online form at → www.fondsdedotationroullier.org/en/application-form-call-for-proposals-soil-research-2026-2029/ and submit the concept note in PDF format in the space provided in the form. The concept note template can be downloaded via the form or on the call for projects page www.fondsdedotationroullier.org/en/call-for-projects/ .

Experts will assess the projects between the **6th of April and the 25th of May 2026**.



The Fonds de Dotation Roullier team reserves the right to request additional information to provide the application if it deems it necessary.

All project leaders will be contacted during the **week of 25 May 2026** to let them know whether they are moving on to stage 2 or whether the call for proposals has ended for them.

Stage 2:

The Fonds de Dotation Roullier team will contact the project leaders selected for stage 2 and send them the more complete application file and the terms and conditions for interviews with the jury. The jury will meet in early September. The agreements with the winners must be signed before the end of 2026.

10. Personal data

The Fonds de Dotation Roullier and each project proponent commit to fully complying with the provisions of Law No. 78-17 of 6 January 1978, as amended (the "French Data Protection Act"), as well as any other regulations that complement or replace it, including, but not limited to (EU) Regulation 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data (hereinafter the **GDPR**), which came into force on May 25th of 2018, and any current or future provisions on personal data protection that are legally applicable in France.

To this end, the Fonds de Dotation Roullier and each project proponent commit, among other things, to fulfilling their respective obligations under the GDPR at their own expense, enabling the other party to meet its own obligations, and ensuring that these obligations are adhered to by anyone with access to any part of the personal data in the context of implementing this call for proposals.

In consequence, the Fonds de Dotation Roullier provides information regarding its privacy policy on its website: [Fonds de Dotation Roullier - Confidentially Charter and Privacy Policy](#) regarding the handling of personal data.