FONDS DE DOTATION
ROULLIER

2027-2030

CALL FOR SOIL RESEARCH PROPOSALS

REQUIREMENTS

1. Context

Soil is one of our planet's most precious resources. Supporting our infrastructure and food production, it contributes directly to food security as more than 95% of food is produced from the soil. At the intersection of the hydrosphere, biosphere, and atmosphere, it is the site of many matter and energy exchanges that influence water quality, biodiversity and ecosystem function. On a global scale, soil stores more carbon than the atmosphere and thus plays a major role in mitigating climate change as well as territorial adaptation to its effects.

Agricultural production depends heavily on soil health, which is measured by several indicators, notably organic matter, the main nutrients, microbiological and faunal bioindicators, as well as enzymatic activity. Productive, functional soils that resist erosion directly strengthen the resilience of agricultural systems facing climate disruptions.

In the context of a changing climate, conservation of natural resources, and food security, restoring and maintaining soil health are major challenges for ensuring the sustainability of agricultural and food systems. Soil thus represents an essential lever for balancing agricultural performance, environmental conservation, and climate resilience of the land.

FONDS DE DOTATION
ROULLIER

Within this context, this call for proposals aims to support solutions and innovations that help preserve, restore, and enhance soil function to promote sustainable, resilient agriculture.

The Roullier Endowment Fund

Created in 2016 at the initiative of Daniel Roullier, founder of the Roullier industrial group, the Roullier Endowment Fund's statutory mission is to research, encourage, and promote sustainable agriculture in France and around the world. The Roullier Endowment Fund 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 Endowment Fund also supports research 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 agricultural stakeholders. Since January 2025, the Roullier Endowment Fund has issued annual calls for research proposals to improve knowledge about soil.

2. Call for Soil Research Proposals - 2027-30

In 2023, the Roullier Endowment Fund governance decided to focus its sponsorship policy on **general-interest** research projects. These projects will be led by project proponents[1] seeking to advance soil knowledge and promote best practices for farming productivity and quality, thus improving farmers' income while also preparing them for future environmental changes.

The Roullier Endowment Fund will support ambitious public-interest initiatives within **ONE of the following two** thematic areas:

Theme:

1- Soil resilience against hydrological challenges (droughts or excess water): developing solutions for farming adapted to climate change

Water is one of the primary limiting factors for agricultural production. Due to climate change, droughts, heat waves, and extreme precipitation events are becoming more frequent and more intense in many regions of the world.

Faced with these changes, adaptation strategies cannot rely solely on mobilizing water resources. They must also strengthen soil capacity to absorb, store, and release water to sustainably improve agricultural system resilience.

[1]Project proponents are defined in point 3 - Target Project Proponents

Objectives

The Roullier Endowment Fund wishes to support projects that promote a better understanding of the mechanisms determining soil hydrological capacity and identify, test, and demonstrate sustainable solutions for improving water management in agricultural systems.

In particular, the proposed projects may focus on evaluating agricultural practices, developing new observation or modelling approaches, testing innovative solutions under real conditions or analyzing their effects on soil health, crop resilience, and water conservation.

Expected Results

The projects must help build knowledge about the role of soil in regulating the water cycle, demonstrate solutions that can be reproduced in various climate and soil conditions, and promote the production of scientific and technical references that can be disseminated to farmers. Results must have concrete relevance to the adaptation of agricultural systems to climate change.

2- Soil health monitoring and evaluation

The transition to more sustainable agricultural systems relies on the ability to objectively evaluate soil conditions and to measure the effects of the practices implemented. In this context, MRV (Measurement, Reporting, and Verification) approaches are developing rapidly, driven in particular by new European Regulations on soil health monitoring as well as initiatives intended to enhance the environmental services provided by soil. Recent progress on sensors, laboratory analyses, remote sensing, digital cartography, and data management now offers new possibilities for monitoring changes in soil health at various levels. These tools are also essential for developing mechanisms for recognizing and evaluating soil conservation practices.

Objectives

The Roullier Endowment Fund wishes to support projects designed to improve methods, tools, and indicators for characterizing, monitoring, and interpreting soil health conditions in agricultural systems.

In particular, proposed projects may focus on developing or evaluating physical, chemical, or biological indicators, refining new field monitoring approaches, or processing data from various sources. They may also focus on improving observation and measurement protocols or developing tools to facilitate access and use of data by stakeholders in the agricultural sector.

Expected Results

Projects must help build knowledge and capacity for evaluating soil health. They must make it possible to produce robust methods or tools that are transferable and suited to users' needs to better support agricultural transitions and sustainable soil management.

These projects should aim to disseminate and promote the results as widely as possible within the agricultural research community and among its stakeholders.

- All geographic implementation zones are eligible.
- **Project administration** must be managed by a **French or European entity**.
- The projects considered will take place over a period of **3 years**, extendable to a maximum of **5 years**.
- The total financing granted to each project will be between €200,000 and a maximum of €400,000 for projects with overall budgets of between €200,000 and several million euros.
- The funding granted by this call for proposals will support **the engineering aspect of the projects.**

3. Targeted Project Proponents

This call for proposals is for French and European project proponents. The project's administrative proponent signing the agreement must be French or European, but the research scope may be international. Commercial entities and individuals are not eligible for this call for proposals.

To be eligible, the project proponent must:

- Have its institutional headquarters in France or Europe.
- Be a legal entity engaged in research activities such as a public research organization, a higher education institution, a university chair, an NGO or association, a foundation or endowment fund, an agricultural research and development structure, or a French or international institution.
- Propose a **general interest project**. For-profit or commercial projects by the project proponent or its partners are not eligible.
- Possess recognized expertise in the fields of agriculture or food production.
- Be eligible for philanthropic funding.
- The project proponent may collaborate with partners such as research and/or training organizations, local authorities, public agencies, technical institutes, cooperatives, or companies.

- The partners working alongside the project proponent must be linked to the proponent through a formalized partnership.
- The partners must participate in defining and implementing the project. Their role and the value they bring to the project must be described.

4. Project Selection Criteria

- **Administrative compliance** of the application (complete and accurate package: properly filled out, grant amount requested, and project duration indicated, etc.), as well as the eligibility of the project proponent and any partners.
- Precision of the response to the issue and relevance of the topics addressed.
- **Project quality**: innovative nature, reach, impact on natural resource management, adaptation to climate change, preservation of agricultural jobs, establishment of skill-based, local and international partnerships, etc.
- **Consideration of previous research** or the actions of other stakeholders on the same topic and/or in the same area.
- Projects must give priority to **participatory action research** approaches, bringing in farmers starting with the project design and integrating experiments under actual conditions to promote the transfer of knowledge and solutions. **Living Lab approaches** are encouraged.
- **Feasibility**: the proponent's and any potential consortium's technical and financial capacity to lead and coordinate the project and successfully carry it out: suitability of the resources to be implemented, budget and timeline, consistency among the overall goal, specific objectives, planned activities, expected results, and their indicators, coherence of the estimated budget and financial structure.
- Projects leading to creating knowledge, methods, tools, or innovations that may be subject to intellectual property protection are eligible provided their primary purpose is of general interest and the support requested is not for developing a commercial activity.
- **Consideration of the initiative's potential for upscaling**: the action's potential for sustainability, capitalization, dissemination, promotion, replication, advocacy, etc.
- The project's ability to **produce transferable, reproducible results** that can be **promoted** to the research community, agricultural sector, and local stakeholders, as well as procedures planned for disseminating these results.

FONDS DE DOTATION
ROULLIER

5. Project Proponent Commitments

- The project proponent must include the Roullier Endowment Fund project manager in the steering committee to regularly monitor project implementation and progress and report to the directors of the Roullier Endowment Fund.
- The project proponent shall agree to present the project and answer questions from members of the Endowment Fund, who will assess the project as part of the review process.
- The proponent will ensure that the project meets the "general interest" criterion.
- The project proponent will regularly update the Roullier Endowment Fund on the key performance indicators for the project as indicated in the agreement between the project proponent and the Roullier Endowment Fund.
- The project proponent will participate in project presentation events organized by the Roullier Endowment Fund.

6. Project financing terms

Financing granted may be up to €400,000.

There is no fixed project financing rate. However, co-financed projects (public, private, or valuation of work performed) with diversified funding sources will be given priority. In-kind contributions (time worked, resources used) must be mentioned in the budget. Travel expenses are eligible.

Small consumables are eligible. However, larger investments, depreciable over several years are not.

7. Selection process and schedule for the 2027-2030 Call for Soil Research Proposals

Only projects demonstrating an actual contribution to the themes of the call for proposals may be selected.

Selection will take place in two phases.

Phase 1: concept note

Project proponents may submit applications between November 10, 2026 and midnight **on January 24, 2027.** All required documents must be sent by email to the address appelaprojets@fdroullier.org , with the date and time of receipt serving as proof of submission.

Project proponents must use the following subject line for their email:

[AAP-Recherche Sols 2027-2030] – [Project Name]

Applicants must complete the Concept Note provided as part of the call for proposals.

The Concept Note template can be downloaded from the call for proposals web page: https://www.fondsdedotationroullier.org/fr/appel-a-projets-recherche-sols

The Roullier Endowment Fund team reserves the right to request information in addition to what is submitted in the application if necessary.

After this first evaluation, ten projects will be selected to participate in phase 2. All project proponents will be notified of the results of phase one during the week of **May 25, 2027.**

Phase 2: application and interview with the committee

The selected project proponents will receive a more complete application as well as procedures for an interview with the committee.

They must complete the application and participate in a thirty-minute interview with the committee. This interview may be conducted in person or by video-conference, at the project proponent's choice.

The committee will meet at the beginning of **September 2027**. After the second phase, the winners will be selected, and the agreements must be signed by the end of 2027.

8. Personal data

The Roullier Endowment Fund and each project proponent commit to full compliance with the provisions of Law No. 78-17 of January 6, 1978, as amended (the "French Data Protection Act"), as well as any other regulations that complement or replace it, including, but not limited to Regulation (EU) 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 25, 2018, and any current or future provisions on personal data protection that are legally applicable in France.

To this end, the Roullier Endowment Fund 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 anyone with access to any or all of the personal data in the context of implementing this call for proposals complies with these obligations.

Therefore, the Roullier Endowment Fund provides information regarding its privacy policy on its website: Roullier Endowment Fund - Confidentially and Privacy Policy regarding the handling of personal data.