

Deploying a Transect to assess Soil Biodiversity and Ecological Function across Europe

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Abstract

Biodiversity is linked to ecological sustainability and the provision of ecosystem services. As such, the monitoring of soil biodiversity is intrinsic to policy development for soil sustainability. It is vital that standardised methods to assess soil biodiversity and ecological function are fit for purpose, allowing comparable monitoring across the European Union.

The EcoFINDERS project to determine Ecological Function and Biodiversity Indicators in European Soils assessed such methods in 2012 using a transect of 81 sites across Europe. Three agricultural land-uses (tillage, grassland, forestry) were explored, covering a range of soil properties. Measurements of biodiversity indicators and a range of ecological functional assays resulted in a snapshot of the current situation and an estimation of the Normal Operating Range (NOR) of the indicators tested.

We will present an overview of the sampling campaign, summarising the knowledge gained in the areas of biodiversity indicators and assessments of ecological function in soils.