



Policy Integration is Non-Negotiable: How to Anchor Soil Health Schemes in Existing Legislation

Business models relying on the Value Chain approach face high risks from a changing regulatory framework or competing policy schemes that can undermine credibility and financial stability. If a soil health label contradicts or competes with a well-established standard, adoption by farmers and acceptance by consumers will stall. Integrate the private soil health business model (Value Chain) directly into existing and relevant policy frameworks. This involves designing the scheme so that its monitoring and verification requirements are compatible with or build upon established public regulations, such as national or EU organic food labelling policies, or national rural development programmes. Successful schemes leverage policy stability: By aligning with established public policies, private schemes gain credibility and reduce the risk of regulatory volatility. For example, some successful initiatives have integrated their soil health labels within the national organic food labelling policy framework, avoiding the need to create a completely new, parallel system that requires intensive quality control. This also helps in streamlining the documentation process for farmers. For Private Actors: When designing a soil health standard for your value chain, ensure that it is compatible with (or supplementary to) existing certifications and EU regulations. Use public support (like the CAP's Eco-schemes) as the minimum acceptable standard, and market payments as a bonus for exceeding that standard. For Public Agencies: Offer technical and legal assistance to Value Chain actors to map existing legislation and identify potential conflicts or synergy opportunities early in the design process.

