



Wednesday April 2, 2025

Gut & Bösel wins Land and Soil Management Award 2025



From left to right: Thierry de l'Escaille (jury president and co-founder), Martin H. Gerzabeck (jury president), Lodovica von Freyberg-Eisenberg (diploma of recognition: San Giorgio Soil Regeneration Project), Benedikt Bösel (winner: Gut & Bösel), Jacques Naudé (diploma of recognition: Joseph's Dream), Kerstin Rosenow (jury member, DG AGRI), and Petra Laux (Syngenta, co-founder).

Brussels, April 2, Benedikt Bösel and his team from the German project Gut & Bösel have been awarded the prestigious Land and Soil Management Award for the 2025 edition. The award was presented on stage during the Annual Conference of the Forum for the Future of Agriculture by Thierry de l'Escaille, Executive President of ELO, and Prof. Martin Gerzabek, former Rector of BOKU – University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences of Vienna.

Since its creation in **2008**, the Land and Soil Management Award has recognised innovative and impactful practices that protect and restore soils while promoting sustainable land use. The award highlights exemplary efforts that address soil threats such as erosion, degradation, compaction, loss of biodiversity, and contamination, and fosters the broader implementation of resilient and scalable solutions across Europe.



This year's winner, [Gut & Bösel](#), represents a transformative approach to **regenerative land and forestry management**. Spread over 3,000 hectares in Brandenburg, Germany, the project combines **agroforestry, grazing, composting, reduced tillage, and mixed cropping** with scientific research and community outreach. It also includes the **conversion of forest monocultures into resilient mixed forests**. The initiative operates in close cooperation with the non-profit **Finck Foundation**, which coordinates extensive research partnerships and knowledge-sharing activities.

The jury particularly commended the project's **holistic and large-scale vision**, its **strong scientific foundation**, and its ability to **successfully integrate economic viability with ecological restoration**. Thousands of people visit the farm each year, and the project has gained wide visibility thanks to its outreach, including a book authored by Bösel, which has sold over 17,000 copies.

Two additional outstanding projects were awarded **diplomas of recognition** this year:

- The **San Giorgio Soil Regeneration Project** (Italy), led by **Rudolf Freiherr von Freyberg-Eisenberg**, distinguishes itself through pioneering **water management and reforestation techniques** in the challenging environment of drought-affected Sicily. By blending traditional knowledge with modern ecological practices, the project has succeeded in building resilient agricultural systems capable of **reducing flood risks** while actively **fighting desertification**.
- Equally inspiring, [Joseph's Dream](#) (Portugal), founded by **Jacques Naudé**, brings new life to abandoned lands through the use of permaculture, organic agriculture, and holistic land management. Anchored in a cooperative model with a strong **social commitment**, the project **revitalises degraded soils** and contributes to **rural regeneration**. It has already settled 14 families, created employment, and restored more than 1,500 hectares, laying the foundation for a circular and sustainable rural economy.

This year, the jury reviewed **23 excellent applications** from Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland. The jury expressed its sincere gratitude to all applicants for their dedication to advancing sustainable soil management, which once again reflected the diversity, innovation, and commitment driving this field across Europe.



By showcasing winning projects as good practices at European level, the Award also sheds light on outstanding achievements and promotes effective and sustainable land and soil management practices. Aiming to encourage new concepts of land and soil protection and their implementation in land management and enhance awareness of the importance of land and soil functions. The award is supported by the European Landowners' Organization, the European Commission DG ENVI and DG AGRI, the Joint Research Center, Syngenta, the University of Ljubljana, the University of KU Leuven and the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna.



[More information on the Land and Soil Management Award is available on the ELO website](#)

About the European Landowners' Organization

The ELO is a leading voice representing the interests of landowners, rural entrepreneurs, and rural land managers in Europe. We promote sustainable land management practices, fosters innovation, and advocates for the recognition of landowners' crucial role in shaping Europe's landscapes and rural areas.

Media Contact

Marie Orban

Communication Manager

Email: media@elo.org

Visit our website
www.europeanlandowners.org

