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THE FRENCH NETWORK OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL EXPERTISE ON SOIL: FEEDBACK FROM A HUB TO STIMULATE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN EXPERTS, DECISION MAKERS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

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In response to the observation of a dispersion of the scientific and technical expertise and initiatives on French soils, the French Ministry in charge of Agriculture launched the French network of scientific and technical expertise on soils (RNEST) in December 2016.

The network aims to federate French research, development, and innovation (RDI) stakeholders, working on soils (forest, agricultural, urban, industrial fallow land, contaminated sites, natural areas, etc.).

Its main mission is to strengthen the scientific and technical expertise and initiatives on soils to guide public policies, and to answer to the needs of stakeholders concerned by soil management.

The network is supported by organisations representing national soil RDI key players: the French ministries in charge of agriculture, environment, and higher education and research, which co-lead the network, three national agencies, a research institute, a research alliance, a learned society, and two agricultural organisations.

The RNEST also relies on a scientific, technical and innovation committee, composed of 32 experts with varied and complementary expertise profiles (pedology, economics, biogeochemistry, etc.), and diverse sectors of activity (academic research, consultancy firm, local authority, association, etc.). This committee carries out actions related to the field of public policy, RDI, and diffusion of information on soils.

Since its launch, the network has enabled its members to carry out actions to provide and facilitate access to expertise for decision makers, and to foster interactions between soil RDI stakeholders.

We intend to present this organisation, share feedback and perspective on how such a multi-stakeholder hub can operate, and illustrate this with two examples. The first one will show how the hub could mobilise to provide input on recent EU and French law proposals on soils. The second one will highlight an original work of the hub that draw up an approach to compare different types of soil degradation, as a first step to allow stakeholders to develop a global and shared vision of the concept of soil degradation.

Keywords: Multi-stakeholder Hub,National Hub,Feedback,Fostering interactions