

February 2018

## **Final Report No. 91140002-01b**

### Soil Biology and Soil Health Partnership Project 1: Translating existing knowledge of management effects on soil biology and soil health for practitioners

#### **Supplementary information**

Many recent studies have highlighted the fundamental role that soil organisms play but soil life and its function can be compromised by many commonplace agricultural practices. In 2012, a report entitled 'Managing soil biota to deliver ecosystem services (NECR100)' was published by Natural England. The report explored how farming practices and systems could improve the biological function of soil, and deliver benefits to both agriculture and the wider environment. It included a review of the impacts of different practices, an exploration of selected practices likely to deliver benefits, feedback from farmers' workshops on the practicalities of different approaches, and also five case studies which describe soil biological management in action, its benefits and challenges.

The report concluded that the biological function of soils can be enhanced by simple approaches that can be integrated into real farm systems – adapting organic matter management, cultivation approaches and cropping – with likely benefits to both farming and the environment. However, uptake of these approaches was restricted by the lack of UK-based demonstrations, trials and advice, and because it is currently difficult for farmers to measure and evaluate impacts on soil biological health. The report highlighted an opportunity to communicate and demonstrate these approaches in real, profitable farm systems, with monitoring of the impacts, costs and benefits.

To access the report, visit <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/2748107>