

How to engage and activate stakeholders?

**Awareness raising - storytelling
– cocreation**

ENSOr-symposium – 14.03.24



Flanders
State of
the Art

▶ **Ellen Luyten / Nele Bal**

**WE MAKE
TOMORROW
BEAUTIFUL**
OVAM

Workshop Agenda

1. Welcome - Round of the table – A small thing that made you happy today (5')
2. Importance of awareness raising – storytelling – co-creation in relation to emerging soil contaminants: a personal story (10')
3. From ENSOr 2018 to now (20'):
 1. Conclusions from the awareness workshop ENSOr1 in 2018
 2. What facts emerged since then? Impact on awareness
 3. Awareness raising as important step in soil care approach OVAM
 4. Role of storytelling and co-creation
4. Discussion - Stewardship for the future (10')

Our house, in the middle of the street...



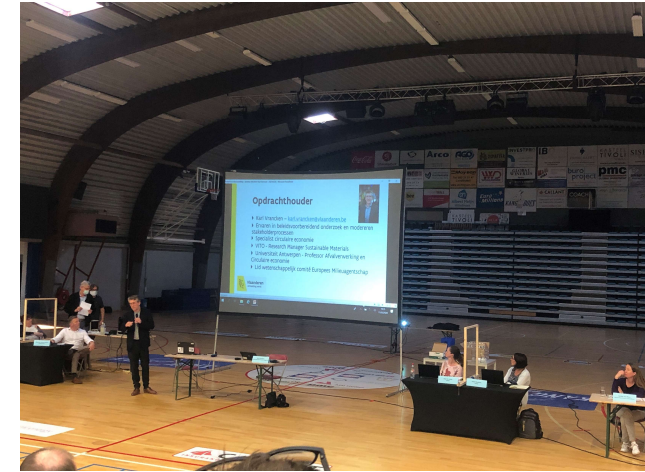
Our house, in the middle of ...



Our house, in the middle of ...



Our house, in the middle of ...



Reflections from the audience

- ▶ What did hearing this story do for you?
- ▶ Do you also have personal experiences with emerging contaminants in your environment?
- ▶ Are these familiar feelings (sadness – powerlessness - ...) and experiences?
- ▶ Do you feel personally addressed/engaged by the storytelling format?

Conclusions workshop on awareness ENSOr 2108

- ▶ Limited awareness of emerging contaminants in soil (diffuse contamination)
- ▶ Insufficient data, scientific background, and policy framework
- ▶ Priorities for the next steps:
 1. Data collection
 2. Development and dissemination of knowledge on sampling, analysis techniques, background values, and threshold values
 3. Establishment of a short-term policy framework
 4. Explanation and communication of complexity
 5. Show impact through externalities and costs associated with harmful effects
 6. Government as a pivotal stakeholder ("spider in the web"):
 - Propose action plan
 - Stakeholder collaboration

What happened since 2018? (In Flanders)

2018

- First ENSOr Symposium
- Publication of Exploratory Study on PFAS in Soil in Flanders – Focus on Risk Activities

2020 – 2024: Booming PFAS Issues:

- New EFSA Values on PFAS and New Guidelines in Flanders
- 'PFAS Crisis' in Flanders
- Multidisciplinary Expert Group led by Karl Vrancken – Coordinated Approach
- More than 800 Soil Surveys (including Firefighting Training Grounds) and Inventarisation PFAS-Risk Activities
- Data on PFAS in Air/Dust, Water, Plants, Eggs, Compost, Materials, Blood, ... – PFAS viewer
- Soil Surveys Hot Spots (e.g., 3M, Willebroek - Former Paper Industry, Ronse - Textile Industry)
- Soil Data on Diffuse PFAS Contamination (Excavated Soil, etc.) and Background Values
- Flemish Knowledge Hub on Emerging Contaminants (not limited to PFAS)
- Ongoing Work on Other Emerging Contaminants such as Microplastics, Flame Retardants, Hormone Disruptors, Pesticides, etc.

What happened since 2018? (In Flanders)

Lot of new data -
public available

Booming
scientific
knowledge – still
in progress

Policy framework
with guidelines,
threshold values in
progress

Start on
integrated
approach

Attention in
media

Political
attention

Start on
collaboration
between
stakeholders

Lot of
municipalities
and citizens
involved



What happened since (Flanders)

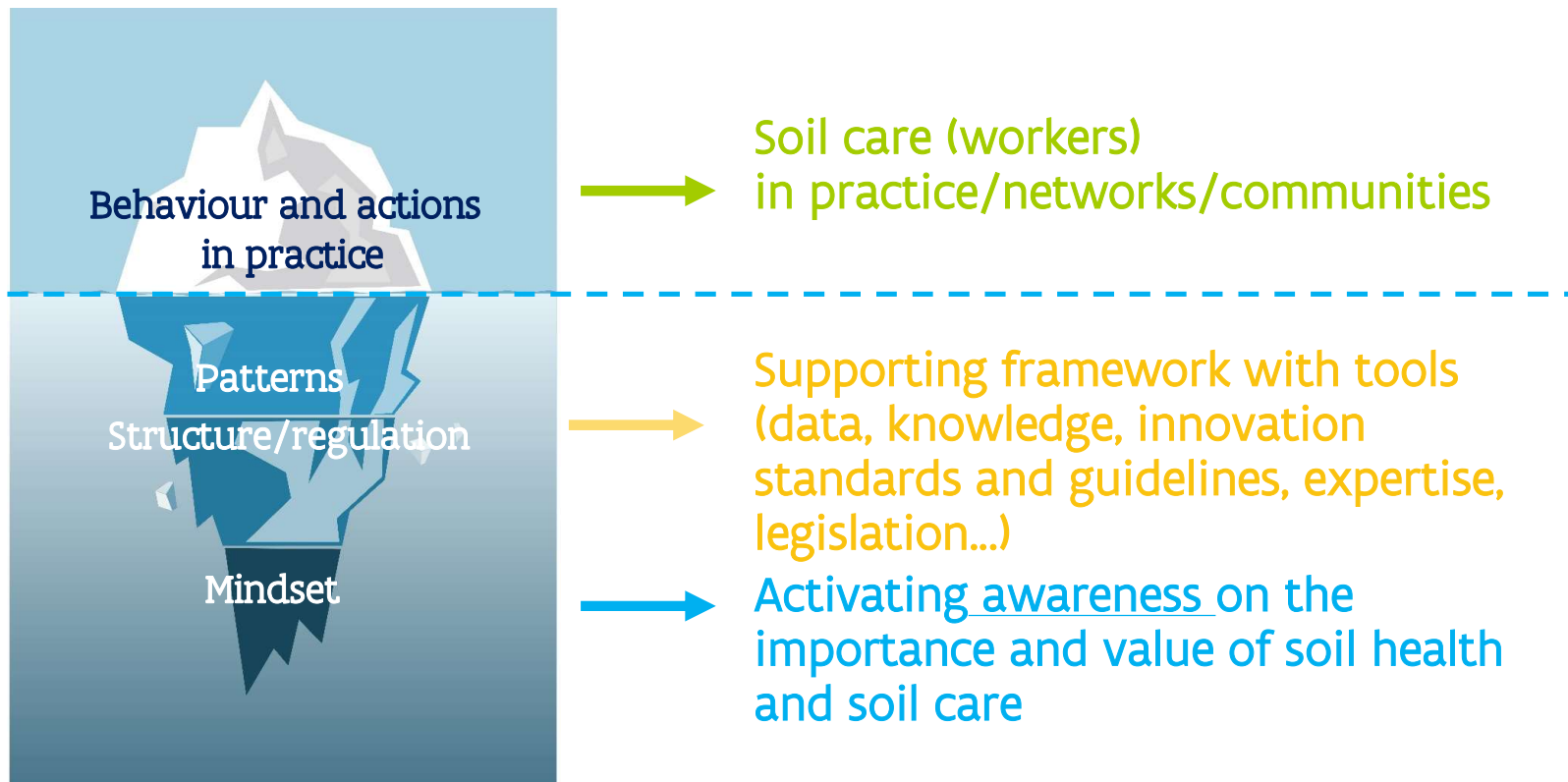
A lot of prior actions already addressed or in progress

Wicked problem: complex – no limits – entangled and ambiguity – different viewpoints - not 1 solution (not only top down) – lot of involved stakeholders

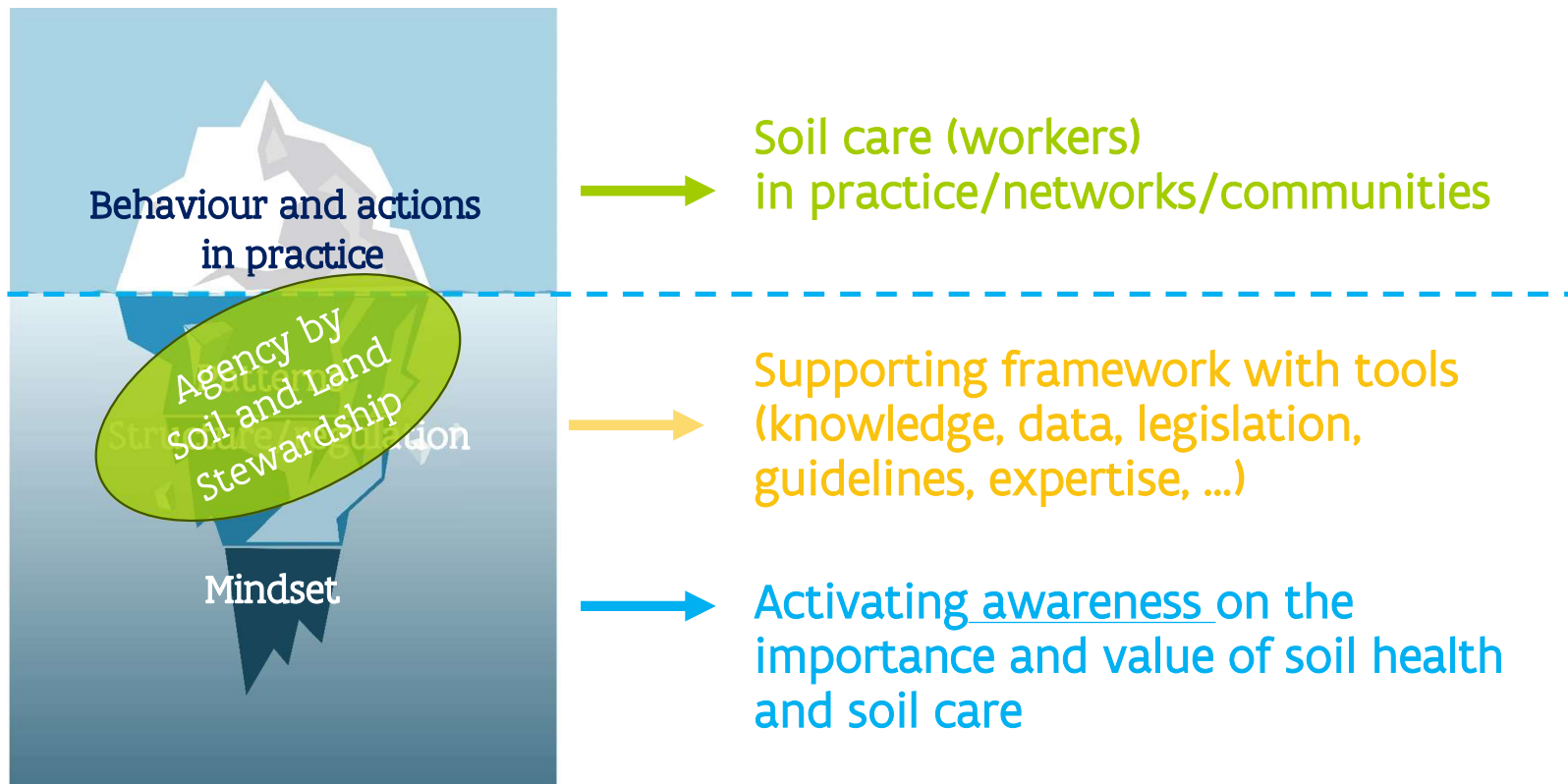
Questions for the audience:
Your experience/idea on this evolution, also outside of Flanders?
More Awareness?
By who (not)? How? Why?
What message?
What underlying 'emotions'?

Start on collaboration between stakeholders

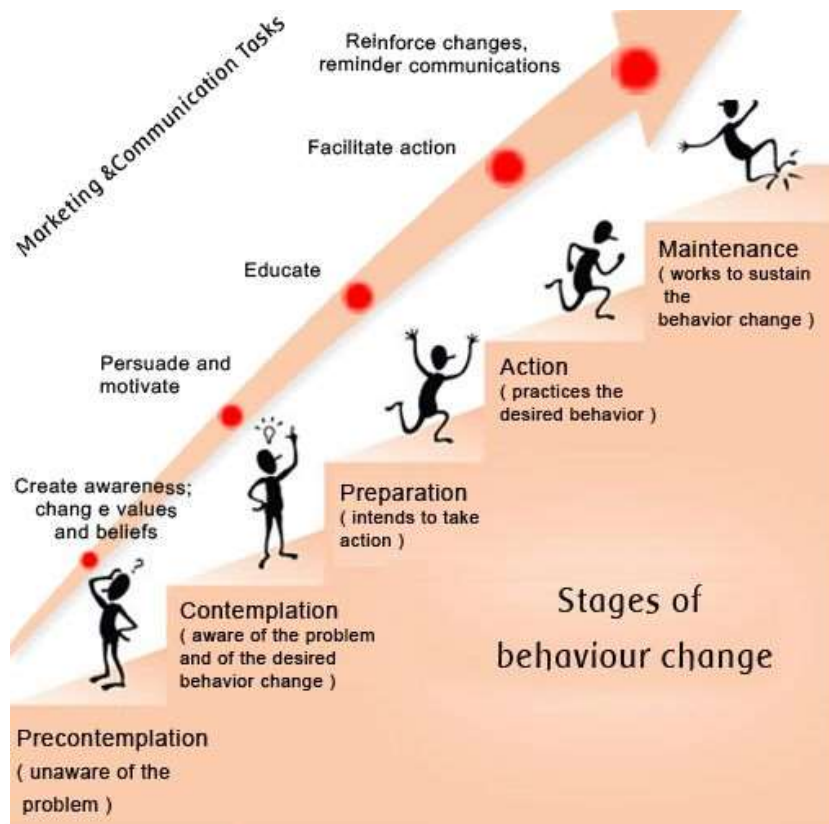
SOIL CARE = INTEGRATED STRATEGY FOCUSING AT 3 FINALITIES



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Awareness raising => engaging and activating stakeholders



► Different steps, levels (≈ tools)

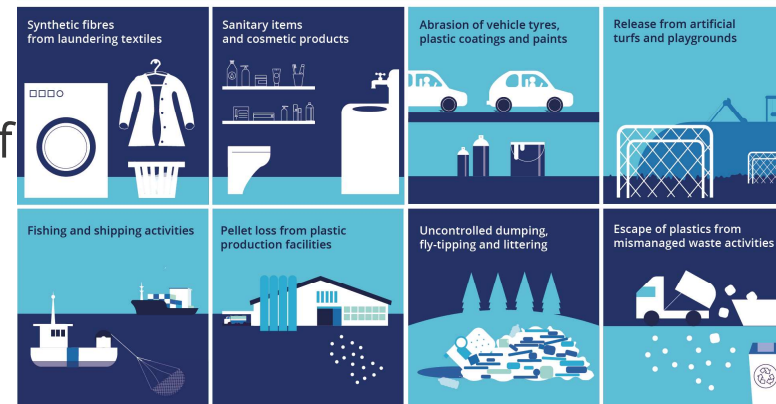
1. To know that it exist
2. To understand more about it
3. To learn what it means for you personally
4. To be motivated and able to take action/change behavior on a personal level
5. To learn what it means on a collective level
6. To be motivated and able to take action /change behavior on a collective level – Higher chance on success!



For the future: how to tackle this wicked problem? What do we need?

- ▶ Foster systemic awareness – how? START SEEING SYSTEMATICALLY
- ▶ What do we need? Start to ACT SYSTEMATICALLY and build awareness that the next big step is a lot of little steps – in co-creation
- ▶ Storytelling? activates your brain (7/2)
 - Storytelling = polyphonic: it helps to listen & include everybody's voice
 - Creates meaning out of patterns, relates events and community to each other
 - Brings empathy across difference
 - Connect and sooth
 - Evokes activism

There are many sources of plastics in the environment, including:



Plastics spread to the environment through, for example:



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Storytelling: how it helps systems change?

TO UNDERSTAND

- stories help illuminate the past, present, and future
- lightens up the paths of change



STORY AS LIGHT

FOR BUILDING A COMMUNITY

- through empathy and coherence, helps to connect across difference, and generates common narratives that holds groups, organisations and movements together



STORY AS GLUE

REWRITE THE WEB WE LIVE IN

- enable change of personal, cultural or mythical narratives influencing our worldview



STORY AS WEB

All sectors can use these qualities of story and narrative to change systems. (Images by Irene Palacio) [Story as light, story as glue, story as web: Ella Saltmarche on the ways tales can help us see and fix systems – THE ALTERNATIVE](#)

Awareness and storytelling on emerging contaminants in soil

- ▶ How do you increase awareness and activate different actors involved?
- ▶ Do you use story telling? Yes/no – why/why not?
- ▶ Do you recognise the importance of co-creation on building a common story?
- ▶ Do you have any other experiences, initiatives or ideas to raise awareness?

Stewardship for the future

You only take care when you care
And
You only care when you are aware

- ▶ Not only legislation, policy, knowledge! Also awareness raising, storytelling, cocreation, ...
- ▶ In cocreation with partners, step by step, towards an ambitious end goal on the horizon.
- ▶ Thank you for joining and inspiring us !!!
- ▶ What could be your next step? (quick round of the table)



Care is not one-way – the cared for
coforms the carer too –
Maria Puig dela Bellascasa

The expression of common concern
builds community, as does our
willingness to show up and respond
Joanna Macy



For Joana

with gratitude from Dori

spiral of
the Work
That
Reconnects

source: Joanna Macy

