



EUROPEAN UNION



# EU MISSIONS

## SOIL DEAL FOR EUROPE

Where we are at with the EU Mission “A Soil Deal for Europe”

ECOMONDO - The States General of Soil Health - ECOMONDO  
Rimini, 9 November 2023

**Kerstin Rosenow**

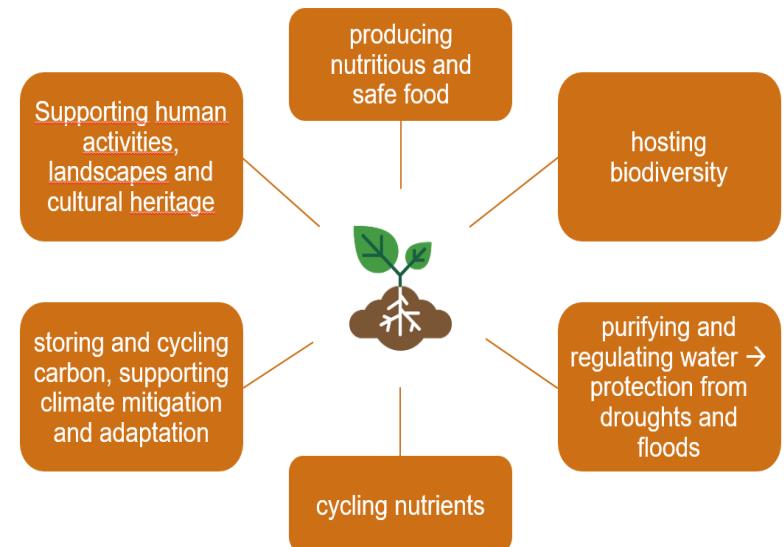
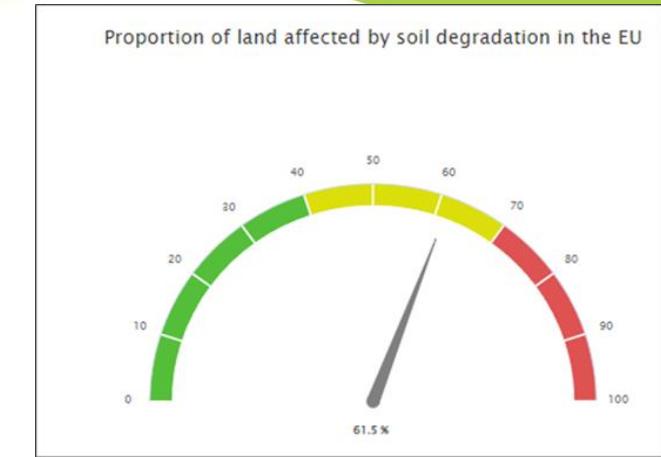
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DG Agriculture and rural development  
European Commission

#EUmissions #HorizonEU #MissionSoil



## The Mission Soil: the right instrument at the right time

- ❖ **Soils are threatened:** over 60% of soils in Europe are unhealthy, thus not able to deliver vital ecosystem services
- ❖ **Healthy soils are needed**
  - For life on earth: provision of 95% of our food and ecosystem services.
  - To meet the Green Deal ambitions (sustainable food systems, biodiversity, zero pollution and climate) and international commitments
  - For the success of the other Missions (clean Oceans, climate neutral cities, climate resilient regions, prevention of cancer)
- ❖ **It is time for bold actions on soils**
  - The Mission Soil – EU Soil Observatory – Soil Strategy – Proposal for a Soil Monitoring and Resilience Directive, together provide a unique framework for soil stewardship at scale
  - Attention in policy, civil society and business is turning to soils
- ❖ **The Mission is the right instrument**
  - Novel transdisciplinary & cross-sectoral approach to soil management addressing all land uses: agriculture, forestry, urban, industrial



## Policy context

Mission embedded in 12 Green Deal strategies, communications or action plans

- Farm to Fork Strategy
- EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030
- Climate Adaptation Strategy
- Forest Strategy
- Zero Pollution Action Plan for air, water and soil
- Organic Action Plan
- Long term vision for rural areas
- EU Soil Strategy for 2030 and proposals for a **Soil Monitoring Law (5/7/23)**
- Communication on sustainable carbon cycles
- Communication “Safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food systems”
- Communication “Ensuring availability and affordability of fertilisers”
- Communication on the European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI) “Save bees and farmers! Towards a bee-friendly agriculture for a healthy environment”

Policy



➡ Identify contribution of Mission to meeting targets and objectives

## The Mission in the Soil Monitoring Law

- Recital 11 A 'Soil Deal for Europe' is one of the five EU missions of the Horizon Europe programme and is specifically dedicated to promoting soil health. **The Soil Mission is a key instrument for the implementation of this Directive.** It aims to lead the transition to healthy soils through funding an ambitious research and innovation programme, establishing a network of **100 living labs and lighthouses** in rural and urban areas, advancing the development of a **harmonized soil monitoring framework** and increasing the **awareness** of the importance of soil."
- Recital 38 "[...] Additional funding for a network of real-life sites for testing, demonstrating and upscaling of solutions, including on carbon farming, will be provided through the Soil Mission's living labs and lighthouses"
- Article 10.1 « When defining the [sustainable and regenerative soil management] practices and measures referred to in this paragraph, **Member States shall take into account the programmes, plans, targets and measures listed in Annex IV as well as the latest existing scientific knowledge including results coming out of the Horizon Europe Mission a Soil Deal for Europe.**»

Examples of policy needs for the implementation of the SML:

### 1. Harmonization of monitoring framework

Transfer functions and interlaboratory calibration / Increased knowledge on soil health indicators (when soil's capacity of delivering Ecosystem Services is lost) for SML evaluation (6 years after entry into force)

### 2. Sustainable Soil Management

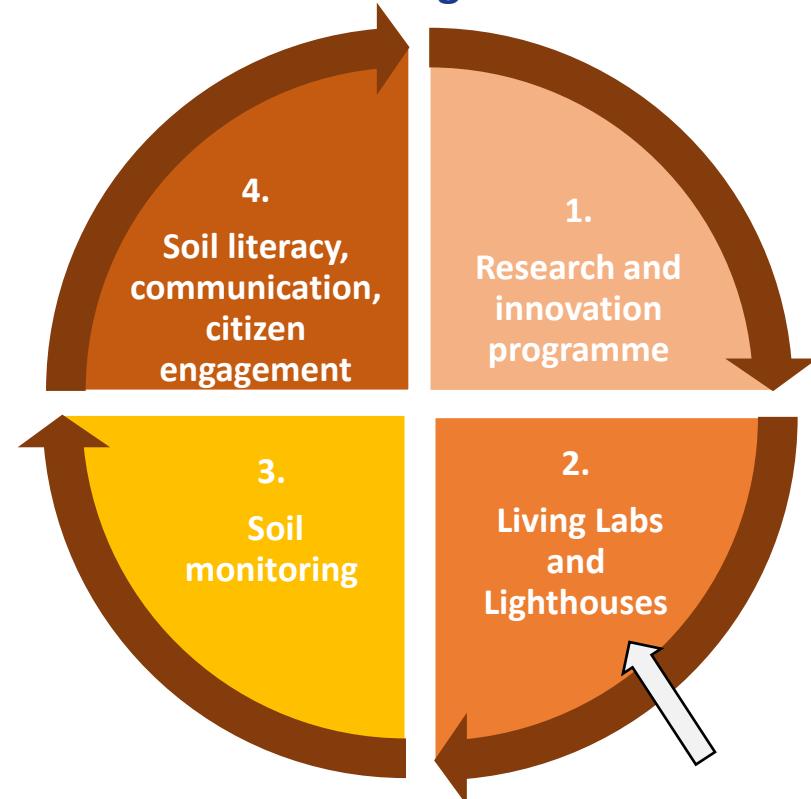
Knowledge on which practices in specific soil types, climatic conditions and land uses translate SML SSM principles and regenerate soil to healthy conditions / most cost-effective remediation techniques / practical tools for advisors to best inform soil managers on how to move to SSM practices

## Goal: 100 living labs and lighthouses to lead the transition towards healthy soils by 2030

### Specific objectives:



### Building blocks:

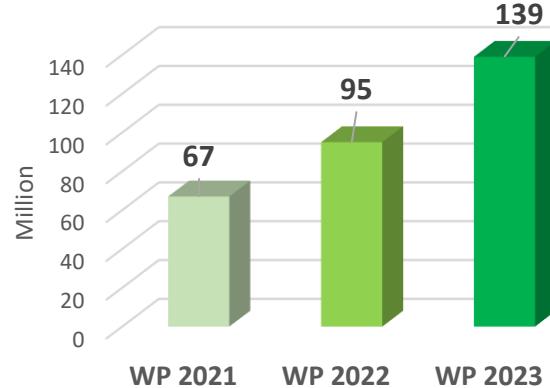


Objectives apply to **all types of land use and all territories** and are relevant for a **range of sectors**

Main vehicle for addressing the diversity of conditions and generating locally adapted solutions

## Mission Soil: state of implementation

### Mission Soil Work Programmes budget



≈ EUR 300 million (2021-2023)

#### ■ WP 2021-2022

- ❖ 27 signed grants
- ❖ EU contribution EUR 154.2 million
- ❖ Average per project: € 5.7 m / 18 partners

#### ■ WP 2023 - Under evaluation

#### ■ WP 2024 - Under preparation

- Since its launch in September 2021, 3 Work Programmes (WP) with calls for proposals have been published under the Mission Soil

- WP 2021 and WP 2022 built capacities and raised awareness on Living Labs (LLs), paving the way to the first call for LLs in 2023. For example, **NATIOONS** is holding **engagement sessions** in all MS and Associated Countries to promote the calls for LLs as well to inform and inspire potential applicants

- Other examples of 2021 running projects:

#### 1. **PREPSOIL** is conducting **soil needs assessments** in 21 European regions:

- Regional authorities can use this knowledge:
  - for programming of funds (Agricultural/Regional)
  - to raise awareness about local/regional soil health challenges
  - to promote the setup of LLs addressing specific soil health challenges



#### 2. **HuMUS** is developing more than **30 Territorial Management Agreements** for soil health

- **Other 17 projects** have been funded under WP 2022, below some topics covered by this call:

- Soil biodiversity and its contribution to ecosystem services
- Remediation strategies, methods and financial models for decontamination and reuse of land in urban and rural areas
- Innovations for soil improvement from bio-waste
- Citizen science for soil health



## Mission Goal: 100 Living Labs and Lighthouses to lead the transition towards healthy soils

### ☐ Work Programme 2023 launched the 1st call for a gradual establishment of a transnational network of LL

#### ☐ Living labs – sites for experimentation

- **Real-life sites** in rural or urban areas in which **people from various sectors and backgrounds** experiment and test solutions in a **co-creative** manner
- Each living lab is composed of a group of sites (e.g., farms, forest stands, urban green areas) working together at regional or sub-regional level

#### ❖ Each LL cluster (i.e. each project) grouping at least 4-5 LL, will:

- Cover **at least 3 MS and/or AC**
- Work together on **thematically related soil health challenges**
- Address at least 1 out of the 8 **Mission's objectives** (and only objective 2 in case of the CF LL)

#### ☐ Lighthouses – sites for demonstration of solutions

- **Individual sites**, such as a single farm, to showcase good practices
- Places for **demonstrations**, training and communication

WP 2023 calls (Closed on 20/09/2023)	Budget (EUR m)	Projects
Co-creating solutions for soil health in Living Labs	36	3
Carbon farming in living labs (CF LL)	12	1

**Phase 1 (2021-2024)**  
Induction and pilot

**Phase 2 (2025-2026)**  
Gradual expansion

**Phase 3 (2027-)**  
Scaling-up  
and mainstreaming

## Mission Soil Positive assessment – 2 years later

- The Mission Soil is in line with its objectives, including defining strategies for soil decontamination and regeneration and developing new business models for soil-friendly and climate-neutral value chains
- The first Living Labs under the Mission will start in 2024, leading to more than 200 test sites for local experimentation in urban and rural areas
- The Mission is integrated in 18 out of 28 Member State CAP Strategic Plans. CAP allocating about EUR 50 billion for sustainable soil management
- Around 1,000 CAP Network Operational Groups (EUR 350m) will contribute to the Mission objectives. EIP AGRI upscaling Mission results
- The Mission receives support from other EU sources such as the LIFE programme, the Circular Bioeconomy Europe JU, PRIMA and the EIC
- Member States have reported more than 200 complementary activities in support of the Mission's objectives
- The Mission has participated in over 350 national and international events, disseminated informative materials, and been consistently covered on social media to improve soil literacy and citizen engagement
- The EIB is developing a large-scale soil investment pipeline to mobilise additional financial resources
- The Mission has become an important flagship for international cooperation with the Global Soil Partnership, the Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate initiative and with international R&I partners such as Japan, the USA, Canada and African countries

## The Mission Soil Manifesto *Launched in April 2023*

- Is a non-legally binding document to formalise stakeholder and citizen participation in and support to Mission activities***
- Can be signed by regional and local public authorities, private and public organisations, NGOs, philanthropic organisations, schools, universities, research institutes, associations, individuals***

A Manifesto in 5 points to:

1. ***Remind the importance of soils for people and the planet***
2. ***Acknowledge the status of soils***
3. ***Recognise the urgency to act***
4. ***Support the Mission and its objectives***
5. ***Take action as policymakers, organisations, or individuals***

Everyone can contribute to protect  
and restore our soils

**+1,700 signatories**

**15% organisations of which 25% local and regional authorities, associations and NGOs**

<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/mission-soil-manifesto>



Today we launch the #MissionSoil Manifesto.

All organisations and citizens that want to become part of a community of practice that cares for #soil health are invited to sign the manifesto



Sign here: [ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/mission-soil-manifesto](https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/mission-soil-manifesto)



# Visit the Mission Soil Platform

To:

- **Learn more** about the Mission Soil
- **Discover** the Mission Soil funded projects
- **Check the legal entities** that are taking action for soil health
- **Add** your soil-related events and check the event map
- **Be informed** about the latest news, activities and policy developments

## Signatories and Friends

The Mission Soil Manifesto brings together a range of stakeholders who care for soil health. The Signatories of the Mission Soil Manifesto represent a diverse group of legal entities including municipalities, regions, NGOs, research institutions, agricultural communities and private companies. They are committed to addressing the urgent challenges facing our soils and promoting sustainable land management practices.

Explore the profiles of our signatories below to learn about how they engage in soil health activities. Together, we are creating a vibrant community dedicated to caring for soil health.

If you want to join us in our collective efforts to secure the future of our soils, [sign the Manifesto!](#)

**239**

legal entities have signed the Mission  
Soil Manifesto

**1376**

people endorse the Mission Soil  
Manifesto and have already become  
Friends of the Mission Soil

## Mission Soil Platform

Home   About   Project hub   Community   Living labs   News & Events   Resource library



## Why are soils important?

Soils are essential for all life-sustaining processes on our planet. If soils are healthy and managed sustainably, they provide essential environmental, economic, and social benefits for society.

[Learn more about soils](#)



## What is the Mission Soil?

The EU Mission 'A Soil Deal for Europe' (Mission Soil) is one of five Missions funded under the EU Research and Innovation (R&I) Programme Horizon Europe. Its goal is to create 100 Living Labs and Lighthouses by 2030 to promote sustainable land and soil management in urban and rural areas.

[Learn more about this Mission](#)

## European Mission Soil Week, 21-23 November in Madrid



Organised by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development ([DG AGRI](#)) in the context of the Mission Soil together with the EU funded project [PREPSOIL](#) and the Joint Research Centre - EU Soil Observatory ([EUSO](#))

❖ *Designed as a major European gathering that brings together the European soil community to:*

- Discuss the challenges for making and keeping EU soils healthy*
- Communicate and disseminate solutions based on the latest research results and innovations for healthy soils*

The conference will be locally hosted by [INIA-CSIC](#) at the central facilities of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) in Madrid under the **Spanish Presidency of the EU Council**.

**More than 100 speakers, more than 300 participants per day – join us!**

<https://www.europeanmissionsoilweek2023.com/en>

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SOIL DEAL FOR EUROPE



# Thank you!

For further information and questions please contact the Mission Secretariat:

[EU-HORIZON-MISSION-SOIL@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EU-HORIZON-MISSION-SOIL@ec.europa.eu)

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