



A new EU Strategy for healthy soils

Aquaconsoil webinar session 09/02/2021

1. **The European Green Deal and soil policy – why a new Soil Strategy, expectations**
2. **The new EU Soil Strategy being conceived: objectives and how to reach them – linking with nature restoration plan, zero pollution, LDN & SDGs**
3. **Enablers, Soil Strategy vs Mission on Soil health and Food, next steps and contributions**

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Why a new EU Soil Strategy

Many things have changed since the first Soil Thematic Strategy 2006

(European Green Deal ambition, SDG and international commitments, awareness, knowledge, etc.)

Continuing soil and land degradations

(erosion, loosing soil carbon, pollution and contaminated sites, soil sealing, reduction of soil biodiversity, salinization, compaction, desertification, soil waste, specific local issues, etc.)

Why at EU level:

Soil does not move but food, people, property, water do; impacts of soil degradation like CO2 emissions, loss of biodiversity, loss of production have no borders; need for level playing field for economic operators; international and European commitments in environment, sustainable development and climate



How the new Soil Strategy should be?

Expectations:

Ambitious but realistic

Holistic but specific for soil

A framework integrating contribution from and to other policy areas and initiatives (climate, biodiversity, zero pollution, sustainable food systems, circular economy, water, waste, forest, CAP, research, health, sustainable finance, ...)

Comprehensive but concise

Science-based and taking into account complexity, but comprehensible to all and inspirational

Recognize efforts while stepping them up

Adopted by the Commission but mobilizing efforts at all levels

Consistent with previous initiatives and forward-looking

Preparing the path to subsequent initiatives but not pre-empting decisions

Setting a long-term vision but defining concrete actions for 2030, starting asap

Environment





Objectives for soil (from Roadmap) and how to achieve them (1/3)

- **Step up efforts to protect soil fertility and reduce soil erosion**

Need to promote the adoption of sustainable soil management practices – fundamental point

Starting from FAO-GSP VGSSM

Taking into account CAP

- **Increase soil organic matter and restore carbon-rich ecosystems**

- **Protect and enhance soil biodiversity**

Clear contribution to climate neutrality, and biodiversity at the same time – minimize trade-offs

Take into account carbon farming

SSM contribution and potential

Consider active restoration when needed, using nature-based solutions

Environment





Objectives for soil (from Roadmap) and how to achieve them (2/3)

- **Reduce the rate of land take, urban sprawl and sealing to achieve no net land take by 2050**

Intermediate target for 2030? Which one?

How to best exploit existing guidance and knowledge?

How to integrate with existing initiatives on sustainable urban areas , green cities?

What can be reasonably achieved with only voluntary efforts

- **Progress in identifying and remediating contaminated sites and address diffuse contamination**

BDS 2030 calls for all ecosystems in good condition by 2050

How to multiply the results of best performers?

How to finance and value remediation?

How to prioritize interventions?

How to measure and monitor?

Environment





Objectives for soil (from Roadmap) and how to achieve them (3/3)

- **Address the growing threat of desertification and Achieve land degradation neutrality by 2030**

How to address desertification, with nature based solutions and monitor progress?

ECA recommendation to develop a common methodology to assess LDN and publish results

Is the UNCCD methodology satisfactory as applied today?

- **Feedback to the Roadmap:**

- **address circularity for soil**

1) How to fill the gap in closing the biological cycle soil-biomass-soil for micronutrients in a clean way?

2) How to address the high quantity of excavated soils wasted?

- **Legislative initiative?**



How to ensure achieving those objectives?

Cross-cutting elements to be taken into account:

- **Societal transformation** (soil literacy, social engagement, soil and land stewardship, behavioral change)
- **Mainstreaming efforts** (at EU and global level; existing initiatives and networking actors, mission on Soil Health and Food, EJP SOIL, ESP, EIONET, Soil and nature protection organization, businesses based on soil restoration, sustainable cities, etc.)
- **Financing** (planned EU funds, taxonomy, ...)
- **Filling in the knowledge gap** (research and innovation, policy questions, ...)
- **Harmonization** (speaking the same language on soil, soil degradation, soil health, sustainable soil management, soil pollution, restoration) **and**
- **common Monitoring and Outlook** (i.e. taking further coordinated actions if progress or trends are unsatisfactory; EUSO, EEA, Legal instrument for nature restoration, EU methodology for LDN assessment, etc.)



Soil Strategy vs Mission on Soil Health and Food

The Soil Strategy will be a communication adopted by the Commission defining the Soil Policy

The Mission on Soil Health and Food has been proposed to be one of the 5 missions within the EU Research Programme Horizon Europe

The Mission Board report of September 2020 recommends a set of research work within Horizon Europe aimed at a recommended overall goal (75% of healthy soils) with proposed targets and indicators.

The Soil Strategy will take into account this input and its planned work

The work of the Mission, after its approval, is expected to be one of the key contributions to the achievement of policy objectives, in particular for developing and spreading knowledge and solutions, but also for communication, societal engagement, behavioral change.

The Strategy will set concrete actions to improve the monitoring needed to see the progress of all efforts towards soil policy objectives

Environment





The process towards to the strategy

- Feedback to the Roadmap : <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12634-New-EU-Soil-Strategy-healthy-soil-for-a-healthy-life>
- Open public consultation open 2/2-27/4: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12634-New-EU-Soil-Strategy-healthy-soil-for-a-healthy-life/public-consultation>
- Consultation of main stakeholders (e.g. EU Soil Expert Group)
- Target: by 2021; coordination with ZPAP, Nature Restoration plan, HE Mission
- Currently aiming at July 2021 for the adoption
- Then the implementation! Where everybody will be needed to contribute