



EU Soil Strategy for 2030



Reaping the benefits of healthy soils for people, food, nature and climate

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According to the EU Soil Strategy for 2030, protection, sustainable use and restoration of soil must become the new normal. Urgent action and a legislative proposal on soil health, increased research and mobilizing societal engagement and financial resources shall enable making soils and ecosystems more resilient and healthy by 2050.



Vision of the new EU Soil Strategy for 2030 aligned with EJP SOIL



New EU Soil Strategy: the package

The new EU Soil Strategy is a package:

- Communication: framework for the protection, restoration and sustainable use of soils with a long-term vision, objectives and actions. The Strategy answers to the request of the Parliament to propose a legal framework for soil.
- Staff Working Document: on the knowledge base supporting the Strategy and the summary of the stakeholder consultation

Links with other policies



Challenges

Challenges: What do we need tackle?

70%
of soils are NOT healthy

13%
EU soils suffer from high erosion with 1.25 BEUR yearly losses on crop yield

78%
of land take takes place in agricultural land

200.000 - 800.000
deaths
globally per year due to soil contamination

7.4 million tonnes of CO₂
Lost yearly by mineral soils under cropland

390.000
Contaminated sites to be remediated

25%
of land in Southern, central and Eastern Europe at high or very high risk of desertification

Soil "diseases":

Erosion, compaction, organic matter decline, pollution, loss of soil biodiversity, salinization, desertification, land take and sealing



Policy context

Soil degradation continues in the EU and so do its transboundary impacts
=> common solutions necessary

Soil recognized as a necessary solution for the climate and biodiversity crisis => factual and political momentum

Soil degradation in the EU costs more than 50 billion EUR per year. Costs of no action amount globally to EUR 5.4 and 8.6 trillion/year.

Benefits of soil restoration outweigh costs 6 times => urgency

The European Green Deal, ratified in 2020, is a set of policy initiatives by the European Commission aimed at making the European Union climate neutral by 2050.

EU 2030 Soil Management Policy Agenda



2 ZERO HUNGER

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



SUSTAINABLE SOIL MANAGEMENT ON THE POLICY AGENDA: A NEW MOMENTUM

Utilizing healthy soils for people, food, nature and climate

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



15 LIFE ON LAND



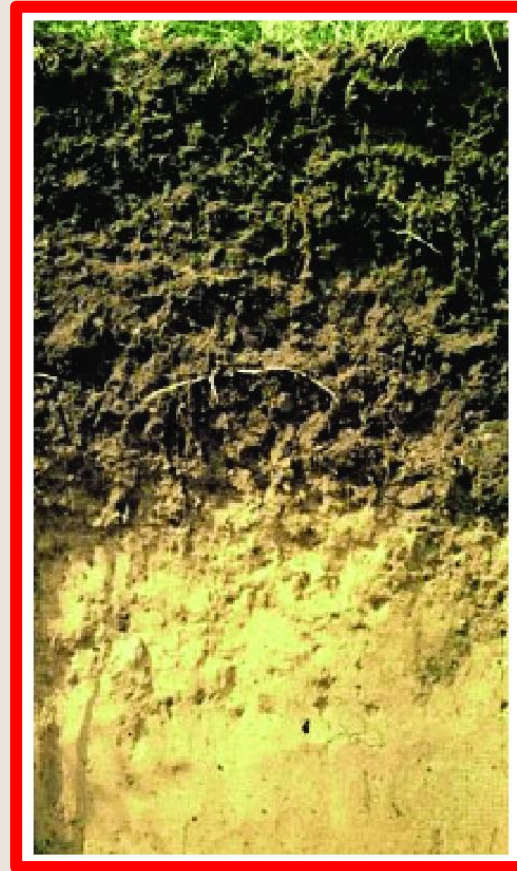
13 CLIMATE ACTION



The vision for soil

By 2050, all EU soil ecosystems are in healthy condition and are thus more resilient, which will require very decisive changes in this decade.

By then, protection, sustainable use and restoration of soil has become the norm.



Healthy soils contribute as key solution to our big challenges to achieve climate neutrality, a clean and circular economy, revert biodiversity loss, safeguard human health, halt desertification and revert land degradation.

Objectives: What do we want to achieve?

Objective: Allowing soil to deliver its essential services (food, energy, raw materials, carbon sequestration, water purification, nutrient regulation, pest control, basis for medicines , recreation etc.)

Soil as a **key enabler** to achieve Green Deal objectives:

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Resource efficient and circular economy
- More biodiversity for human, animal and plant health
- Ensuring healthy water resources



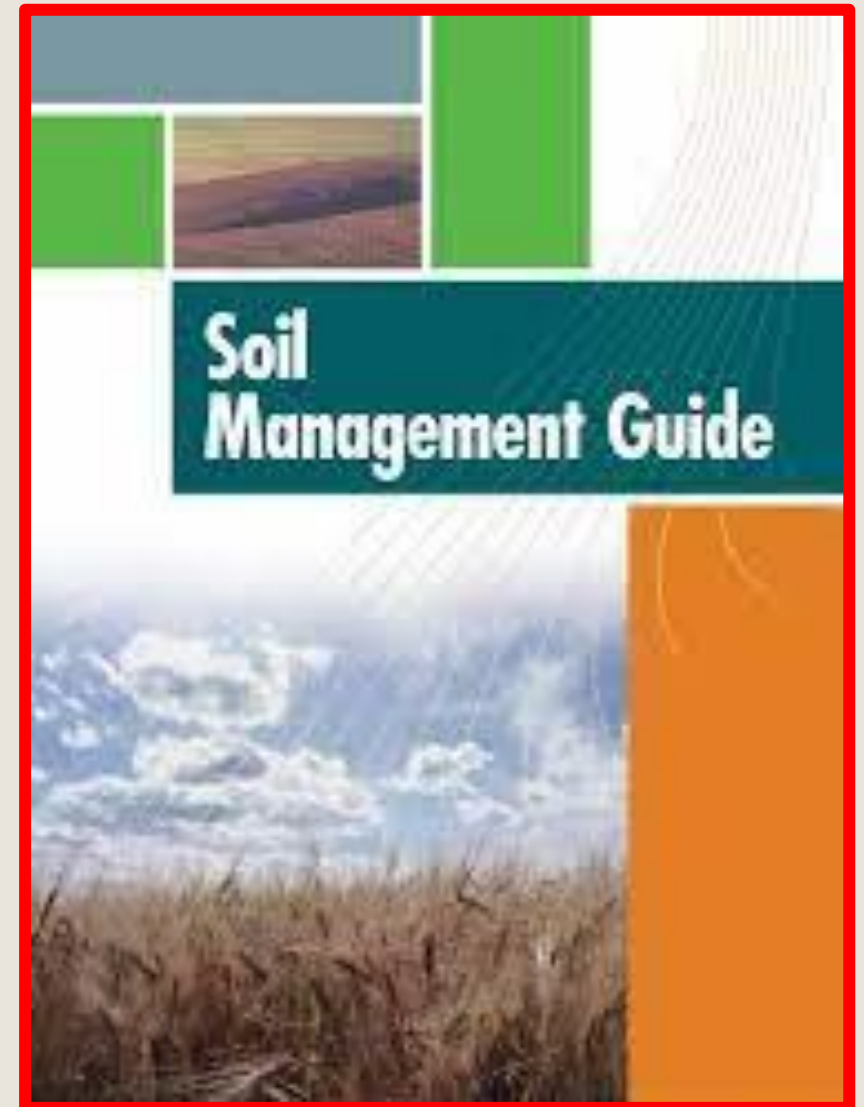
Solutions: What do we propose?

A basket of measures/ actions:

- Combination of voluntary and legally binding measures
- At local, regional, national, EU and global level

Concept of healthy soils: to be developed with MS and stakeholders

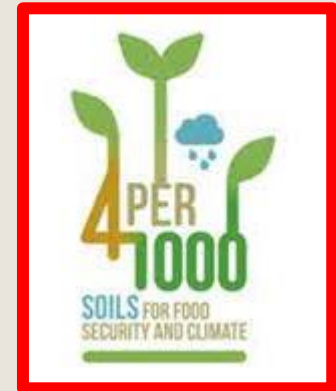
- Soil Monitoring
- Sustainable Soil Management
- Restoration of degraded soils



Key actions

Soil health for climate change mitigation and adaptation

- Assess **the state of peatlands** in the Global Peatlands initiative
- Join the **global 4 per 1000 initiative**
- Present **carbon farming initiative** (2021) and **proposal on carbon removal certification** (2022)



The “4/1000 Initiative: Soils for Food Security and Climate”

The “4/1000 Initiative “ was launched by the French government at the COP21 Paris climate summit in 2015.

It aims to increase carbon storage in agricultural soils by 0.4% each year to help mitigate climate change and increase food security.

The “4/1000 Initiative: Soils for Food Security and Climate” aims to ensure that agriculture plays its part in combating climate change.



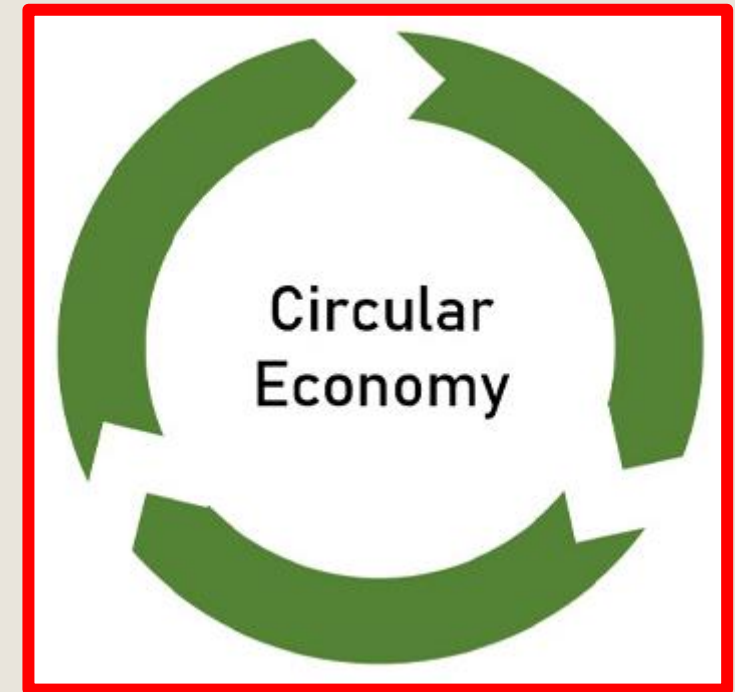
Key actions

Soil health and the circular economy

- Benchmark streams of excavated soils in the EU (2023)
- Promote the land take hierarchy and ask MS to set targets for 2030
- Provide guidance and exchange of practices to reduce sealing (2024)
- Close the nutrient and carbon circle by safely recycling biowaste

Soil biodiversity for human, animal and plant health

- Assess soil biodiversity, antimicrobial resistance (2022) and invasive alien species
- Put soil biodiversity on the international agenda (e.g. CBD COP 15, GSP)



Soil health and the circular economy

- Establishing the excavated soils use curriculum in the EU (2023),
- Support the land acquisition hierarchy and ask Member States to set targets for 2030;
- Provide guidance and exchange of practices to reduce sealing (2024)
- Complete the nutrient and carbon cycle by safely recycling biowaste,



Soil health and the circular economy

Safe, sustainable and cyclical use of excavated soil

- As part of the development of the Soil Health Law, assessing the need and potential for legally binding provisions for an 'excavated soil passport' and providing guidance to put such a system in place, based on the experience of Member States.
- The passport of the excavated soil will reflect the soil quantity and quality to ensure its safe transport, processing or reuse to another location.



Soil health and the circular economy

Limiting land take and soil sealing with circular land use

- Reducing net land use by 2030 by setting national, regional and local targets to make a measurable contribution to the EU's 2050 target.



Soil health and the circular economy

- Integrating the 'land acquisition hierarchy' into Urban Greening Plans and financial incentives to and against this hierarchy through appropriate regulatory initiatives, e.g., to prioritize land reuse and recycling and quality urban land at the national, regional and local level, by phasing out local financial benefits to transform agricultural or natural land into a built environment;



- To provide a clear definition of land acquisition in the Soil Health Law.

Soil health and the circular economy

Limiting land take and soil sealing with circular land use

- Laying down the necessary provisions for Member States to report on progress made in achieving their land acquisition targets, as part of the impact assessment of the Soil Health Law;
- As part of the impact assessment of the Soil Health Law, monitor and report on progress towards non-net land acquisition targets and implementation of the land acquisition hierarchy, based on data reported by Member States;
- With the revision of the EU Soil Sealing Guidelines by 2024, public authorities and private companies will be provided guidance on how to reduce soil sealing, including best practices for locally driven initiatives to remove this sealing from artificial surfaces to allow the soil to breathe.

Key actions

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

Healthy soils for clean water

- Improve **soil-sediment-water nexus**
- Guidance on sustainable management of sediment
- Better integrate soil and land use management in the River Basin Management Plans

Making Sustainable Soil Management (SSM) the new normal

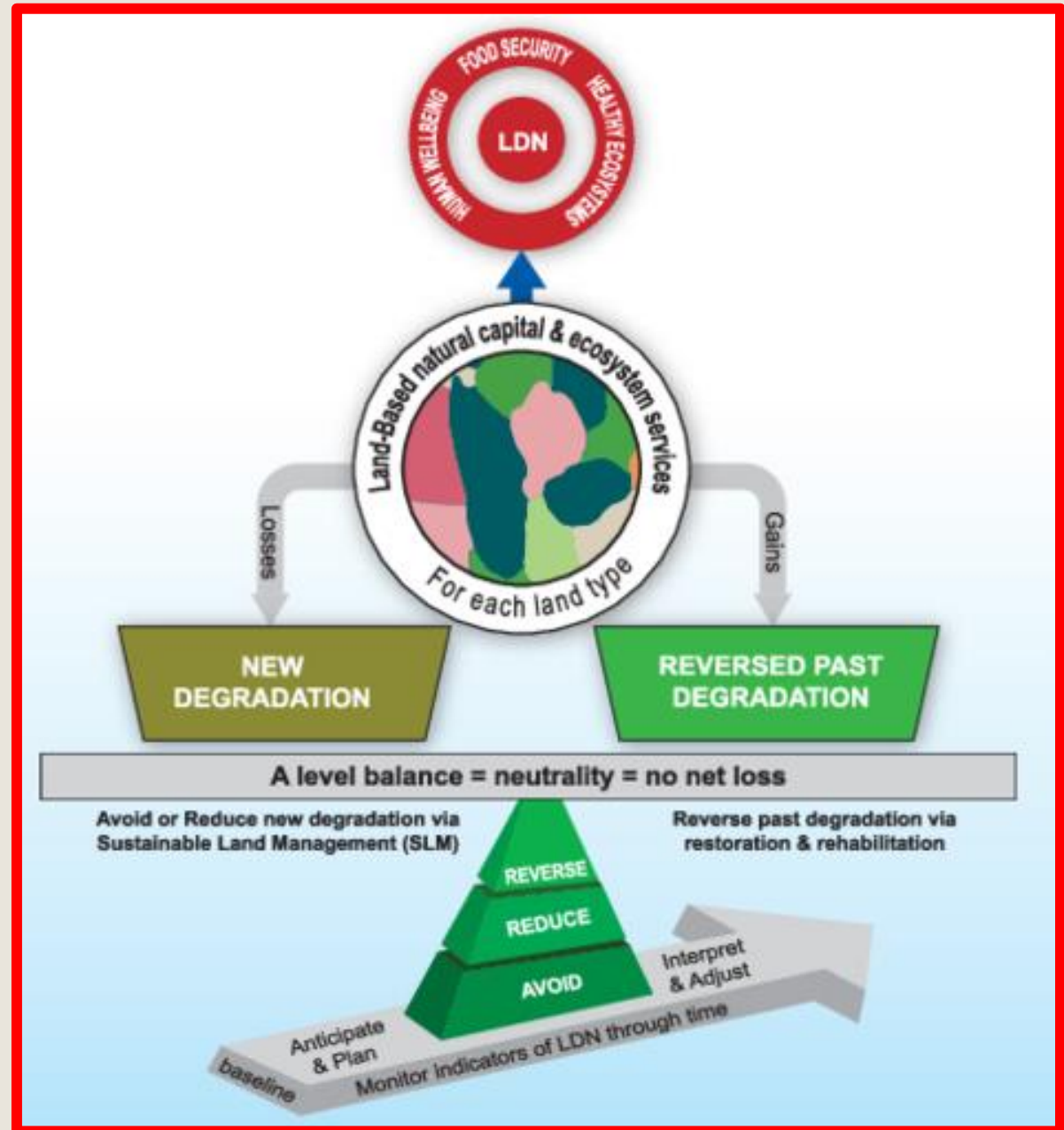
- **Set of SSM practices** and criteria to phase out unsustainable practices
- Launch together with MS the **Test Your Soil For Free initiative**
- Promote **sustainable soil management through the CAP** and build a network of practitioners



Key actions

Prevent desertification

- Develop a **common methodology to assess desertification and land degradation** and report regularly
- Propose to **declare the EU as affected party under the UNCCD**
- Continue to support development projects **outside the EU**



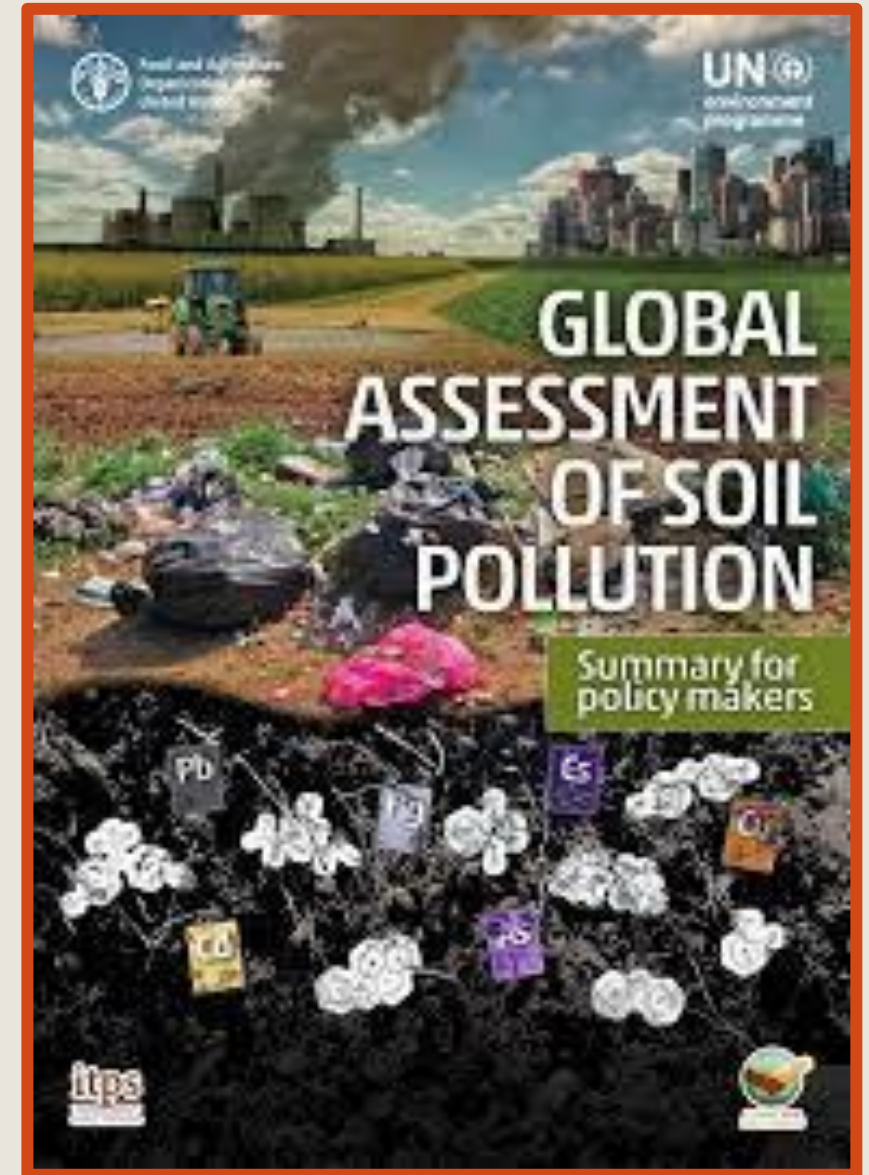
Key actions

Prevent pollution

- Improve the risk assessment of chemicals on soil quality and of soil contaminants on human health and the environment
- Restrict microplastics (2022), PFAS and other soil contaminants under the REACH Regulation
- Policy framework on bio-based, biodegradable and compostable plastics (2022)
- Revise the SUP Directive, evaluate the Sewage Sludge Directive (2022) and review the Fertilizing Products Regulation (2026)

REACH: Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals

PFAS: Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances



Key actions

Restore degraded soil and remediate contaminated sites

- Facilitate an exchange between MS on risk assessment methodologies
- Develop an EU priority list for soil contaminants (2024)
- Revise the Industrial Emissions Directive (2022) and evaluate the Environmental Liability Directive (2023)



Key actions

Improve digital knowledge, monitoring and research on soil

- Implement the EU Soil Observatory, the Land Information System for Europe and the Soil Mission

Enable the transition to healthy soil

- With private finance and EU funding
 - Publish a guide with an overview of EU funding opportunities for healthy soils (2022)
 - Foster investments towards sustainable soil through the EU Taxonomy Regulation



Key actions

Enable the transition to healthy soil (cont.)

- Through soil literacy and societal engagement
 - Launch a soil literacy initiative
 - Exchange and share best practices in communication and engagement on soil
 - Use the European common reference framework of sustainability competences



Soil Health Law

Objective
to achieve
healthy
soils by
2050

Definitions
Including
healthy soil

Monitoring
and
assessment
of soil state

Provisions
to
sustainably
use soils

Identify and
remediate
contaminated
sites

Programmes
of
measures

Reporting

The aim of the Soil Health Law proposal announced in the EU soil strategy for 2030 is to:

- specify the conditions for a healthy soil
- determine options for monitoring soil and
- lay out rules conducive to sustainable soil use and restoration.

Thank you

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