



EUROPEAN UNION



EU MISSIONS

SOIL DEAL FOR EUROPE



October 2023

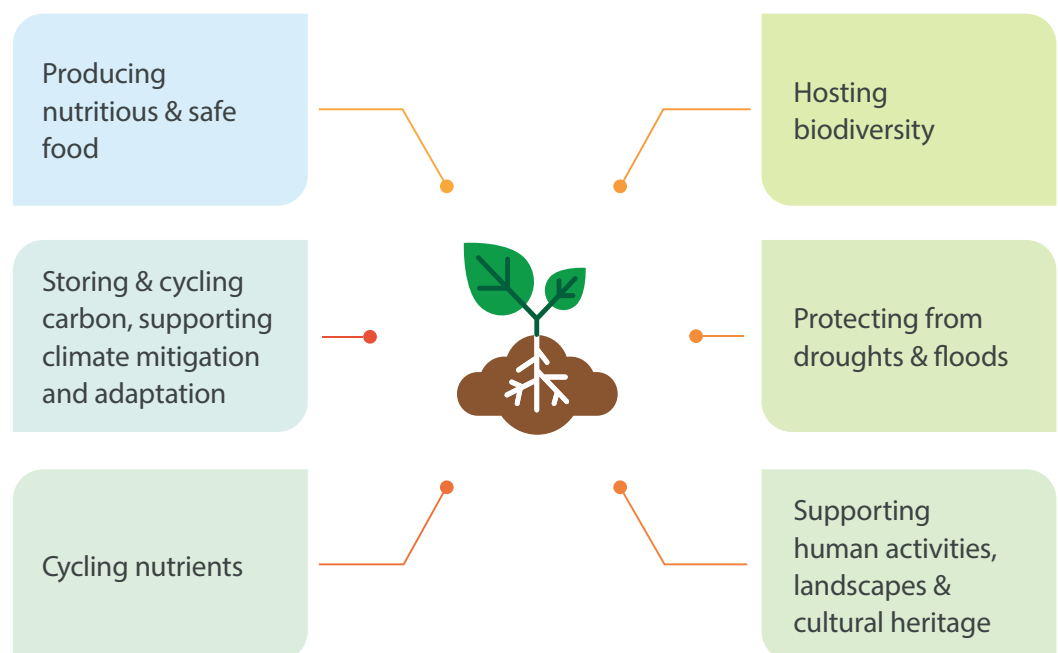
WHAT IS THE EU MISSION: A SOIL DEAL FOR EUROPE

The Mission 'A Soil Deal for Europe' is an ambitious, innovative instrument launched in 2021¹ by the European Commission to accelerate the development and large-scale deployment of solutions for sustainable land and soil management as part of a wider, green transition. Together with the Soil Strategy, the upcoming Soil Health Law, the EU Soil Observatory and climate policies (such as for carbon farming) the Mission is part of a robust framework for soil protection in the EU.

While rooted in the EU research and innovation programme, Horizon Europe, the Mission serves as a mechanism to enhance synergies with other EU programmes such as the Common Agricultural Policy and to team up with stakeholders in Member States, EU Associated Countries and global partners.

WHY A MISSION ON SOIL

Life on Earth depends on healthy soils: they are the basis of our food and provide other vital ecosystem services.



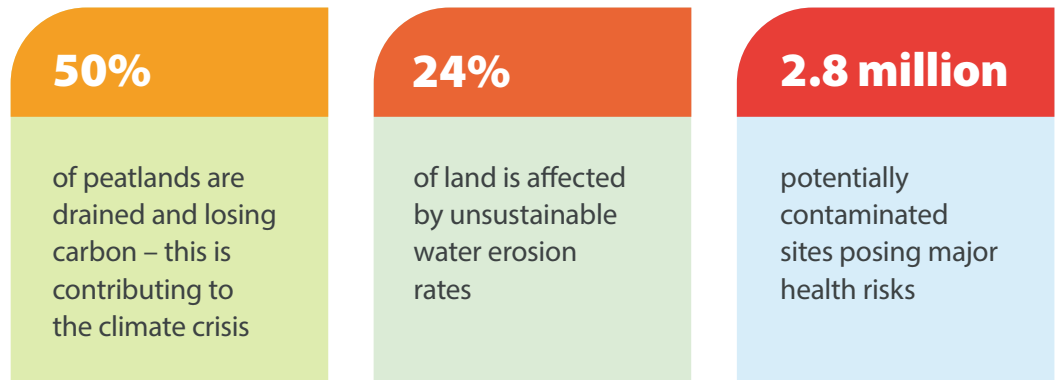
¹ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-07/com_2023_457_1_en_act_part1.pdf

**WE NEED TO
ACT NOW!**

Soils are a scarce, threatened and non-renewable resource.

About 60%² of soils in Europe are considered to be unhealthy due to current management practices, pollution, urbanisation and the effects of climate change.

Examples of the extent of soil degradation in the EU:



**THE MISSION'S
OVERALL GOAL**

Create a network of 100 living labs and lighthouses to lead the transition towards healthy soils by 2030

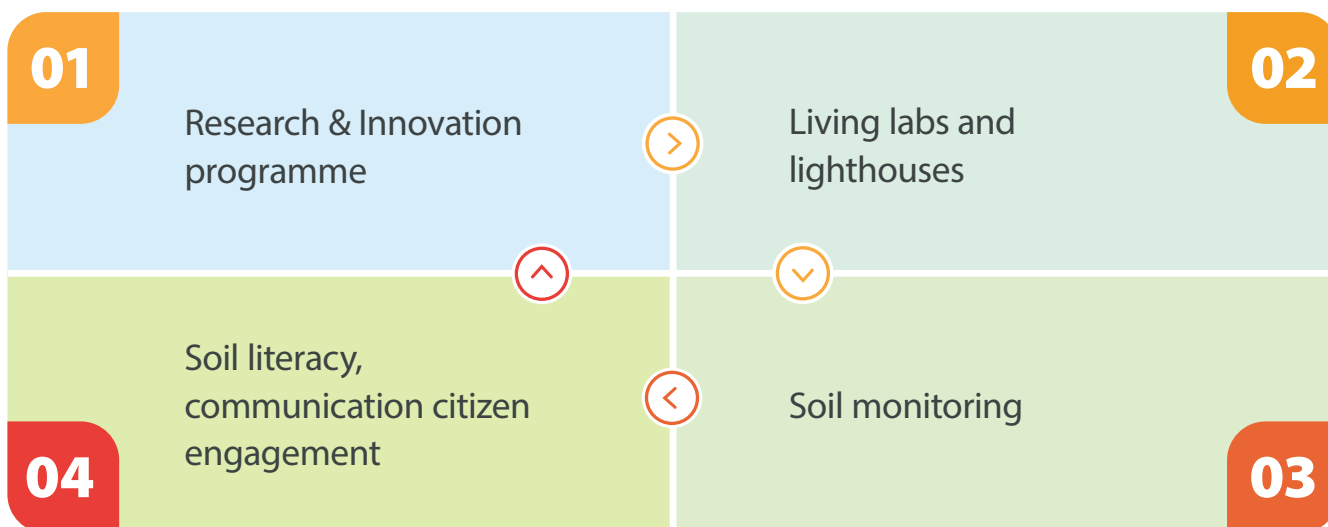
**THE MISSION'S
SPECIFIC
OBJECTIVES**

- | | |
|--|---|
| 01 Reduce desertification | 05 Prevent erosion |
| 02 Conserve soil organic carbon stocks | 06 Improve soil structure to enhance soil biodiversity |
| 03 Stop soil sealing and increase re-use of urban soils | 07 Reduce the EU global footprint on soils |
| 04 Reduce soil pollution and enhance restoration | 08 Improve soil literacy in society |

² Source: [EU Soil Observatory dashboard – JRC](#) data retrieved on 20/04/2023

Activities under the Mission's **four building blocks** address soil health and the drivers of soil health.

HOW THE MISSION IS IMPLEMENTED



The mission will pioneer, showcase and accelerate the transition to healthy soils through ambitious actions in 100 living labs and lighthouses within territorial settings. This will be combined with an ambitious transdisciplinary R&I programme, a robust, harmonised soil monitoring framework and increased soil literacy and communication to engage with citizens.

Living labs are a core element of the Mission and key to accelerate the adoption of sustainable practices for soil management which are adapted to local conditions.

- Living Labs are 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.

Lighthouses are individual sites of exemplary performance with regard to a certain practice.

The network of 100 living labs and lighthouses will be built up gradually, following call for proposals under the Mission's Horizon Europe Work Programmes - Search [Funding & Tenders \(europa.eu\)](https://europe.eu)

LIVING LABS AND LIGHTHOUSES



Everyone has a role in protecting and restoring our soils - Sign the Mission Soil Manifesto!

THE MANIFESTO

Regional and local public authorities, private and public organisations, NGOs, philanthropic organisations, schools, universities, research institutes, associations, individuals.

WHO CAN SIGN?



To become part of a community, gain visibility, access to Mission-led knowledge, involvement in Mission activities beyond Horizon Europe calls.

WHY?

Visit the website for more info: [A Soil Deal for Europe](#)

