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EUROPEAN MISSION SOIL WEEK

The Mission Soil: state of play

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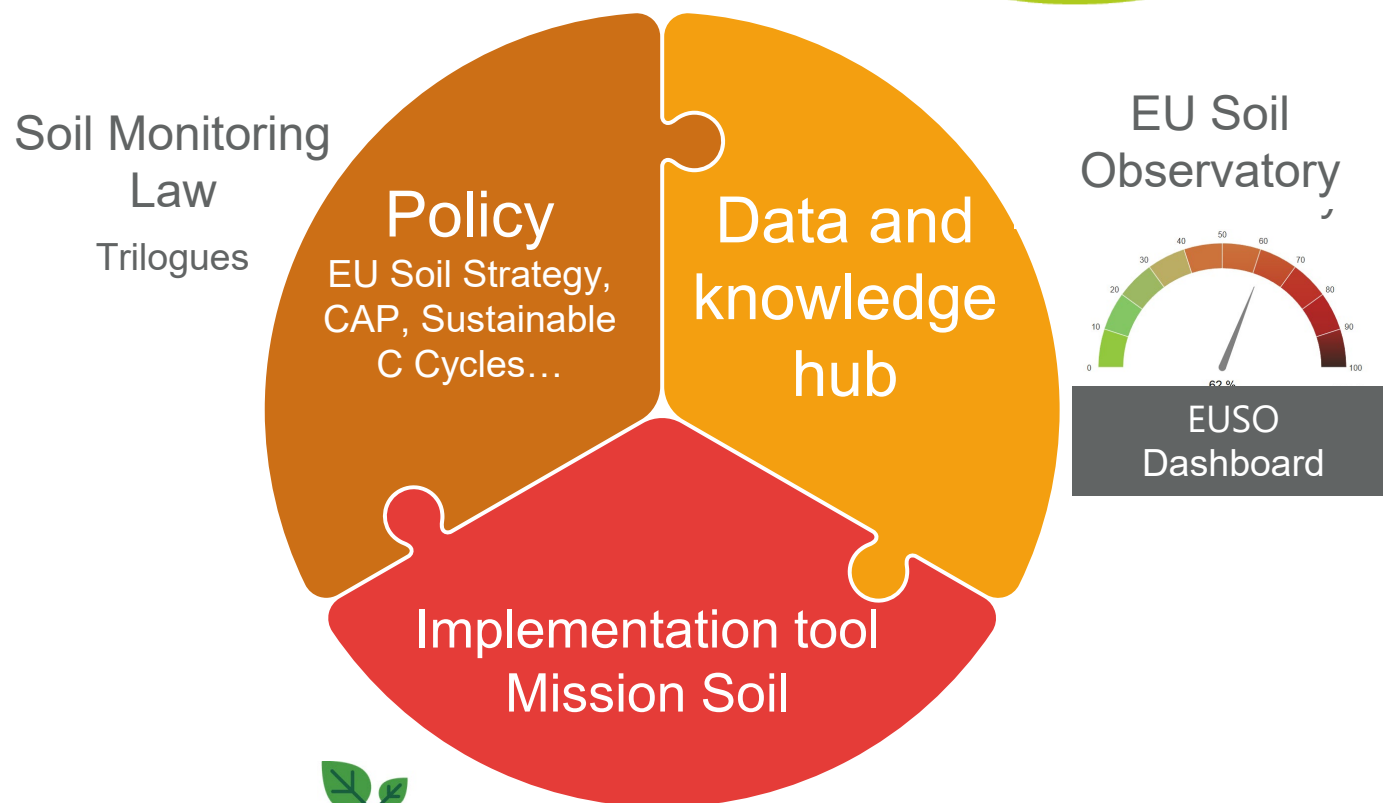
Policy context

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The challenges ahead

The EU framework for soil health protection and restoration

- Over **60% of soils** in Europe are **unhealthy**
- Knowledge – practice divide:** knowledge on sustainable soil management not context-specific / accessible.
- More context-specific knowledge and data needed:** soil biodiversity, contamination, carbon farming, circular solutions.
- Soil health **monitoring is neither systematic nor harmonized** in the EU.



49 projects, 25 living labs
+1000 participations, 3 million reached

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A soil-friendly policy framework

The Mission supports the implementation of key EU soil policies

- **Vision** to achieve **healthy soils by 2050** (EU Soil Strategy for 2030)
- **Common Agricultural Policy**: more than **40 billion Euro** to improve **soil quality**.
 - Mission in most national CAP Strategic Plans.
 - 1,000 Operational Groups replicating and scaling up solutions developed in Living Labs.
- **Soil Monitoring Law**
 - Mission supporting design and future revision and implementation.
- **Nature Restoration Law** (adopted on 17 June 2024)
 - Soil prominently featured.
 - Mission explicitly mentioned to support the implementation of the restoration targets.



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“Soil health and land management are the **first levels of action for sustaining agriculture.**”
(Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture)

“I intend to work with farmers, all food supply chain actors, consumer representatives and **science** to develop a harmonised **on-farm sustainability assessment – the benchmarking system.**”



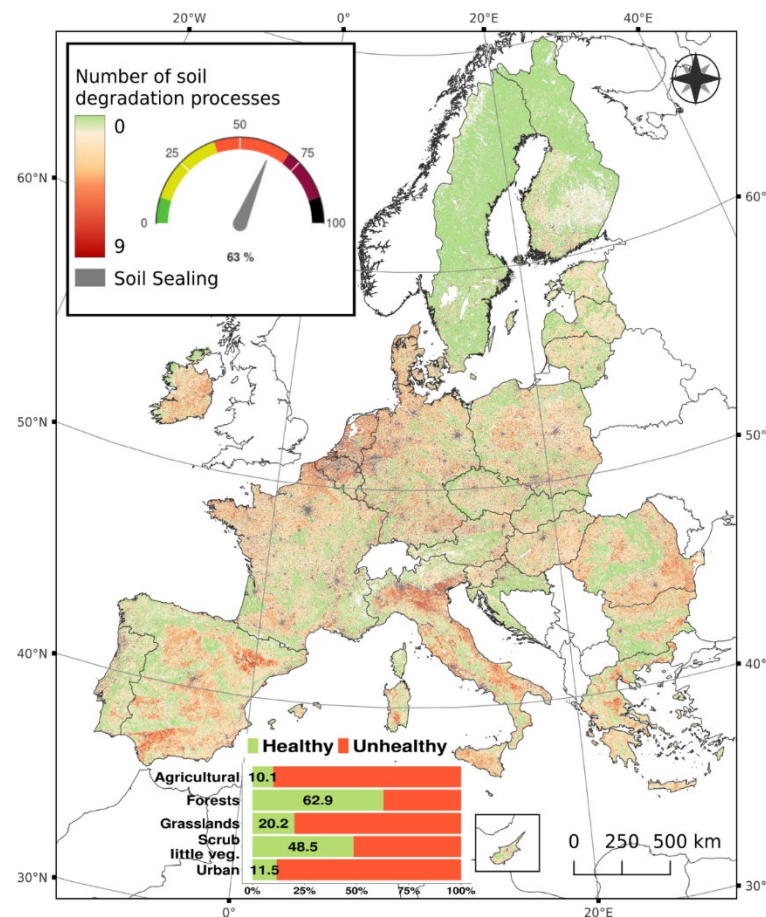
Commissioner-designate for Agriculture and Food
Christophe Hansen

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Some preliminary results

The EUSO Soil Degradation Dashboard

- The main platform for gathering and disseminating **soil health indicators at EU-level**.
- Provides a **spatial visualisation and defines thresholds** for unhealthiness.
- **19 indicators** are visualised in a comprehensive way.
- **Updated in June 2024:**
 - percentages of unhealthy soils per land cover
 - adjustable thresholds for the soil erosion
 - option to display a subset of indicators in the map
- Developed by the **EU Joint Research Centre** with the support of and in collaboration with the **Mission Soil**.



NEW INDICATORS!!

Cadmium
Arsenic
Zinc
Post-fire recovery
Packing density

Mission projects
contributing with
data and
knowledge

Clusters



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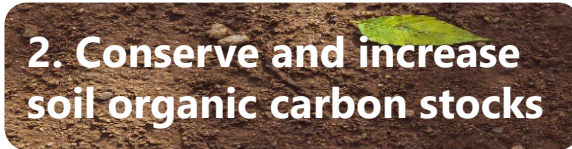
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Mission implementation

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

Specific objectives



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



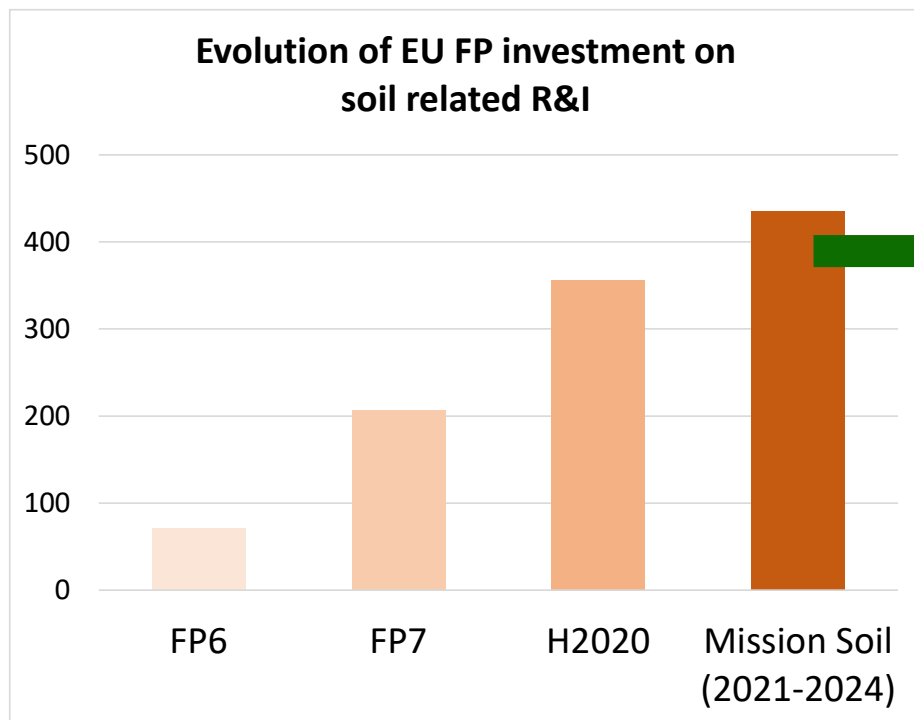
Main vehicle for addressing the diversity of conditions and generating locally adapted solutions

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Mission implementation

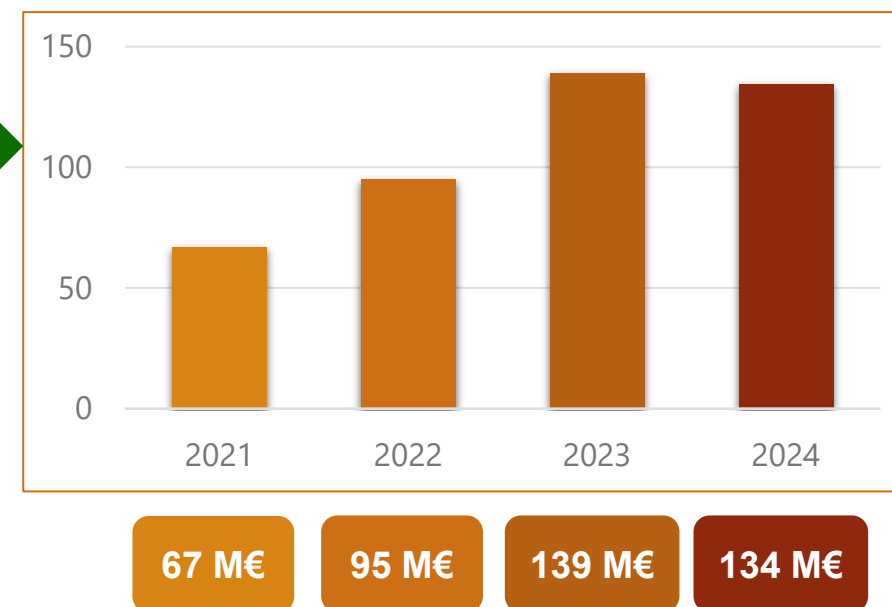
An unprecedented investment in soil research

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The Mission alone has already (4 years) invested more in soil-related projects than H2020 (7 years)

Work Programmes budget 2021-2024
Total **435.5 M€**



**+EUR 500 million in
+140 soil-relevant projects!!!**
Horizon Europe (EIC, Cluster 6, MSCA, PRIMA, CBE...), LIFE, Interreg...

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Mission Soil funded projects



Circular economy



Awareness, engagement and creativity



Biodiversity



Carbon Farming



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Mission Soil Funded Projects

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Mission support



Soil monitoring and indicators



MARVIC
MRV for carbon farming



MRV4SOC PROJECT



Soil Health **BENCHMARKS**



E-SPFdigit



Tackling pollution & restoration



aragorn



PHISHES



Business models



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Mission Soil Funded Projects

Support & Living labs



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Territorial dimension



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Insights into project activities and initial results



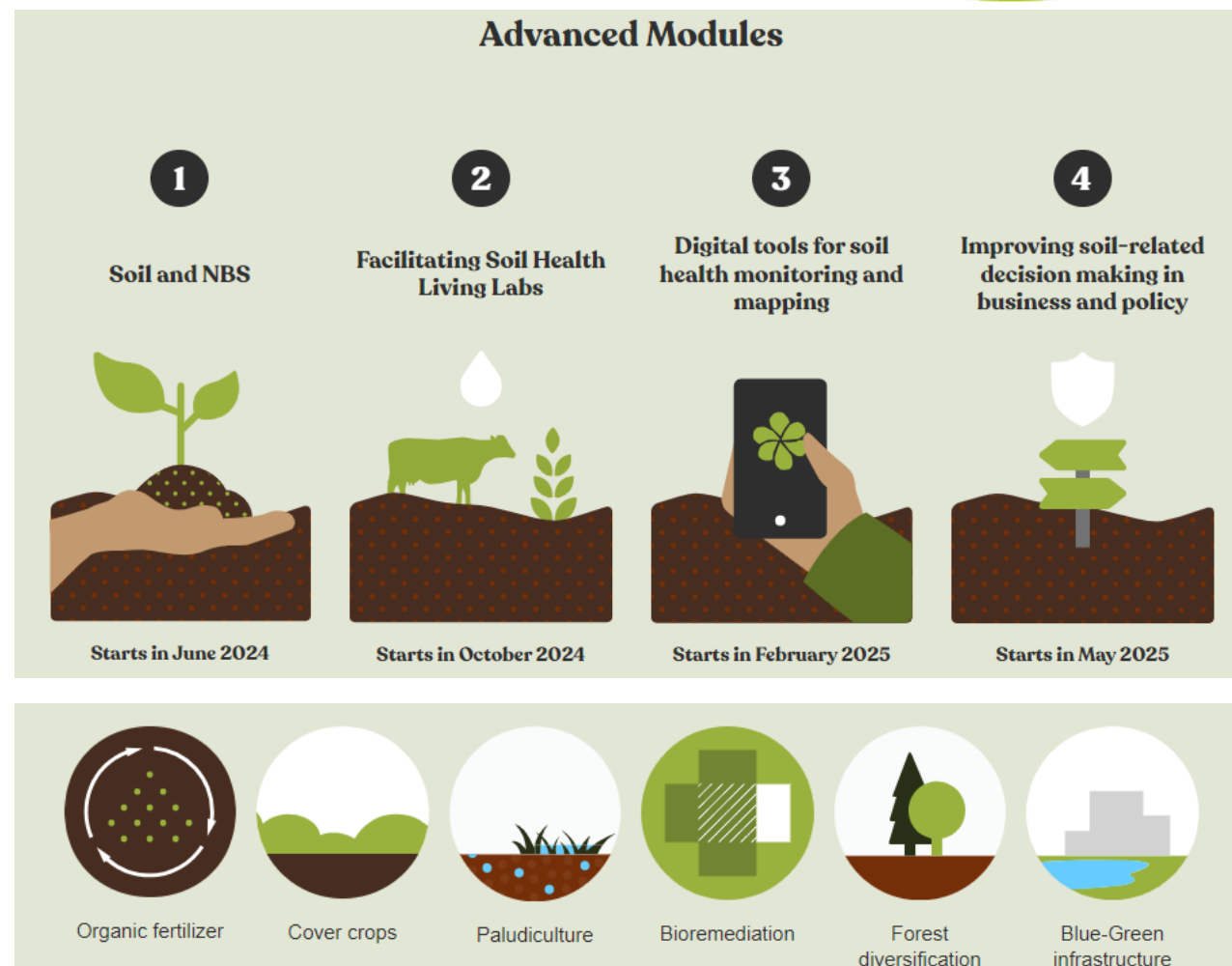
NBSOIL

Nature-based Solutions
for Soil Management

Soil Academy launched in June 2024

- **Target: soil or agricultural advisors (incl. aspiring)**
- Online modules, live sessions and practical workshops and demonstration events
- 3 Learning levels (60h – 240h)
- 7 languages

[Soil Academy Registration | NBSOIL](#)



Insights into project activities and initial results



- 34 pilot projects dealing with **participatory soil governance** at the local and regional level -> develop Territorial Management Agreements
- [Pilot case studies](#)

Podravje Region (Slovenia)



Focus: Soil & regenerative agriculture, Land use: Urban

Good practice: Participatory rehabilitation and revitalization of soil (plans for rehabilitation and revitalisation of abandoned and devalued lands owned by municipalities)

Workshop dates: May 2024

Partner organisation: Regionalna razvojna agencija za Podravje – Maribor (RRA)

[Learn more!](#)

Soil Stewards training launched in July 2024

- Target: **civil servants at regional and municipal level** that can facilitate dialogues on soil health
- Four modules focusing on soil health assessments, participatory soil governance and regional policy frameworks and fundraising

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[Registration Soil Stewards training](#)



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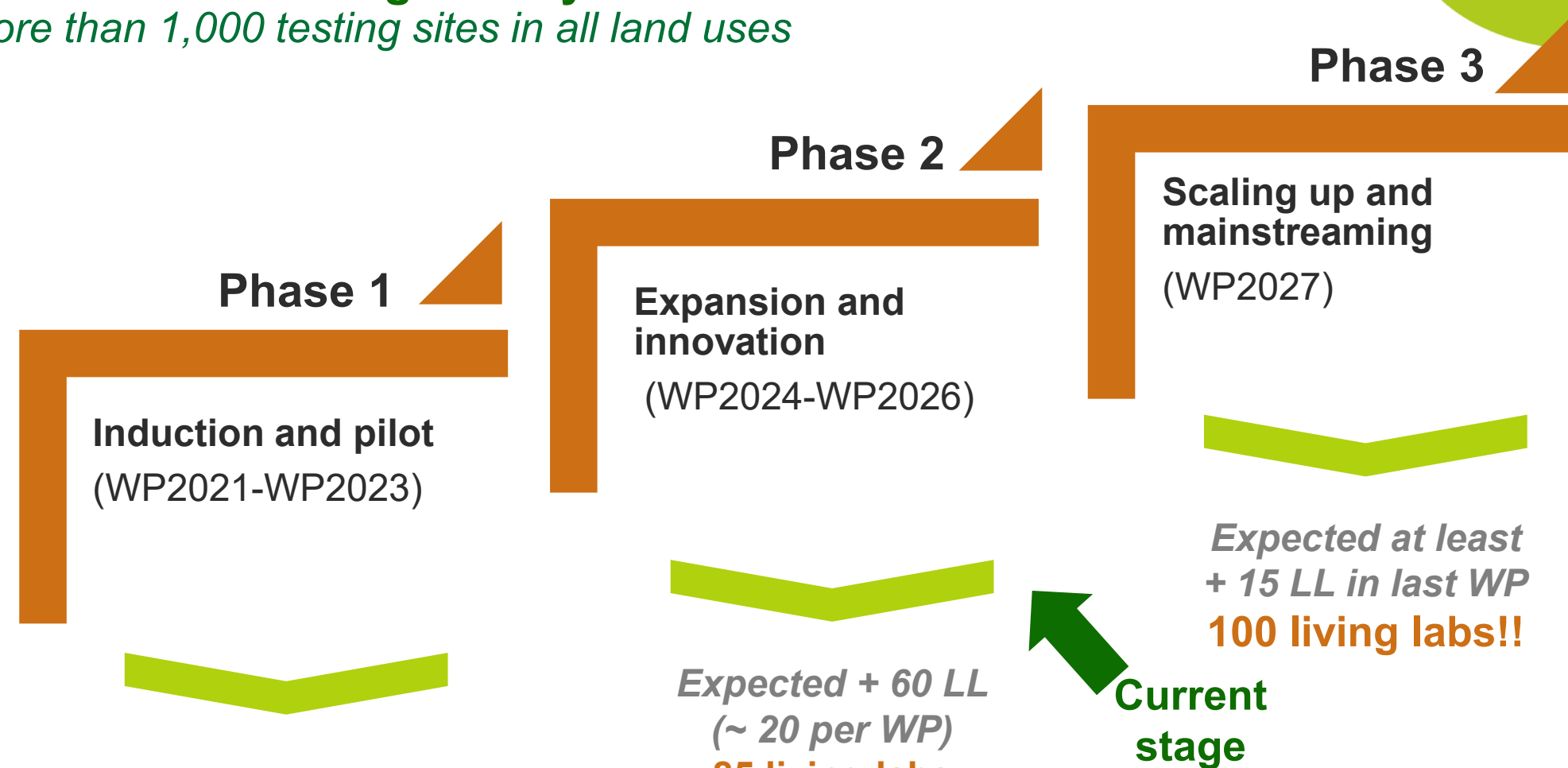
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Mission Soil Living Labs

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100 soil health living labs by 2030

More than 1,000 testing sites in all land uses

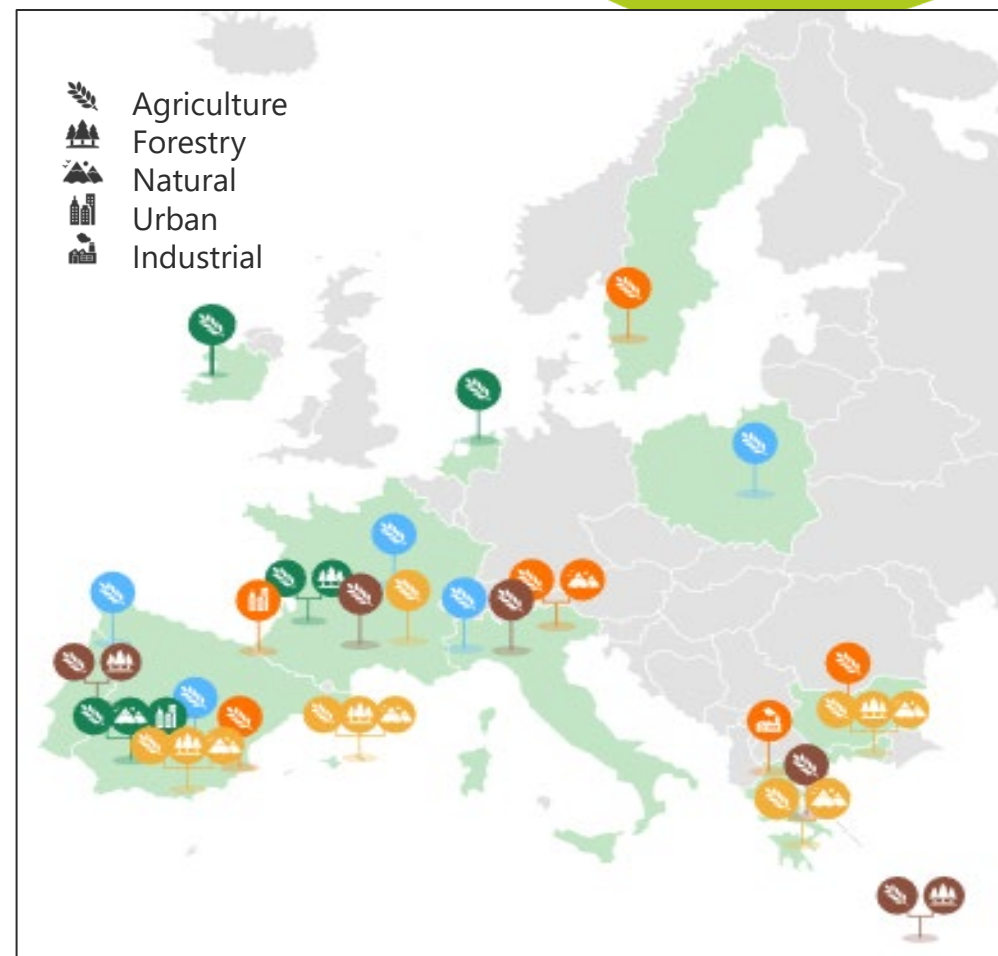


✓ **First 25 living labs**
(within 5 R&I projects)

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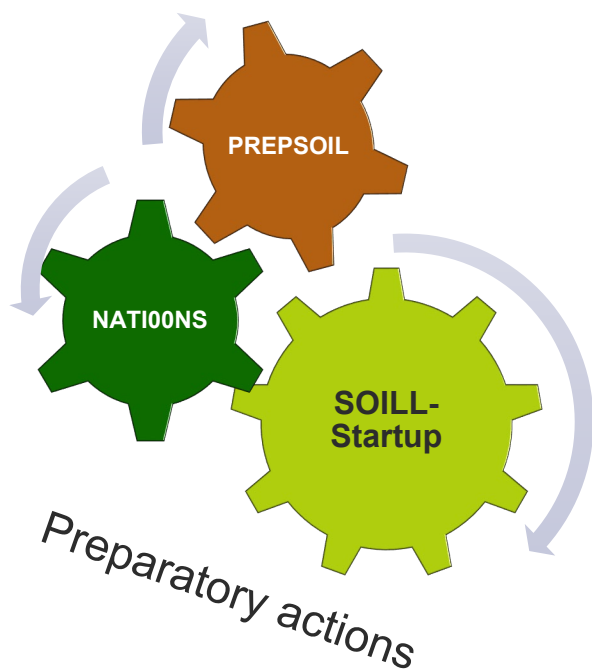
First 5 Living Lab projects of the Mission Soil

- **iCOSHELLs**: Innovative co-creation soil health living labs
- **SOILCRATES**: Soil innovation labs: co-regenerating and transforming European soils
- **LIVINGSOILL**: Healthy soil to permanent crops living labs
- **LILAS4SOILS**: Fostering carbon farming practices through living labs in the mediterranean and southern EU for the healthy future of European soils
- **GOV4ALL**: Governance and business models for living labs: rural regeneration hubs for tackling soil health challenges in the mediterranean region



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Overview: key aspects of the first Mission Soil Living Labs



Geographical coverage:
mainly **Southern Europe**

Land use type:
mainly **agriculture**

But also urban, post-industrial and
natural soils

First 25 Living Labs

Specific Objectives:
mainly **soil structure to
enhance biodiversity &
carbon stocks**

followed by literacy, pollution and erosion

Actors involved:

**multidisciplinary and multi-
actor consortia**

Participation of private actors 3 times
higher than in the other Mission
projects.

A promising start of Mission Living Labs

Few examples

 GOV4LL

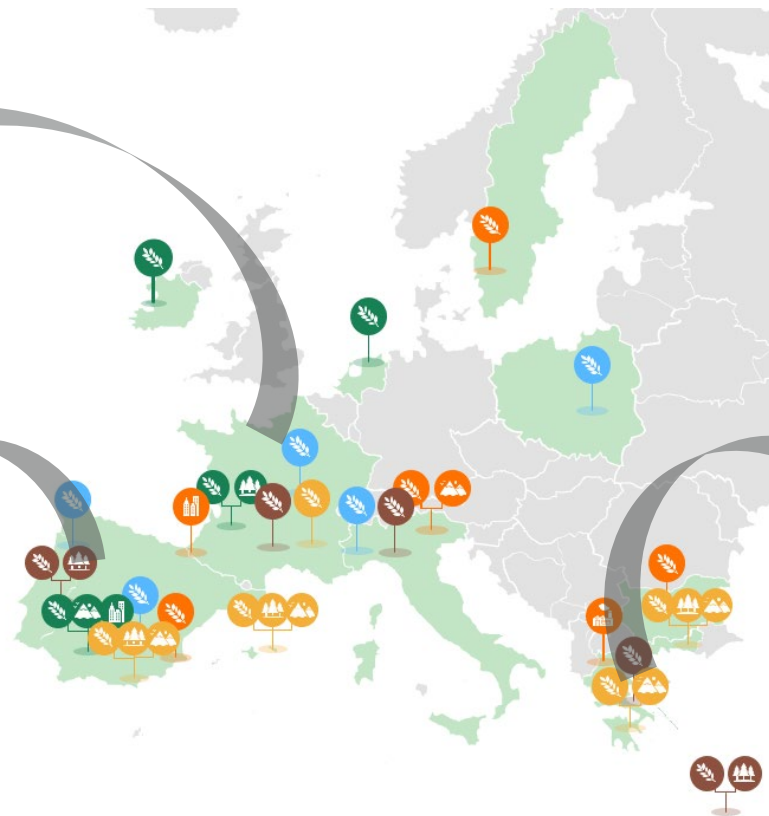
France

Composting platform for agricultural and industrial waste
Becoming a center for economic development in the region.

Spain and Portugal
pioneering practices to **reduce soil erosion** and **improve water management** in sloping soils.

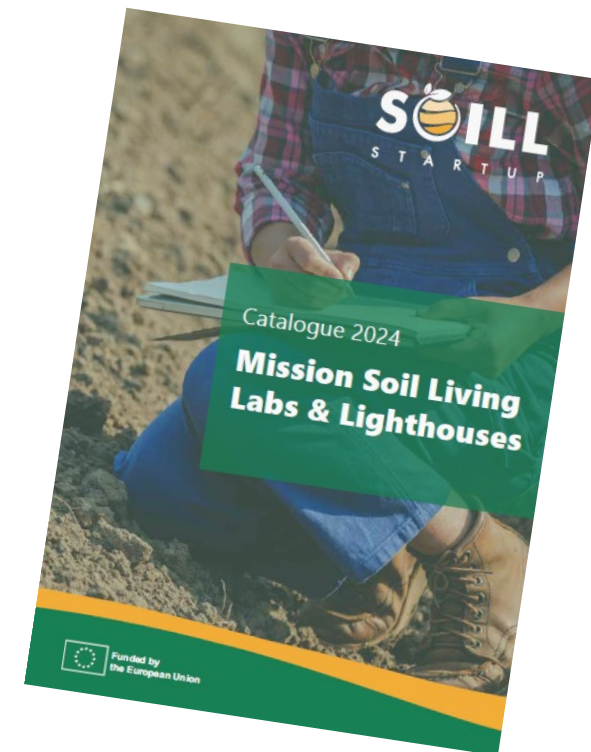
Key economic, social and cultural crops
(vineyard, olive trees)
in neighboring regions.

 LIVINGSOILL



iCOSHELLs

Greece
Restoration and reclamation of **contaminated lignite surface mine sites.**
With involvement of **cooperatives of local farmers, regional authorities & municipalities.**



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Preliminary conclusions: the way forward

- **Resounding response from the soil community** to the call for action: 44 proposals in 2023 and 72 proposals in 2024 (≈300 living labs!)
- **Opportunity to scale up by mobilizing further resources** from the public and the private sectors
- **Increased involvement of “unusual suspects”** ... we still need more newcomers to ensure impact
- **Build on other Mission projects** developing innovative technologies, management practices, methodologies and tools
- **Enhance citizen awareness**, triggering further positive long-term developments in soil health
- **Make sure that practical tools and support are accessible** to land managers, policymakers and independent advisors



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Mission Soil Manifesto

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Mission Soil Manifesto overview

The Manifesto:

- acts a lever to raise awareness of the Mission
- promotes soil literacy
- encourages local action for soil health
- fosters collaboration between different stakeholders

+ 3.110 signatories based in EU and outside

2.526 individuals

(Researcher, agricultural advisors, farmers, urban planners etc.)

584 legal entities

(Private companies, NGOs, research institutions etc.)

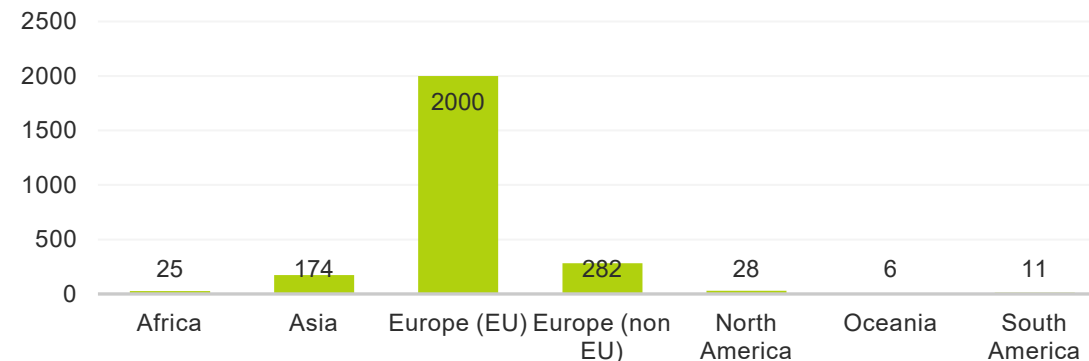
Contributions from all MSs and other 52 different countries

Individuals based in EU

1	Spain	329
2	France	285
3	Germany	263
4	Italy	236
5	Belgium	163
6	Portugal	128
7	Netherlands	103
8	Austria	54
9	Poland	52
10	Greece	47



Signatories as individuals by Continent



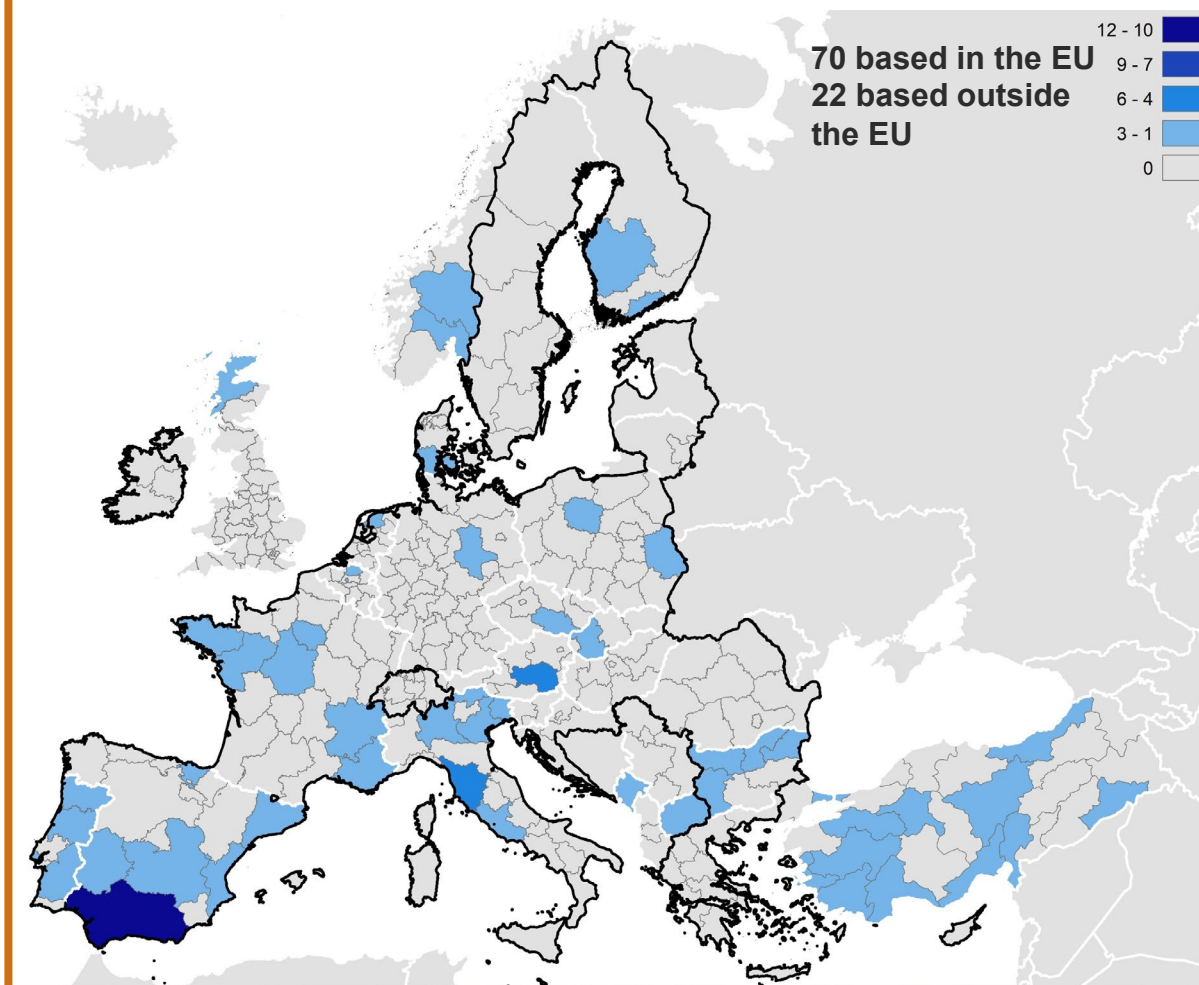
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Mission Soil Manifesto: focus on legal entities

Legal entities represent:

- **19 %** of the total Manifesto signatories (almost 600)
- **84%** of entities are based in the **EU**, 16% outside of the EU
- At least 1 legal entity per MS
- Contributions from 28 different countries
- Most signatories representing legal entities (30,5%) come from the **private sector** (incl. farming, forestry), followed by NGOs (13,7%) and Research and technology organisations (12%)

Regional and local authorities, municipalities and other public bodies





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Mission Ambassadors

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Mission Soil Ambassadors

Ambassadors are individuals:

- committed to soil health and sustainable land management practices
- passionate about environmental sustainability and related topics
- willing to promote the Mission and its activities, leveraging their influence to raise awareness on soil health

Mission Soil specific objective 8:
'Increase soil literacy in society'

Profiles: diverse stakeholder expertise

-  • Land stewards (farmers, managers, foresters)
-  • Specialist in soil, environment or food
-  • Environmentalists, climate activists
-  • Entrepreneurs, representatives of the private sector
-  • Student group leaders
-  • Communicators
-  • NGOs or civil society representatives

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Mission Soil Ambassadors: role and activities

ROLE

- **Act** as Mission Soil and soil health advocates
- **Engage** different target audiences
- **Help** to bridge the gap between civil society, stakeholders and policy initiatives

ACTIVITIES

- **Lead** by example and inspire other to act
- **Share** best practices
- **Organise** activities focused on soil health
- **Promote** the Mission Soil Manifesto
- **Inform** on the Mission's progress and research findings





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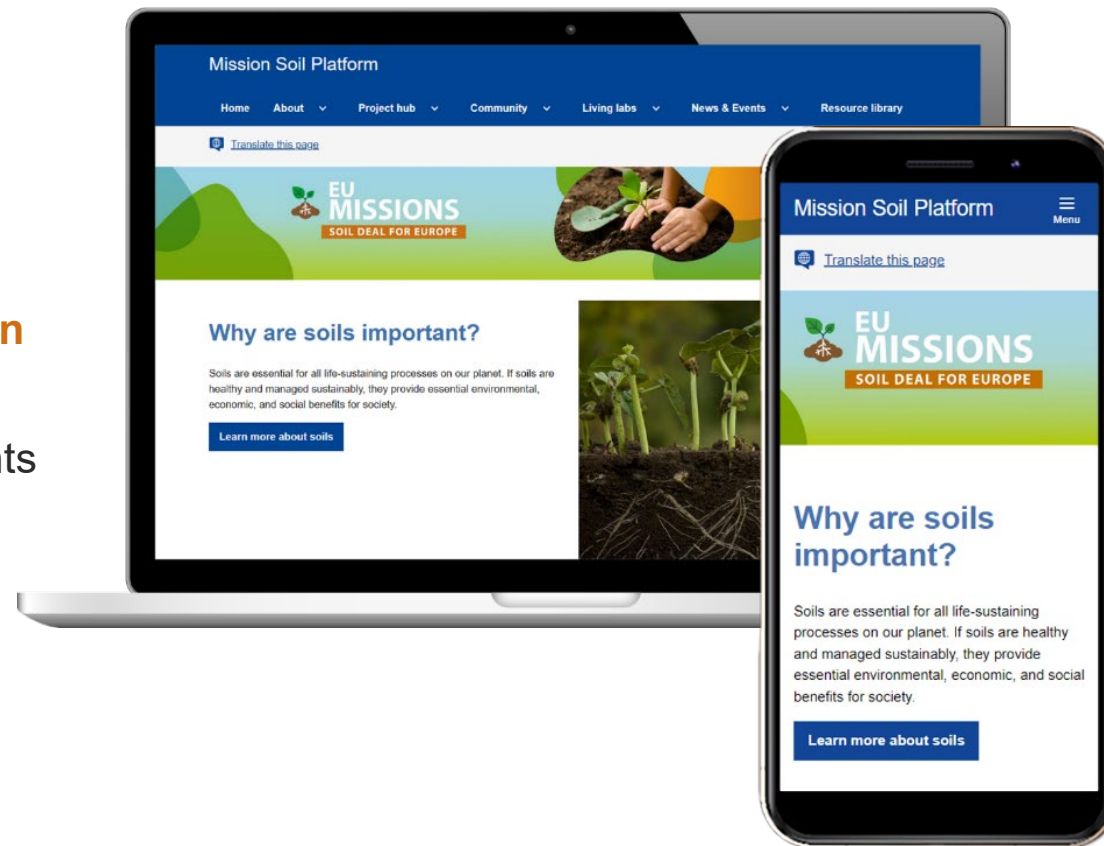
Communication

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Communication and engagement

- Over **3 million people reached** through #MissionSoil and #MissionSoilWeek
- More than **4000 subscribers** to the Mission Soil newsletter
- Mission Soil **podcast series launched**
- **Videos** produced including on **Soil Biodiversity** and **Mission Soil Board Members**
- Regular promotion of Mission Soil funded project news, events and resources on the **Mission Soil Website**
- NEW: **Mission Soil Dashboard**
- **EU Mission Soil Week!**
- Stay tuned! **Communication activities by projects** e.g. newsletters, podcasts, videos, etc. and first **SOILSCAPE festival** in France and Portugal in 2026

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Visit mission-soil-platform.ec.europa.eu

The Mission Soil starts delivering impact

- **50 projects** are advancing soil-related research and innovation
- The first **25 Mission Soil Living Labs** are in place
- The Mission, in cooperation with EUSO, is **advancing soil monitoring across the EU** and supporting key policy objectives
- **Mission Soil Ambassadors** show that a part of society is already engaged and ready to move toward sustainability
- The Mission Soil has created a **growing community of soil guardians**, and this community continues to expand
- You are part of it and you can contribute to shaping the future of the Mission and **the future of soils**

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