



# EU Soil Strategy for 2030

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

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# | EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030

## **Commitments:**

- Protect soil fertility, reduce soil erosion, increase soil organic matter
- Adopt sustainable soil management practices
- Identify contaminated sites, restore degraded soils, define good ecological status, introduce restoration objectives, improve monitoring
- Update EU Soil Thematic Strategy in 2021



# Policy context and links

- Continuing and aggravating soil degradation with transboundary impact
  - Common solutions necessary
- Soil as solution for climate and biodiversity crisis
  - Momentum
- Increasing cost of no action: benefits of soil restoration outweigh costs 6 times
  - Sense of urgency



# Challenges

**60-70%**  
of soils are not  
healthy

**78%**  
of land take  
takes place in  
agricultural  
land

**7.4 million  
tonnes**  
of CO<sub>2</sub>  
lost yearly by  
mineral soils  
under cropland

**200 – 800k**  
deaths globally  
per year due to  
contamination

**13%**  
of EU soils suffer  
from severe  
erosion with 1.25  
bEUR yearly  
cost

**390.000**  
contaminated  
sites to be  
remediated

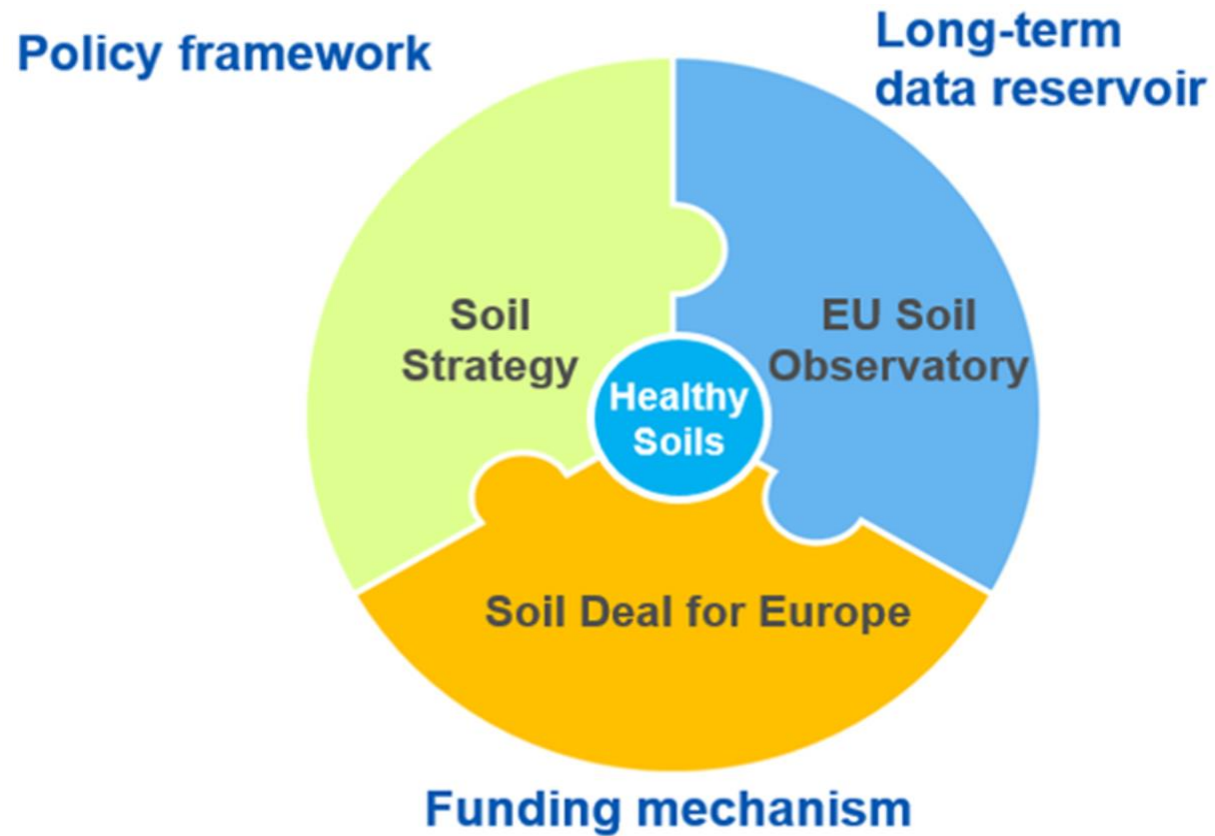
**25%**  
of land in Southern,  
central and Eastern  
Europe at high or  
very high risk of  
desertification

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





# | Science-policy framework





# Vision and definition for healthy soil

- **Soil health:** good chemical, biological and physical condition; provision of as many ecosystem services as possible

## Vision

- By 2050, soils are healthy and resilient, which requires decisive change
- Protection, sustainable use and restoration of soil becomes the norm
- Solution for climate neutrality, clean circular economy, biodiversity loss, protection of human health, desertification and land degradation

# Existing objectives reconfirmed

## For 2030

- SDG 15.3: combat desertification, restore degradation, achieve land degradation-neutrality
- Restoration of degraded and carbon-rich ecosystems
- LULUCF: greenhouse gas net removal of 310 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>eq
- Good status in surface waters and groundwater (by 2027)
- Reduction of nutrient losses by  $\geq 50\%$
- Reduction of use and risk of pesticides and of use of more hazardous pesticides by 50%
- Progress in remediation of contaminated sites

## For 2050

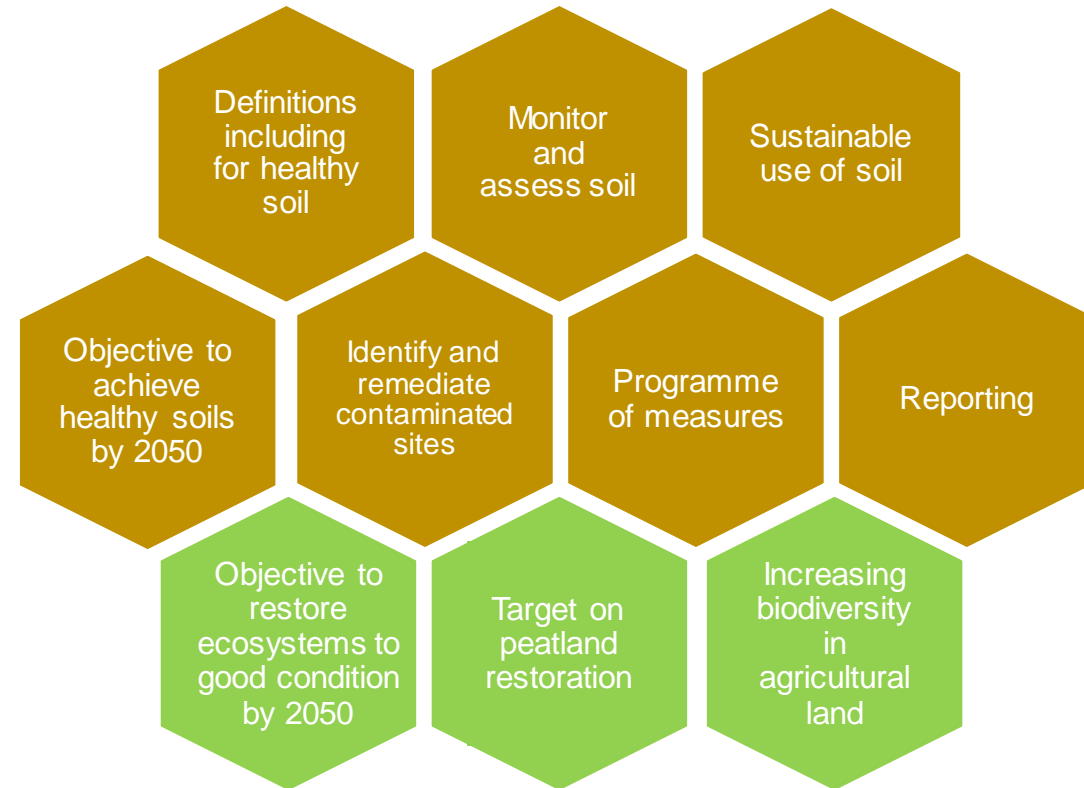
- No net land take
- No risk from soil pollution for human health and environment
- Climate-neutral Europe, with land-based climate neutrality by 2035
- Climate-resilient society adapted to climate change







## Soil health law



## Nature restoration law



# | Key actions

- **Climate change mitigation and adaptation**



- Assessment of peatlands in Global Peatlands initiative
- Join 4 per 1000 initiative
- Carbon farming initiative and proposal on carbon removal certification (2022)

- **Circular economy**



- Benchmarking streams of excavated soils (2023)
- Promote land take hierarchy and ask MS to set targets for 2030
- Guidance and exchange practices to reduce sealing (2024)
- Closing nutrient and carbon circles by safely recycling biowaste

- **Human, animal and plant health**

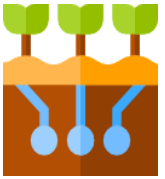


- Assessment of soil biodiversity, Anti-microbial Resistance (2022) and Invasive Alien Species
- Soil biodiversity on international agenda (e.g. CBD COP 15, Global Soil Partnership)



# | Key actions

- **Clean water**



- Exchange of practices on soil-sediment-water nexus
- Guidance on sustainable management of sediment
- Better integration of soil and land use management in River Basin Management Plans

- **Sustainable Soil Management (SSM)**



- List of SSM practices and criteria for unsustainable practices
- 'Test your soil for free' initiative
- Promotion of SSM through CAP and network of practitioners

- **Desertification**



- Methodology to assess and report desertification and land degradation
- Propose EU as affected party under UNCCD
- Support for development projects outside EU



# | Key actions

- **Pollution prevention**



- Improvement of risk assessment of chemicals for soil quality
- Restriction of microplastics (2022) and PFAS under REACH, development of framework on bio-based, biodegradable and compostable plastics (2022)
- Revision of SUP Directive, evaluation of Sewage Sludge Directive (2022), review of Fertilising Products Regulation (2026)

- **Restoration and remediation of degraded and contaminated soil**



- Knowledge exchange on risk assessment of soil contamination
- EU priority list for soil contaminants (2024)
- Revision of Industrial Emissions Directive (2022), evaluation of Environmental Liability Directive (2023)





# | Key actions

- **Improve digital knowledge, monitoring and research on soil**



- EU Soil Observatory (JRC)
- Land Information System for Europe (EEA)
- Soil Mission (Horizon Europe)

- **Enable the transition to healthy soil**



- **With private finance and EU funding**

- Guide with EU funding opportunities for healthy soils (2022)
- Foster sustainable soil management through the EU Taxonomy Regulation

- **Through soil literacy and societal engagement**



- Soil literacy initiative
- Exchange best practices on communication and engagement on soil
- EU reference framework of sustainability competences



# Thank you! Questions?



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