

# Cinquième séance : une ouverture européenne

## Soil related activities at JRC

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Soil data and information are relevant for a number of European Union (EU) policy areas: agriculture, soil protection, water protection, nature protection, development policy, health and sustainable development. The EU Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection addresses these different policy areas in a coherent manner and proposes the way forward towards effective soil protection in Europe. Policy relevant soil data and information will therefore play a crucial role in the policy development and implementation process. In addition, a number of global multilateral agreements also ratified by the European Community (United Nations-Framework Convention on Climate Change, Convention on Biological Diversity, UN-Convention to Combat Desertification) demand an increasing amount of soil data and information: climate change, biodiversity and desertification are global issues that are strongly related to soil degradation phenomena at the global scale.

European Union policy relevant soil information, from initial field data collection all the way to final reporting is managed by the JRC. This is achieved by using the European Soil Data Centre (ESDAC) as the single European soil information focal point. It serves the Commission's needs in negotiating through the European Union Institutions the Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection (COM (2006)231) and the proposed Soil Framework Directive (COM(2006)232) as well as their subsequent implementation in Member States. Advanced modeling techniques and scenario analyses are used to provide soil information to end users in relation to the major threats to soil identified in the Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection (erosion, decline of organic matter, compaction, salinisation, landslides, sealing, contamination, acidification and loss of soil biodiversity). A strong scientific and technical support to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UN-CCD) is provided by promoting the reform of the Committee of Science and Technology (CST) of the UN-CCD and by the development of an operational Global Soil Information System (GLOSIS) for the regular assessment of global soil degradation processes.

The JRC is providing a coherent approach to soil data collection and distribution for all different policy areas and initiatives relevant to the European Union, while assuring high scientific quality, policy relevance and technical support as needed.

The JRC main activities on soil within FP7 focus on the following overarching objectives:

- The establishment of the European Soil Data Centre (ESDAC) as a single focal point for all soil data and information in Europe.
- The development of procedures and methods for data collection, quality assessment and control, data management and storage, data distribution to Commission and external users, fully complying with INSPIRE principles for spatial data infrastructures.

Research and development of advanced modelling techniques, indicators and scenario analyses in relation to the major threats to soil (erosion, decline of organic matter, compaction, salinisation, landslides, sealing, contamination, and loss of soil biodiversity), as identified in the Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection.

Provide Commission services with soil information and scientific as well as technical assistance in negotiating the Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection and the proposal for a Soil Framework Directive through the EU Institutions and their subsequent implementation at Community and Member State level.

Extension of the coverage of the European Soil Information System (EUSIS) towards a fully operational Global Soil Information System (GLOSIS), providing relevant soil information for

the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, like UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD, and contributing to the ground segment of the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES).

Full documentation on the above activities is available at the EU-Soil Portal:

<http://eusoils.jrc.it/index.html>

## New opportunities in LIFE+ for soil survey in Europe

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Regulation No 614/2007 concerning the Financial Instrument for the Environment establishes a Community programme for the period 2007 to 2013 as a streamlined approach to EU level support for environment policy development and implementation, reflecting the European Union's current objectives in this field. This programme is known as the LIFE+.

The Principal objective of LIFE+, as defined in the Regulation, is to contribute to the implementation, updating and development of Community environmental policy and legislation. This includes the integration of the environment into other policies, thereby contributing to sustainable development. In particular, LIFE+ supports the implementation of the 6<sup>th</sup> Community Environment Action Programme (2002 – 2012)<sup>1</sup>, including its thematic strategies, and provides financial support for measures and projects which offer EU *added value* in the Member States.

LIFE+ provides for a multi-annual programming approach.

This multi-annual programme:

- sets principal objectives, priority areas of action, type of measures and expected results for a four year period ending in 2010.
- provides a split between the centrally managed component of LIFE+ and the budget which will be delegated to the Member States; provides also a breakdown of funding per Member State subject to the confirmation of the budgetary authority.
- serves as the basis for drawing up the national annual work programmes which are necessary to facilitate the annual commitment from the Community budget.
- serves as the framework within which the Member States will prepare their programmed proposals under the delegated part of the budget.
- serves as the basis for drawing up the centrally managed component of LIFE+.

In particular, LIFE+ shall support the implementation of the 6<sup>th</sup> EAP, including the thematic strategies, and finance measures with European added value in Member States. Consequently priority areas of action are based on the following general objectives:

- **Nature and biodiversity**, including protection of species and habitats, aspects of the NATURA 2000 network.

Key objective:

- To protect, conserve, restore, develop and facilitate the functioning of natural systems, natural habitats, wild flora and fauna, with the aim of halting the loss of biodiversity, including diversity of genetic resources, within the European Union.
- **Climate change**, including prevention and adaptation measures.

Key objectives:

- To contribute to the long term objective of stabilising greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system;
- To tackle the early effects of climate change such that the quality of life of EU citizens is safeguarded.

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<sup>1</sup> COM(2002)1600

- **Environment and health and quality of life**, water, air quality, noise, soils, chemicals.

Key objectives:

- To investigate links between aspects of the environment and their effects on human health, with a view to identifying actual and potential hazards which, through appropriate remedial measures and innovative approaches, can be eliminated in order to protect the human population. This is with respect to the main media that link human health and the environment: air, noise, water and soil;
  - For air: to achieve levels of air quality that do not give rise to unacceptable impacts on, and risks to, human health and the environment;
  - For water: ensuring a high level of protection of bathing, surface and groundwater, preventing pollution and promoting sustainable water use;
  - For soil: to protect and ensure a sustainable use of soil by preserving the soil functions, and by preventing the threats to soil, mitigating their effects and restoring degraded soils
  - To improve the protection of environment and health from risks posed by chemicals by 2020, in particular through the implementation of the REACH legislation ('Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemical substances').
- **Natural resources and waste**, sustainable management and use of resources, sustainable production and consumption, waste management policy, integrated product policy, integrated pollution prevention and control.

Key objectives:

- To promote the sustainable management of natural resources and waste, decoupling the environmental impacts of natural resources use, including generation and management of waste, from the rate of economic growth;
  - To encourage a shift towards sustainable production and consumption patterns inter alia through integrated product policy.
  - To encourage a move to an EU recycling society.
- **Monitoring of forests** and environmental interactions in the Community, forest fire prevention measures.
  - **Strategic approaches** to environment policy development, communication and dissemination of best practices, implementation and enforcement.

Key objectives:

- To promote effective and uniform implementation and enforcement of EC environmental legislation;
- To improve the effectiveness of environment policy, through better planning and co-ordination, including integration, notably in strategic policy processes such as sustainable development and the Lisbon partnership for growth and jobs, risk management, evaluation of progress towards implementation goals, timely identification and narrowing of knowledge gaps as well as utilisation of scientific, economic and other information in the design, implementation and enforcement of policy.
- To promote general environmental awareness and better understanding of - and participation in - environmental issues.
- To foster balanced civil society stakeholder representation in support of legislation e.g. standardisation work.

- To promote the use of innovative approaches and policy instruments to better achieve environmental policy goals, including public-private partnerships, voluntary approaches and market-based mechanisms.

To be eligible for financing under the LIFE+ Regulation, measures must:

- contribute to the achievement of the principal objective of LIFE+ (Article 1 of the Regulation);
- satisfy eligibility criteria (Article 3), in particular to ensure European added value;
- be consistent with at least one of the specific objectives of the three components of LIFE+ (Article 4); and
- be ineligible for financing under other Community financial instruments (Article 10).
- be consistent with Annex I of the LIFE+ Regulation.

Concerning soils, the principal objectives are:

- To protect and to ensure the sustainable use of soil by preserving soil functions, preventing threats to soil, mitigating their effects and restoring degraded soils by:
  - implementing the Thematic Strategy for soil protection,
  - ensuring the protection and restoration of soil biodiversity.