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**Introduction to EU Soil Mission: A Soil Deal for Europe**  
**EIP-AGRI brokerage event**  
**'Get involved in the EU Mission: A Soil Deal for Europe'**





EUROPEAN UNION



# HORIZON EUROPE



EIP-AGRI brokerage event 'Get involved in the EU Mission: A Soil Deal for Europe'

8 June 2022

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DG AGRI/F2





## R&I Missions

Linking EU's research and innovation to major societal needs; with strong visibility and impact

A mission is a portfolio of actions across disciplines intended to achieve a **bold and inspirational and measurable goal** within a set timeframe, with **impact** for society and policy making as well as relevance for a significant part of the European population and wide range of European citizens.

Horizon Europe defines mission characteristics and elements of governance, and **5 missions areas**.



# Missions: a new instrument under Horizon Europe to address major societal challenges

Adaptation to  
Climate Change



Mission Manager  
DG CLIMA

Cancer



Mission Manager  
DG RTD

Climate-neutral  
and Smart Cities



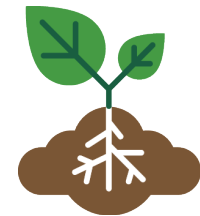
Mission Manager  
DG MOVE

Restore our  
Ocean and Waters



Mission Manager  
DG MARE

Soil Deal  
for Europe



Mission Manager  
DG AGRI



## We need to act now!

### Soils need our attention!

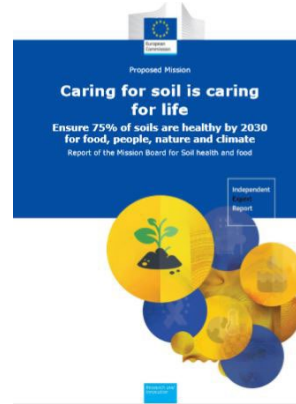
- 2.8 million potential contaminated sites (only 24% inventoried) posing major health risks
- 65-75% of agricultural soils with nutrient inputs at levels risking **eutrophication of soils and water** and affecting biodiversity
- Cropland soils **losing carbon** at a rate of 0.5% per year; 50% of peatlands drained and losing carbon – this is contributing to the climate crisis
- 24% of land with **unsustainable water erosion rates**
- 25% of land at High or Very High risk to **desertification** in Southern, Central and Eastern Europe in 2017
- The **costs associated with soil degradation in the EU exceed 50 billion € per year**

The effects of climate change put further pressure on soils and accelerate land degradation!



# Developing the mission

## Mission Board “Soil health and food”



## R&I days 2020

the Mission Board hands over its report **“Caring for soil is caring for life”**



September 2019

## R&I days 2019

creation of the Mission Board  
Soil health and food

until September 2020

Mission board develops its recommendation for a mission.  
**More than 60 events to promote and co-create the mission**

September 2020



until June 2021

Commission services prepare the **mission implementation plan**

29 Sept 2021

Official launch of the missions through a **Commission Communication**



# Goal of mission “A Soil Deal for Europe”: 100 living labs and lighthouses to lead the transition towards healthy soils by 2030

## Specific objectives

1. Reduce desertification

2. Conserve soil organic carbon stocks

3. Stop soil sealing and increase re-use of urban soils

4. Reduce soil pollution and enhance restoration

5. Prevent erosion

6. Improve soil structure to enhance soil biodiversity

7. Reduce the EU global footprint on soils

8. Improve soil literacy in society



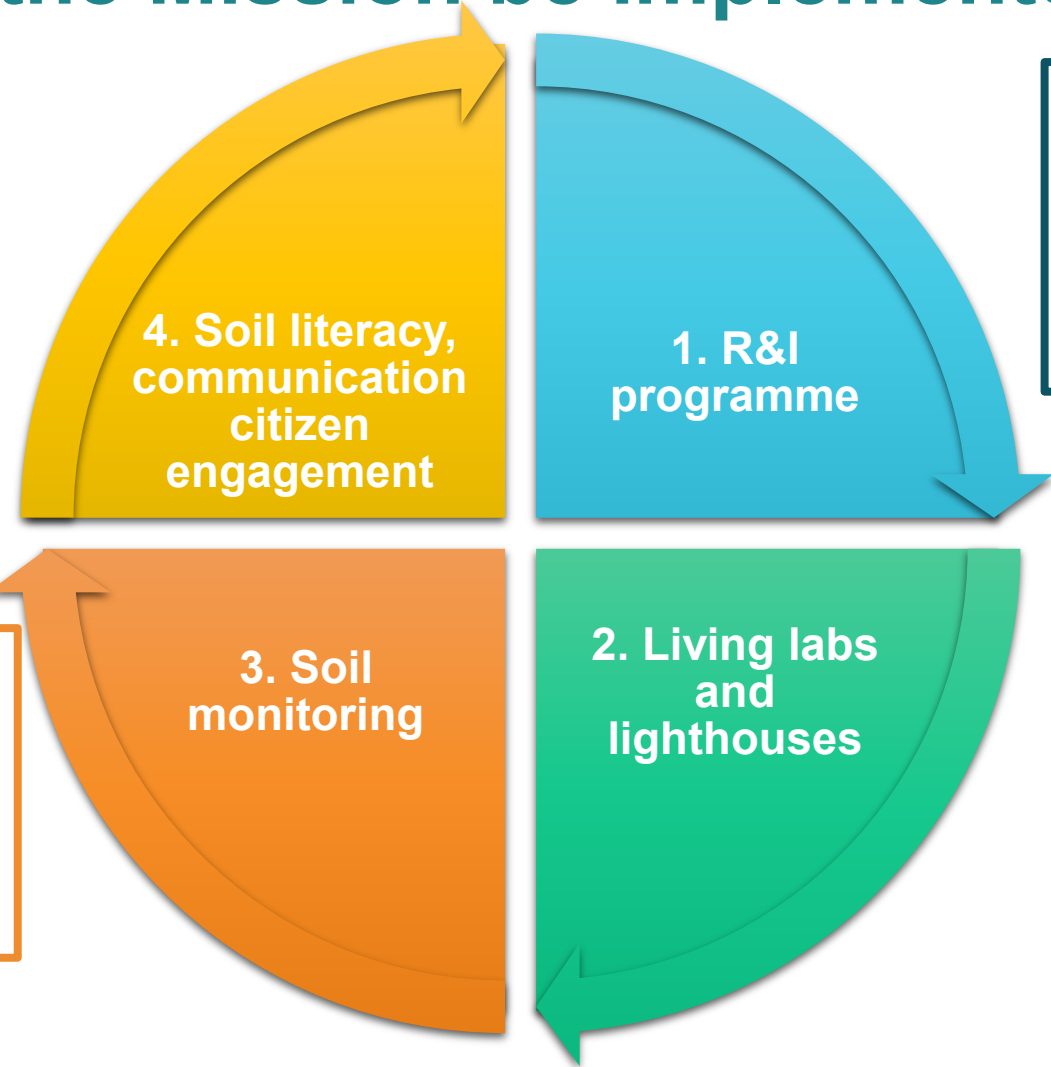
Each specific objective is backed by one or more quantified targets and measurable indicators. Objectives apply to all types of land use.





# How will the Mission be implemented?

Communication, training and advice targeted to different target groups; specialised “soil advisors”



Knowledge, data, technologies and infrastructures to support practices and business models for soil health

Co-implementation of mission by: researchers, land managers, regions, businesses, policy makers, citizens and international partners

Harmonization of soil health monitoring and reporting across Europe; contribution to European Soil Observatory

A comprehensive network of real-life sites for co-creating, testing, demonstrating and upscaling of solutions



Activities under the **four building blocks** to address **soil health** and the **drivers of soil health**





# Living Labs and Lighthouses

- **Living labs are a core element of the mission**
  - They 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 contains a cluster of 10 – 20 sites (e.g. farms) working together at regional or sub-regional level.
  - Specific criteria for living labs have been developed under the mission to ensure common approach and comparability of data and experiences.
- **Lighthouses are sites of exemplary performance** with regards to a certain practice
  - They are individual sites, such as a single farm, to showcase good practices.
  - They are places for demonstrations, training and communication.

**Living labs and lighthouses are key to accelerate the adoption of sustainable practices by users and co-developed methods adapted to the local conditions.**



# A gradual development of 100 Living Labs across Europe

## Phase 1 (2021-2024)

**Engagement activities** with stakeholders foreseen at regional level to ensure common understanding of the criteria and a balanced coverage of rural and urban areas and across all Member States.

**A network support structure** to be established to cater for the needs of the emerging living labs.

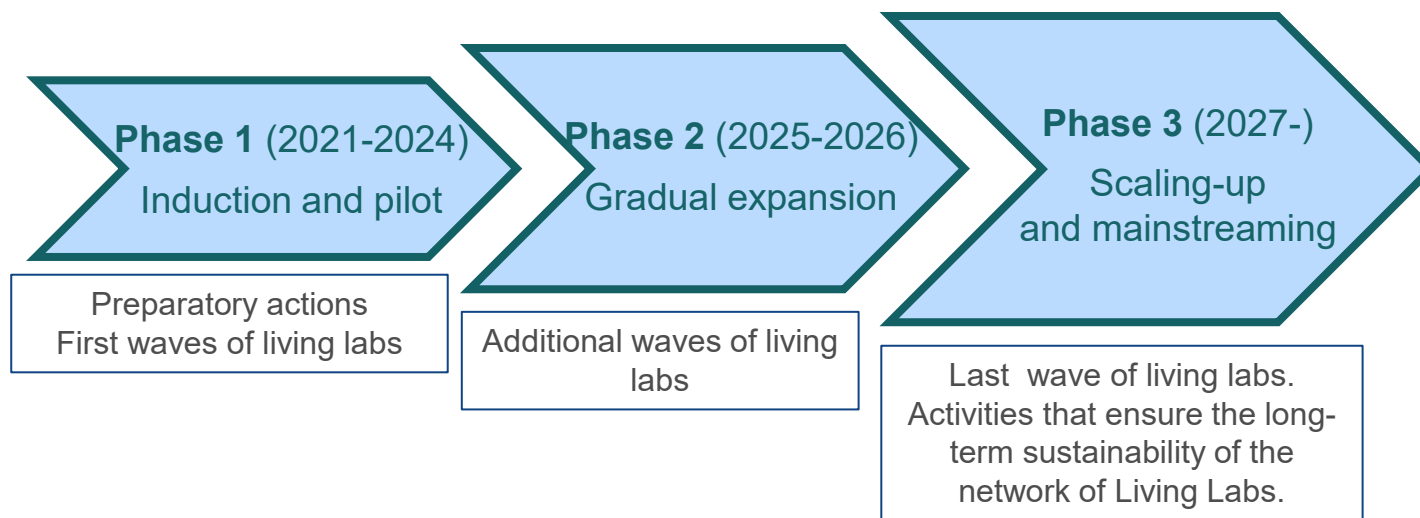
**First waves of Living Labs** to be in place as from 2024.

## Phase 2 (2025-2026)

**Expansion** of living labs all over Europe through additional calls.

## Phase 3 (2027 onwards)

**Further waves of living labs**, along with accompanying measures to facilitate the mainstreaming, continuation and sustainability of the living labs beyond the Mission.



**A network of living labs and lighthouses** will be gradually established through consecutive calls under Horizon Europe.



# Soil literacy, communication and engagement

- Foster **soil education** across society
- **Engage and activate regions and municipalities** to design their own strategies and actions for the protection of soil health
- Engage with the **private sector and consumers** to embed soil health in business practices
- Strengthen soil health advice and **improve access to training for practitioners** in line with Agricultural Knowledge Innovation Systems (AKIS)
- Create **citizen-led soil stewardship** and **citizen science**
- Bring **soils closer to citizens' values**







# Building synergies between the Soil Mission and the CAP

Instruments for improving soil management practices of CAP beneficiaries

## Soil Deal Mission

- Generates knowledge and innovations for sustainable soil and land management.
- Engages with farmers and foresters in Living Labs and Lighthouses to co-create test and demonstrate solutions.
- Disseminates, raises awareness and provides training to enhance “soil literacy”.
- Improves methods for assessing and monitoring soil health.



## Common Agricultural Policy

- **EIP AGRI** Operational Groups replicate solutions in regions where no living labs and lighthouses are operating. **EIP AGRI network** promotes good practices and information on successful mission projects.
- **Agricultural advisory services** support the deployment of best available soil management practices.
- **CAP networks**: foster innovation in agriculture and in rural areas, support interactions...
- Innovations tested under the mission are up-scaled through **investments**.



## Soil Mission: Building on existing knowledge and expertise

- Horizon 2020 projects
- 337 EIP OIGs target directly soil management and functionality and many more deals with soil relevant matters



# Implementation of the Mission

## First call for proposals under the mission in the area of Soil health

- *Horizon Europe Mission Work-Programme 2021*
- *Application period closed*
- *Horizon Europe Mission Work-Programme 2022*
- **Call is open** for application deadline is 27 September 2022
- *Horizon Europe Mission Work-Programme 2023: under preparation*







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# Thank you!

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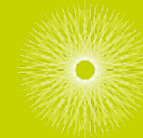
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# **EIP-AGRI brokerage event** **'Get involved in the EU Mission:** **A Soil Deal Europe** **8-9 June 2022, Brussels, Belgium**

All information on the brokerage event is available on  
[www.eip-agri.eu](http://www.eip-agri.eu)

on the event webpage:  
<https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/event/eip-agri-brokerage-event-%E2%80%99get-involved-eu-mission>

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