

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

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Life on Earth depends on healthy soil. 95 % of global food production relies on soil. Soil is home to a quarter of all terrestrial species, and it plays a crucial role in nutrient cycling as well as in storing carbon and filtering water, which helps mitigate climate change and prevent flooding and droughts. Yet regardless of soils' fundamental role in the

functioning of our planet's ecosystems, soils in Europe (and globally) are being degraded which is now starting to have far-reaching consequences, for food security and safety, the integrity of ecosystems and the services they provide to humanity. Urgent action is needed, especially as it takes considerable time to (re)generate soils and restore soil health.

Knowledge and tools developed through research and innovation will contribute to preserving healthy soils. For example, recent research has highlighted the function of soils as carbon and nitrogen sinks, thereby supporting the role of agriculture and forestry in the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, as well as combating desertification and land degradation.

Under Horizon 2020, several topics were dedicated to advancing research efforts in soil health. These efforts will be carried forward under the EU's new Horizon Europe program. Horizon Europe will also incorporate new "EU missions," designed to solve major societal challenges facing our world. Five specific missions have been proposed, with one focusing on Soil health and food: "Caring for soil is caring for life." If successfully adopted, this mission will work towards developing real and tangible solutions for restoring soil health and functions, as well as raising general societal awareness of the importance of soils.

The 12 fully featured projects in this Results Pack highlight the synergies between what has already been achieved and how these results can be taken further under Horizon Europe and the proposed EU mission in the area of Soil health and food.

More information: For more information, read the online edition or to download it in PDF, please visit:

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