

OPEN PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE NEW SOIL STRATEGY

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

Soil is the material in the top layer of the surface of the earth in which plants grow, and it is formed by living organisms, organic matter as well as water, air and mineral particles. **Soil is an extremely complex, variable and living medium, which is critical for life on Earth.** Soil is a non-renewable resource in that the degradation rates can be rapid whereas the formation and regeneration processes are extremely slow. **Soil is an essential ecosystem** hosting an incredible amount of biodiversity that delivers valuable services such as the provision of food, energy and raw materials, carbon sequestration, water regulation and purification, regulation of droughts and floods, nutrient regulation, pest control and recreation. Therefore, soil is crucial for addressing some of the greatest societal challenges of our time: the fight against **climate change and biodiversity loss**, the protection of **human health** and ensuring **food safety and security**.

Land is the space required for living, as well as natural space, cultural space, economic space, and recreational space. When covering soils by buildings, constructions and layers of completely or partly impermeable artificial material (soil sealing), the benefits of using land go to either a community or a single individual or business, while the detrimental effects are shared by society at large. Valuable farmland is built over, the surface of the ground is sealed and most ecological functions of the soils are destroyed.

Soils are dramatically degrading at European and global level, as portrayed by the European Agency's [2020 State of the Environment Report](#), [the Special IPCC report on Climate Change and Land](#) and [the IPBES Assessment Report on Land Degradation and Restoration](#). Erosion, loss of organic matter, compaction, contamination, sealing, salinization, landslides and desertification have negative impacts on human health, natural ecosystems and climate, as well as on our economy. Land and soil degradation have transboundary effects such as CO₂ emissions from soil organic carbon and loss of biodiversity, hampering EU food security through reduced production of food commodities traded in the internal market, hampering water quality across borders through contaminants and sediments in river basins, food safety concerns from soil contaminants. Poor land management, such as deforestation, overgrazing, unsustainable farming and forestry practices, construction activities and soil sealing, as well as pollution from industrial emissions, air deposition or contaminants present in fertilisers or sewage sludge applied to soil, are among the main causes of this situation.

All main drivers of biodiversity loss – changes in land and sea use, overexploitation, climate change, pollution, invasive alien species – can be traced back in one way or another to the health of our land and soils. [The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030](#) announced the adoption of a new Soil Strategy in 2021, reviewing [the 2006 EU Soil Thematic Strategy](#). The aim will be to address soil- and land-related issues in a comprehensive way. The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 highlighted that significant progress is needed

on issues such as protecting soil fertility, reducing soil erosion and sealing, increasing soil organic matter, identifying and remediating contaminated sites, restoring degraded soils, defining the conditions for their good ecological status, introducing restoration objectives, and improving monitoring. However, action at EU level is not starting from scratch. The new Soil Strategy will build on and step up [existing activities](#) aiming at preventing soil and land degradation and restoring soil health.

Guidance on the questionnaire

This public consultation aims at gathering the views of EU citizens, including stakeholders and experts, on the elements to be considered in the upcoming Soil Strategy. The results of the consultation will also underpin various soil-related initiatives under preparation by the Commission, e.g. the legally binding EU nature restoration targets, the soil aspects of [the Zero Pollution Action Plan](#), etc.

The aim is to ensure that all relevant stakeholders that may have an interest in soil and land protection and restoration and beyond, have an opportunity to express their views on the problem of soil and land degradation and an EU approach to tackle it.

You are invited to respond to the following questions below regardless of your level of expertise.

The estimated time for completion is 25 minutes.

The questions cover the following topics:

1. **The importance of soil and land**
2. **Causes of soil and land degradation**
3. **How to address soil and land degradation effectively**
4. **Final remarks** (if you wish to provide specific comments or upload a document that you think is relevant to better explain your views).

All the responses to this consultation will be assessed and the overall results will be considered during the preparation of the new Soil Strategy. We will also produce a stand-alone summary of the results of the consultation.

Thank you for taking part in this consultation.

About you

* Language of my contribution

- Bulgarian
- Croatian
- Czech
- Danish
- Dutch
- English
- Estonian
- Finnish

- French
- German
- Greek
- Hungarian
- Irish
- Italian
- Latvian
- Lithuanian
- Maltese
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Romanian
- Slovak
- Slovenian
- Spanish
- Swedish

* I am giving my contribution as

- Academic/research institution
- Business association
- Company/business organisation
- Consumer organisation
- EU citizen
- Environmental organisation
- Non-EU citizen
- Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- Public authority
- Trade union
- Other

* First name

Julie

* Surname

Mac Namara

* Email (this won't be published)

jmn@iogp.org

* Please indicate the sector you are active in

- Agriculture
- Agro-industry (chemical inputs, seeds, machinery)
- Bio-technology
- Construction, urban planning & development
- Disaster prevention
- Education
- Energy (electricity, gas and water)
- Environment & nature protection
- Financial business (bank, insurance, etc.)
- Food/beverage industry
- Forestry and hunting
- Health and social work
- Mining and quarrying
- Soil remediation
- Tourism/recreation
- Waste & waste recycling
- Other

* Organisation name

255 character(s) maximum

International Association of Oil and Gas Producers

* Organisation size

- Micro (1 to 9 employees)
- Small (10 to 49 employees)
- Medium (50 to 249 employees)
- Large (250 or more)

Transparency register number

255 character(s) maximum

Check if your organisation is on the [transparency register](#). It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making.

3954187491-70

* Country of origin

Please add your country of origin, or that of your organisation.

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Afghanistan | <input type="radio"/> Djibouti | <input type="radio"/> Libya | <input type="radio"/> Saint Martin |
| <input type="radio"/> Åland Islands | <input type="radio"/> Dominica | <input type="radio"/> Liechtenstein | <input type="radio"/> Saint Pierre and Miquelon |
| <input type="radio"/> Albania | <input type="radio"/> Dominican Republic | <input type="radio"/> Lithuania | <input type="radio"/> Saint Vincent and the Grenadines |
| <input type="radio"/> Algeria | <input type="radio"/> Ecuador | <input type="radio"/> Luxembourg | <input type="radio"/> Samoa |
| <input type="radio"/> American Samoa | <input type="radio"/> Egypt | <input type="radio"/> Macau | <input type="radio"/> San Marino |
| <input type="radio"/> Andorra | <input type="radio"/> El Salvador | <input type="radio"/> Madagascar | <input type="radio"/> São Tomé and Príncipe |
| <input type="radio"/> Angola | <input type="radio"/> Equatorial Guinea | <input type="radio"/> Malawi | <input type="radio"/> Saudi Arabia |
| <input type="radio"/> Anguilla | <input type="radio"/> Eritrea | <input type="radio"/> Malaysia | <input type="radio"/> Senegal |
| <input type="radio"/> Antarctica | <input type="radio"/> Estonia | <input type="radio"/> Maldives | <input type="radio"/> Serbia |
| <input type="radio"/> Antigua and Barbuda | <input type="radio"/> Eswatini | <input type="radio"/> Mali | <input type="radio"/> Seychelles |
| <input type="radio"/> Argentina | <input type="radio"/> Ethiopia | <input type="radio"/> Malta | <input type="radio"/> Sierra Leone |
| <input type="radio"/> Armenia | <input type="radio"/> Falkland Islands | <input type="radio"/> Marshall Islands | <input type="radio"/> Singapore |
| <input type="radio"/> Aruba | <input type="radio"/> Faroe Islands | <input type="radio"/> Martinique | <input type="radio"/> Sint Maarten |
| <input type="radio"/> Australia | <input type="radio"/> Fiji | <input type="radio"/> Mauritania | <input type="radio"/> Slovakia |
| <input type="radio"/> Austria | <input type="radio"/> Finland | <input type="radio"/> Mauritius | <input type="radio"/> Slovenia |
| <input type="radio"/> Azerbaijan | <input type="radio"/> France | <input type="radio"/> Mayotte | <input type="radio"/> Solomon Islands |
| <input type="radio"/> Bahamas | <input type="radio"/> French Guiana | <input type="radio"/> Mexico | <input type="radio"/> Somalia |
| <input type="radio"/> Bahrain | <input type="radio"/> French Polynesia | <input type="radio"/> Micronesia | <input type="radio"/> South Africa |
| <input type="radio"/> Bangladesh | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> Moldova | <input type="radio"/> South Georgia and the South |

	French Southern and Antarctic Lands		Sandwich Islands
<input type="radio"/> Barbados	<input type="radio"/> Gabon	<input type="radio"/> Monaco	<input type="radio"/> South Korea
<input type="radio"/> Belarus	<input type="radio"/> Georgia	<input type="radio"/> Mongolia	<input type="radio"/> South Sudan
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Belgium	<input type="radio"/> Germany	<input type="radio"/> Montenegro	<input type="radio"/> Spain
<input type="radio"/> Belize	<input type="radio"/> Ghana	<input type="radio"/> Montserrat	<input type="radio"/> Sri Lanka
<input type="radio"/> Benin	<input type="radio"/> Gibraltar	<input type="radio"/> Morocco	<input type="radio"/> Sudan
<input type="radio"/> Bermuda	<input type="radio"/> Greece	<input type="radio"/> Mozambique	<input type="radio"/> Suriname
<input type="radio"/> Bhutan	<input type="radio"/> Greenland	<input type="radio"/> Myanmar /Burma	<input type="radio"/> Svalbard and Jan Mayen
<input type="radio"/> Bolivia	<input type="radio"/> Grenada	<input type="radio"/> Namibia	<input type="radio"/> Sweden
<input type="radio"/> Bonaire Saint Eustatius and Saba	<input type="radio"/> Guadeloupe	<input type="radio"/> Nauru	<input type="radio"/> Switzerland
<input type="radio"/> Bosnia and Herzegovina	<input type="radio"/> Guam	<input type="radio"/> Nepal	<input type="radio"/> Syria
<input type="radio"/> Botswana	<input type="radio"/> Guatemala	<input type="radio"/> Netherlands	<input type="radio"/> Taiwan
<input type="radio"/> Bouvet Island	<input type="radio"/> Guernsey	<input type="radio"/> New Caledonia	<input type="radio"/> Tajikistan
<input type="radio"/> Brazil	<input type="radio"/> Guinea	<input type="radio"/> New Zealand	<input type="radio"/> Tanzania
<input type="radio"/> British Indian Ocean Territory	<input type="radio"/> Guinea-Bissau	<input type="radio"/> Nicaragua	<input type="radio"/> Thailand
<input type="radio"/> British Virgin Islands	<input type="radio"/> Guyana	<input type="radio"/> Niger	<input type="radio"/> The Gambia
<input type="radio"/> Brunei	<input type="radio"/> Haiti	<input type="radio"/> Nigeria	<input type="radio"/> Timor-Leste
<input type="radio"/> Bulgaria	<input type="radio"/> Heard Island and McDonald Islands	<input type="radio"/> Niue	<input type="radio"/> Togo
<input type="radio"/> Burkina Faso	<input type="radio"/> Honduras	<input type="radio"/> Norfolk Island	<input type="radio"/> Tokelau
<input type="radio"/> Burundi	<input type="radio"/> Hong Kong	<input type="radio"/> Northern Mariana Islands	<input type="radio"/> Tonga
<input type="radio"/> Cambodia	<input type="radio"/> Hungary	<input type="radio"/> North Korea	<input type="radio"/> Trinidad and Tobago
<input type="radio"/> Cameroon	<input type="radio"/> Iceland	<input type="radio"/> North Macedonia	<input type="radio"/> Tunisia
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Canada | <input type="radio"/> India | <input type="radio"/> Norway | <input type="radio"/> Turkey |
| <input type="radio"/> Cape Verde | <input type="radio"/> Indonesia | <input type="radio"/> Oman | <input type="radio"/> Turkmenistan |
| <input type="radio"/> Cayman Islands | <input type="radio"/> Iran | <input type="radio"/> Pakistan | <input type="radio"/> Turks and
Caicos Islands |
| <input type="radio"/> Central African
Republic | <input type="radio"/> Iraq | <input type="radio"/> Palau | <input type="radio"/> Tuvalu |
| <input type="radio"/> Chad | <input type="radio"/> Ireland | <input type="radio"/> Palestine | <input type="radio"/> Uganda |
| <input type="radio"/> Chile | <input type="radio"/> Isle of Man | <input type="radio"/> Panama | <input type="radio"/> Ukraine |
| <input type="radio"/> China | <input type="radio"/> Israel | <input type="radio"/> Papua New
Guinea | <input type="radio"/> United Arab
Emirates |
| <input type="radio"/> Christmas
Island | <input type="radio"/> Italy | <input type="radio"/> Paraguay | <input type="radio"/> United
Kingdom |
| <input type="radio"/> Clipperton | <input type="radio"/> Jamaica | <input type="radio"/> Peru | <input type="radio"/> United States |
| <input type="radio"/> Cocos (Keeling)
Islands | <input type="radio"/> Japan | <input type="radio"/> Philippines | <input type="radio"/> United States
Minor Outlying
Islands |
| <input type="radio"/> Colombia | <input type="radio"/> Jersey | <input type="radio"/> Pitcairn Islands | <input type="radio"/> Uruguay |
| <input type="radio"/> Comoros | <input type="radio"/> Jordan | <input type="radio"/> Poland | <input type="radio"/> US Virgin
Islands |
| <input type="radio"/> Congo | <input type="radio"/> Kazakhstan | <input type="radio"/> Portugal | <input type="radio"/> Uzbekistan |
| <input type="radio"/> Cook Islands | <input type="radio"/> Kenya | <input type="radio"/> Puerto Rico | <input type="radio"/> Vanuatu |
| <input type="radio"/> Costa Rica | <input type="radio"/> Kiribati | <input type="radio"/> Qatar | <input type="radio"/> Vatican City |
| <input type="radio"/> Côte d'Ivoire | <input type="radio"/> Kosovo | <input type="radio"/> Réunion | <input type="radio"/> Venezuela |
| <input type="radio"/> Croatia | <input type="radio"/> Kuwait | <input type="radio"/> Romania | <input type="radio"/> Vietnam |
| <input type="radio"/> Cuba | <input type="radio"/> Kyrgyzstan | <input type="radio"/> Russia | <input type="radio"/> Wallis and
Futuna |
| <input type="radio"/> Curaçao | <input type="radio"/> Laos | <input type="radio"/> Rwanda | <input type="radio"/> Western
Sahara |
| <input type="radio"/> Cyprus | <input type="radio"/> Latvia | <input type="radio"/> Saint
Barthélemy | <input type="radio"/> Yemen |
| <input type="radio"/> Czechia | <input type="radio"/> Lebanon | <input type="radio"/> Saint Helena
Ascension and
Tristan da
Cunha | <input type="radio"/> Zambia |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> Lesotho | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> Zimbabwe |

Democratic
Republic of the
Congo

Saint Kitts and
Nevis

Denmark

Liberia

Saint Lucia

The Commission will publish all contributions to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would prefer to have your details published or to remain anonymous when your contribution is published. **For the purpose of transparency, the type of respondent (for example, 'business association', 'consumer association', 'EU citizen') country of origin, organisation name and size, and its transparency register number, are always published. Your e-mail address will never be published.** Opt in to select the privacy option that best suits you. Privacy options default based on the type of respondent selected

* Contribution publication privacy settings

The Commission will publish the responses to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would like your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

Anonymous

Only organisation details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published as received. Your name will not be published. Please do not include any personal data in the contribution itself if you want to remain anonymous.

Public

Organisation details and respondent details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published. Your name will also be published.

I agree with the [personal data protection provisions](#)

I. The importance of SOIL and LAND

Land and soil provide the principal basis for human livelihoods and well-being. Human use directly affects more than 70% of the global, ice-free land surface. And **Europe's land is one of the most intensively used geographic areas on the globe.** It has the highest proportion of land (up to 80 %) used for settlement, production systems (in particular agriculture and forestry) and infrastructure. Human health depends on soil: soil provides 95% of the food we eat and it purifies the water we drink. However, soil may be contaminated by heavy metals or chemicals that may negatively impact human health and ecosystems.

1. How well do you consider yourself informed about the quality of soils in your local area, region or country, at EU or global level?

	well informed	somewhat informed	not well informed	not at all informed	I don't know / no opinion
* your local area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* region	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* EU level	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* global level	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Which soil ecosystem services do you consider as the most important?

	high importance	moderate importance	low importance	not at all important	I don't know / no opinion
* the supply of nutritious and healthy food	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* the provision of feed, fibre, timber, biomass and soil as a material	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* water purification and maintaining good quality of freshwater, including ground and drinking water	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* climate adaptation and building resilience to extreme climate events, such as droughts and floods (e.g. through naturally retaining water)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* hosting many organisms and preserving habitats which are essential for biodiversity (e.g. earthworms, beetles, mites, etc.)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* preserving our cultural heritage	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* carrying different landscapes and infrastructure for our society and recreation	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* carbon sequestration, removing and capturing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* nutrients cycling, such as nitrogen, phosphorus and sulphur



3. How would you rank the importance of protecting soil health/quality and its restoration at EU level?

- very important
- important
- neither important nor unimportant
- not at all important
- I don't know / no opinion

* 4. For those respondents who are land users (who regularly undertake activities related to management of land and soil, e.g. farmers and foresters), to what extent do soil health/quality considerations influence your activities and management choices?

- to a large extent
- partly
- to a small extent
- not at all
- I don't know / no opinion

II. Causes of soil and land degradation

5. Soils are fragile and take hundreds of years to form but can be degraded in hours. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following human-activities contribute most to soil and land degradation?

	high importance	moderate importance	low importance	not at all important	I don't know / no opinion
* unsustainable farming and forestry practices (e.g. over-intensive use of soils such as harmful soil practices, mono-cropping and intensive livestock production)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* diffuse contamination (e.g. due to overuse of pesticides, nutrient pollution from excess use of fertilizers, microplastics, air depositions of pollutants)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* local contamination by industrial and waste management activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* soil sealing and land take for infrastructure construction (e.g. house building, industrial /commercial buildings, roads and motorways, parking lots, airports)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* other land-use changes such as conversion of natural grasslands, wetlands/peatlands and forests to arable lands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

6. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following soil and land degradation processes are the most acute in your country?

	high importance	moderate importance	low importance	not at all important	I don't know / no opinion
* loss of soil organic matter (e.g. loss of stored carbon through erosion, wetland drainage and peat extraction)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* soil pollution (e.g. the accumulation in soil of heavy metals or other chemical pollutants due to industrial activities, waste disposal and unsustainable land management)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* soil erosion (i.e. the removal of the most fertile topsoil by water or wind)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* land take and soil sealing (i.e. covering of the soil surface with materials such as concrete and asphalt, as a result of new buildings, roads, parking places but also other public and private spaces)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* soil compaction (i.e. the result of heavy machinery compressing the soil, preventing air and water to filtrate/accumulate in soil)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* desertification (i.e. land degradation in drylands in which land's ability to support and sustain life is lost due to natural processes or induced by human activities whereby fertile areas become increasingly arid)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* salinization and sodification (i.e. the accumulation of salts in soil that impacts the metabolism of soil organisms and soil fertility)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* acidification (i.e. a process where the soil pH decreases over time)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
*					

loss of soil biodiversity (as a result of the above-mentioned processes or other human-induced factors such as simplified crop rotation, monocultures, intensive application of pesticides and fertilisers and habitat fragmentation)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* loss of ability to withstand floods and landslides (e.g. due to erosion, extreme weather events, or unsustainable land management such as excess sealing, compaction and drainage)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

III. How to address soil and land degradation effectively

7. To the best of your knowledge, are the causes of soil and land degradation sufficiently addressed?

	sufficiently	not enough	not at all	I don't know / no opinion
* in your region	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* in your country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* at EU level	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* at global level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

8. [The mission on Soil health and food](#) (one of the missions identified under the EU research programme Horizon Europe) proposed the following eight indicators to assess current soil status and to track changes:

1. Presence of soil pollutants, excess nutrients and salts
2. Soil organic carbon stock
3. Soil structure including soil bulk density and absence of soil sealing and erosion
4. Soil biodiversity
5. Soil nutrients and acidity (pH)
6. Vegetation cover
7. Landscape heterogeneity
8. Forest cover

* Do you think that this set of criteria is appropriate to ascertain soil health?

- Yes, this is a complete set
- The set is appropriate but not complete. I would add other indicators.
- No, this list is not appropriate.

9. What are your views on the following possible actions to be explored under the new EU soil policy framework?

	this is essential	this is important but not essential	this does not necessarily need to be developed at EU level	this is not needed	I don't know / no opinion
* set, at EU level, the criteria that have to be met for soil health to be qualified as 'good'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* define an EU assessment methodology to monitor the achievement of land degradation neutrality by 2030 (part of the UN Sustainable Development Goal 15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* improve soil properties monitoring at national and EU level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* develop guidelines for sustainable management of soil including the safe, sustainable and circular use of excavated soil in the EU	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* introduce binding restoration targets for degraded soils	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* encourage Member States to establish an inventory of contaminated sites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* encourage Member States to remediate the contaminated sites identified	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* enhance the research and knowledge about soil health and actions to protect it	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* enhance the public awareness (through e.g. school education, soil sustainability labels) and the literacy on the importance of soil health and actions to protect it	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* promote initiatives to reduce soil sealing in the EU and to achieve no net land take by 2050 (objective defined in the Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* further support farmers, foresters and other land users to apply sustainable					

soil management practices through the EU's Common Agricultural Policy and the farm advisory services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* further support farmers, foresters and other land users to enhance carbon sequestration on soil through dedicated funding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* strengthen EU leadership on soil and land-related issues in international fora, including through policy dialogue and technical support to partner countries	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. How can the EU better support farmers, foresters and other land users to apply sustainable soil management practices?

	high importance	moderate importance	low importance	not at all important	I don't know / no opinion
* with a clear legal framework	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* through financial incentives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* through better training and advice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* through exchanges of best practices among the sectors (e.g. agriculture, environment, climate, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* through a level playing field in the EU (e.g. same rules on soil for all)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* through developing a certification scheme	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

11. How can the EU increase the uptake of existing funding (from [the EU's Common Agricultural Policy](#), regional funds, research funds e.g. [Horizon Europe](#), [the LIFE programme](#)) for soil protection and restoration in the EU?

	high importance	moderate importance	low importance	not at all important	I don't know / no opinion
* disseminate better the information on funding possibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* reduce the administrative burden for applications	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* provide assistance in the implementation of the projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
foster twinning projects or exchange of best practices between beneficiaries for soil protection and restoration initiatives	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* identify financing opportunities for research and innovation on soil	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. How can the EU steer global action on soil and land protection and restoration?

	high importance	moderate importance	low importance	not at all important	I don't know / no opinion
* mainstream sustainable soil and land management in bilateral and multi-lateral relations and organizations (FAO , UNEP , OECD , WHO , etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* intensify the cooperation and support to the Global Soil Partnership, its European Soil Partnership or other voluntary initiatives such as the "4 per 1000" Initiative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* aim for better integration of soil in the Rio Conventions (UNFCCC , CBD , UNCCD)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* promote sustainable soil and land management through trade policies and Green Deal diplomacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* increase the financial support and development aid for international soil and land protection and restoration projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
* strive for new international commitments and conventions on soils and land	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

IV. Final remarks

If you wish to add a specific short contribution - within the scope of this questionnaire - please add it here.

1000 character(s) maximum

If you wish also to complement it with a more extended contribution you can also upload a short separate document.

(The maximum file size is 1 MB)

Only files of the type pdf,txt,doc,docx,odt,rtf are allowed

e48d062e-bbb4-467c-9269-b999159acabf

/IOGP_input_to_the_consultation_on_the_new_EU_Soil_Strategy_27_April_2021.pdf

Please note that the uploaded document will be published alongside your response to the questionnaire which is the essential input to this open public consultation. The document is an optional complement and serves as additional background reading to better understand your inputs.

Contact

[Contact Form](#)

IOGP input to the consultation on the new EU Soil Strategy

Explanatory remarks

Introduction

The International Association of Oil & Gas Producers' (IOGP) member companies account for approximately 70% of the oil and gas produced in Europe. IOGP shares the world's ambition to reach the Paris Agreement's goals and supports the EU's objective of climate neutrality by 2050 upon the implementation of enabling measures.

IOGP recognises the central role of soil protection in reducing pollution in Europe. More broadly, IOGP supports the strategic direction of the Zero Pollution Ambition to reduce the environmental footprint of our societal activities while caring for European citizen's well-being and restoring biodiversity.

Soil protection is already addressed in the EU under a number of provisions in EU policy instruments (IED, Biodiversity (Habitats & Birds), Environmental Impact, Forest, Land Use Land Cover). Further to this, there is additional legislation in place at national level which is tailored to the specific needs of individual Member States, noting that there are over 300 different soil types in Europe. There is no justification for introducing EU-wide soil legislation, which would create administrative burdens for both industry and the authorities on various levels with no additional environmental benefits. To achieve further pollution reduction, we would recommend as general principles to:

- Employ a risk- and science-based approach for soil protection, built on the principle of legal subsidiarity.
- Strengthen the implementation, enforcement, and harmonization of the existing EU legislation among Member States.
- Conduct thorough impact assessments on all the legislative and non-legislative future proposals.
- Ensure stable and predictable regulatory framework that is necessary for long-term investments.

We appreciate the opportunity to respond to the Commission's consultation on the New EU Soil Strategy. We would like to highlight that we responded to the questionnaire as an association representing the oil and gas (O&G) exploration and production (E&P) sector at the EU level. This means that questions related to actions at the level of individual countries are not addressed, nor questions asking for statements on other sectors.

Moreover, we would like to make further clarifications regarding our answers to the questionnaire:

Part I: The Importance of Land and Soil

3. How would you rank the importance of protecting soil health/quality and its restoration at EU level?

It is essential to acknowledge that soil types vary greatly across Member States and regions. Accordingly, IOGP position is that soil protection is most effectively addressed at national level, and that an integrated environmental regulation should target the sources of pollution, as opposed to the receptors of pollution, such as soil. The role of existing measures at EU level, such as provisions in EU policy instruments (IED, Biodiversity (Habitats & Birds), Environmental Impact, Forest, Land Use Land Cover), is most effective in providing tailored soil protection when it is complemented by national legislation also. In light of the significant variance in soil types depending on region, it is essential that this is taken into consideration in any future decisions.

Part II: Causes of Soil and Land Degradation

5. Soils are fragile and take hundreds of years to form but can be degraded in hours. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following human-activities contribute most to soil and land degradation?

IOGP has not answered questions regarding other sectors and without any reference to oil and gas activities.

Further, it must be noted that IOGP member companies represent a very small percentage of the many human activities that contribute to soil and land degradation.

As regards local contamination by industrial and waste management activities, IOGP has selected 'low importance' in this respect. This matter is regulated by other directives, for example through the IED and also the Water Framework Directive, ensuring a comprehensive approach.

In respect of soil sealing and land take for infrastructure construction, IOGP has answered that this is of 'moderate importance'. This is intended to reflect the conflict between soil and water preservation on one side, and protection of soil and groundwater against potential pollution by impermeable surface layers for contamination risk areas on the other.

6. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following soil and land degradation processes are the most acute in your country?

IOGP has responded 'I don't know/no opinion' to this question, on the basis that IOGP is an international association and cannot answer questions at the level of individual countries.

Part III: How to address soil and land degradation effectively.

7. To the best of your knowledge, are the causes of soil and land degradation sufficiently addressed?

IOGP is an international association and cannot answer questions at the level of individual countries.

IOGP position is that soil pollution is sufficiently addressed at EU level, in the sense that there are sufficient mechanisms in place in order for Member States to implement these measures through their own tailored regimes for soil protection. In this context, there would be no justification for new legislation on an EU-wide level to protect soil, given that this is already catered for in an efficient and carefully considered manner at Member State level, paired with the various afore-mentioned policy instruments on EU-level also.

7a. If you think that the causes of soil and land degradation are not properly addressed, which of the following elements do you think should be addressed better at EU level?

IOGP position is that it is 'not at all important' to address local contamination by industrial and waste management activities at EU level, as this would not be sensible. An EU-wide framework would not be beneficial, as the matter of soil protection is best handled at Member State level.

8. The mission on Soil health and food (one of the missions identified under the EU research programme Horizon Europe) proposed the following eight indicators to assess current soil status and to track changes:

1. Presence of soil pollutants, excess nutrients and salts
2. Soil organic carbon stock
3. Soil structure including soil bulk density and absence of soil sealing and erosion
4. Soil biodiversity
5. Soil nutrients and acidity (pH)
6. Vegetation cover
7. Landscape heterogeneity
8. Forest cover

Do you think that this set of criteria is appropriate to ascertain soil health?

IOGP considers that this is a complete set of criteria. It is important to note that these parameters can only be considered through risk-based assessment of impacts locally and to wider environment and socio-economic effects. The issue is not simply the mere presence of pollutants but rather their ability and agility to cause harm to people, the local environment and the global environment.

We would like to draw attention to the fact that sometimes temporary trends may not reflect the overall direction of the indicator. For example, if we consider carbon content of the soil, a temporary reduction can occur when soil contamination is treated with heat (thermal treatment) for remediation purposes. The carbon content is therefore reduced, but this is temporary only and overall serves to improve another indicator, such as soil pollutants, in this case. Indicators should therefore take these potential temporary cross-effects into account.

9. What are your views on the following possible actions to be explored under the new EU soil policy framework?

IOGP considers that the development of guidelines for sustainable management of soil and the introduction of binding restoration targets for degraded soils 'do not necessarily need to be developed at EU level'. This is on the basis that such issues are best addressed at national level.

10. How can the EU better support farmers, foresters and other land users to apply sustainable soil management practices?

IOGP has not answered questions relating to other sectors and without any reference to oil and gas activities. In respect of the option to address the issue raised by creating the same rules on soil for all, IOGP would not consider this to be beneficial, insofar as this entails a binding EU-wide requirement.

12. How can the EU steer global action on soil and land protection and restoration?

In the context of this question, it must be highlighted that acceptance on a global level will best be achieved if the EU employs a risk- and science-based approach. Following the principle of subsidiarity, this would be most appropriate to address the variance in soil types across countries and regions.

Further, it is important that a positive, open and collaborative approach is fostered between stakeholders, rather than a top-down approach in which guidelines must be followed which have not been internationally developed and therefore may not be appropriate in some regions.

Registered Office: City Tower, Level 14, 40 Basinghall Street, London EC2V 5DE, United Kingdom
T +44 (0)20 3763 9700 / reception@iogp.org

Brussels Office: Avenue de Tervuren 188A, B-1150 Brussels, Belgium
T +32 (0)2 790 7762 / reception-europe@iogp.org

Houston Office: 15377 Memorial Drive, Suite 250, Houston, TX 77079, USA
T +1 (713) 261 0411 / reception-americas@iogp.org

www.iogp.org
www.oilandgaseurope.org