

# 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting Common Forum Working Group Soil as a Resource



## 1. Opening by Co and Margot

## 2. Welcome and Introduction by Joelle Welfring, Deputy Head of the Environment Agency

The **main tasks** of the Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development are the implementation of the governmental programme, the coordination of work regarding sustainable development, taking all the appropriate measures to protect the natural and human environment as well as the fight against climate change.

The **mission** of Environment Agency is:

The agency is at the service of society in order to ensure a high level of environmental protection and quality of life for the human being in its environment.

They provide support for political decision making, ensure the application of environmental law and supervise and assess the state of the environment. They promote ecological practices and encourage innovation for the environment.

Together with the Nature Conservation Agency as well as the Water management Agency, they put the environmental policy of Luxembourg's Government into practice.

The **values** of the Environmental Agency are: responsibility, team spirit and know-how, commitment and service and respect.

The **vision** of the Environment Agency is:

The Environmental Agency is a national reference that proactively protects the environment and the quality of human life in its environment. They are managing the environment in a sustainable way through a scientific, integrated and concerted approach with all relevant stakeholders.

They develop an efficient management system to provide a high quality service to citizens, companies and other actors in our society. They are a competent and reliable partner for Luxembourg's Government.

## 3. Implementation of SDGs in Luxembourg, challenges and priorities by Marguy Kohnen

Marguy is member of The High Council for Sustainable Development (established by law). The Council is an advisory body for reflection and discussion on matters regarding sustainable development.

How is Luxemburg implementing the Agenda 2030?

First we learn some details on Luxembourg. Demographic growth is enormous: 65%; 170 different nationalities; 47% foreigners. The number of cross border workers from Germany and France are remarkable; Luxembourg has a strong agricultural tradition, 1/3 of the area is forest.

Luxembourg has a National Plan for Sustainable Development since 2018. They also made a report on the SDGs, mapping the baseline, published in 2017. This was followed by an outline and strategy and 4 challenges were extracted: dynamic demographic development, the diversity of the resident and active population, pronounced dependence of the economy of a sector of activity, pressures on the environment. Part of the strategy are 10 priority areas for action. Two soil related actions are:

- Plan and coordinate land use;
- Stop degradation of the environment and respect the capacities of natural resources.

Luxembourg is working on a new plan for soil sealing and consumption to achieve no net land take.

How to implement: an active and integrated discussion with all kind of stakeholders, several levels, what to do and how to act.

For each SDG a midterm and long term vision and actions for the government are defined.

Supporting tools: knowledge and awareness, connection, sustainable financing, research, monitoring and evaluation. Communication for the general public by website and booklet.

Luxembourg made a selection for relevant targets, identifies statistical targets and indicators, makes an assessment of the evolutions.

#### 4. Soil issues in relation to spatial planning by Liette Mathieu and Tom Fourman

Soil consumption and soil sealing. The challenges, the instruments and monitoring.

Main challenges (caused by foreign workers)

- Mobility (free public transport in 2020)
- Housing prices
- Fragmentation of the landscape

They adopted a new law on spatial planning (2018); a national spatial planning strategy and implementation of sectoral plans is part of it: Housing Sector Plan (among which redevelopment of industrial waste land); Landscape Sector Plan; Transport Sector Plan; The Economic Activity Areas Sector Plan.

These plans are also connected to the SDGs such as SDG11.

Also soil protection is part of these plans, but new soil protection plans are foreseen. A lot of excavated soil is causing a problem as place for land filling is lacking. Land and soil management is more and more coming up as a need. This is also connected to circular economy (CE) and the soil related SDGs.

Land planning scenarios for 2050 pay attention to erosion, carbon sequestration, organic farming. These all need information and data. Reduction in the land take policy is: from 1 ha a day towards at least ½ a hectare per day.

Monitoring of land cover and land use.

From data can be distinguished that land use changes take place namely in settlement areas.

Hardly in agricultural areas. Soil consumption in rural areas is relatively much higher than in urban areas.

#### 5. The Landmark project by Francesca Bampa

Francesca shows the set up and ambitions of the Landmark project. <http://landmark2020.eu/> LANDMARK is a research project on the sustainable management of land and soil in Europe. The pilots are connected to soil functions: primary production, water regulation and purification, carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, habitat biodiversity.

The specific project objectives of LANDMARK are to produce:

1. For farmers & advisors – a Soil Navigator that provides advice on the sustainable management of soils on 'my farm'. This agricultural Decision Support Tool (DST) will be developed for soil management that optimises soil functions, both from an agronomic perspective (optimising yields) and an ecosystem function perspective (enhanced environmental performance), and that sustains soil functions by mitigating threats to soil quality;
2. For legislators – a *framework for monitoring of soil quality and soil functions* that is applicable across Europe. The monitoring scheme designed will be applicable at regional scale, for a range of soil types, land uses and pedo-climatic zones;
3. For policy makers – an assessment of policies that can ensure that we 'make the most of our land', from both an agronomic and environmental point of view. The *policy framework* developed for 'Functional Land Management' at European scale will optimise the sustainable

So there are three type of scales: farm scale, country scale and EU scale.

Consultation in 5 countries.

Francesca shows some story lines which can be used to support narratives underlining the importance of soils for soil related SDGs.

There is a gap between farmers and other stakeholders. How to fill this gap? Can the SDGs help?

Discussion:

Pol: How did you assess the societal demands? They are assessed by policy instruments these can be found in the paper drawn up (EU level). The story lines are drawn up by the University of Antwerp. How do you define the demand? They looked at the soil related SDGs.

Jörg wondered which data were used? Soils differ over Europe. They were derived from local data. It was an enormous task to build the data structure/data set.

Jörg sees that the data are still very academic. It is necessary to bring this forward, to practice.

Francesca is here to see whether this work can be used to help other countries. It can be helpful in models, which of course are a simplification.

Esther: Are there tests of the navigator and are they available in several languages? It's available in English and will be translated to the languages of the joining countries. Testers are welcome.

Kris: soil functions and monitoring systems are shown. Are there separate evaluations of the several soil functions or do you strive for add up of functions? Dependant on the soil and local situation 2 to 3 functions are available or can be optimized.

Luxembourg Environment Agency: from a planner's perspective you wonder if functions can be separated. Can the model be used to make separate optimizations with the aim to work those out in strategies?

The model is not designed for spatial planning, but for agriculture. You can optimize.

There will be policy briefs made on the story lines. These will be discussed on October 23 in Brussels in the stakeholder meeting.

## **6. Land Stewardship status quo by Margot de Cleen**

Margot gives feedback on the Barcelona CF meeting and the workshop at the WRF2019.

Lucia sketches the work of Nicole and which will be further discussed internally (e.g. in the coming June meeting in Lyon).

Bavo asks what do you consider as LS? We discuss that LS can be used as a way to protect soils, but also to give new values to degraded land and restore degraded land.

It looks too early to draw up a position paper together with Nicole, but we should have discussions to determine our position. We need to make an appointment on how and when. Lucia invites us to come to Lyon.

## **7. EASAC report Opportunities for soil sustainability in Europe**

Co explains the main conclusions of this study. Be informed on this report.

Francesca remarks that it is not including some of the recent research and therefore is not giving the full picture on what is going on.

## **8. Soil related SDGs**

The questionnaire "Inventory soil related SDGs EU wide" as discussed in the last Expert meeting on soil raises some doubts about the added value. The discussion is if there are any questions which we should discuss together?

Esther points out that the questions are not that difficult to answer.

Jörg wonders if these questions should be worked out for EU level. These are more relevant for local or regional level.

Do we have the right tools to come to a common position?

SDG 15.3 LDN target setting programme UNCCD

Co raises the question: Why do we not have a target setting program in the EU? UNCCD has 3 indicators: carbon, land cover, land use.

Bavo explains the difficulty of the concept LDN. There are different layers of degradation. How to monitor, how to compensate. The UNCCD focusses on combat of desertification. Desertification is not the main problem in most EU countries, but other forms of soil degradation like contamination, loss of organic carbon and loss of soil fertility take place. The EU is not having a target because MS do not want to have more coordination from EU.

Johan is involved in the target setting. OVAM has a proposal and this proposal is not accepted by the Flemish department of Environment.

Lucia wants to know the concept of LDN, land degradation neutrality? Of course this depends on the definition of land degradation.

## **9. Announcements**

European Joint Programme for Agricultural Soils; roadmap by WUR and INRA in January presented to the commission; the outcome will be published soon.

FAO The Global Symposium on Soil Erosion - GSER19; <http://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/resources/highlights/detail/en/c/1178197/>

Bodembeed NL May 16 2019: the programme is set up about the soil and water related SDGs ICCL program committee is completed. Land stewardship is not yet on the agenda. It can be asked whether they are interested.

Nicole June meeting in Lyon; the fall meeting will be in Warsaw (theme will be soil contamination in Eastern Europe).  
CF Working Group Soil as a Resource will not take place in Peru, but subjects can be presented and discussed if needed.

**10. Draft Minutes of the meeting Barcelona October 2018**

If you have any remarks, please send them to Co or Margot.