

TAIEX-EIR multi-country Flagship workshop on the Soil Monitoring Law

Organised in cooperation with

*European Commission, DG Environment,
Land use and management Unit (DG ENV.D1)*

27 January 2026

Venue:

*Le Plaza Brussels Hotel, Adolphe Maxlaan
118/126, 1000 Brussels*

Beneficiary:

*Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia,
Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Spain, Finland,
France, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania,
Luxembourg, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Poland,
Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Slovakia, Slovenia*

TAIEX Case ID 92098

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Aim of the workshop

The Directive on Soil Monitoring and Resilience (Soil Monitoring Law) was adopted on 23 October 2025 and is a key deliverable of the EU Soil Strategy for 2030. The Soil Monitoring Law (SML) is the first ever EU legislative act entirely dedicated to soils. It fills a major gap and sets a long-term aspirational objective to achieve healthy soils by 2050.

The SML puts in place a solid and coherent soil monitoring framework for all soils across the EU, which will contribute to address the current gap of knowledge on soil health. The SML also sets out land take mitigation principles and improves the support for soil health and soil resilience. The SML tackles as well soil contamination and requires Member States to identify, investigate, register and assess potentially contaminated sites following a risk-based approach. Lastly, the SML includes provisions on access to justice and information to the public. The Member States now have three years to bring into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions to transpose the Directive.

The Directive requires the Commission to provide Member States with the necessary support, assistance and capacity building to help them carry out their obligations. The Commission shall, in cooperation with the Member States, draw up documents and develop scientific tools that may be used by Member States to facilitate them to carry out their obligations under the Directive.

This flagship workshop is a first step to support Member States and their competent authorities at all relevant levels in preparing the transposition of the Directive and kickstarting the implementation of the obligations. Participants will have an opportunity to discuss the main challenges that they foresee in the implementation, how these can be best addressed as well as the kind of support Member States and their competent authorities need in successfully adapting to the rules. Participants will also be able to share best practices as well as existing tools and experiences.

Due to the hands-on interactions foreseen in the breakout sessions, the workshop is foreseen as an in-person only event in Brussels.

Speakers

Speakers from EU institutions

- **Mr Eric Mamer**
Director-General, DG ENV, European Commission
- **Mr Mathieu Bousquet**
Director, DG ENEST A, European Commission
- **Mr Ion Codescu**
Head of Unit – Land use and management, DG ENV, European Commission
- **Ms Anna Vezyroglou**
Head of Unit - Institution building, TAIEX, Twinning, DG ENEST, European Commission
- **Mr Mirco Barbero**
Land use and management, DG ENV, European Commission
- **Mr Bavo Peeters**
Land use and management, DG ENV, European Commission
- **Mr Christian Probst**
Land use and management, DG ENV, European Commission
- **Ms Esther Goidts**
Land use and management, DG ENV, European Commission
- **Mr Cristiano Ballabio**
Forests and Bioeconomy, Joint Research Centre (JRC), European Commission
- **Mr Arwyn Jones**
Forests and Bioeconomy, Joint Research Centre (JRC), European Commission
- **Mr Rainer Baritz**
European Environment Agency

Speakers from EU Member States

- **Ms Swerts Martine**
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Government of Flanders, Environment Department, Belgium

- **Ms Lydie Sombré**
Bruxelles Environnement – Leefmilieu Brussel, Belgium
- **Ms Tímea Farkasné Kövesdi**
Soil conservation expert, Ministry of Agriculture, Hungary
- **Mr Antonio Callaba**
Ministerio para la Transición Ecológica y el Reto Demográfico, Spain
- **Ms Joanna Kwapisz**
Ministry of Climate and Environment, Poland

Speaker from other sector:

- **Mr Christian Andersen**
Common Forum & Danish Regions, Denmark
- **Mr Michele Munafò**
Head of National Environmental Information System Division, Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA), Italy

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See https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/taix_privacy_statement_online.pdf

Day: Tuesday 27 January 2026

Venue: Le Plaza Brussels Hotel, Adolphe Maxlaan

118/126, 1000 Brussels (in-person)

Language of the workshop: English without interpretation

Moderated by Ms Tamsin Rose

Local time 08:30 – 09:00	<i>Registration and welcome coffee</i>
09:00 – 09:15	Welcome and introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">Mr Eric Mamer, Director-General DG ENV, European CommissionMr Mathieu Bousquet, Director, DG ENEST, European Commission
	SML: what's in it? (Part I) <p>Overview of the main legislative provisions with specific focus of the topics that will be further discussed in the breakout sessions during the afternoon.</p> <p>Topic 1: Putting in place or adapting an existing national soil health monitoring framework (soil districts, soil units, competent authorities, sampling points and methodologies)</p>
09:15 – 09:30	Subject: Scene setting (15 minutes) Speakers: Ms Esther Goidts (DG ENV) & Ms Tímea Farkasné Kövesdi (Hungary)
09:30 - 09:50	Subject: Possible methodology for determining sampling points / sampling protocol / pilot exercise Speaker: Mr Cristiano Ballabio (JRC) (20 minutes)
09:50 -10:00	<u>Question & answers (10 minutes)</u>
10:00 -10:15	Topic 2: Setting healthy soil criteria Subject: Scene setting (15 minutes) Speakers: Mr Christian Probst (DG ENV) & Ms Swerts Martine, (Belgium)
10:15 -10:35	Subject: From science to policy recommendations (20 minutes) Speakers: Ms Arwyn Jones (JRC) and Mr Rainer Baritz (EEA)
10:35 -10:50	<u>Question & answers (15 minutes)</u>
10:50 – 11:20	<i>Coffee break</i>
	SML: what's in it? (Part II) <p>Overview of the main legislative provisions with specific focus of the topics that will be further discussed in the breakout sessions during the afternoon.</p> <p>Topic 3: Soil sealing and soil removal: monitoring and mitigation principles</p>
11:20 – 11:35	Subject: Scene setting

	Speakers: Mr Mirco Barbero (DG ENV) & Ms Lydie Somb�re, (Belgium)
11:35 -11:55	Subject: From land take monitoring to land take mitigation (20 minutes) Speaker: Mr Michele Munafo (ISPRA IT)
11:55 -12:10	<u>Question & answers (10 minutes)</u>
12:10 -12:25	Topic 4: Setting the soil contamination descriptor (diffuse contamination) and establishing a risk-based approach for management of contaminated sites Subject: Scene setting (15 minutes) Speakers: Mr Bavo Peeters (DG ENV) & Mr Antonio Callaba (Spain) & Ms Joanna Kwapisz (Poland)
12:25 -12:45	Subject: Lessons learnt on contaminated land management policies (20 minutes) Speaker: Mr Christian Andersen (Common Forum)
12:45 -13:00	<u>Question & answers (15 minutes)</u>
13:00– 14:30	<i>Lunch break</i> <i>Please be reminded to sign the attendance list</i>
14:30- 15:30	Discussions in four parallel breakout groups – upcoming challenges, solutions and best practices for implementing the new Directive <i>Please find preparatory questions for participants at the end of this document.</i> In each breakout session, Member States experts are invited to discuss the challenges, solutions and best practices for implementing the provisions of the Directive related to their field of expertise. Member States could for example further share existing tools and experiences to support implementation.
15:30-16:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
16:00 – 16:45	Conclusions from the four breakout sessions From each breakout session, the most relevant outcomes of the discussion are presented and discussed in plenary (10 minutes per breakout session).
16:45 – 17:00	Concluding remarks & closing of the workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Ion Codescu, Head of Unit - Land use and management, DG ENV, European Commission Ms Anna Vezyroglou, Head of Unit - Institution Building, TAIEX, Twinning, DG ENEST, European Commission
	<i>End of workshop</i>

Breakout groups: preparatory questions for participants

PARTICIPANTS WILL FIND BELOW, FOR EACH BREAKOUT GROUP, PREPARATORY QUESTIONS TO HELPING TO IDENTIFY THE MAIN CHALLENGES AND EXISTING BEST PRACTICES OR TOOLS.

BREAKOUT GROUP (1):

Putting in place or adapting an existing national soil health monitoring framework (soil districts, soil units, competent authorities, sampling points and methodologies)

The Directive requires Member States to establish soil districts for administrative purposes and soil units for the monitoring and assessment of soil health. The Directive sets criteria to define soil districts which are made up of several soil units. The Directive also requires Member States to determine the number and location of sampling points by applying the methodology set out in Annex II, part A.

- At what level does your Member State intend to establish the soil districts and competent authorities? What are the challenges that you foresee for establishing soil units? Do you consider that you have sufficient information for applying the criteria to define soil units?
- What challenges do you foresee in applying the requirements for the soil health monitoring framework and in particular to determine sampling points as defined in the Soil Monitoring Law? Where relevant, how do you envisage to integrate the LUCAS soil points? Do you foresee substantial changes in your existing monitoring networks to accommodate for the requirements of the Soil Monitoring Law?

BREAKOUT GROUP (2):

Setting healthy soil criteria

The Directive introduces healthy soil criteria made of non-binding sustainable target values and operational trigger values. Member states are required to set the operational trigger values for part A and part B descriptors as well as the non-binding sustainable target values for part B descriptors.

For which descriptors would you need in particular specific information or examples to set non-binding sustainable target values and operational trigger values? What criteria do you envisage to apply to define the operational trigger values? What challenges do you see to provide local level information on suitable measures and practices?

BREAKOUT GROUP (3):

Soil sealing and soil removal: monitoring and mitigations principles

The Directive focuses on the most visible and impactful sub-types of land take which are also the easiest to monitor: soil sealing and removal. Member States are required to monitor the soil sealing and soil removal indicators with at least a 3 year frequency and to identify, in each soil district, the areas with high potential for improvement of soil health through de-sealing or soil reconstruction. The Commission and the EEA will support Member States by providing them with the necessary data based on existing space-based data and products delivered under Copernicus.

The Directives also sets mitigation principles in case of new soil sealing or soil removal. These provisions are effort-based and do not impact national competence on spatial planning.

- Which difficulties do you foresee in identifying the areas of sealed soils and areas that underwent soil removal? Which experience do you have with the assessment of the loss of ecosystem services? What technical expertise is needed in your view to apply minimum methodological criteria for determining the values of the soil sealing and soil removal indicators? Do you already use and apply some of the optional soil sealing and removal indicators?
- To which extent do you consider that further guidance on mitigation principles would be useful? Do you have practical experience regarding the implementation of the land take mitigation principles (e.g. reuse of sealed soils, selection of severely degraded soils, keeping sealing as reversible as possible, etc.)?

BREAKOUT GROUP (4):

Setting the soil contamination descriptor and establishing a risk-based approach for the management of contaminated sites

Soil contamination is tackled under the chapter dealing with soil health monitoring network as well as under the chapter dealing with contaminated sites.

The Directive leaves flexibility to Member States to set the contaminants (except for heavy metals) to be monitored.

The Directive requires Member States to follow a risk-based and stepwise approach to identify and investigate potentially contaminated sites and to manage contaminated sites since the number of potentially contaminated sites and contaminated sites may be very large and the level of risk a contaminated site poses may vary from very low to very high. The public concerned shall be given early and effective opportunities to on the establishment and concrete application of the risk-based and stepwise approach.

- How do you envisage to set the contaminants under part B and C of annex I? What information do you consider as necessary? What factors may influence your decision? What are your expectations for the indicative list of soil contaminants?
- Based on your experience, what are the challenges in establishing a risk-based approach? Where relevant, do you foresee substantial changes in your existing approach regarding potentially contaminated sites and contaminated sites? Do you already apply a hierarchy to determine parties responsible to address contaminated sites? Do you have a list of potentially contaminating activities or standard procedures for soil investigations? What events could trigger soil investigation?
- Are there important bottlenecks for the site-specific assessment and management of the risks of contaminated sites? Based on your experience, what kind of tools are best suited to ensure broad participation of the public concerned? What challenges do you foresee to set-up and maintain a public register of (potentially) contaminated sites?



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