

**MANDATE OF THE**  
**Soil Protection Working Group**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 2023-2024**  
**(BETWEEN THE XVII AND XVIII MEETINGS OF THE ALPINE**  
**CONFERENCE)**

## 1. Introductory remarks

Importance of the issues selected and relevance of the proposed way to tackle them

In view of the current crises, such as the climate crisis, the pandemic and most recently the war in Ukraine, greater self-sufficiency in regionally produced food and fodder, the transition to renewable energy sources and the continuous land take demand for living, work, tourism and trade are proceeding at an even faster pace. These developments massively affect the soils of the Alpine region and will intensify different land use interests as well as resulting conflicts.

The Working Group contributes to the protection and improvement of the condition of Alpine soils. Based on the results of previous mandates (2019-2020 and 2021-2022), especially activities defined in the “Long-Term Action Plan for the implementation of provisions and declarations on soil protection in the specific context of the Alpine region” should be fostered. Concrete results are to be achieved within this mandate period that contribute to the ongoing implementation of its objectives, which are also in line with the Soil Conservation Protocol, other protocols of the Alpine Convention and long-term strategies of relevant cooperation partners.

## 2. Objectives

Description of the objectives to be achieved until the XVIII Alpine Conference

Fostering especially the following activities proposed within the Long-Term Action Plan for the implementation of provisions and declarations on soil protection in the specific context of the Alpine region:

1. Continue to tackle economical and prudent use of soil in the Alps.
2. Underline the importance of moor protection.
3. Continue the efforts regarding comparable soil data.
4. Raise awareness on the importance of soils, soil fertility and on avoiding degradation.
5. Improve soil literacy, awareness and exchange in the Alps.

### 3. Planned outputs

Description of the planned outputs, with reference to the objectives
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Efforts regarding the provision of statistical data e.g. on land-consumption and soil sealing continued.</li><li>2. Statement on the importance of moor protection in the Alps and exchange about best practice examples e. g. on substitution of peat products, rewetting measures.</li><li>3. Continued cooperation on data issues with the JRC, especially regarding LUCAS soil (European Land Use and Coverage Area frame Survey), including an input for the LUCAS soil survey in 2026.</li><li>4. Coaching events in Alpine Countries for spatial planners and decision makers about the importance of the soil ecosystem services and the necessity to consider data on soil functions in spatial planning processes.</li><li>5. Continuation of the Alpine Soil Newsletter and participation or active contributions to relevant events and conferences.</li></ol> <p>All outputs will ensure that the Alpine Convention in general and the Working Group on Soil Protection in particular are visible, e.g. by using the logo of the Alpine Convention.</p>

### 4. Work plan

Outline of the foreseen timetable (meetings and other activities, main milestones scheduled)
<p>The Working Group on Soil Protection plans at least 2 regular meetings per year with additional cross-sectoral meetings as required. Meetings will be organised in personal or virtual form as appropriate.</p> <p>To achieve the objectives, concrete contributions by the delegations and cross-sectoral cooperation of working groups related to the topic of soil is required. It is foreseen that group members take over the responsibility for specific planned outputs.</p>

### 5. Cooperation

Description of the planned cooperation with other Alpine Convention bodies and further relevant partners and processes, and the expected benefits
<p>The Soil Protection Working Group will continue to cooperate with other Working Bodies of the Alpine Convention (above all the Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development Working Group, the Natural Hazards Working Group – PLANALP and the Alpine Climate Board) and with relevant Action Groups of the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP). Other important partners or points of contact are the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC), the Alpine Soil Partnership (AlpSP), the European Expert Group on Soil Protection, and the European Land and Soil Alliance (ELSA). Important initiatives are also the EU Mission "A Soil Deal for Europe", the EU Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection, the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the European Green Deal, the European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion</p>

(ESPON) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Further future cooperation opportunities will be explored.

The objectives and output contribute to the implementation of the Climate Action Plan 2.0, especially regarding the implementation pathways IP\_S1, IP\_S2, IP\_S3 and IP\_SP1.

The Working Group will animate members of the Group to contribute to the implementation of outputs of completed, on-going and new projects relevant for soil protection in the Alps and to participate in future projects according to the available resources.

## 6. Communication

Description of the communication goals, targets and respective planned measures

- Systematic communication of activities within the Working Group.
- Sharing relevant activities of the Working Group and dissemination of the results by each member within their respective networks, including national and regional administrations and other relevant stakeholders.
- Alpine Soil Newsletter and outreach activities to related processes as outlined above.

## 7. Link to the Multi-Annual Work Programme 2023-2030 of the Alpine Conference

Description of how the proposed objectives and activities shall contribute to some or all of the priority areas of the MAP 2023-2030 (biodiversity and ecosystems / climate action / quality of life / interlinkages, synergies, and trade-offs of the aforementioned areas)

The Working Group contributes to the implementation of the Multi-Annual Work Programme of the Alpine Conference for the years 2023-2030 by its activities which are directly or indirectly beneficial for all three priorities biodiversity and ecosystems, climate and quality of life.

## 8. Chair

The Chair will be held by Austria.