



## 1st EU Soil Observatory Stakeholder Forum

### Minutes of the Workshop on data integration/sharing in EUSO

*Wednesday 20 October 2021, 10:00 – 12:30 (virtual)*

*Moderator: Marc Van Liedekerke, European Commission Joint Research Centre – ESDAC*

*Rapporteur: Calogero Schillaci, European Commission Joint Research Centre*

*Minutes by: Marc Van Liedekerke*

*Reviewed by participants. Input from Maria Fantappie’.*

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**This workshop was about new data/information that we would like to see incorporated in the EU Soil Observatory (as an extension of the European Soil Data Centre);**

The moderator gave an introduction of where we stand as ESDAC and where we want to go, concluding with 3 questions that we would like to tackle in this meeting and in the future work of the WG to establish.

The **vision** for the ESDAC part of the Observatory is a data repository and an open data platform where the public at large can access soil related datasets and the supporting documentation, at EU scale. And this vision was coupled to a tentative **mission** to that vision with a catchy slogan: "‘EU-scale soil data: if you can’t find them through ESDAC, you can’t find them anywhere’.

The Moderator gave an overview of which data are currently in ESDAC, and proposed what we would like to add:

- Data from EU research soil related projects (examples: SOILCARE, LANDMARK, ISQAPER, EJP) that typically generate EU wide datasets that at the end of the project (at least in the past) were are not accessible to public users. Our objective is to make them accessible.
- Future LUCAS SOIL campaigns data (point data; derived maps)
- Data from EU Soil Monitoring activities (in collaboration with the EUSO WG, discussed on Day-1 of this SF)
- Data from Indicators/Dashboard activities (is another WG needed?)
- EU-wide data possibly compiled on the basis of National data. But the question is: in which framework?
- EU wide soil data or reference to data associated to peer-review publications (to be found in literature).

The Moderator also suggested the creation of a **hub** for accessing (not hosting) national soil data in EU. It would be a kind of compendium of sites where to find for EU countries country-wide soil property/functions/threats data.

Other candidates for inclusion in ESDAC are:

- Data on EU soil research (already handled by many projects, e.g. Bonares)?
- Data on EU-funded projects (at least a list of such projects with abstracts and links)?

The moderator stressed the **importance of Intellectual Property Rights** for any data/information to be included in ESDAC, with a special reference to data/information coming from EU-projects.

**Technically** speaking, we will continue to keep ESDAC as repository of static data + documentation, with commonly accepted and usable formats; currently, there are no plans to integrate the various datasets in a common database. But, as we have many geographic datasets (maps), we will offer visual exploration of the data through a web MapViewer and external accessibility by GIS-clients through WMS (web mapping service) links.

The moderator then raised the **3 questions** to address:

- Question1: what else would you see as essential data that EUSO should incorporate? And where/how to get it?
- Question2: how could a working group concretely assist us? And, as this would be voluntary: what is in it for WG members?
- Question3: who could contribute? (with suggestions: EU projects? Representatives of EU countries for identifying authoritative soil data and provide suitable documentation/metadata? Soil Mission? EU soil related networks? Other ... ?

After the introduction, **5 'seed' presentations** were invited that expressed some points of view on EU wide soil data in EUSO and partly answered some of the questions raised in the introduction, but also raised new questions on the relation with EUSO.

- In the first presentation "The integration of EU-project results in EUSO", Maria Jose' Amaral of the EU Research Executive Agency informed us about the mechanisms for EU projects to share the results and data to the world, and how EUSO could play a significant role into it, by being present from the start (influencing the content of the Grant Agreement).
- As one example of an EU-funded project, the presentation with title "EJP-SOIL as soil data provider to EUSO" by Maria Fantappie' from CREA (Italy) and Fenny Van Egmond (ISRIC, the Netherlands) explained very clearly the operational links with EUSO and REA when it comes to the definition of the outcomes of the various data deliverables, and the place it could take within ESDAC. The presentation ended with a good set of questions that need to be addressed by EUSO and could also be discussed in the future WG.
- The third presentation, by Maria Fantappie' with the hat of chair of the 'Pillar-4 on data' of the European Soil Partnership (regional branch of the GSP) tackled the question "Is there a role for the European Soil Partnership in contributing to the data in EUSO?" explained the ESP and its Pillar-4, and concluded with valuable suggestions on the interface between ESP/GSP, in essence about aligning international and European activities on indicators development and system design (with references to GLOSIS and INSPIRE) for delivering soil data in distributed fashion to stakeholders.
- The fourth presentation considered the view of one EU country (but we could have invited any) on the role of EU national soil data organizations in contributing to EUSO. In this case for France, Antonio Bispo from INRAE, explained carefully the various national soil data

sources, the user access from the public, and thus the possibility of what can be shared or not with EUSO, in case EUSO would need access to national soil data to compile EU-wide data products.

- The last presentation by Rainer Baritz, responsible for the theme Soil in the European Environment Agency, covered the topic “EEA perspective on soil data integration and exchange”. This provided the participants with a general view on data handling at EEA and on soil data in particular, concluding with a number of general key messages out of which can be highlighted: “Data products and knowledge exchanges with countries need to be deepened technically: improve Europe-wide mapping of soil functional parameters (based on improved basic geospatial soil data, e.g. soil type maps)”, leaving open the role of EUSO in such endeavor.

The moderator asked then for **Contributions from the floor** to possibly complement the 5 seed presentations, and for **questions on the presentations**. There was little interaction, also because the meeting was running late. The moderator suggested that late contributions and questions could be channeled by email through the WG Chair (see below), and distributed further to the participants. Also a real discussion on the **proposed 3 questions** did not take place, partly because most of the questions were already somehow answered in the presentations.

The Moderator continued then with a proposal on how to **establish the EUSO Working Group (WG) on data integration and sharing**. The WG will be chaired by a person from EUSO (Marc Van Liedekerke).

The WG will be informal and totally voluntary. Maybe in a consecutive stage, a more formal approach could be envisaged (e.g. when establishing an ‘official’ soil monitoring system in EU). It could be useful to establish **small subgroups** to work on **specific aspects** (EU-projects; IPR; hub to link to national data, INSPIRE issues (including solutions for missing CodeLists, missing official high resolution grids specifications, etc.). Persons/organizations that want to contribute actively should send a mail to the WG Chair ([marc.van-liedekerke@ec.europa.eu](mailto:marc.van-liedekerke@ec.europa.eu)) and state their intentions for contribution. Among all persons volunteering to be part of the WG, one or two **Vice-Chairs** will be appointed to help the Chair in the coordination work. The Chair will solicit candidates to become Vice Chair, and organize a vote per email among WG members.

The meeting concluded with the **next steps**:

- EUSO will write the minutes of this workshop;
- EUSO will identify some core tasks that could be done by the WG;
- EUSO will solicit among meeting participants for participation in the WG, and possibly sub-groups, asking which specific contribution they can make.
- EUSO will organize a follow-up workshop to discuss details and organize better the operation of the WG.