

# WHY IS ECHO IMPORTANT?

Soil is a vital, yet often disregarded, resource that supports life on Earth by providing the foundation for agriculture, forests, and various other natural ecosystems. However, soil degradation is a growing concern around the world, and it can have severe consequences for our planet - such as reduced crop yields, increased greenhouse gas emissions, and decreased biodiversity.

**Project ECHO - ENGAGING CITIZENS IN SOIL SCIENCE: THE ROAD TO HEALTHIER SOILS** aims to enhance existing, and create new knowledge through amplification of novel scientific research by increasing awareness and literacy of soil health related issues. **ECHO** will lead and develop coordinated **citizen science initiatives** across European Member States and Scotland considering different land-uses and stakeholder needs. With its activities, **ECHO** contributes to the EU Mission 'A Soil Deal for Europe' to accomplish the transition towards healthy soils by **2030**.

## PARTNERS



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# ECHO

ENGAGING CITIZENS IN SOIL SCIENCE:  
THE ROAD TO HEALTHIER SOILS

# EXPECTED IMPACT

Soil literacy, awareness, competence and societal appreciation of the vital functions of soils are significantly increased and result in wide societal engagement on soil health

Land managers, industries, consumers and society at large work together and take effective action on soil health across sectors and land uses

Robust soil monitoring programmes and common definitions are in place (based on common, harmonised and comprehensive measurements) and allow land managers and public authorities to take effective actions based on up-to-date information from all Member States and Associated Countries

Successful implementation of the Mission supports several EU policies and international commitments, e.g. in relation to land degradation neutrality, food and nutrition security, climate and biodiversity (e.g. SDGs, UNCCD, UN CBD, Green Deal including the Farm to Fork Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy, new Soil Strategy, Zero Pollution Strategy, Forestry Strategy or the Long-term Vision for Rural Areas).

# OUR OBJECTIVES

**ENGAGE** citizens and through increased knowledge and stimulate their interest in soil health

**EMPOWER** citizens and invite them to take an active role in data collection and soil science

**ENABLE** citizens to directly participate in decision-making on soil issues based on acquired knowledge

# TOOLS & ACTIVITIES

**28** tailor-made **citizen science initiatives** across EU Member States

**16,500** sites in different climate and biogeographic regions assessed

**TOOLBOX** **Citizen Science Toolbox** - a free resource including open access field guidelines, protocols and forums

**ECHOREPO** a long-term open access repository with a direct link to the EUSO (The EU Soil Observatory)



# EXPECTED RESULTS

- 🌿 Pan-European map of target citizen groups
- 🌿 Citizens engaged with soil health activities
- 🌿 Soil stewardship across Europe
- 🌿 Citizen Science Platform
- 🌿 Increased knowledge about soil health among citizens
- 🌿 Increased knowledge about soil health amplifying scientific research
- 🌿 Long-term digital data repository
- 🌿 Different end-users groups engaged
- 🌿 Showcasing the utility of citizen science data on soil health

