



Global Soil Biodiversity Conference 13-15th March, 2023 Dublin, Ireland

Workshop “Molecular and Traditional Methods to Assess Soil Biodiversity” co-organized by three European projects to be held on 14th March 2023 at the 3rd Global Soil Biodiversity Conference

March 2023

Three sister projects, SoildiverAgro, SOILGUARD, and EXCALIBUR, all of them funded under the Horizon 2020 programme of the European Commission, co-organized the workshop “Molecular and Traditional Methods to Assess Soil Biodiversity”, to be held on 14th March 2023 at the 3rd Global Soil Biodiversity Conference in Dublin (Ireland).

This workshop will be organised in the form of a round table, where representatives of these projects will present their aims and outcomes and the methodologies used for soil biodiversity assessment.

The main objective of SoildiverAgro is the adoption of new management practices and cropping systems that enhance soil genetic and functional biodiversity to reduce the use of external inputs while increasing crop production and quality, the delivery of ecosystem services and the EU agricultural stability and resilience.

The SOILGUARD project will develop a conceptual and analytical framework with the potential to become the global standard for future assessments of soil biodiversity status. All knowledge will be shared through SOILGUARDIANS, a predictive tool based on the links between soil biodiversity, soil multifunctionality and wellbeing to support stakeholders in their transition to sustainable management.

EXCALIBUR, coordinated by Dr. Stefano Mocali from CREA (Italy), aims to enhance the efficacy of microbial biostimulants and biopesticides capable of improving crop efficiency and protection, respectively, by stimulating the native soil biodiversity, thus reducing the use of chemical inputs towards a more sustainable agriculture, aligned with the goals of the Common Agricultural Policy, the EU Green Deal, and the Farm to Fork Strategy.

The second part will be led by three relevant speakers from SoilBON, EUdaphobase and JRC LUCAS, who will introduce their initiatives, followed by an interactive discussion between the participants.

SoilBON is a global partnership that is working with other global and regional partners to make available the soil biological and ecosystem observations needed to ensure living soil resources are sustainably conserved and managed and can support essential human needs.

The EUdaphobase COST Action aims to create the structures and procedures necessary for developing an open Europe-wide soil biodiversity data infrastructure. The ultimate goal of EUdaphobase is to establish a pan-European soil-biological data and knowledge warehouse, which can be used for understanding, protecting and sustainably managing soils, their biodiversity and functions.

LUCAS (Land Use/Cover Area frame statistical Survey) is a European Commission's initiative that gathers information on land cover and use by means of regular, harmonised surveys across the European Union. As of 2009, it also comprises a soil module, LUCAS Soil, for monitoring soil physico-chemical properties in over 20,000 sites all over Europe. In 2018, a soil biodiversity component was added to the project in order to assess the distribution of soil organisms by means of molecular biology techniques.. By repeating the survey every few years, changes to soil (biological) properties can be identified.

The audience will be welcome to actively participate in the debate, share the methods they are using, discuss the perks and barriers for harmonisation or even if harmonisation is possible and desirable.

More information: SoildiverAgro, SOILGUARD and Excalibur co-organize the workshop "Molecular and Traditional Methods to Assess Soil Biodiversity" at the 3rd Global Soil Biodiversity Conference - SoildiverAgro