



# Public summary of D1.1

## ½ Year Activity Report of INSPIRATION

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## 1 Summary of the context and overall objectives of the project

The way we steward soil resources and manage our land use activities is central to ensuring Europe's transition to a sustainable future for its citizens and its global partners. Research and knowledge dissemination are fundamental to securing soils and land for next generations, for competitive economies and healthy landscapes. Clever use of the services provided by the soil-sediment-water system (SSW system) may provide solutions for meeting societal needs and for overcoming societal challenges.

**The aim of the Coordination and Support Action INSPIRATION** is to establish based on a demand-driven approach the adoption of a Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) for land and the soil-sediment-water system, land-use changes and soil management in Europe. Main objectives are:

- Formulate, consult on and revise an end-user oriented SRA
- Scope out models for implementing the SRA
- Prepare a network of private and public funding institutions willing to commonly fund the SRA.

**Horizon 2020** calls for research and innovation that will help Europeans achieve meaningful, harmonious and lasting existence in the face of significant driving forces. The INSPIRATION work programme is to derive a SRA to directly address these **challenges** through understanding the SSW-system and identifying land use and land management practises that can

- Contribute to food security and food safety
- Ensure secure supplies of safe drinking water
- Secure energy supply and distribution
- Reduce raw material and resource consumption
- Ensure efficient use of natural resources
- Contribute to climate change mitigation and societal adaptation.

INSPIRATION stands for INtegrated Spatial PlannIng, land use and soil management Research ActiON. The consortium comprises 21 European partners from 16 countries. The network's actions to achieve its objectives are based on **a multi-stakeholder, multi-national and interdisciplinary, demand-driven approach** that covers the diversity of stakeholders (public bodies, business, science, citizens and society) and the variety of relevant public and private funders.

INSPIRATION engages in two ways with stakeholders. In a **bottom-up approach**, National Focal Points (NFPs) in the 16 INSPIRATION countries interview national stakeholders, perform a desk study and organize workshops with national key stakeholders of funders, end-users and researchers across the various soil and land management disciplines. The goal of these exercises is to collate the information being essential for identifying knowledge gaps and research demands. Moreover, at the European level networks, e.g. from industry, policy-making and regulation, are invited to share their experiences, research demands and funding interests.



The outcomes of the collation of demands for research from industry, end-users and funders are taken up and reviewed under **four integrative themes**

- Resources demand and efficiency
- Natural capital
- Land management
- Net impact on global, EU and local scale.

This is done in order to structure information into **thematic knowledge needs** to satisfy the as yet unmet societal challenges and to ensure that research and knowledge dissemination will contribute primarily to enable meeting these challenges.

Based on these results, a cross-country and cross-discipline dialogue will subsequently be organized among the relevant user groups, private and public funding institutions and scientific communities in Europe in order to reach **a trans-national, prioritized SRA and a model for execution of this SRA**. Thus a framework for future research calls will be produced which will give private and public funders confidence that for each Euro they spend, they will get multiple Euros worth of knowledge in return.

INSPIRATION is coordinated by the German Federal Environment Agency (UBA) and structured in five work packages (WPs) to achieve an efficient realisation of the project's objectives:

**Project Management is handled in WP1**. Its objective is to ensure an appropriate general management structure and an organisational platform to ensure a smooth and streamlined information flow to safeguard that all aspects of the project are well integrated and coordinated, including

- Liaison between the consortium and the European Commission
- Handling contracting, financial administration and progress (periodic) reporting
- Submission of deliverables in a timely manner
- Support of the Core Group as key decision body in the consortium.

Towards the final phase of the project, WP1 will organize INSPIRATION's final conference.

The main objective of **WP2 "Demands of research from industry, end-users and funders (State-of- the-art at national levels)"** is to collate, review and synthesize for all countries participating in INSPIRATION the following information:

- Demand-driven suggestions for the SRA, i.e. suggestions from the perspective of industry, end-users and funders
- Experiences regarding the exploitation of scientific knowledge to improve business opportunities and/or tackle other societal challenges
- Predominantly used as well as promising alternative funding schemes, mechanisms, programs for knowledge production and dissemination
- Experiences regarding the use of any trans-national, common budget for scientific knowledge production related to the scope of INSPIRATION.

This is done keeping the tackling of the societal challenges in mind. National key stakeholders (consisting of the most relevant funders, end users and researchers in soil, land use and land management) have a central role in WP2 and will be consulted in interviews and national workshops. The national reports resulting from WP2 are used in WP3 and WP4.



The objectives of **WP3 “Transnational commons aggregated under integrated themes”** are to

- Achieve an overview of the transnational shared demands and experiences grouped under the four integrated themes based on the national state-of-the-art reports as produced by WP2
- Prioritise and elaborate the topics that could be included in the SRA (to be developed by WP4) under specific themes
- Elucidate the opportunity to match (to be done under WP4) individual stakeholders (as funders) to specific SRA topics that could be shared transnationally.

The objectives of **WP4 “Developing, delivering and match-making of a strategic research agenda”** are to

- Develop the SRA for activities on soil, land-use and land management
- Explore and where feasible establish a match between the SRA and national funders potentially willing to fund collaboratively a specific part of the SRA
- Map out funding models for delivering the SRA.

WP5 **“International dissemination and communication”** is to facilitate effective communication of the INSPIRATION project with all stakeholder communities willing to contribute to the development and ultimate delivery of the SRA. WP5 objectives are to

- Disseminate project results to the relevant societal and policy stakeholder groups and scientific communities in Europe and beyond
- Support quality assurance for INSPIRATION by appointing and engaging with an International Advisory Board composed of key representatives of international initiatives dealing with land and soil management challenges
- Organise policy review and gap analysis workshops
- Ensure that also needs of stakeholders are met who are not directly participating in INSPIRATION, especially policy related parties and funding institutions
- Motivate the different stakeholder communities in Europe to take up INSPIRATION’s key deliverables (developed in WP4).



## 2 Work performed from the beginning of the project to the end of the period covered by the report and main results achieved so far

INSPIRATION is structured in five work packages (WPs) to achieve an efficient realisation of the project's objectives and implementation of the bottom-up approach towards developing, delivering, match-making and promoting of a Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) for land and the soil-sediment-water system, land-use changes and soil management addressing the societal challenges in Europe. The Coordination and Support Action started in March 2015. As of October 2015 the following work has been conducted and main results achieved under the five WPs:

### WP1 – Project management

#### Task 1.1: Project management

The project's kick-off meeting took place in Berlin, 1-2 April 2015, with representatives of all beneficiaries. The project managing Core Group met face to face on 31 March 2015 and had at least monthly online meetings since the project kick-off. Furthermore, the coordinator participated in selected WP-meetings, national workshops and external events in order to facilitate the project internal and external co-ordination.

A Consortium Agreement between all 21 INSPIRATION partners was established. During the reporting phase, issues demanding an amendment of the Grant Agreement have been identified (e.g. accession interest of new beneficiaries) and are being negotiated within the consortium, concerned third parties and with the European Commission's services. Next to contractual issues, the EC's scientific project officer has been informed regularly on the progress of the project, including submission of deliverables and achievement of milestones.

Semi-annual, activity reports on INSPIRATION actions are updated to facilitate a regular and iterative evaluation of the project's progress as part of the progress (periodic) reporting. Including a first ½ activity report (D1.1), six deliverables that have been due so far were submitted on time. All three milestones scheduled in this phase were achieved.

#### Task 1.2: Final conference

Lessons learned from participation in events so far, will be considered in organizing INSPIRATION's final conference.



## **WP2 – Demands of research from industry, end-users and funders (State-of-the-art at national levels)**

### **Task 2.1: Kick off with National Focal Points (NFPs)**

During the INSPIRATION kick-off meeting, a first meeting of the NFPs was realized, using the discussions as input for the project internal deliverable D2.1 “Memorandum of Understanding on how the National Focal Points should execute their tasks”.

### **Task 2.2: Registry of National Key Stakeholders (NKS)**

For each country, NKS were approached and an overview of a balanced group of NKS was established (with funders, end-users, researchers and different organisations with expertise within the INSPIRATION scope): The outcome is documented in the public deliverable D2.2 “Registry of National Key Stakeholders cooperating in INSPIRATION”.

### **Task 2.3: Prepare a harmonized template for information collation**

A template for interviews of the NKS by the NFPs was prepared and discussed with WP5 (to be coherent with a policy workshop) and the coordinator in a meeting in Paris (18 May 2015). Thereafter this template was discussed in depth, together with the WP2 topics ‘data collation’, ‘review’ and ‘synthesizing’, in an extra activity: a full-day NFP training session (22-23 June 2015, Vienna). Moreover, comments of the International Advisory Board were included. The results are documented in the deliverable D2.3 “Template for national information collation”, which has been made publically available.

### **Task 2.4: Collate information at national levels**

In summer, information collation by the NFPs has started in all countries, by desk study and interviews with NKS. In the Core Group, the idea of using narratives for reporting to highlight the urgency of specific challenges/topics for a broader audience has been worked out and will be further discussed.

### **Task 2.5: Review and synthesise the collated information**

The NFPs have started to organize – and some have already conducted – at national level a 2-day workshop, where the collated information is reviewed, synthesized and prioritized by the NKS. A draft of the “National reports on collated information following the template” (D2.4) was prepared and consulted with the Core Group and NFPs. The outline allows tailoring of the national workshops to specific national situations. Detailed data on workshops’ timing can be found on the INSPIRATION website.



**WP3 “Transnational commons aggregated under integrated themes”** will start in month 13. The WP-Leader and Theme Leaders organized a first WP3 internal meeting (Berlin, 26 May 2015) to reflect the objectives and approach of their foreseen tasks. They have participated next to Core Group meetings in a WP meeting with WP1 and WP2 (Scheyern 6-7 October 2015) in order to prepare and concretize the implementation of their activities.

**WP4 “Developing, delivering and match-making of a Strategic Research Agenda (SRA)”** will start in month 20. The WP-Leader has participated next to Core Group meetings in a WP meeting with WP1, WP2 and WP5 (Paris, 18 May 2015) in order to prepare and link WP4 activities.

## **WP5 – International Dissemination and Communication**

### **Task 5.1 International Advisory Board (IAB)**

For providing the cross-cutting and integrating activities perspectives (with the related multidisciplinary and multiskills approach), an IAB was set up, which is composed of experts representing international initiatives dealing with land and soil management challenges. The IAB interacts with INSPIRATION to give input to, and reflect upon, the key project deliverables. In line with achieving milestone MS1, a “First International Advisory Board meeting” took place back-to-back with the kick-off meeting in Berlin.

### **Task 5.2: Policy-oriented workshop with policy makers and impacted stakeholders at an early stage**

The SRA will cover numerous thematic policies implemented at European or regional scales. Most of these policies and the associated policy-makers have own research and knowledge agendas. Complementing the collation of relevant agendas on national level in WP2, visions and needs at the European scale were to be collected through a policy-oriented workshop, which was held in Brussels 30 June - 1 July 2015. Results of this early policy workshop (available on the website – in line with achieving milestone MS13 “Policy oriented workshops”) plus IAB recommendations have been used to formulate recommendations and input for national and thematic workshops / actions in WP2, WP3 and WP4 as part of the project-internal deliverable D5.2 “Results policy workshops and IAB recommendations”.

**Task 5.3: Setting up policy oriented workshop towards the end for contribution to the SRA** will be in a later project stage.





#### **Task 5.4: Dissemination of SRA and the proposed implementation models**

To facilitate stakeholder engagement, contacts have been established with networks of funding agencies and other key-players in Europe, including NICOLE, SedNet, ICCL, but also beyond Europe, e.g. ALGA. Special sessions have been set up at events, including Global Soil Week, AquaConSoil and Sednet conferences.

A clear project communication plan is developed in the first year of the project. As a key means, the website [www.inspiration-h2020.eu](http://www.inspiration-h2020.eu) was launched on 28 June 2015 and is update regularly (fulfilling the deliverable D5.1 “Website and internet operational”): News are added as often as possible and subpages for each INSPIRATION country are available in respective national languages to allow a maximum of stakeholders to have access to information on INSPIRATION objectives and local activities. Contributing to milestone MS2 “INSPIRATIONs website and intranet operational”, also a collaborative intranet was created.

Currently, a newsletter is prepared, for which registration can be done on the website.



### 3 Progress beyond the state of the art and expected potential impact (including the socio-economic impact and the wider societal implications of the project so far)

Soil and land use management needs to focus on sustainable use of natural capital and resources. It needs to understand the potentials, functioning and limits of the Soil-Sediment-Water-system. The underlying premise of INSPIRATION is that land and soil services are fundamental for meeting societal needs (food, drinking water, energy production, shelter, infrastructure) and overcoming societal challenges (climate change mitigation and adaptation, increasing demands on non-renewable natural resources, environmental justice).

**The main aim of INSPIRATION is to develop a Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) to inform environmentally friendly, socially acceptable and economically affordable soil and land use management that meets societal needs and challenges.** Thereby, INSPIRATION strives to make a difference through both i) the legitimacy of the demand driven basis of the SRA for land and the SSW-system, land-use changes and soil management in Europe and ii) a strongly independent promotion of the mutual benefit of cooperation by funders in its delivery through various fit-for-purpose funding models.

#### Agreed vision and SRA

INSPIRATION will help achieve integrated and interdisciplinary action in the next decade by implementing the SRA through agreed common initiatives which reflect societal challenges along with the individual demands of funding agencies and private partners. The bottom up process of INSPIRATION will identify synergies between existing institutions and programs. "Knowledge requirements" and INSPIRATION's dissemination and communication actions are designed to establish a long term "reform process" at the institutional and programme level. A key success indicator will be the declarations of interest of cooperation for the developed SRA.

#### Connecting/network of national funding agencies: synergies

INSPIRATION contributes to matching Europe's funding agencies by developing shared research and innovation (R&I) programs at different implementation levels to deliver better value for money knowledge creation and transfer. Via a match-making process, individual funders are matched to, for them, recognizable, specific, transnational SRA topics. Thus INSPIRATION will propose R&I themes and topics at different levels of cooperation and motivate active participation during the final consultation process. The process will improve coordination of EU and Member State/associated country R&I programmes on a short, medium and long term basis. It will also include opportunities for initiatives on policy related programmes, like INTERREG, LIFE or URBACT. The nature and volume of engagement by stakeholders in the opportunity provided for a final checking the project outcomes and in the number of 'funder-SRA-topic' matches established will indicate INSPIRATION's success.



## **Enhanced impact of research and innovation activities**

Impact will be enhanced by public sector, businesses, industry and general society providing evidence-based policy and R&I priorities. Their involvement as National Key Stakeholders (NKS) all along the INSPIRATION project – from the identification of R&I needs to the consultations for matchmaking the SRA and the funding options – will increase the impact. By mobilizing the relevant actors (NKS) from the early start of INSPIRATION, the awareness for opportunities of the Soil-Sediment-Water-system, land use and soil management to tackle societal challenges and the support, engagement and willingness to contribute to the SRA (on a longer term) are increased and the network and collaboration possibilities are strengthened. This all contributes to the willingness and commitment to implement the SRA after the funding of INSPIRATION as a Coordination and Support Action.

By interviewing NKS in 16 countries simultaneously, a unique overview of national societal challenges and related research questions is generated. Also the information and experiences on science-policy-interface (SPI) and suggestions for funding possibilities offer great potential for the European research-end-user and funding community to improve current land management practices and exploit opportunities to address related societal challenges.

The success of INSPIRATION in achieving this objective will be indicated by the actual number of stakeholders from different communities (e.g. funder, end-users, researchers) that engage in national interviews and workshops and in the final verification of the SRA.

## **Effective Communication**

Effective internal communication is ensured by the open character of the INSPIRATION process and the deep mutual respect among its partners. Effective external communication will be through regular updates of the project website linked with existing high traffic portals and networks in this field, on-going communication with stakeholders involved in the national and thematic workshops, an INSPIRATION e-newsletter, webinars and EU info-days promoting the SRA and its implementation. The successfulness of achieving effective communication is indicated by the number of publications, special sessions and key-note speeches by INSPIRATION partners, number of visits on the project website and attendances at workshops.

## **Evidence-based policy making, in particular a land-degradation neutral world**

INSPIRATION will formulate the SRA through an open process completed in phases which challenges stakeholders (acting on the numerous sectorial policies – such as spatial planning, agriculture, resource efficiency, biodiversity and green infrastructure or EU cohesion) to work towards achieving a land-degradation neutral world. The relevance and needs of policy will be reflected in the operational work of INSPIRATION through annual meetings and two policy-oriented workshops to take place in the first and third project year. Success will be indicated by the number of countries taking into account the SRA and new funding schemes as well as by the extent of European and international organisations referring to INSPIRATION products in their agenda setting.



# i nspiration

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