NICOLE and Common Forum joint workshop 24 – 25 November 2022

Call for Abstracts

Circularity within contaminated land management

119, Mesogeion Ave., 11526 Athens, Greece

Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy

Although land is still subject to severe degradation processes, it is probably the most undervalued element of nature. The EU Green Deal (EGD) is the EU's policy response to the environmental degradation and the transition to circular economy is one of the corner stones of the EGD. Land and soil are an unquestionably critical parameter of a sustainable Circular Economy as also reflected in the new Circular Economy Action Plan (2020), although even in areas with advanced environmental policy, such as the EU there is no coherent and strategic policy or legislation dedicated to contaminated soil and land management.

Historically contaminated land management has been a national level policy issue, managed differently by the member states, ranging from advanced to non-existent national contaminated land management policy. In the latter case, contaminated land management is mostly based on other EU policy instruments, such as the Environmental Liability Directive and the Industrial Emissions Directive.

Application of these directives, however, does not effectively satisfy the needs of a robust contaminated land management framework. Greece is one such example of a country without such a framework, where the experience on the subject is still developing. At the same time several mega-projects, brownfield redevelopment, or infrastructure works are already in progress across the country and authorities, services providers and landowners encounter significant decision making, scientific and management challenges on several topics, such as land transfer, remedial targets and excavated soil reuse. As a consequence, significant negative impacts on planning, the quality of projects, environmental benefits and costs occur in practice.

It is imperative therefore that a coherent EU-wide policy frame and joint tools for contaminated land management are considered to support all Member States in striving for resource efficiency.

The new EU Soil Strategy introduces the concept of “healthy soil” and sets out a framework and concrete measures forsoil protection and restoration to ensure the sustainable use of soil by 2050. In this context new policymaking tools regarding, amongst others, excavated soil reuse (“passport for excavated soil”) and the issue of liability transfer (“soil health certificate”) are expected to have a significant role in the new era ofcontaminated land management and the transition to circular economy in the EU.

This workshop aims to highlight the new opportunities and challenges that the EU Soil Strategy brings and promote feasible solutions in the application of circularity principles to the very demanding and complicated topic of contaminated land management across the EU.

Abstracts (maximum two pages or your alternative/pitch) should be sent by email to Nan Su before **September 16th**. Afterwards the organizing committee will evaluate the abstracts and the authors will be notified of acceptance by **October 14th**.

Evaluation criteria will be e.g.

- Being in line with goal/topic of the workshop,
- Proven approaches/methods/techniques
- Beneficial for society
- Broad applicability and availability of the technology
- Contribution of the approach/method/technique to the EU objectives

The workshop will be dealing with several key areas (final number of topics will be chosen based on the applications):

Topic 1: Circular economy principles for contaminated land management practices.

A circular economy is the cornerstone of natural resource protection, for the sustainable use of soils and materials and furthermore a driver for soil conditions, biodiversity and (ground-)water protection. Contaminated land management is thus closely linked to these societal challenges.

Contaminated land management needs to be integrated into the circular economy without creating any harmful impact on soil and groundwater or additional restrictions on land use. On the other hand, a circular economy strives for reducing the amount of waste.

In this sub session, on these basic principles, we are looking for some answers:

- What are the circular economy principles for contaminated land management practices?
- What are the best practices in the EU and elsewhere?
- What are the problems to consider?
- What are the challenges that confront us?
- What are interesting (successful or unsuccessful) case studies?
- When applying this economic model, what are the lessons learned?

We are looking for abstracts which focus on the answers to these questions, but also it is encouraged to pay attention to the following question: what are the challenges and opportunities for industry, policy makers, scientists & service providers in our work, when we make the transition to sustainable land management, including the objective to make our soils healthier, and circular economy approaches?

Topic 2: Innovative approaches and business models

Circular use of land, re-use of soils or the use of other materials (i.e., raw materials and/or residual flows) upon or added into the soil in order to improve (physical) soil quality or soil structure presents an opportunity for the contaminated land community. Application of circularity principles to soil management however is not without environmental risk.

As protecting soils, managing them sustainably and restoring degraded soils is the future common standard, two main factors are relevant in making sustainable circular use possible. First can this be done in an environmentally safe way, taking the entire life cycle into account. Second there is a requirement for a robust business model: it does not work if one party can pick the sweet fruits of economic benefits, while the other party (including society) has to bear the negative environmental effects and costs.

In this sub session we are looking for innovative approaches and examples of business models which can work in order to boost circularity in the field of contaminated land management. We request abstracts covering the following topic areas:

- Examples of practical and practice-proven regulation on the circular use of soils
- (New) methods and techniques to enhance the re-use of excavated impacted soils
- Innovative techniques to reduce concentrations and limit mass flows of hazardous substances and in particular SVHC (Substances of Very High Concern)
- Examples, best practices and lessons learned of the use of raw materials or residual flows on and into the soils to improve soil quality or make (valuable) use of these waste streams
- Methods, including early warning indicators, available to assess and monitor the circular use of soils in this field

We are both looking for abstracts which focus on examples of practice-proven regulation, specific techniques or a specific project/site, but it is encouraged to pay attention to the whole value chain.

Topic 3: Instruments & quality assurance

Applying circularity principles in contaminated land management contributes to a sustainable use of the raw material but requires both the protection of health and the environment in the present and future. Concretely, such asystem should be able to distinguish clean, fertile and healthy soils from contaminated soils and should provide tools to ensure safe (re)use of land by traceability of excavated soil and will condition soil (re)use to reuse it's quality.

In this sub session we are focussing, amongst others, on the instruments and tools introduced by the EU SoilStrategy on how to create synergies for resource efficiency and traceability ("passport for excavated soil") and how to organise liability transfer ("soil health certificate"). This suggest a need to go beyond a including existing schemes at national and regional level or quality assurance and certification systemsfor recycling materials.

We request abstracts covering the following topic areas:

- Examples of national or regional systems already in place for regulation, their assessment, criteria and related tools and instruments
- Examples of national or regional initiatives under discussion for future applications
- Interfaces to Circular Economy the use of recycling materials and how to handle material flows without trade-offs for improving soil conditions
- Tools and instruments to assess direct and indirect inputs of substances to soil and groundwater and to monitor risks with regard to good status
- Best practices and lessons learned, including questions raised, feedbacks, problems faced and possible solutions, possible restrictions to shape instruments at EU level.

We want to provide in this sub session an overview of the different initiatives and each of the examples provided must present the purpose of the policy tool / instrument (what for?), the conditions of application and potentials for digitalisation (when, what information and where?), the parties involved in the process at each stage (who?), the related policy and costs (how?)

Organization committee members:
COMMON FORUM Representatives
Dietmar Müller-Grabherr – CF General Secretary | Environment Agency Austria (EAA)
Jörg Frauenstein – Umweltbundesamt (UBA)

NICOLE Representatives
Chantal Broeken – WSP
Hayley Thomas – Shell
Jean-Louis Seveque - AquaTerraSana
Linda Maring – Deltares
Iraklis Panagiotakis - ENYDRON
Martin Doeswijk - TAUW
Willem Hendriks - Witteveen+Bos

SOILveR Representatives
Frédérique Cadiere - Ademe

www.nicole.org

https://www.linkedin.com/company/network-for-industially-co-ordinated-sustainable-land-management-in-europe

www.commonforum.eu

www.soilver.eu