



## LETTER OF AGREEMENT

BETWEEN

**THE AFRICAN UNION SOIL OBSERVATORY (AUSO) HORIZON EUROPE PROJECT**

AND

**THE SOIL HEALTH MONITORING AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR SUSTAINABLE SOIL MANAGEMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION (SOILS4MED) PRIMA PROJECT**

This Letter of Agreement is entered by and between:

The African Union Soil Observatory (AUSO) project, represented by The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) located at No. 7 Flower Avenue, New Achimota Mile 7, Accra, Ghana,

and

The Soil Health Monitoring and Information Systems for Sustainable Soil Management in the Mediterranean Region (SOILS4MED) project, represented by University of Sassari (UNISS), Dept. of Agricultural Sciences located at Dipartimento di Agraria – Sustainable management of Soil and Landscape Research Unit (SMSL), Viale Italia 39, Sassari, Italy.

This Letter of Agreement (“LoA”) is made and entered into by and between AUSO and SOILS4MED, concerning knowledge exchange on soil health (indicators) and soil information systems for food security and sustainable land management.

WHEREAS AUSO has as goal to establish a comprehensive soil information system for Africa to support the management of African soils. This includes developing a scalable soil health dashboard for Africa, along with a plan for long-term sustainability; Identifying significant local and regional thresholds for essential soil health descriptors; Collecting new data strategically to address knowledge gaps in areas; creating roadmaps to illustrate trends in soil health responses to policy instruments; and supporting participating African countries in developing national soil health strategies.

WHEREAS SOILS4MED has as goal to engage a wide platform of Mediterranean scientists and SHs in the co-design of scientifically sound policy-relevant soil health indicator sets and monitoring strategies harmonized across the MR, with particular focus on non-EU countries, as enabling condition for SSWM and for the protection, restoration, and improvement of soil health and land conditions in the region.

WHEREAS, both parties recognize the pressing need for comprehensive soil data and capacity building to support protecting, restoring, and improving soil health, sustainable land management, and climate change adaptation in Africa, and are committed to exchange knowledge to this end.

THEREFORE, the parties, having common goals and expressing their mutual desire to cooperate on soil information systems, soil health, sustainable land management and capacity building have agreed to formalize their relationship in accordance with the following Articles.



## **1. COMMENCEMENT AND DURATION**

The LoA shall enter into effect on the date of the last signature by the parties and shall remain in effect unless it is amended in writing or terminated in accordance with clause 7.

## **2. EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION**

- 2.1. The parties have the intention to exchange information and knowledge on the extent, scope and magnitude of their impact and research programs in areas of mutual interest.
- 2.2. The parties have the intention to exchange information and knowledge in areas of mutual interest in the form of newsletters, publications and other media.
- 2.3. Each party have the intention to invite the other to participate in scientific and project meetings, conferences, workshops and seminars that it holds, and which are related to the parties' common activities.
- 2.4. The parties have the intention to cooperate in organizing scientific conferences, workshops, and specialized seminars and training programs in areas of mutual interest.

## **3. RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER, AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

- 3.1. In accordance with binding collaboration agreements as may be signed as per Article 5 between the two parties and subject at all times to their personnel and budgetary limitations, AUSO and SOILS4MED may promote cooperation in research, exchange visits and consultations, in areas of mutual interest, including but not limited to:
  - 3.1.1 Joint research initiatives on soil health, soil information systems and sustainable land management in Africa, particularly in the Mediterranean region in North Africa;
  - 3.1.2 Strengthening of the National Soil Information Systems (NSIS) for Africa;
  - 3.1.3 Policy advocacy and engagement with African government agencies to incorporate soil data and soil health into sustainable land management;
  - 3.1.4 Capacity-building programs, including training modules for students, government officials, and industry professionals in soil science and sustainable land management practices; and
  - 3.1.5 Organizing stakeholder workshops, conferences, and exchange visits to share best practices and research findings.

## **4. COORDINATION**

- 4.1. The parties shall meet on mutually agreed dates if feasible to discuss areas of cooperation, to develop work plans that describe more specifically the activities to be carried out within the projects. Where possible, these meetings will be scheduled to coincide with other meetings between the parties.



## 5. COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENTS

5.1. To the extent the parties agree to enter into collaboration agreements, such agreements shall *inter alia* specify:

- 5.1.1. The project's objects and duration;
- 5.1.2. The contributions and responsibilities of each party;
- 5.1.3. The intellectual assets to be shared and created and related intellectual property ownership issues;
- 5.1.4. Publication rights and arrangements;
- 5.1.5. Whenever possible the Parties agree to make available the Outputs to Third Parties in accordance with Creative Commons license CC-BY (Open Access);
- 5.1.6. The rights and obligations of each party; and
- 5.1.7. Any other provisions as may be relevant and/or applicable.

5.2. The parties specifically acknowledge and agree that this LoA does not entail any funding obligation, in particular that:

- 5.2.1. Implementation of specific collaborative programs will depend upon the availability of funds.

## 6. MANAGEMENT OF INTELLECTUAL ASSETS

6.1. This Letter of Agreement ("LoA") does not affect the ownership of any intellectual property held by the Parties prior to this agreement, which shall remain the sole property of the Party contributing it to the collaboration. The intellectual property made available for the purposes of this LoA, together with the applicable access rights, conditions of use, and acknowledgment requirements, is specified in Annex I (*Background intellectual property and acknowledgement*). Any use of intellectual property owned by the other Party shall be subject to the terms set out in this LoA and Annex I and shall include appropriate acknowledgment in the form specified therein.

6.2. Ownership to the intellectual properties generated from joint activities of the Parties under this framework agreement shall be jointly owned by AUSO and SOILS4MED;

6.3. The parties agree that the data shall be made publicly available for academic and scientific use, while ensuring the protection of proprietary data and knowledge where applicable;

## 7. TERMINATION

Either party may terminate this LoA by giving at least three months prior written notice to the other party.



**8. MISCELLANEOUS**

- 8.1. This LoA does not obligate either party to work exclusively with the other on any project.
- 8.2. Any amendment to this LoA shall be effective only if in writing and signed on behalf of each party by a duly authorized signatory.
- 8.3. This LoA is intended to set forth the general understanding of the parties with respect to the subject matter herein and does not contractually bind the parties.
- 8.4. This LoA does not create any waiver of either party's privileges and immunities.

As agreed by the contracting parties and signed by their authorized representatives as shown below,

Signed and date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed and date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by:  
*Prof. Oluwole Fatunbi*  
8BC849928BBA47B...

Firmato da:  
*Claudio Zucca*  
C54A39F5A3694CA...

5/13/2026

5/12/2026

Name: Prof. Oluwole Fatunbi

Name: Prof. Claudio Zucca

Title: Project coordinator for AUSO project.

Title: Project coordinator for SOILS4MED

Ag. Director of Research and Innovation of FARA

Associate Professor in Pedology at UNISS

FARA

UNISS



## Annex I – Background intellectual property and acknowledgment

### 1. Purpose

This Annex specifies the background for the Intellectual Property (“IP”) that the Parties make available for the purposes of the collaboration under this LoA, as well as the conditions for access, use, and acknowledgment.

### 2. Identification of intellectual properties

Item No.	Description of IP	Owning Party	Type	Included / Excluded
1	Continental and regional soil data layers	AUSO	Data	Included
2	Soil information system architecture and data standards	AUSO	Methodology	Included
3	Digital soil mapping tools	AUSO	Methodology	Included
4	Soil health conceptual framework, soil health indicators, field protocols, and assessment methodologies	SOILS4MED	Methodology	Included
5	Soil information system architecture and data standards	SOILS4MED	Methodology / System design	Included
6	Field soil data and related observations	Both Parties	Data	Included
7	Enabling environment information	SOILS4MED	Knowledge	Included
8	Training materials, guidelines, and capacity development resources	Both Parties	Documentation	Included
9	Any IP explicitly identified by either Party as excluded from sharing	Both Parties	Various	Excluded

Only the IP explicitly listed as “Included” in this Annex shall be considered available to the other Party under this LoA.

### 3. Access rights and conditions of use

3.1. IP identified as “Included” shall be made available solely for the purpose of implementing the collaboration between the Parties, including knowledge exchange, joint analyses, and capacity-building activities.

3.2. Unless otherwise specified, access to IP for implementation purposes shall be granted on a royalty-free basis.

3.3. Specific conditions and restrictions:

- AUSO datasets (Item 1): May be subject to data-sharing policies, including attribution requirements and restrictions on redistribution of raw data.
- AUSO and SOILS4MED tools (Items 2–3, 5): Use limited to non-commercial research and collaboration purposes unless otherwise agreed.
- AUSO and SOILS4MED soil data (Item 6): Use subject to prior approval for publication and may require aggregation or anonymization. Use of legacy soil data based on access permissions established by data owning partners.

3.4. Use of IP for purposes other than implementation of the collaboration shall require prior written agreement between the Parties.



#### **4. Acknowledgment requirements**

4.1. Any use of IP shall include appropriate acknowledgment of the owning Party.

4.2. Standard acknowledgment wording:

*"This work makes use of [data, tools, or methodologies] provided by [Owning Party / Project name]."*

4.3. Where relevant, outputs shall acknowledge both collaborating initiatives, including the AUSO project and the SOILS4MED project.

4.4. Additional requirements:

- Citation of datasets and tools where DOIs or formal references exist;
- Inclusion of project names and, where appropriate, logos in reports and presentations;
- Acknowledgment in publications, presentations, and digital platforms.

4.5. The acknowledging Party shall, where feasible, share drafts of publications or outputs with the other Party for review of acknowledgment and use of IP at least 5 days prior to publication.

#### **5. Confidentiality**

Where IP is identified as confidential or restricted, the receiving Party shall:

- Use such IP solely for the purposes defined in this LoA;
- Not disclose it to third parties without prior written consent;
- Apply appropriate technical and organizational measures to protect its confidentiality.

#### **6. Updates to the annex**

This Annex may be updated at any time by mutual written agreement of the Parties, including the addition of new datasets, tools, or methodologies.

#### **7. No transfer of ownership**

Nothing in this Annex shall be construed as transferring ownership of any IP between the Parties.