

# Introduction to the Working with Soil scheme



**WORKING WITH SOIL**  
setting standards in soil science



## Introduction

**Professional soil science conducted under contract will very often involve one or more of the following generic activities:**

- The investigation of soils in the field and their consistent description according to a recognised scheme
- The interpretation of soil profiles, properties and conditions, soil maps and other soil, earth science, climatic or topographic data and information to guide the current or future use and/or management of land for a range of interests
- The identification of the soil resources at a site prior to their excavation, storage and eventual re-instatement

The work may be at a site-specific, local, regional, or national scale and may range across local land practice to national and international policy development and regulation.

This document describes the *Working with Soil* scheme, which sets out the minimum qualifications, skills, and knowledge, which the British Society of Soil Science (BSSS) considers necessary for scientists and engineers working on the above identified aspects of soil science. Ten documents identify minimum competencies for the foundation skills of field soil investigation (Document 1) and a number of commonly-conducted tasks.

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## Who will the scheme benefit and how?

In producing these documents, the Society aims to set and improve standards in professional soil science and to assist clients in identifying and engaging scientists and engineers with the appropriate combination of qualifications, knowledge, and skills to carry out soil-related work to a high standard. Soil is a vital natural resource that delivers many ecosystem services and much economic value. It is important that those advising on soil health, use and management meet professional standards. Society imposes standards on professionals such as doctors, engineers, and lawyers and we should expect no less from those practising professional soil science. It is intended that the scheme will be expanded over time with further task-based documents and related training opportunities.

Our hope is that the scheme will prove of value to those commissioning soil science work and that it is seen as an industry standard and widely adopted across relevant sectors. Its adoption by Government and industry will benefit scientists and engineers, with improved recognition for their qualifications, expertise and skills in soils. Ultimately, we hope that society will benefit from improved and more sustainably managed soil resources.

The documents are freely available as downloads via the Society's website: [www.soils.org.uk](http://www.soils.org.uk)

The Society sets no limitations as to their use and has no objection to their inclusion as annexes in tender or contract documents, but accepts no liability, direct or indirect, for the consequences of their use.

## The Working with Soil documents

- BSSS PCSS Document 1 – **Foundation skills in field soil investigation, description and interpretation**
- BSSS PCSS Document 2 – **Agricultural Land Classification (England and Wales)**
- BSSS PCSS Document 3 – **Soil science in integrated soil and water management**
- BSSS PCSS Document 4 – **Soil science in soil handling and restoration**
- BSSS PCSS Document 5 – **Soil science in land evaluation and planning**
- BSSS PCSS Document 6 – **Soil science in the establishment, management and/or conservation of natural habitats and ecosystems**
- BSSS PCSS Document 7 – **Soil science for the application of organic materials to land**
- BSSS PCSS Document 8 – **Soil science in landscape design and construction**
- BSSS PCSS Document 9 – **Research and development leadership**
- BSSS PCSS Document 10 – **Soil science in crop and livestock production**

The documents can be downloaded from [www.soils.org.uk](http://www.soils.org.uk)

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