

ECOBASE NEWSLETTER 2nd period

Visit of the members of ECOBASE team to the Institute of General and Physical Chemistry in Belgrade, Serbia

Date: 6/5/2025



Prof. dr Blažo Lalević elaborated the main objective of Serbia, as the ECOBASE partner, and that is recognition of degraded agricultural lands due to poor land management practices and restoration measures. Precise detection of this requires the application of modern methods, especially when it comes to soils degraded by excessive use of pesticides. For this purpose, we visited Laboratory for Spectroscopy and Laboratory for Chemical Analyses.

During this visit, Natalia Niedzbała, PhD student from Poland joined ECOBASE team and shared her experience with biochar as a soil conditioner.

Degraded soil issues, like all other ecosystem problems, requires a broad and multidisciplinary approach that secures long-lasting and sustainable solutions.

Together, we can make a difference and mitigate soil degradation!

**Research activities by the Aetoloakarnania Chamber
with the productive actors of the agri-food sector
regarding soil health quality-degradation, within the
framework of the ECOBASE project in
Aetoloakarnania in Western Greece.**

Date: 12/5/2025



Soil degradation is a major global problem and a cause for alarm, as it is a key ecosystem related to food production, energy, carbon sequestration, water purification and nutrient regulation. When soil is degraded, it causes a decline in soil health, biodiversity and productivity. This leads to problems at all levels of many ecosystems and significant environmental consequences, such as flooding and mass migration.

To help combat soil degradation, the IPA ADRION – ECOBASE project aims to develop innovative and sustainable soil management strategies to address the issue and its associated impacts.

Within the framework of the project's actions, the Aetoloakarnania Chamber implemented a research activity through digital communication on social media as well as meetings at the headquarters of agricultural cooperatives and producer groups, with the aim of collecting data useful for identifying the main gaps, needs and challenges that need to be addressed for the effective implementation of innovative and sustainable soil management strategies.

There was also information on the implementation of future Digital info-activities & events for the signing of a memorandum of understanding and the support of the creation of a Stakeholder Network of the ECOBASE project with the aim of:

- participating in all project actions, such as events, workshops, and other capacity building and networking activities.
- becoming part of the project methodologies and technologies and support the dissemination and adoption in their respective sectors.
- participating in the feedback network by providing know-how for the implementation of effective soil management strategies and practices.
- assisting in engagement with local communities and stakeholders, promoting the

Presentation of the ECOBASE Project at the 36th Festival of Delicacies from Slovenian Farms by the Agriculture and Forestry Institute Ptuj (KGZ Ptuj)

Date: 22/5/2025



The Festival of Delicacies from Slovenian Farms is a nationwide project that promotes the production of healthy local food and its direct marketing. Now in its 36th year, the festival takes place every May in the Minorite Monastery in Ptuj, where the main exhibition of products from Slovenian farms and a marketplace of local goods are held. As the main organizer of the event in Ptuj, we took the opportunity on Saturday, May 17, 2025, to present the project activities—specifically the ECOBASE project—with a focus on the topic of soil degradation.

ECOBASE project team members presented the following to festival visitors:

- basic information about the ECOBASE project
- the importance of healthy soils for food production and everyday life
- types and consequences of soil degradation,
- examples of good practices for soil conservation and restoration.

Interaction took place through short conversations and individual content presentations. We found that the general public has relatively little knowledge about the issue of soil degradation, and even less awareness of the long-term consequences of this process. Visitors listened to the presentation with interest and asked questions, which indicates openness to further awareness raising. Participation in the Festival of Delicacies from Slovenian Farms proved to be an effective opportunity for promoting the ECOBASE project and raising public awareness about the importance of soil protection. We aim to expand this activity in the future with similar field-based presentations.



Visit of the member of ECOBASE team to the Agro-Mediterranean Faculty of the University "Džemal Bjedić" in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Date: 27/5/2025



The Agro-Mediterranean Faculty of the University "Džemal Bjedić" in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, hosted a meeting in the beginning of May 2025 to discuss future project collaboration. Prof. dr Blažo Lalević highlighted the significance of land degradation as a result of inadequate farming practices and presented the "ECOBASE" initiative during the meeting. The fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina also faces land degradation issues was brought up, which makes it possible for both countries to collaborate on EU projects.

ECOBASE INTERREG IPA-ADRION project, synergies, and activities in the Region of Western Greece.

Date: 14/6/2025



Pantelis Barouchas, Professor and head of the Soil Science Laboratory of the Department of Agriculture of the University of Patras and the associate partner Agrifood Partnership of Western Greece, represented by the President and Deputy Regional Governor of Rural Development, Andreas Filias, had the chance to present the ECOBASE INTERREG IPA-ADRION project, synergies, and activities for combating soil degradation in Western Greece and especially in those areas with a high rainfall rate in the Aetoloakarnania regional unit, during a workshop with stakeholders, cooperatives and agri-food local enterprises.

The event was organized on Tuesday 27/05 in Stamna lagoon, Messolonghi- Region of Western Greece in a parallel presentation of the results of the project with the title «Optimization of the irrigation and fertilization system in table olive crops using innovative precision farming methods – operational team ANCIENT OLENEIA in the framework of action 2 of RDP METRO 16 "COOPERATION": Submeasure 16.1 & 16.2 Establishment and operation of Operational Teams of the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) for the productivity and sustainability of agriculture by the Agrifood Partnership of the Region of Western Greece is financed by European and national funds through the Ministry of Agricultural Development. An extended roundtable discussion was held, with representatives from the Western Greece Region serving as associate partners, including Deputy Regional Governor of the Regional Unit of Aetolonia, Thanasis Mavromatis, and Deputy Regional Councilor, Giorgos Kontogiannis, as well as representatives from various institutions and local enterprises.

As soil degradation in Western Greece by the combination of high irrigation and rainfall rates is a central topic, all the representatives gave their promise to continue their efforts to inform all the stakeholders regarding the implementation of sustainable soil management practices, such as lowering of fertilization inputs and the number of the periodical spraying with cooper-based pesticides.



[ECOBASE NEWS]:ECOBASE Project at the KGZ Ptuj Annual Presentation Day in Slovenia

Date: 20/6/2025



On Friday, 6 June 2025, the Annual Presentation Day took place at KGZ Ptuj, where the activities of the institute were presented to the visitors. There was no dedicated presentation of the ECOBASE project at the event; however, the project was included in the general presentation of the institute's work. In his opening speech, the Director of KGZ Ptuj, Mr. Rebernišek, emphasized that the institute participates in several national and international projects, including the ECOBASE project. In the area designated for the presentation of project activities, a poster of the ECOBASE project was displayed, providing additional visual information about the project to the event visitors.



The event was attended by several employees of KGZ Ptuj, guests, and visitors from various agricultural and professional sectors, including the Director of the Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia (KGZS), Mr. Martin Mavsar, and the Mayor of the Municipality of Ptuj, Ms. Nuška Gajšek. The activities took place in a relaxed atmosphere, which allowed for informal discussions and networking, also touching upon project-related topics. The event was well attended, and visitors had the opportunity to learn about the various activities of the institute, with the ECOBASE project presented as part of the wider scope of KGZ Ptuj's project work.

Soil Health Survey Conducted Within the ECOBASE Project – MONTENEGRO

Date: 6/7/2025

As part of the ECOBASE project – “Ecological Solutions to Combat Land Degradation”, funded through the Interreg IPA ADRION programme, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (PP8) is implementing activities aimed at improving soil health and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources.

Staff from the Directorate for Advisory Services and Field Control in the Area of Plant Production, in cooperation with the Department for International Cooperation and IPA Projects, surveyed agricultural producers in the municipalities of Tuzi, Zeta, Podgorica, and Danilovgrad.

The questionnaire focused on identifying challenges, needs, and priorities related to soil health.

The collected data will provide valuable input for planning future project activities, building capacities for the preservation and enhancement of soil quality, and raising awareness of the importance of sustainable soil management.



ECOBASE Networking activities of Aetoloakarnania Chamber project team executives with stakeholders- Memorandum of understanding

Date: 18/7/2025



In the last three months the Aetoloakarnania Chamber project team organized a series of meetings with representatives of stakeholders of the agrifood sector in the Region of Western Greece. During these meetings, networking activities took place and the importance of signing the memorandum of understanding within the framework of the project ECOBASE was explained in detail. All the stakeholders were very interested in the project and the possible outcomes which will provide solutions on major problems of the agrifood sector. The effort to sign memorandums of understanding is ongoing with the aim of creating a network for maximum communication and participation of the agricultural food ecosystem in the ECOBASE project.



Consultations Held with Agricultural Associations within the ECOBASE Project, in Montenegro

Date: 31/7/2025



The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of Montenegro, within the ECOBASE project implemented through the Interreg IPA ADRION programme, is carrying out activities aimed at preserving soil health and ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources. In this context, field visits and discussions were conducted with agricultural associations in the central and northern regions, with the goal of collecting data, identifying challenges, and exchanging experiences.

Representatives of the associations highlighted that the main causes of soil degradation are linked to human activity – land conversion for construction purposes, abandonment of arable land, grassland burning, and limited access to lease unused land. In Pljevlja, particular emphasis was placed on issues related to old mining pits and neglected infrastructure, while in Nikšić, the need for continuous increase in livestock numbers was underscored, as it directly impacts the quality and management of pastures. The participants also stressed the need for better enforcement of legislation, producer education, and more effective institutional coordination.

During the consultations, project activities related to the development of tools for soil data exchange were presented, as well as information on the drafting of the new Law on Agricultural Land. Participants shared concrete proposals for improving the legal framework and protecting fertile land. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management actively participates in international projects of this kind, with a particular focus on linking scientific and state institutions with agricultural producers.



ECOBASE IPA-ADRION DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES AT EUROSOIL 2025 CONFERENCE IN SEVILLE

Date: 23/9/2025

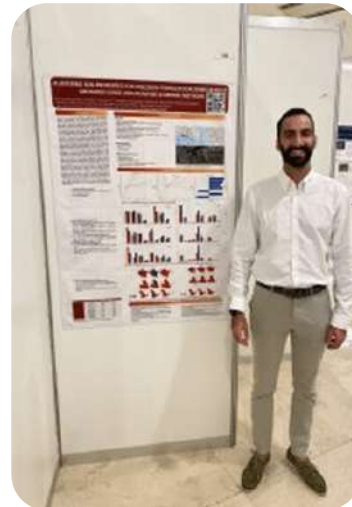


The Soil Science Laboratory of the University of Patras had the honor of participating in the European conference Eurosoil 2025, an international forum that brings together scientists and stakeholders united by a shared vision: the protection and sustainable management of soils.

Within the framework of the conference, a research paper was presented entitled 'Clustering soil properties for precision fertilization zones in olive orchards using unsupervised learning methods'. This work addresses precision agriculture practices in olive cultivation and their role in combating soil degradation.

The persistent challenge of soil degradation was among the central themes of the conference. The Soil Science Laboratory also had the opportunity to present the research project ECOBASE – Eco-Friendly Nature-based Solutions to Mitigate Soil Degradation, which focuses on addressing soil degradation and promoting sustainable practices that contribute to the preservation of this invaluable natural resource.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all colleagues and collaborators for their contributions to the research, as well as to all conference participants for the productive discussions. Soil degradation remains a pressing global issue that demands our collective attention and action.



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