

ANNUAL REPORT NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF SOIL SCIENCE

Anno 2016

1. Short introduction on the subject of research and the goals of the Committee

The NCSS was set up in 2002, following long lasting activities of the Soil Science Society of Belgium (started in 1924) and with the purpose to bring soil science to the attention of the broader public with particular focus of the young people. This original mission of SSSB/NCSS is more relevant now than ever: soil and soil suitability comes daily in the media and in the public debate: soil as an ultimate powerhouse and store for carbon sequestration to check climate change; trade-offs between food production versus agro-fuels; the preservation of our pristine soils; the conservation of our soil heritage; the rehabilitation of marginal lands and the remediation of polluted soils. The NCSS is the representative organization for all soil scientists active in Belgium and is the official Belgian representative into the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS).

Special editions of our activities were launched in the wake the UNESCO International Year of Soils, and in view of the International Decade of the Soil under the IUSS:

Continuation of the prestigious “Africa in Profile” exhibition, through to the end of January 2016

Day of the Young Soil Scientist: Keynote by the President Bruno Delvaux.

International congress on soil science at UCL, Louvain-La-Neuve

Congress excursion to Bertem Forest and to the Zonien Forest

Thematic Day (on the World Soil Day on 5 December): Soil processes and biogeochemical cycling of elements.

Moreover, the society made special efforts to reach out to the general public:

Establishment of a virtual tour through the “Africa in Profile” exhibition:

<http://ees.kuleuven.be/africa-in-profile/virtuele-tentoonstelling/virtual-tour.html>

Soil on Canvas Exhibition at the Culture House “The Warande” at Turnhout along with its thematic symposium on soil heritage

Joint excursion with Belgian Association of Geomorphologists (BAG)

As follow-up of the “Africa in Profile” exhibition by KU Leuven, ISRIC, EU-JRC and Africa Museum (5/12/2015 - 29/01/2016), a permanent soil hub will be established in the Africa Museum of Tervuren

We contributed to a round table discussion in the EU-DG Development with focus on soil care

2. Member list

Board:

President: B. Delvaux (French)
Vice-President: S. Deckers (Dutch)
Secretary-General: K. Vancampenhout (Dutch)
Treasurer: Gilles Colinet (French)
Executive Officer: G. Barrie (Dutch)

Board members:

G. Baert (Dutch)
P. Boeckx (Dutch)
G. Colinet (French)
J.T. Cornelis (French)
S. De Neve (Dutch)
B. Delvaux (French)
P. Engels (French)
E. Goidts (French)
R. Langohr (Dutch)
X. Legrain (French)
S. Marx (French)
R. Merckx (Dutch)
J. Poesen (Dutch)
V. Vanacker (French)
A. Verdoodt (Dutch)

Associated board members:

C. Ampe, W. Cornelis, P. Delmelle, O. de Witte, S. Dondeyne, S. Garré, M. Kervin, F. Mees, J. Nyssen, S. Opfergeldt, P. Sonnet,

Honorary members:

L. Bock, J. Chapelle, S. Deckers, J. Dufey, M. Geypens, A. Herbillon, G. Hofman, M. Penninckx, O. Van Cleemput, M. Van Meirvenne, E. Van Ranst, B. Van Wesemael, W. Verheye

Members: 140 - 48 paying members and 92 students.

3. Meetings of the Committee in 2016

16/03/2016: NCSS board meeting, Royal Academy, Brussels

16/03/2016: General Assembly and Day of the Young Soil Scientists at RASAB, with some 45 participants

10/06/2016: Contribution to the excursion of the Belgian Association of Geomorphologists in the catchment of the AA river: some 50 participants. Organization: Jan Nyssen and Amaury Frankl (UGent)

From 5 - 8 July, 2016: Joint International Congress (YES) of the Soil Science Society of Belgium with the French Soil Science Society (AFES), organized by UCL (Bas Vanwesemael and Bruno Delvaux): 150 participants

8/07/2016: Annual excursion in the margin of the YES congress to Bertembos (Seppe Deckers, Karen Vancampenhout and Bruno Delvaux) and to the Zonienforest (Roger Langohr), 150 participants

25/10/2016: Soil on Canvas exhibition in the Cultural Centre at Turnhout (Karen Vancampenhout): 135 participants

25/10/2016: Symposium in the margin of “Soil on Canvas” on “Soil awareness - Bodem bewust”: 25 participants

25/10/2016: Post-symposium excursion to visit the “Soil drawer - bodemschuif” in the nature reserve “De Liereman”, 12 participants

06/12/2016: Soil processes and biogeochemical cycling of elements: J.T. Cornelis, ULiege, Gembloux: 45 participants

14/12/2016: Thematic Day on the numerical soil map of Wallonia: Xavier Legrain, ULiege, Gembloux: **over 100 participants**

Main conclusions: the NCSS normally organizes 5 activities per year: 1) Day of the Young Scientists in February, 2) a field excursion in May/June or September and 3) a Thematic Day in November - December & 4) two boards (one in February, together with the Day of the Young Scientists, one in December, together with the Thematic Day). This year, special and additional activities were organized in the aftermath of the International Year of the soil and also to mark the International decennium of the Soil.

4. International Scientific Union

The planned Eurosoil meeting of the European Confederation of Soil Sciences in Istanbul (17-22th of July 2016) was cancelled due to the coup attempt in Turkey. The next Eurosoil meeting will be organized in Geneva, Switzerland in 2018.

Main conclusions: K. Vancampenhout is member of the IUSS Board. Stefaan Dondeyne and Seppe Deckers are in the Board of the IUSS Working Group WRB on international soil classification, which organized an international meeting and excursion on Soil Classification in South Africa. Seppe Deckers is also chairing the Ad-Hoc Selection Committee of the bi-annual IUSS-Guy Smith Medal Award, the latest Medal Award (2016) was bestowed to Dr. Juan Comerma from Venezuela.

5. Other activities in 2016 (description, goal, attendance)

Participation to the EGU at Vienna, Austria in April 2016

Seppe Deckers received the status of “Honorary Membership of the International Soil Reference and Information Centre (ISRIC), Wageningen University, The Netherlands on 8/09/2016 for his life-long work on soil classification, more particularly the World Reference Base for Soil Resources (WRB)

11/07/2016: International Soil Monolith Campaign (SSSB and ISRIC) on Luvisols and Stagnosol at Anderlecht (Karen Vancampenhout)

23/08/2016: ad-hoc excursion to an excavation site in the river bench of the Schelde, West of Gent (Jari Nickelsen)

6. Perspectives

NCSS will organize 5 core activities in 2017:

2 board meetings (February 15, 2017 & December 5, 2017) at RASAB

A general assembly and Day of the Young Soil Scientist on February 15, 2017 at RASAB

An annual excursion on **The Orneau : a fertile valley for soil research, organization Patrick Engels, ULiege, on 23/5/2017**

Thematic Day - December 5, 2017: Soil Mapping in Belgium: past, present and future, organization Seppe Deckers (KU Leuven).

In addition, other activities will be under the NCSS umbrella:

IUSS, Working Group WRB: International Soil Classification excursion to Riga, Letland in July 2017.

6. Financial report 2015 by the Executive Officer

Balance on 31/12/2016

1° Current account 31/12/2015 saldo **1 986,43**

Income 2016

Membership SSSB (22x25€) + (9x125€) = 550+1125 = **1 675**

Total income 2016 **1 675**

Outcome 2016

Bank costs **33,86**

Young scientist day 2016 **497,57**

Trip (S) Oil on Canvas **228,00**

Board meeting 29/11/16 **41,15**

Total outcome 2016 **800,58**

New saldo 31/12/2016 **2 860,85**

2° Saving account 31/12/2015 saldo **1535,40**

Intrest **3,02**

New saldo 31/12/2016 **1 538,42**

The result on 31 / 12 / 2016 :

On January 2015 an invitation has been sent by sssb@lists.ulg.ac.be to 300 nominal members, concerning payment of their membership fee. It has been maintained at 25 € for one year and at 125 € for five years. Students pay no fee ; PHD's do.

31 members have paid their membership fee in 2016 (22 for one year, 2016 ; and 9 for five years 2016-2020). So an amount of 1 675 € (22 x 25) + (9 x 125) has been deposited on the account of the society.

34 members had already paid their fee for 2016 as a result of a five year deposit (mostly starting in 2015 extending to 2019 as result of the new approach of the Executive Officer in 2015).

As a total amount SSSB now lists 64 paying members.

Membership of The International Scientific Unions - 2014 has eventually been paid from the current account of SSSB in 2015. After a long period of financial uncertainty RASAB has received for the year 2015 its budget. We received a letter in which they promise to pay the membership contribution for Belgium for the year 2015. For 2016 we did not receive any message, so we presume RASAB has paid the contribution.

Conclusion: As revenues exceeds expenses, the overall financial situation has a positive result and so the saldo of current account has increased.

Greet Barrie, Executive Officer SSSB

Bruno Delvaux
President
Karen Vancampenhout
Secretary-General

Seppe Deckers
Vice-President
Gilles Colinet
Treasurer