

Introduction to the Working with Soil scheme



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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 introduces a scheme, *Working with Soil*, which sets out minimum qualifications, skills and knowledge which the Institute of Professional Soil Scientists considers necessary for scientists and engineers working on the above identified aspects of soil science. Eight documents form the first release and identify minimum competencies for the foundation skills of field soil investigation and a number of commonly conducted tasks.

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Who will the scheme benefit and how?

In producing these documents, the Institute 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 its health and its use and management meet professional standards. Society imposes standards on doctors, engineers, lawyers and other professionals and we should expect no less from those practising professional soil science. Our intention is to expand the scheme by adding more task-based documents as needed.

Our hope is that the scheme will prove of value to those contracting out soil science work and that it will become an industry standard, widely adopted in all the appropriate activity sectors. Its adoption by Government and industry will benefit scientists and engineers with the required qualifications, expertise and skills through preferred access to more work. Ultimately, we hope that society will benefit from better and more sustainably managed soil resources.

The documents are freely available as downloads via the Institute's website (www.soilscientist.org/workingwithsoil). The Institute 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

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

The documents can be downloaded from www.soilscientist.org/workingwithsoil

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