

Date: 26 August 2024

Dear Dr Andreas Baumgarten
President of the Austrian Soil Science Society

Candidate for the Presidency of the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) – Dr Bruce Lascelles

Dear Dr Andreas Baumgarten,

As President of a Society belonging to the IUSS you will already have been informed by the Secretariat that I am officially a candidate for the Presidency of the IUSS for the 2027 – 2028 period. I am taking this opportunity, in advance of the voting, to introduce myself to you briefly and set out what I would hope to achieve should I be honoured with appointment to this role.

I am a soil scientist based in the UK in a beautiful area known as the Cotswolds. My love of the natural world started as a child, spending my days, when not at school, exploring the woods, fields and rivers around the house. At school, physical geography was a real highlight for me, and looking back now I recognise the real importance of good teachers who can engage on a topic and instil a life-long passion for a subject.

This passion for the natural environment was strengthened in my A Level studies where I first delved properly into the world of soils, driving me to want to study soils further at university. As my father had been a forester in his early career I chose to study both forestry and soil science at the University of Bangor in North Wales, going on to undertake a PhD looking at environmental and pedogenic change over the Holocene period and then, at the University of Leicester, a Post Doc studying soil erosion.

This gave me the opportunity to study soils both in detail and at a landscape scale, and also in the context of the wider environment, including the influence we have had. I think this laid the foundation for my career – bridging the gap between disciplines such as ecology, hydrology and hydrogeology and their intricate linkages to soils. Through my career I have focused on:

- Soil survey
- Agricultural Land Classification survey/assessment
- Developing soil handling strategies
- Designing habitat creation/restoration/translocation schemes; and
- Assessing soil physical and chemical characteristics to define options for Biodiversity Net Gain and carbon sequestration.

I also have significant business and leadership experience. At Arcadis I have led several teams, most lately a team of 200 people with an annual turnover of over £14M. To successfully deliver in these roles I have had to define and deliver on strategic objectives and have held full accountability for the profit and loss account of the business. I have had to develop detailed implementation plans and track progress against these, but also have had to remain agile to external changes, not least the COVID pandemic where I had to respond very rapidly to a changing market environment and business requirements. Throughout my career I have always worked to bring equality, diversity and inclusion to the teams and organisations I work for; I worked with colleagues to set up what is now the suite of ED&I initiatives within Arcadis.

I have a long track record of supporting the British Society of Soil Science. I was honoured to be voted in as President for 2021 - 2022 and am nearing the end of my 6-year term as part of the Presidents team. I brought my business leadership, strategic thinking, relationship building and commercial acumen to the role which overlapped with the culmination of over 10 years of work leading the team preparing for and delivering the 22nd World Congress of Soil Science in Glasgow, which was a scientific and commercial success. Over my career, both with Arcadis and with the British Society of Soil Science, I have built a strong network, in part from making opportunities to speak at conferences or on panels as well as developing and delivering training courses for organisations in support of their drive to understand soils and build knowledge within their organisations.

The IUSS is and has to be a central to driving soil science development, provision of support for the science and the dissemination of this scientific knowledge to as wide an audience as possible. There is much to do now but also a critical need to look to the future. I recognise this importance of IUSS, an organisation which comprises 60,000 soil scientists globally, who through their networks have the ability and opportunity to educate, influence and engage on soils in the widest context.

So, if elected, I would focus on delivering tangible impact in two key areas:

IUSS as the leading global union of soil scientists.

I would ensure there is a clear focus on advancing the discipline of soil science and supporting the development of soil scientists across the IUSS community. This would comprise:

- Developing an IUSS Strategy Implementation Plan with clear priorities set against capacity within the Secretariat, Divisions, Commissions, Working Groups and wider membership (and to include capacity-building where required), at the same time ensuring commercial stability
- Strengthening relationships and engagement with all National Societies and all organisations involved with soil, climate, biodiversity etc.
- Promotion of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in all IUSS activities and business operations, driving a focus on an equitable transition in the face of the climate and biodiversity crises
- Promotion of and support for the Early Careers soil science community
- Development and implementation of a Code of Conduct for IUSS

IUSS as the global champion for the recognition of soils.

The breadth and depth of expertise, knowledge and networks within IUSS is unique. I would ensure there is a focus on action and engagement with soil with the ultimate aim of restoring soil health. This would comprise:

- Development of an initiative to follow on from the International Decade of Soils (working title: IUSS 2025 – 2050 Action: Healthy Soils, Healthy People)
- Promotion of wider public literacy in soil sciences – across all people but with a core focus on tapping into and supporting the existing energy across youth groups and movements around land and soil
- Continuation of the development and dissemination of IUSS publications in an open access format

I understand the importance and value of soil science and the dissemination of this science to as wide an audience as possible. I have considerable business and commercial management and strategic leadership experience and expertise which I will bring to the role.

I am excited and enthused by the potential opportunity to take up the position of President of IUSS and use my experience to benefit IUSS and soils more widely. As such, I would be honoured to receive the endorsement of your National Society at the vote to be held during the Inter Congress in China in October this year.

If you have any questions, I would be happy to follow up with you.



Email: bruce.lascelles@arcadis.com

Mobile: +44 (0)7565 096326