



STRENGTHENING NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL CAPACITIES ON SUSTAINABLE SOIL MANAGEMENT AND SOIL INFORMATION

Soils provide many critical ecological services, as well as being crucial for achieving food security and nutrition, as 95 percent of our food production is linked directly or indirectly to soils. However, recent assessments have demonstrated the extent to which soils are deteriorating. In fact, about one-third of our soils globally are facing moderate to severe degradation, affecting the productivity of the one billion smallholders who depend on natural resources for their livelihoods, as well as the commercial farming and forest sectors. In this context, the importance of soil management is underestimated – including management in the field and in data collection and analysis – in the fight for food security, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and biodiversity conservation. The availability of soil data is highly heterogeneous in different regions, and in many developing countries there is no information about soil status, leading to agricultural practices that are frequently not appropriate for local conditions. Against this background, the project comprised the third phase of a European Union-funded FAO project, advocating for enhanced soil governance and the dissemination and adoption of sustainable soil management (SSM) worldwide, as well as the improvement of soil data and information availability.



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WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project contributed to advancing the international soil agenda by supporting the overall activities of FAO's Global Soil Partnership (GSP) and its technical networks, and increasing awareness and adoption of SSM globally. This included the development of key knowledge products to improve the understanding of the global state of soil. A global database was also developed, *SoiLEX*, to facilitate access to information on existing legal instruments on soil protection and prevention of soil degradation, to which over 95 countries contributed. In addition, the Global Soil Information System (GloSIS) was established and consolidated, including the development of country-driven global data products; countries received technical specifications, training and country guidelines for producing national products. Workshops, webinars and technical meetings were organized, both regionally and globally, to raise awareness of the benefits of SSM for soil health and food security, and the prevention of soil degradation. As a result of targeted training sessions, many farmers have increased their understanding of the benefits of adopting SSM practices for the productivity of their crops, their livelihoods, and the overall health of their soils. The various publications and data products supported by the project and developed collaboratively by hundreds of experts from all over the world have highlighted the important role of the GSP in coordinating all soil stakeholders and disseminating soil knowledge and data.

KEY FACTS

Latest Approved Budget
USD 1 107 200

Duration
October 2019 – October 2021

Resource Partner
European Union

Partners
Ministries of agriculture and environmental protection, soil research institutes

Beneficiaries
Local governments, national soil information institutions, smallholder farmers

IMPACT

The project interventions contributed greatly to advancing regional and global GSP action plans and improving capacities for soil analysis, data collection, processing and exchange of soil information and policy capacities for SSM. It is expected that this will contribute to improving income, food security and nutrition, as well as environmental and human well-being, as a result of enhanced sustainable management of soil resources.

ACTIVITIES

- Nine workshops, webinars and technical meetings organized regionally and globally; and three regional workshops supported in Latin America, to raise awareness of benefits of SSM for soil health and food security, and prevention of soil degradation.
- Three case studies established in Colombia, Bangladesh and Burkina Faso to implement SSM practices.
- Soil Doctors Programme training sessions implemented in Bangladesh, Malawi and Mexico; and training and outreach materials produced.
- Organization of World Soil Day (WSD) regional events supported, comprising 560 events in 100 countries across the world in 2019, and over 780 events in 2020.
- Two virtual annual GSP Plenary Assembly (decision-making body of GSP) sessions organized, in June 2020 and September 2021 respectively.
- Series of Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS) soil letters launched in 2020, to provide general public with concise and clear information on their work and activities, of which four letters produced so far.
- Scientific paper produced: *“Soil: the great connector of our lives now and beyond COVID-19”*, published by ITPS in peer-reviewed journal.
- Three global symposia organized by FAO and ITPS: Global Symposium on Soil Erosion; Global Symposium on Soil Biodiversity; and Global Symposium on Salt-affected Soils.
- Two key tools published to enhance carbon sequestration in soils, to mitigate and adapt to climate change: *“Recarbonizing global soils – A technical manual of recommended management practices”*, and *“A protocol for measurement, monitoring, reporting and verification of soil organic carbon in agricultural landscapes”*.
- Three global data products developed: Global Soil Organic Carbon map v1.5.0; Global Soil Organic Carbon Sequestration Potential map; and Global map of Salt-affected Soils.
- *“State of knowledge of soil biodiversity – Status, challenges and potentialities”* main report and its summary for policy-makers produced, to which over 300 scientists from around the world contributed.
- Global assessment of soil pollution report and its summary for policy-makers produced, to which 200 experts from around the world contributed, and with baseline information from 73 countries.

Project Code

FAO: GCP/GLO/993/EC

Donor: 21.020701/2019/810630/SUB/ENV.D1

Project Title

Support to FAO for the implementation of the Global Soil Partnership Phase III Period 2019-2020

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS