



Establishment

In December 2012, FAO Council established the **Global Soil Partnership (GSP)** as a voluntary mechanism, which should enable Member countries and other partner institutions to join forces in order to preserve limited and vital soil resources and start reversing alarming degradation trends. FAO provides the Secretariat to this initiative at its HQ in Rome and facilitates the full implementation of this mechanism.



Urgency for Collaborative Action

GSP partners recognize the urgency to take action as soils are often overlooked and their management and protection has not received adequate attention in the past. The partnership aims to mobilise strengthened and fruitful collaboration among the range of organisations, institutions and networks associating with soil management and protection for enhanced food production and sustainable development.

Vision: Improve governance of the limited soil resources of the planet in order to guarantee healthy and productive soils for a food secure world, as well as support other essential ecosystem services, in accordance with the sovereign right of each State over its natural resources. The GSP should become an interactive and responsive partnership.

Regional Soil Partnerships are being developed among interested stakeholders in the regions and, as required, with sub-regional groupings to facilitate common language, priority setting and working arrangements. They will work in close coordination with FAO Regional Offices and will establish an interactive consultative process with national soils entities and relevant regional institutions.



Partners are invited to join the GSP and its Regional Soil Partnerships for an interactive, responsive and voluntary partnership open to governments (FAO members), institutions and other stakeholders at various levels as NGOs, private companies, farmer associations and donors. A registration form for partners is available at <http://www.fao.org/globalsoilpartnership/en>

Awareness raising platforms

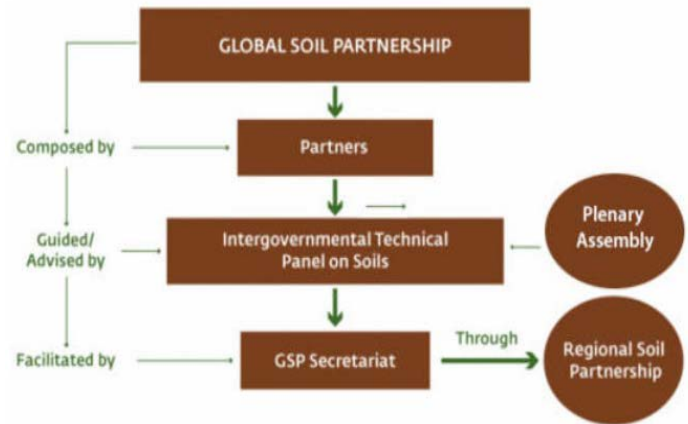
In June 2013, the FAO Conference endorsed the **World Soil Day** to be held on 5th December, and the **International Year of Soils** to be celebrated in 2015. Formal approval for these two events is pending in the United Nations General Assembly, but we have every reason to expect a favorable outcome.





Governance arrangements

The **Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS)** is the main advisory body mandated "to provide scientific and technical advice on global soil issues primarily to the GSP, and in relation to specific requests submitted by global or regional institutions". It is composed of 27 reputed experts from all regions appointed by the Assembly. Current activities of ITPS members are: sound technical advice for the development of Plans of Action for the GSP Pillars; guidance towards an SDG on soils; updating the World Soil Charter; and leadership in developing a flagship report on "Soils for sustainable development".



The **Plenary Assembly** is in charge of reviewing GSP actions and facilitating regional decision making processes. An annual meeting is held and open for ITPS members, GSP Secretariat, representatives of the partners and country members to FAO, including regional organizations such as the European Union.

The work of the GSP is organized around 5 main Pillars and Plans of Action

1. Promote sustainable management of soil resources.
2. Encourage investment, technical cooperation, policy, education awareness and extension in soils.
3. Promote targeted soil research and development focusing on identified gaps and priorities
4. Enhance the quantity and quality of soil data and information
5. Support harmonization of methods, measurements and indicators for sustainable soil management, with a national validation that takes into account the differences of production systems and ecosystems.

Rio+20 process: Under the ongoing Post 2015 process, sustainable soil management should be a major feature of the Sustainable Development Agenda. The GSP and its ITPS members are geared to actively support a renewed drive towards healthy soils for a food secure world through close interaction among **post UNCED Convention bodies**, notably with expert bodies such as IPPC, IPBES and the newly established Science-Policy Interface of the UNCCD, as well as other institutions concerned with soil resources..



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