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Global Soil Partnership Plenary Assembly



Third session

Rome, 22-24 June 2015

Plans of Action for the GSP Pillars

3.1 Endorsement of the draft Plan of Action for Pillar 3

Executive Summary

- The Terms of Reference (ToRs) contemplate five “Pillars of Action” for the GSP, while Rule VII of the Rules of Procedure (RoP) specifies that corresponding Plans of Action (PoAs) should be developed following an inclusive and participatory process, and in accordance with agreed guidelines (cf. Annex 1 of the RoP). Following the adoption of PoAs for the other four Pillars at the previous session, one is still pending approval by the PA, i.e. for Pillar 3: “Promote targeted soil research and development focusing on identified gaps, priorities and synergies with related productive, environmental and social development actions”.
- The draft PoA before the present session of the Plenary Assembly is the result of an intensive formulation process, in particular via development of drafts by a specially appointed Working Group as well as contributions from external reviewers. The Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS) was closely involved throughout, either in full or by sub-groups of ITPS members, in consonance with the mandate of the latter Panel.
- The present document highlights the recommendations contained in the draft PoA, while in view of budgetary constraints, only the English version of the entire PoA is provided under separate cover.
- The Chairperson of the above mentioned working group is expected to present the draft Plan to the Assembly, and to assist with clarifications as required.

Suggested action by the GSP Plenary Assembly

- The Plenary Assembly may wish to endorse the draft PoA for Pillar 3, thereby completing an essential task in the pursuance of the GSP objectives.

Summary of Recommendations for Pillar Three Plan of Action

- **Recommendation 1:** Compile for all partners, evidence for the value of soil research for society, stressing the importance of soil functions for the provision of services by ecosystems and in reaching the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Recommendation 2:** Encourage research and development to support the five pillars to enhance the development of appropriate sustainable soil management practices and systems,

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the applicable use of soil information, the harmonization of methods and determination of best indicators, and the dissemination of research results beyond the scientific community, to globally support economic growth, environmental sustainability and social development.

- **Recommendation 3:** Produce regular intelligence on current and emerging global, regional and local research and development priorities for all partners.
- **Recommendation 4:** Foster synergy and engagement between research and end-user communities to facilitate active collaboration in a joint-learning approach that can be effective in broadening the research focus and enhancing its impact.

3.2 Progress in the implementation of agreed Plans of Action, including eventual consideration of detailed Implementation Plans

Executive Summary

- It may be useful to recall what the Annex to the agreed Rules of Procedure of the GSP also specifies the required follow up steps after the endorsement of Plans of Action , i.e.:
 - “f) the Secretariat will invite Partners to suggest how they could contribute to implementation of the approved PoA and will develop an implementation plan together with the working group (which prepared drafts of the PoA, etc.).
 - g) Implementation will be coordinated and facilitated by the Secretariat in close consultation with the interested Partners.
- Accordingly, turning the approved PoAs into fully-fledged Implementations Plans was one of the main preoccupations of the Secretariat in the last months. Considering the scope of the various GSP pillars and taking into account the related implications at different levels, the most pertinent approach adopted was as follows: due to their primarily global scope, Pillars 4 and 5 should require Global Implementation Plans while the other Plans of Action should be addressed essentially by carefully tailored Regional Implementation Plans.
- Substantial progress was made with regard to the Pillar 4 Implementation Plan while the Pillar 5 Implementation Plan is currently under development. The Pillar 4 Implementation Plan was developed by a working group with the following composition: a representative from each regional soil partnership, the ITPS Chairperson, the Chair of the Pillar 4 PoA working group and the GSP Secretariat as facilitator. This implementation plan was developed in full concordance with the endorsed PoA and in the spirit of finding a feasible pathway to make the recommendations a reality. This of course required a thorough assessment of ongoing initiatives, so that synergies could be ensured in order to make wise use of resources. Similarly, many institutions were consulted about their interest in participating in the implementation process.
- As regards Pillars 1, 2 and 3 (pending formal approval of the PoA), the Secretariat has been supporting the development of comprehensive and realistic Regional Implementation Plans. This complex process is discussed in more detail under item 5 of the agenda.
- At the stage when the Implementation Plan for Pillar 4 and some Regional Implementation Plans should be available to guide and design concrete actions, the main challenge for all partners is to muster the significant amount of external financial and in-kind resources which are much needed to complement domestic resources.

Indeed, while the GSP process has allowed so far to support some institutional build up, partners face the critical stage of implementing concrete programmes and activities at all levels with focus on promoting sustainable soil management on a wide scale. It is hoped that resource partners would rise to the challenge of providing matching contributions, lest the plans become dead letter.

Suggested action by the GSP Plenary Assembly

The Plenary Assembly may wish:

- To take note with appreciation of the extensive work done in developing implementation plans, and to call on all partners to join forces in the execution of these implementation

plans, including resource partners prepared to invest in this process and in the GSP work in general.