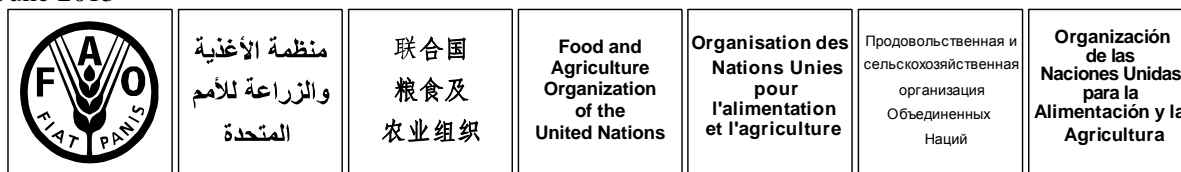


June 2013



Rules of Procedure of the Global Soil Partnership

The Plenary Assembly of the Global Soil Partnership adopted Rules of Procedure for the GSP, at its first session of June 2013. Slight revision and addition was done on its second session of July 2014.

Rule I - Scope


These Rules of Procedure shall apply to all activities related to the implementation of the Global Soil Partnership.

Rule II - Partners

- 1) The Global Soil Partnership (GSP) is a voluntary partnership, open to governments, international and regional organizations, institutions, and other stakeholders.
- 2) All Partners, except FAO Members, will be reviewed and approved by the Secretariat following FAO procedures.

Rule III – Plenary Assembly

- 1) The Plenary Assembly shall hold one regular session every year. It may also decide to convene extraordinary sessions, subject to the approval of Partners. Regular sessions shall not exceed three days and shall be preceded by regional consultations (based, to the extent possible, on electronic communications methods such as teleconferences). The sessions of the Plenary Assembly shall be held at the FAO Headquarters in Rome unless otherwise decided by the Plenary Assembly.
- 2) The notice for a regular session of the Plenary Assembly shall be communicated to Partners not less than 90 days before the opening day, while notices for extraordinary sessions shall be sent not less than 45 days in advance.
- 3) All sessions of the Plenary Assembly shall be convened by the GSP Secretariat (hereafter referred to as Secretariat) in consultation with Chairperson and the Secretary of the FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG).
- 4) Each Partner shall be registered to attend Plenary sessions by communicating to the Secretariat the name of its representative (s), before the opening day of each session of the Plenary Assembly.
- 5) Partners should, as far as possible, be represented by highly qualified senior officers so as to contribute actively to multidisciplinary discussions of the subjects on the agenda of the Plenary Assembly.
- 6) At the end of each session, the Plenary Assembly shall elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteur. The Chairperson, or in his absence the Vice-Chairperson, shall preside at the subsequent sessions of the Plenary Assembly.

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- 7) The Plenary Assembly will keep under continuous review, prioritise and discuss progress on GSP activities through Plans of Action related to each of the GSP pillars. Partners may implement the decisions taken by the Plenary Assembly with the support of the Secretariat as required.
- 8) Expenses of Partners to attend the sessions of the Plenary Assembly shall be borne by them.
- 9) Languages of the GSP will be FAO languages. FAO Members may decide to hold specific meetings or carry out specific activities in a selected number of agreed languages on an ad hoc basis.

Rule IV - Agenda and documents


- 1) The Secretariat, in consultation with all Partners and, if needed, the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils, shall prepare a provisional agenda for the Plenary Assembly which shall be communicated with due notice, in accordance with Rule III.2.
- 2) Any Partner may request the Secretariat, not less than 30 days before the date fixed for the opening day of the Plenary Assembly, to add an item to the provisional agenda. The Secretariat shall thereupon advise all Partners about the proposed item, together with any necessary documents.
- 3) The Assembly may, by consensus, amend the agenda through the deletion, addition or modification of any item.
- 4) Documents to be submitted to any session of the Plenary Assembly shall be posted on the GSP website at the time the agenda is published, or as soon as possible thereafter, but at least 30 days prior to the opening day. Upon request by Partners, the documents may be provided in hard copy.
- 5) Documents exceeding 5000 words shall include an executive summary.

Rule V - Decision-making

All GSP decisions shall be taken by consensus during the Plenary Assembly. Decisions that may require follow up by national Governments will be solely decided upon by GSP partners which are FAO members.

Rule VI - Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS)

- 1) Procedure for establishing the ITPS:
The ITPS shall be established as follows:
 - a) The Secretariat will request Partners to propose, within a specific deadline, names of experts from their respective regions, who shall have:
 - a recognized academic profile (postgraduate level);

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- demonstrated experience at international level in different soil-related activities, ranging from research to development;
- a record of sound publications subjected to peer reviews;
- a position that would not preclude the provision of advice independently from their employment status and nationality.

The ITPS experts should act in their personal capacity and provide the best possible scientific knowledge available.

- b) Members of the ITPS shall be experts appointed by the GSP Plenary Assembly for a term of 2 years renewable for one additional term (with agreement of the Plenary Assembly).

Every 2 years the call for experts shall be re-conducted; the Secretariat will consolidate the new list of experts on the basis of the above criteria.

- c) This list of experts will be submitted to FAO Members requesting their endorsement, while respecting the criteria mentioned in section 5.2 of the Terms of Reference of the GSP, and taking into account the diverse fields of soil science, a balanced participation within regions, and an equitable rotation.
- d) Members of the ITPS will not hold any employment contract with FAO. The Secretariat will meet the costs related to travel and daily subsistence allowance in order to facilitate the participation of the members of the ITPS during its annual working session.
- e) If, due to unexpected reasons, an ITPS member is unable to fulfil his/her responsibilities for the full term, the concerned FAO regional group may communicate to the Secretariat the name and qualifications of a substitute expert. This substitute expert can join the ITPS, subject to positive common assessment by the ITPS Chairperson and the Secretariat. Confirmation of the substitute expert to serve during the remainder of the term of the original member is to be requested from the following session of the Plenary Assembly.

2) Duties of members of ITPS


The members of the ITPS shall:

- provide scientific and technical advice on global soil issues to the GSP;
- sign a “non-conflict of interest” declaration;
- participate at the Plenary Assembly, as provided for in the TOR of the GSP;
- appoint a Chairperson by consensus whose tasks will be:
 - to coordinate activities with panel members;
 - to act as communication channel with the Secretariat;
 - to report to the Plenary Assembly and to other events, if so requested by the Plenary Assembly or the Secretariat.

3) Functions of ITPS

The ITPS will have the following functions:

- 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.

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- b) advocate for the inclusion of sustainable soil management into different development agendas.
- c) review and follow up on the situation and issues related to soils in the contexts of food security, use and management of natural resources, ecosystem services provision, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and other relevant areas.
- d) review and endorse from a technical viewpoint the GSP Plans of Action.
- e) follow up on the implementation of these Plans of Action with due attention to their impact and contributions to different global policies and initiatives related to sustainable development, MDGs, food security, climate change adaptation and other subject matters.
- f) in exceptional cases, when complex technical matters arise, request the Plenary Assembly and the Secretariat to form technical committees aiming to gather specific advice.

Rule VII - Plans of action

Plans of Action for GSP Pillars will be developed following an inclusive and participatory process according to the guidelines set out in Annex 1 of these Rules of procedure. The Plans of Action shall be approved by the Plenary Assembly.

Rule VIII – Regional Soil Partnerships

- 1) Regional Soil Partnerships (RSPs) may be established in each of the following geographical areas:
 - Africa
 - Asia
 - Europe
 - Latin America and the Caribbean
 - Near East
 - North America
 - Southwest Pacific
- 2) Partners may decide to establish soil partnerships of regional nature not coinciding with those mentioned in the preceding paragraph, based on common language, culture, physical location or other considerations.
- 3) Members of the RSPs shall be members of the GSP willing to promote the World Soil Charter principles in their respective region.
- 4) The RSP Partners will identify the priorities for their region and present them at the Plenary Assembly. The ITPS will provide guidance on these priorities and facilitate their implementation through the concerned Plans of Action.
- 5) Each RSP shall liaise with the Secretariat for coordinating the implementation of activities in their region.
- 6) The Secretariat will facilitate the functioning of the RSPs, particularly through promoting implementation at regional level of global actions. The RSPs will seek to catalyze in a proactive manner the necessary financial support at regional level for implementing their activities.

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Rule IX - Reporting

The Plenary Assembly shall report, through the Secretariat, to the FAO's Committee on Agriculture which may bring to the attention of the FAO Council any recommendation adopted by the GSP that may have policy implications, or could affect strategic programmes of FAO. As soon as the report of the Plenary Assembly becomes available, it will be circulated to all Partners and will also be sent for information to international organizations concerned with soil resources.

Rule X - Secretariat and expenses

- 1) The Secretariat shall be composed by FAO technical and administrative staff. It should facilitate and coordinate implementation of GSP activities at all levels in close interaction with the Plenary Assembly, the ITPS and the RSPs.
- 2) The Secretariat will organize meetings related to the implementation of GSP activities and provide the necessary administrative and technical support.
- 3) The Secretariat will facilitate the work of the ITPS, including interaction between the ITPS and the Plenary Assembly.
- 4) The Secretariat will also facilitate the work of the RSPs in implementing the Plans of Action at regional level.
- 5) The Secretariat will be responsible for promoting, organizing and facilitating activities related to the celebration of the World Soil Day, and other awareness raising events such as the International Year of Soils.

Rule XI - Amendments to the Rules of Procedure


- 1) The Plenary Assembly may amend the Rules of Procedure, provided that such amendments are consistent with the Terms of Reference of the GSP.
- 2) No proposal for the amendment of these Rules of Procedure shall be included in the agenda of any session of the Plenary Assembly unless notice thereof has been given to Partners by the Secretariat at least 30 days before the opening of the session.

Annex 1 to the Rules of Procedure

Guidelines for the development of Plans of Action of the GSP Pillars

- a) An international technical workshop will be organised by the Secretariat for the development of each Plan of Action with representatives from each Region to discuss and outline the scope and content of the concerned Plan of Action.

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- b) The workshop will nominate a working group, consisting of competent experts from active institutions and considering equitable representation, to further develop the draft Plan of Action through a transparent and open process in close consultation with the Secretariat.
- c) The draft Plan of Action should be circulated for feedback from GSP partners to the Secretariat. The working groups will incorporate inputs in a revised draft Plan of Action with the support of the Secretariat.
- d) Plans of Action shall be submitted to the ITPS for consideration, finalisation and endorsement.
- e) The endorsed Plan of Action will be submitted to the Plenary Assembly for approval.
- f) The Secretariat will invite Partners to suggest how they could contribute to implementation of the approved Plan of Action and will develop an implementation plan together with the working group.
- g) Implementation will be coordinated and facilitated by the Secretariat in close consultation with the interested Partners.