

ESP/18/Report



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**



5th Plenary Meeting of the European Soil Partnership

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, 20 – 21 March 2018

ESP/18/Report

Report of the 5th Plenary Meeting of the European Soil Partnership

Provided by the GSP Secretariat

Chair: Elena Havlicek, FOEN Switzerland

Secretary: Marc Van Liedekerke, European Commission Joint Research Centre

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, 20 – 21 March 2018

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
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List of Acronyms

AlpSP: Alpine Soil Partnership.....	15
CD: Capacity Development	6
COCOFE: Code of Conduct for the Management of Fertilizers.....	7
EASP: Eurasian Soil Partnership	8
EC: European Commission	6
ESP: European Soil Partnership.....	6
EU: European Union	14
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	6
GLOSIS: Global Soil Information System.....	8
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IP: implementation plan	6
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PA: plenary assembly.....	6
PM: plenary meeting.....	6
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1 Opening of the meeting and tour de table

The 5th Plenary Meeting (PM) of the European Soil Partnership (ESP) was hosted at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) headquarters, Rome, Italy. Mr. Ronald Vargas, as Secretary of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP), welcomed the more than 50 members from 20 ESP countries and the representatives of the European Commission (EC) and of participating organizations (e.g. AFRD, Common Forum, EEA, ISRIC). Participants were invited to introduce themselves and a tour de table was taken (see Annex II – Participant List).

The main objectives of the 5th PM were summarized by the ESP chair, Ms. Elena Havlicek, as follows:

1. Decisions on emerging topics and the next steps for the ESP;
2. Election of the ESP Steering Committee (chair, vice chair, secretary, etc.);
3. Reporting from the national focal points about the work progress related to the Implementation Plan (IP) 2017 – 2020; and
4. Reporting from the leaders of the ESP pillars/working groups to inform about ongoing projects, progress and current challenges.

The meeting followed the agenda without any adoptions. The agenda is available in Annex I – Agenda.

2 Reports

2.1 GSP Report

Mr. Ronald Vargas (GSP Secretariat) informed about the recent developments in GSP activities. Considering the progress of the overall GSP IP, IPs of pillars (Ps) 2, 4, 5 are executed, P 1 and 3 are currently in preparation. IPs will be submitted to the GSP Plenary Assembly (PA) after revision through the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS).

The Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management (VGSSM) are in the process of implementation through specific actions for sustainable soil management (SSM). A survey of the implementation is planned; the ESP members will be informed about the survey. The tool of training in countries has a positive reputation, with high appreciation of the Capacity Development (CD) in particular.

In terms of establishing technical networks, Mr. Ronald Vargas informed about the International Network on Black Soils (INBS). He stated that the response of European countries to the call was not high and called for higher contribution of countries from the European region. He also informed about the Global Soil Laboratory Network (GLOSOLAN) and additional regional soil laboratory networks that have been established (SEALNET Asia and LATSOLAN Latin America).

Mr. Ronald Vargas informed about the successful launch of the Global Soil Organic Carbon map (GSOCMap) in 2017. He emphasized that the Regional Soil Partnerships (RSP) were helpful in facilitating the GSOCMap. The GSOCMap is not a final product but a continuous project; the end of the year objectives were specified as:

- Production of an updated map to include data from more countries;
- Enhanced capacity development/training on digital soil mapping in the member countries (if requested);
- Inclusion of one more soil layer: 30 – 100 cm; and
- Development of a global soil organic carbon (SOC) monitoring system.

Related to the implementation of the monitoring system, Mr. Ronald Vargas furthermore informed about the outcomes of the Global Soil Organic Carbon Symposium in 2017 (GSOC17). He stated that the GSP is currently preparing the implementation of action through providing guidelines by August this year. Mr. Ronald Vargas made a call to the ESP plenary members for experts to prepare the SOC guidelines. He stated that many countries were not responding to the reporting and urged countries to make an effort to provide information on that issue.

Mr. Ronald Vargas informed about the status of the development of the Code of Conduct for the Management of Fertilizers (COCOFE). A zero draft version prepared by ITPS is currently under review; he made a call for experts and highlighted the importance of European member countries to participate in the development process of the COCOFE. The COCOFE will be introduced at the GSP Plenary Assembly (PA).

Mr. Ronald Vargas furthermore informed about the Global Symposium on Soil Pollution 2018 (GSOP18), a response to the UNEP Assembly to contribute to the implementation of the declarations on soil pollution (prevention and remediation). Current status on GSOP 18 was reported as follows: 350 registered participants and 150 abstracts submitted.

Related to the GSP PA – 6th Session, held from 11 to 13 June 2018, at FAO HQ, Rome, Mr. Ronald Vargas made a call to the ESP PM members to propose items for the PA agenda, and requested the participation and involvement in the PA from ESP members. Items for the provisional agenda may be sent to the GSP Secretariat by 11 May 2018. The provisional agenda is published online (<http://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/about/plenary-assembly/sixth-session-2018/en/>). The focus for the PA in 2018 is set on soil biodiversity in order to reactivate the initiative on this issue. The GSP suggested a global soil biodiversity assessment and opened a call for ideas in practical terms to facilitate this activity.

As a last remark, Mr. Ronald Vargas introduced the joint work agenda on agriculture under the COP that comprises soils as a topic. He highlighted the high importance of the work of the GSP and gave an outlook on the planned activities during the COP24 in Poland in 2018.

The chair of the ESP, Ms. Elena Havlicek, thanked Mr. Ronald Vargas and the GSP secretariat for the GSP work/global management. A remark on the flow of information and the many GSP calls for contributions from experts/working groups was made, stating that the given time frame is sometimes too narrow to mobilize the requested experts. To tackle this issue, the provision of an overview on all coming activities at the beginning of the year was proposed to mobilize experts/working groups.

Mr. Ronald Vargas agreed to the proposed submission of a calendar with the main annual activities for better coordination.

2.2 ITPS Report (Peter de Ruiter)

Mr. Peter de Ruiter presented the ITPS' work and plans for future work on behalf of European members of the ITPS. Mr. de Ruiter highlighted the close collaboration of the ITPS and linked WGs in GSP, as well as the cooperation with other international advisory bodies.

Ronald Vargas introduced the chair/members and functions of the ITPS. He highlighted the ITPS' high contributions to several products and publications.

The main activities and products of the ITPS were presented:

- Revised World Soil Charter (WSC), Status of the World Soil Resources (SWSR), Voluntary Guidelines of Sustainable Soil Management (VGSSM), Global assessment of the impact of plant production products on soil functions and soil ecosystems (PPP); and
- Contribution to the successful implementation of the Global Symposium on Soil Organic Carbon (GSOC17) (follow-up by the ITPS in terms of publications with two special issues in journals to be published).

Mr. Peter de Ruiter introduced the ITPS future work programme for 2018:

- Contribution to publications on GSOP18;
- Preparation of the 2nd SWSR as a continuous working process to be completed before 2025 (Mr. Rainer Baritz is responsible for the European region update).

The SWSR update should include results of the implementations during the past years. As a first step, Mr. Peter de Ruiter emphasized the need to start gathering information on the different activities of the GSP pillars as soon as possible. Mr. Ronald Vargas informed about the decision to move the date to produce the SWSR update from 2020 to 2025 during the PA. He suggested to include information gathered through the Global Soil Information System (GLOSIS) in the updated report. Mr. Vargas furthermore shared the request of an additional report on SSM by 2020 for which the contribution of the ITPS is ensured, and highlighted the need to prioritize the work on both reports. Mr. Peter de Ruiter requested the involvement of the national focal points to prepare the updated chapter in the 2nd SWSR for the European region.

Furthermore, Mr. de Ruiter informed about the rules of procedure in terms of members of the ITPS, stating that a gender balance would be much appreciated in the European delegation for the next ITPS mandate. As for the election of the chair position, he suggested that several members together take the chair position.

2.3 Eurasian Soil Partnership Report (Gulchekhra Khasankhanova)

Presentation: <https://www.slideshare.net/ExternalEvents/eurasian-soil-partnership-report>

Ms. Gulchekhra Khasankhanova reported on the status and outputs of the sub-regional Eurasian Soil Partnership (EASP) during 2017 and gave an outlook on planned activities for the period of 2018/2019.

Ms. Khasankhanova expressed gratitude to the GSP for the training/capacity building program to develop SOC maps and the support to produce/develop national SOC maps.

2.4 ESP Steering Committee Report (Elena Havlicek)

Ms. Elena Havlicek informed about the progress report of the ESP Steering Committee meeting (minutes online

https://esdac.jrc.ec.europa.eu/public_path/network_coop/esp_sc/2017_Feb_ESP_SC_meeting-minutes-final.pdf).

Ms. Havlicek highlighted the urgency for additional resource mobilization. Because the activities of the ESP members are mainly on a voluntary basis, additional staffing (e.g. student assistants) is required to ensure the progress in the IPs.

The Steering Committee is aware of a lack of representatives from Baltic countries; therefore, Ms. Havlicek requested the contributions from members from the Balkan region to participate in the ESP.

2.5 Information from National Focal Points and ESP Members

The national focal points were requested to report on the state of the IP in their countries.

Italy/Italian Soil Partnership – Anna Benedetti:

- Improvement of activities in each of the 5 Ps
- Contribution to VGSSM (translation in Italian language) and organization in Italy of a workshop on VGSSM to inform stakeholders;
- P 2 – education, communication, schools, books, World Soil Day (WSD) activities, national events, exhibitions
- P 3 – organization of national meeting of soil science society
- P 4 – mapping SOC coordinated by Mr. Eduardo Costantini
- P5 (related to P 4) – analytical method on SOC
- created a space in home page of SISS for Italian SP
- head meeting at national level to coordinate the implementation plans (ESP, GSP)

Austria – Andrea Spanischberger:

- Contribution to GSOCmap
- A lot of activities are going on, but most of them not under the roof of the ESP
- Awareness raising is very important (for schools, farmers etc.)
- Very active participation in the AlpSP due to high importance for Austria
- Contribution to GLOSOLAN with 5 labs, experts participate almost in all pillars
- Hosting the EU/EEA topic center on urban and land soil systems
- Hosting secretariat IUSS
- Children Museum in Vienna is developing a soil exhibition with support of the Ministry
- Intensive participation from the experts in international soil networks (e.g. ELSA; ENSA; Alpine convention etc.)
- Further project contributions (not under the ESP roof): e.g. LANDMARK

Czech Republic – Josef Kozak:

- Contribution to the ESP with diverse activities
- New version of the Soil Information System (SIS)
- P5 – harmonization of soil data

Belgium – Martine Swerts:

- Contribution of two reference soil labs for GLOSOLAN
- Contributing activities to GSOCMap
- Monitoring of SOC for more reliable data
- Development of chapter on SOC stocks to incorporate in the country's climate plans
- Monitoring SOC also in gardens and public parks (over 10 percent of area are gardens)
- Participation on WSD events with a thematic day on soil resources mapping and illustration of data
- Improvement of availability of soil data
- Improvement of information exchange in agriculture and forestry
- Awareness raising in schools, farmer inclusion in activities

Slovenia – Borut Vrscaj:

- Awareness raising on the national level

- Contributions to ESP and GSP
- Provision of a group of experts to contribute to national legislation in soil protection and SSM
- Soil protection activities including revised soil research activities and new topics (e.g. to address soil sealing issues)
- Activities in schools to link soil to other subjects; publication of a booklet for schools and general public

Latvia – Laura Liepina:

- Contribution of two soil laboratories in GLOSOLAN
- Participation in the GLOSOLAN survey
- Contribution to GSOCMap
- main activity: improvement of the historical soil database and harmonization of the soil classification system; development of a national soil mapping methodology
- Development of a national framework to estimate greenhouse gas emissions in peatlands to enhance the countries SIS

Slovakia – Jaroslava Sobocká:

- Provision of a group of experts for all pillars
- P 1 – translation of VGSSM
- P2 – Co-organization with the JRC of the biennial workshop and conference of ENSA in Bratislava (in Sept. 2017), arrangement of high-level participation from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Slovakia, and university students.
- P 4 – Contribution to GSOCMap and INBS, pilot project on SOC map creation with cross-border cooperation (SK, AT, CZ)
- P 5 - Participation in GLOSOLAN questionnaire
- Planning of the arrangement of sessions and conferences in the future

Hungary – Katalin Berényi-Üveges:

- Laboratory selection for GLOSOLAN
- Nomination of the institutions for INSII

Estonia – Alar Astover:

- Provision of inputs for GSOP18
- Contribution of 3 laboratories for GLOSOLAN
- Training on DSM techniques to update soil legacy maps
- Awareness raising activities

Poland – Grzegorz Siebielec:

- Monitoring of Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) impacts of soil through the Ministry of Agriculture
- Soil sampling campaign across the country
- 600 farms are representing different policy instruments
- Implementation of peat soil monitoring with countrywide sampling and 20 case study areas to evaluate the status of peat soils and drivers
- Planning the updating of national SOC map with 40,000 new sampling locations in the future to create a new DB (reason why Poland did not submit data to GSOCMap)
- Following the same scope as ESP country partnerships towards the implementation of SSM practices

Germany – Joachim Bollmann:

- Soil protection is governed by specific legislation and part of other policy areas such as waste policy, fertilizer policy, etc.
- One recent example for this is a regulation on the requirements for the use of building destruction waste as material for minor roads in forests
- There is plenty of support, attention and activity regarding soil related events (e.g. WSD, IYS)
- Soil surveys of agriculture and forest soils have been implemented
- A large coordinated soil research project called BONARES has been implemented by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research

France – Dominique Arrouays:

- Initialization of the 4per1000 initiative during COP23
- Participation in events about soil management; several events at national and international level
- P 2 – Establishment of a national network on soils for research development; technical and innovation council

UK – Jaqueline Hannam:

- Policy: Establishment of a 25-year plan of the environment that aims at improving soil health and restoring peatlands; including strategies to end peat use in horticultural product by 2030
- Policy: Initiatives to investigate soil health in the new agricultural bill
- Contribution to GSOCMap
- Soil information updates from soil survey data (Agricultural Land Classification in Wales)
- Active awareness raising through British Society of Soil Science (soil as topic in the secondary school curriculum)

Croatia – Vlatka Jurcovic:

- Resolution of a new law on agricultural land
- 10 labs included, mandatory for analysis of land/soil

Turkey – Hakki Erdogan:

- Two line activities (ESP, EASP); developing the synergies of both partnerships
- Contribution to resource mobilization for implementation of the VGSSM, INBS, GLOSOLAN
- Contribution to GSOCMap
- development of a national soil strategy led by the Ministry of Agriculture
National SSS focuses on awareness raising

Greece – Sid P. Theocharopoulos:

- Disseminate and communicate the activities of ESP
- Locate and propose participants/contributors to the 5 pillars
- Collect all available soil data
- An accredited lab joined the GLOSOLAN
- Started bilateral cooperation with Italy as mentioned by Mr. Edoardo Costantini
- Harmonization of SOC map with Italy (Mr. Edoardo Costantini)
- Considering increasing the awareness in the public and introducing soil material in schools
- Try to contribute to the ESP implementation plan

Israel – Roey Egozi (Israel focal point to GSP, ESP)

- Response to the ITPS call by submission of names of qualified soil scientists to serve on ITPS panel, hoping to get the support from ESP.

- Join the GLOSOLAN and expect to contribute; make the effort to join more soil labs to the network.
- Continuation of involvement with Pillar 4 activities. Participation of Dr. Maya Zehavi in the last meeting in November 2017, in Rome.
- Successful visit of Ms. Weis, previous GSP secretariat member (CBL/FAO). Her visit contributed to raising awareness on GSP activities in general and highlighted potential collaboration / initiative with Israel Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development.

Switzerland – Elena Havlicek:

- Support of the ESP through the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN)
- Ensuring GSP financial support through the Federal Office for Agriculture
- Ongoing development of a national soil strategy (since 4 years)
- Final phase of the national research project (NRP 68) on sustainable use of soil as a resource whose aims are to analyse the current condition of the soil and determine the key functions of soil as an ecosystem through interdisciplinary research (scientific publications/spatial planning for policy makers)
- Publication of a report on the current countrywide soil state

Ms. Elena Havlicek highlighted that sharing information on ongoing activities in the different Ps in the countries (to be reported by the national focal points) could be beneficial. Ms. Havlicek proposed to collect and disseminate this information through the ESP Secretariat in the form of an information sheet on the website.

Two announcements from ESP plenary members were made:

1. Mr. Kris Van Looy: Announcement of two expert events organised by the Flemish OVAM: The World Resources Forum February 2018, organised by OVAM in Flanders in 2019, offering opportunity to the ITPS new WSRR preparation initiative, and an international conference on soil modelling (International Soil Modelling Consortium, 5-7 November Wageningen);
2. Announcement of a meeting in Chile in 2019 on SOC mapping in Puerto Varas (information to be sent to the ESP Secretariat).

3 ESP Work Progress

3.1 Work Progress Pillar 1 (Violette Geissen)

Presentation: <https://www.slideshare.net/ExternalEvents/work-progress-pillar-1>

Ms. Violette Geissen presented the outputs of P 1 to the ESP plenary members.

All ESP members were asked to contribute to collect available data on SSM case studies across the European region to be incorporated in the P 1 outcomes. Ms. Violette Geissen identified this activity as an opportunity for ESP member countries to examine the lack of knowledge and collect results on P 1 outcomes. She shared the idea to compile a European wide database on projects (including exact location, addressed soil threat, strategy, outcomes) to assess if projects are successful or not in terms of the implementation of SSM strategies. National focal points were asked to participate in compiling the database (shared spreadsheet). Mr. Frank Glante commented on the request, stating that a database of research projects in Germany exists. Mr. Gergely Toth identified the soil research internet platform BonaRes as a possible basis for the ESP information sharing because BonaRes provides a good technical solution. Ms. Ute Wollschläger from the BonaRes Centre clarified that the BonaRes platform

does not have the complexity that is discussed for the ESP soil research internet platform. However, BonaRes will be happy to contribute where applicable (e.g. the knowledge platform).

Ms. Geissen highlighted the increasing threat of micro plastic in soils, an issue not yet considered in any legislation. Geissen made a call for contribution of ESP member countries to report on the usage of plastic mulch to assess micro plastic residues across Europe.

3.2 Work Progress Pillar 2 (Arwyn Jones)

Presentation: <https://www.slideshare.net/ExternalEvents/work-progress-pillar-2>

Mr. Arwyn Jones presented the outputs of P2 to the ESP Plenary members. The presentation focused on developments in relation to the six recommendations passed from the GSP Pillar 2 Action Plan. The presentation reported on the joint JRC-ENSA-Pillar 2 workshop in Bratislava last September, where it was decided to develop a booklet on best practices that would accompany a policy brief on the need for investment in soil awareness. Regarding the recommendation on support to sustainable soil management, the JRC is in discussions to jointly organize a summer school for 2019. On the recommendation on extension, the University of Gloucestershire had agreed to take the lead and noted that there were a number of H2020 projects looking at the issue of soil and sustainable agriculture practices. The EC JPI on agricultural soil was seen as a key initiative for strengthen scientific and technical cooperation while activities at the JRC on cost of soil erosion and on the development of natural capital accounting showed progress on issues relating to investments.

Mr. Jones suggested the development of an ESP newsletter after the ESP meeting and World Soil Day that reports on key highlights and developments.

Ms. Isabelle Verbeke from the GSP Secretariat gave a presentation on soil awareness raising at global level (WSD 2017). Ms. Verbeke asked the ESP plenary members to help to disseminate information on the event in all member countries through the usage of the related hashtags, materials, etc., and to make suggestions for new activities to increase participation.

3.3 Work Progress Pillar 3 (Gergely Toth)

Mr. Gergely Toth presented the outputs of P 3, and highlighted the strong linkages between the five ESP Pillars. Therefore, there is a need to review all ESP Pillars to identify synergies for coherent actions of the WGs.

Mr. Toth emphasized the need to address soil threats in the European region research wise and to define a science driven understanding of the priorities in soil research.

Mr. Toth stated that the limited budget is a general problem for the ESP WGs, and additional budget is needed to facilitate the working progress and further activities.

An alternative way to identify research gaps and minimize the risk of overlapping work proposed by the ESP plenary members:

1. Incorporation of the EU Joint Programming to coordinate between the ESP initiatives and associated countries in terms of soil research;
2. Development of an internet knowledge platform (potential cooperation with BonaRes and INSPIRATION; to be discussed); and
3. Prioritization from the scientists' point of view with the consolidation of a common priority in research.

3.4 Work Progress Pillar 4 (Edoardo Costantini)

Presentation: <https://www.slideshare.net/ExternalEvents/work-progress-pillar-4>

Mr. Edoardo Costantini presented the outputs of P 4, and highlighted the strong linkage to P 5. He informed about P 4s close partnerships with ISRIC, GSSDIC, and INSII. A collaboration with Pillar 2 for the new soil Atlas has been envisaged as well as the opportunity for a joint meeting of the Pillars 2 and 4.

Mr. Edoardo Costantini summarized the efforts to produce GSOCMap and update SoilStats. He stated that only few countries were willing to collaborate in the P 4 activities, e.g. video conferences to produce SOC maps in the European region.

For data harmonization, Mr. Costantini asked ESP member countries for more cross-border/bilateral activities. France offered to collaborate/do cross-border activities to harmonize the methodologies for mapping (without data transmission). FAO has assured availability for continuous updating of national data.

Mr. Edoardo Costantini addressed the metadata availability issue and emphasized that metadata need to be shared/to be made open accessible through the countries and not through extension services (e.g. FAO or soil data facilities such as ISRIC).

3.5 Work progress Pillar 5 (Hakki Erdogan)

Presentation: <https://www.slideshare.net/ExternalEvents/work-progress-pillar-5>

Mr. Hakki Erdogan presented the outputs of P 5, and explained that P 5 is mostly dealing with data exchange specifications.

The ESP plenary members discussed data governance issues, starting with Ms. Josiane Masson emphasizing the need for a clear overview on governance (e.g. where will the data infrastructure be localized) and for decisions on data governance to be taken at the GSP PA.

Mr. Rik van den Bosch provided information about the role of the Soil Data Facility (SDF) at ISRIC, referring to the decisions made during the previous GSP PA.

Mr. Rainer Baritz stated that governance components and guidance for the European region are laid out in the current version of the ESP implementation plan (see under Pillar 4). He highlighted the importance of national soil information institutions (INSII members) and soil laboratories (members of GLOSOLAN).

Mr. Ronald Vargas informed about the P 5 activities in other regions, e.g. about the establishment of a SIS in Latin Amerika and the decision to get the SIS hosted by the GSP, aiming at developing GLOSIS. For further implementation of GLOSIS, a bottom-up approach will be followed supported by the countries and the regional soil partnerships.

Mr. Pavel Krasilnikov mentioned that the implementation of GLOSOLAN is an important step towards data harmonization, but the further promotion of a universal soil classification is needed within the European region including Eurasia. Mr. Hakki Erdogan replied that Europe has already a laboratory network and that GLOSOLAN can act as an extension of this network to develop common standards. This action will be prioritized in the actions of P 5 in the future.

4 Projects with ESP contribution

4.1 EU Contribution to ESP and Synergies (Josiane Masson)

Presentation: <https://www.slideshare.net/ExternalEvents/eu-contribution-to-esp-and-synergies>

Ms. Josiane Masson presented the European Union (EU) direct contributions to the ESP and GSP, which is mainly financial support through the DG ENV, as well as personnel and financial support through the Joint Research Center (JRC). For 2018, DG ENV resources are available to support the ESP. Masson emphasized the need to foster the development of synergies between the EU and the ESP in the future.

Financial resources from the DG ENV mobilization are available for **specific** activities e.g.:

- Building a network of practitioners;
- Organization of summer schools;
- Organization of farm visits through the network of farmers that apply SSM;
- Collecting data on SSM case study sites across the European Union; and
- Building an ESP data infrastructure (provision of resources for meetings, workshops, etc.).

The ESP chair asked the Pillar chairs to agree on the distribution of the budget and to designate specific activities as soon as possible this year to use the mobilized resources. Mr. Arwyn Jones clarified that activities need to be assigned in 2018 but can be implemented in 2019. The ESP chair assigned this task to the Steering Committee.

4.2 Alpine Soil Partnership proposal (Borut Vrscaj)

Presentation: <https://www.slideshare.net/ExternalEvents/alpine-soil-partnership-proposal>

Mr. Borut Vrscaj introduced the Alpine Soil Partnership (AlpSP)/Link4Soils project. As the AlpSP follows the five Ps/general principles of the ESP, he suggested the exploration of the possibility to implement the AlpSP as a sub-regional partnership after the project closure. The AlpSP aims to build high awareness of soils on the municipality level plus to promote SSM practices. He highlighted the need to recognize the AlpSP through indicating an ESP representative in order to link workflows (harmonize the projects and work) of the two soil partnerships. As the initiative will end in two years, the AlpSP representatives are willing to share the deliverables with the ESP.

Mr. Hans Brand stated that, as a bottom-up initiative, there is a question about the continuity of the AlpSP as a sub-regional partnership after the projects ends and raised concerns on the feasibility of sub-regional partnerships because of a higher need for coordination, time lines, deliverables, project management, and resources.

Ms. Elena Havlicek highly appreciated the initiative for soil protection on the European level, recognized the accordance of the AlpSP with the ESP IP/objectives, confirmed that regional initiatives are welcome and supported by the ESP. The decision on the continuity of the AlpSP was given to the Steering Committee.

4.3 4.3. European Soil Atlas (Arwyn Jones)

Mr. Arwyn Jones introduced the work progress for updating the European Soil Atlas. Due to pressure on human resources, progress is slower than expected. New sections on soil forming factors and soil ecosystem services have been added together with an overview of issues for individual countries. A technical meeting is planned for later in the year to look at the challenges associated with updating

the map spreads to the WRB 2015 classification system. It is planned that a revised draft will be circulated for comments by the end of 2018. The revised atlas is expected to be published in 2019.

Mr. Pandi Zdruli asked whether the JRC would consider a dedicated soil atlas for the Mediterranean region, in collaboration with the Near East and North African Partnership.

4.4 ESP Contribution to GSOP2018 (Marc Van Liedekerke)

Due to the enforced absence of Mr. Marc Van Liedekerke, Mr. Arwyn Jones presented an overview of the state of the soil pollution assessment for the European region. The report follows a request from the GSP Secretariat to the Regional Partnerships in mid-February to provide information on the status of soil pollution in each region as a contribution to the forthcoming Global Soil Pollution Symposium. Given the severe time constraints, the GSP Chair asked whether the JRC could coordinate the response based on existing assessments and data (e.g. JRC and EEA Reports, FP Projects, LUCAS, networks, etc.). However, a follow up report should be developed whereby NFP contribute with country assessments of both local and point pollution issues. The ESP Steering Committee will develop a template and a set of questions to ensure harmonized reporting. There were several comments about the lack of time for NFP to contribute or react. EEA noted that they would try to circulate the draft through EIONET-Soil. The inclusion of data on micro plastics as a source of soil contamination has been discussed, as well as possible contributions to the report from the EASP (as a separate chapter) and GEMAS.

The process will be coordinated by the ESP secretariat (Mr. Marc Van Liedekerke). The report will be circulated to all Steering Committee members, and the national focal points will be informed on the status and content of the report.

5 Projects with ESP Contribution

5.1 H2020 EJP Agricultural Soil Management (Edoardo Costantini)

Presentation: <https://www.slideshare.net/ExternalEvents/h2020-ejp-agricultural-soil-management>

Main point for discussion: the H2020 Call LC-SFS-20-2019 and contribution to the preparatory meeting of future program owners and managers (26 March 2018, Brussels).

Mr. Edoardo Costantini made an inquiry to the ESP national focal points to contact the ministries or program managers to respond to the project call. Furthermore, he asked the PM if the ESP will be involved as side or core participant in the EJP Agricultural Soil Management. He highlighted the possible beneficial impact of the project for all five Ps of the ESP.

Ms. Josiane Masson suggested the formation of a consortium made of national entities (not under the flagship of the ESP) to join the call. Because the ESP, as a regional partnership, does not act as a legal entity, Masson outlined concerns on the availability of the provided EU funding for the ESP.

Mr. Gergely Toth was speaking up for a contribution of ESP to the call, not as an entity but as an advisory body (e.g. on specific topics such as the AlpSP) to guide the work plans. He stated that the main consortium is from a very small geographical area within the European region and highlighted the opportunity for more countries from a larger geographical area to contribute to the EJP project through the contribution of the ESP. According to Mr. Toth, this contribution to the consortium could be an opportunity for the promotion of the collaboration of soil professionals across Europe. Mr. Toth proposed to draft a letter of interest stating that the ESP is willing to support the formation of the project consortium. Rik van den Bosch supported the suggestion to draft and send a response to the

project call ASAP. The ESP chair appointed Mr. Gergely Toth to draft a brief proposal/letter of interest to respond to the project call.

Mr. Edoardo Costantini negated that the ESP will be authorized to be a member of the project consortium, as the consortium consists of program owners and funding bodies such as ministries, etc. He repeated the call for a proactive contribution of the national focal points of the ESP and members of the EU to urge the program owners to join the activities to point for a program manager. Mr. Costantini raised concerns of the ESP being a European contributor in the project because of overlapping topics/work tasks.

Mr. Gergely Toth presented a first draft of a brief proposal for the project H2020 Call LC-SFS-20-2019. The proposal shall serve as a letter of interest/non-binding document for the project call containing the following statements (short):

1. ESP is supportive to the project goals, because common goals are shared;
2. ESP Ps are closely linked to the five expected impact areas of the project;
3. ESP can facilitate the inclusion of further European countries.

The exact formulations were being discussed within the ESP PM. As there is criticism about its vagueness that might engage unwanted commitment of the ESP, the ESP plenary members requested a reformulation of the letter. The ESP chair Ms. Elena Havlicek postponed the exact formulation of the letter for after the meeting. The letter will go through additional consultation with ESP members before being submitted.

5.2 Soil Research Funding Platform – INSPIRATION (Stephan Bartke)

Presentation: <https://www.slideshare.net/ExternalEvents/soil-research-funding-platform-ispiration>

Main point for discussion: Potential role of the ESP as a stakeholder for consultation/updating the Strategic Research Agenda/networking/resourcing in the presented Soil Research Funding Platform.

Mr. Stephan Bartke highlighted the potential for collaborations with the ESP as a stakeholder in the funding framework. Bartke emphasized the shared aim of prioritizing research needs, as well as content related links to another current ongoing European project (e.g. in the context of H2020). He explained that the mentioned projects do involve the EC in the funding, but that the new Funding Platform as an alternative funding mechanism does not, which has additional benefits (flexibility) to fund small(er) and targeted projects. Currently, five committed funders (first call expected in 2019) are involved in the Platform Initiative, including France, Belgium and Sweden, which qualifies the project as operational. In June 2018, a funder workshop to include further interested funders is planned. This initiative is independent from the INSPIRATION project – the latter only acts as a facilitator. Bartke invited the ESP national contacts to inform their relevant national funders about the Funding Platform Initiative and the opportunity to engage early on by participating in the June Funder's Workshop.

Mr. Rainer Baritz promoted the importance of this opportunity for ESP P 3 to identify research gaps, stating that the ESP is lacking the interaction between public and private research bodies. He emphasized the INSPIRATION project and Funding Platform as a pledge to play a role in P 3 to guide and promote in an efficient way soil research across the European region.

Mr. Gergely Toth proposed a further discussion on the participation/contribution to the Funding Platform with the P 3 Co-chair and the ESP secretariat.

The chair of the ESP Ms. Elena Havlicek concluded the discussion with the approved decision that WG of P 3 takes over further directions with the proposed Platform (contact via Bartke).

5.3 SOER 2020 (Rainer Baritz)

Presentation: <https://www.slideshare.net/ExternalEvents/soer-2020>

Main point for discussion: Contribution of the ESP to the SOER 2020 (a comprehensive assessment of the European environment's state, trends and prospects), especially to the thematic assessment land and soil.

Mr. Rainer Baritz presented the environmental reporting by the European Environment Agency (EEA): the next SOER2020 informs about the state and trend of the environment in Europe 2015-2020. Baritz stated that policies involving soil hardly contain any specific targets and quantifiable objectives. He outlined the thematic overlapping of the SOER assessments and the ESP implementation plan.

The ESP chair Ms. Elena Havlicek stated the possibility to share the report of the last Meeting of the Eionet Reference Centres for soil (NRC soil). This possibility is to clarify with Mr. Rainer Baritz.

Mr. Edoardo Costantini asked for clarification about the connection to Pillar 4. Mr. Rainer Baritz stated that the Pillar 4 Implementation Plan provides an overview of important data products, and that Pillar 5 supports the respective implementation with guidance on harmonization. Furthermore, the ESP members are requested to mandate their national soil information institutions to increase the efficiency in working together to hit the same targets in reporting, etc.

5.4 GLOSOLAN (Rosa Cuevas)

Main point for discussion: The possibility/need to establish a Regional Soil Laboratory Network (RESOLAN) for the European region.

Ms. Rosa Cuevas (GSP Secretariat) informed the ESP plenary members about the mission, status and way forward for the Global Soil Laboratory Network (GLOSOLAN). For the European/Eurasian region 48/9 laboratories confirmed to participate in GLOSOLAN. Due to the high participation in these two regions, the GSP secretariat suggested to implement RESOLAN Europe.

Mr. Rik van den Bosch informed about WEPAL, an established program in Wageningen, the Netherlands. WEPAL provides standard procedures

Ms. Vlatka Jurkovic asked about the possibility to join GLOSOLAN. Rosa Cuevas referred to Ms. Lucrezia Caon (GSP secretariat) as the contact person to request participation in GLOSOLAN.

Mr. Rainer Baritz informed about the state of European laboratory networks. A network of forest soil inventories exists under the ICP Forests; however, there seems to be a lack of such a network for agriculture. Based on that, Mr. Baritz highlighted the importance to examine European laboratories and explore the possibilities for a region specific network.

The ESP chair Ms. Elena Havlicek concluded that the implementation of RESOLAN Europe might be followed up.

5.5 5.5. CIRCASA (Sophie Ittner)

Presentation: <https://www.slideshare.net/ExternalEvents/circasa>.

Main point for discussion: Contribution of the ESP to the CIRCASA project.

Ms. Sophie Ittner introduced the CIRCASA (H2020) project, which serves as a coordination hub of international research on soil carbon sequestration in agriculture.

The ESP chair Ms. Elena Havlicek asked for clarification on the role of CIRCASA for the ESP. Ms. Ittner replied that the presentation of the project at the ESP PM is aiming to address national focal points within the ESP in particular. The ESP secretariat will provide necessary information to contact national focal points.

5.6 5.6. EUROSIL 2020 and ECSSS (Elena Havlicek)

Presentation: <https://www.slideshare.net/ExternalEvents/eurosoil-2020-and-ecsss>

Main point for discussion: Consideration of a permanent link between the ESP and ECSSS, which is currently under renewal.

Ms. Elena Havlicek stated that ESP members will be kept informed through the ESP Secretariat about the current developments and ECSSS meeting outcomes, and the EUROSIL call for symposia (dissemination through ESP channels).

6 The Way Forward

6.1 Note by the Director EC JRC Sustainable Resources (Giovanni De Santi)

In his note, Mr. Giovanni De Santi acknowledged soil as a central pillar for environmental and agricultural policies in the European region, with a high importance for the implementation of the CAP, biodiversity policies, etc., and on a broader scale for climate change mitigation. As soil is a key component in all sustainable developments within the EC/European region, Mr. De Santi highlighted the need to raise awareness on soil, and promote the existing linkages to related policies such as biodiversity.

As a main role of the JRC, Mr. De Santi stressed that one of the main roles of the JRC was the dissemination of scientific knowledge and that it was working on developing a more integrated approach in relation to policy support. He proposed working towards improved monitoring, and increased stakeholder involvement of European farmers for soil conservation and preservation, which is also important to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. Giovanni De Santi highlighted the importance of continuous cooperation with international bodies and organizations in the future. Together with the DG Environment of the EC, the JRC is willing to continue working with the ESP. For the future, the JRC will contribute to the development of new models and the provision of an updated knowledge base to support the updating of the World Soil Resources Report for the European region.

Ms. Elena Havlicek, chair of the ESP, expressed high gratitude for the commitment of the JRC, especially to soil management which enables the inclusion of social and economic components of the society, and acknowledged the JRC as a key actor for the ESP, the European Union and other countries in European and Eurasian region such as Switzerland. The GSP secretariat expressed its gratitude to the JRC, and requested continued support from the JRC in the future. Giovanni De Santi confirmed the request and the continuation of the support to the ESP chair and the GSP secretariat.

6.2 Discussion on the Next Steps of the ESP

Mr. Edoardo Costantini is stating that the planned assessment of the 30 cm to 100 cm SOC stock for the GSOCMap update is not feasible. The discussion of this issue has been postponed to the GSP PA. Concerning further steps regarding GSOCMap, Ronald Vargas was announcing that the GSP secretariat will share a note about the consultancy on the GSOCMap follow-up after the meeting.

7 Election of the Steering Committee

The election of the Steering Committee for the next two years mandate:

- Chair position: Elena Havlicek
- Vice-chair positions: Carmelo Dazzi
Hakki Erdogan
- ESP Secretariat: Marc Van Liedekerke

Further appointments:

- EASP representative: Gulchekhra Khasankhanova
- ITPS representative: Peter de Ruyter
- Co-chair position of P3: Gergely Toth

The elections/appointments were by common consent of the ESP plenary members. Mr. Pavel Krasilnikov was proposing to appoint the ESP 2nd vice-chair from the EASP.

8 Conclusions

The 5th PM of the ESP concluded with the following regarding future steps:

1. Enhancement on soil governance in the European region;
2. Development of strategies to improve information sharing and exchange within the ESP and with related networks;
3. Enhancement and vivification of available networks within ESP;
4. Fostering the implementation of the VGSSM into precise actions; and
5. Enhancement of soil literacy especially for policy makers.

The next ESP PM will take place in 2019 – date to be decided by the end of 2018.

Annex I – Agenda



European Soil Partnership Plenary Meeting

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy

20-21 March 2018

Chair: *Elena Havlicek, FOEN Switzerland*

Secretary: *Marc Van Liedekerke, European Commission Joint Research Centre*

Provisional Agenda

Tuesday 20 March (9:30-17:30)

1. Welcome and information + Reporting (09:30 – 10:30)

- 1.1. Welcome and Opening (*Elena Havlicek*)
- 1.2. Adoption of the Agenda
- 1.3. Tour de table (*all*)
- 1.4. GSP report (*Ronald Vargas*)
- 1.5. ITPS report (*Peter de Ruiter / Rainer Horn*)

10:30 – 11:00 *Coffee break*

2. Reports (11:00 – 12:30)

- 2.1. Eurasian Soil Partnership report (*Gulchekhra Khasankhanova*)
- 2.2. ESP Steering Committee report (*Elena Havlicek*)
- 2.3. Information from National Focal Points and ESP members (*all*)

12:30 – 14:00 *Lunch*

3. ESP Work progress: presentation and discussion (14:00 – 17:30)

- 3.1. Work progress Pillar 1 (*Violette Geissen*)
- 3.2. Work progress Pillar 2 (*Arwyn Jones*)

15:30 – 16:00 *Coffee break*

- 3.3. Work progress Pillar 3 (*Coen Ritsema*)
- 3.4. Work progress Pillar 4 (*Edoardo Costantini*)
- 3.5. Work progress Pillar 5 (*Hakki Erdogan*)

Wednesday 21 March (9:00-17:30)

4. Projects with ESP contribution (09:00 – 10:30)

- 4.1. EU contribution to ESP and synergies (*Josiane Masson*)
- 4.2. Alpine Soil Partnership proposal (*Borut Vrscaj*)
- 4.3. European Soil Atlas (*Arwyn Jones*)
- 4.4. ESP contribution to GSOP2018 (*Marc Van Liedekerke*)

10:30 – 11:00 *Coffee break*

5. Projects with ESP contribution (11:00 – 12:30) continued

- 5.1. H2020 EJP Agricultural Soil Management (*Edoardo Costantini/Agnieszka Romanowicz*)
- 5.2. Soil Research Funding Platform – INSPIRATION (*Stephan Bartke*)
- 5.3. SOER 2020 (*Rainer Baritz*)
- 5.4. GLOSOLAN (*Ronald Vargas*)
- 5.5. CIRCASA (*Sophie Ittner*)
- 5.6. EUROSOL 2020 and ECSSS (*Elena Havlicek*)

12:30 – 14:00 *Lunch*

6. The way forward (14:00 – 15:30)

- 6.1. Note by director European Commission JRC Sustainable Resources (*Giovanni de Santi*)
- 6.2. Discussion on the next steps of the ESP (*all*)

15:30 – 16:00 *Coffee break*

7. Procedural matters+ conclusions (16:00-17:00)

- 7.1. Election of the Steering Committee (*all*)
- 7.2. Date and venue of the next plenary session (*all*)
- 7.3. Planning
- 7.4. Conclusions (*Elena Havlicek*)

Annex II – Participant List

First Name	Last Name	Country	Institution/Organization
Paolo	Adamo	Italy	UNINA
Dominique	Arrouays	France	INRA
Alar	Astover	Estonia	Estonian University of Life Sciences
Rainer	Baritz	Denmark	EEA
Stephan	Bartke	Germany	German Environment Agency
Zineb	Bazza	FAO	GSP Secretariat
Anna	Benedetti	Italy	CREA
Katalin	Berényi Üveges	Hungary	National Food Chain Safety Office
Stanislaw	Bialousz	Poland	Lab. of Geoinformation Academy of Aviation, Deblin
Joachim	Bollmann	Germany	Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture
Hans	Brand	Netherlands	Ministry of Agriculture
Edoardo	Costantini	Italy	CREA
Rosa	Cuevas	FAO	GSP Secretariat
Peter	de Ruiter	Netherlands	University of Amsterdam
Giovanni	De Santi	EC	JRC
Marco	Di Leginio	Italy	ISPRA
Hakki Emrah	Erdogan	Turkey	Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock
Maya	Federmann	Israel	Permanent Representation of Israel to FAO
Violette	Geissen	Netherlands	WUR
Frank	Glante	Germany	German Environment Agency
Erik	Grüneberg	Germany	Thünen Institute of Forest Ecosystems
Jacqueline	Hannam	UK	Cranfield University
Elena	Havlicek	Switzerland	BAFU

Sophie	Ittner	Germany	Ecologic Institute
Arwyn	Jones	EC	JRC
Vlatka	Jurković	Croatia	Agricultural Land Agency
Gulchekhra	Khasankhanova	Uzbekistan	EASP
Josef	Kozak	Czech Republic	CULS Prague
Pavel	Krasilnikov	Russia	Eurasian Center for Food Security, Lomonosov Moscow State University
Laura	Liepima	Latvia	Ministry of Agriculture
Josiane	Masson	EC	European Commision
Federica	Minutillo	Italy	Geofilos
Guillermo	Olmedo	FAO	GSP Secretariat
Francesco	Pascale	Italy	Geofilos
Stephanie	Reiter	FAO	GSP Secretariat
Grzegorz	Siebielec	Poland	Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation - State Research Institute
Hanna	Smit	Netherlands	Permanent Representation of the Netherlands to FAO
Jaroslava	Sobočka	Slovakia	National Agricultural and Food Centre - Soil Science and Conservation Research I
Anrea	Spanischberger	Austria	BMNT
Giulia	Stanco	FAO	GSP Secretariat
Martine	Swerts	Belgium	Government of Flanders
Fabio	Terribile	Italy	CRISP UNIVERSITA' DI NAPOLI FEDERICO II
Sideris	Theocharopoulos	Greece	HAO-DEMETER
Gergely	Toth	Hungary	Soil Institute
Rik	Van den Bosch	Netherlands	ISRIC
Kris	Van Looy	Belgium	OVAM
Ronald	Vargas	FAO	GSP Secretariat
Isabelle	Verbeke	FAO	GSP Secretariat

Borut	Vrscaj	Slovenia	Agricultural Institute of Slovenia
Zora	Weberova	Slovakia	Permanent Representation of Slovakia to FAO
Ute	Wollschlaeger	Germany	UFZ
Yusuf	Yigini	FAO	GSP Secretariat
Pandi	Zdruli	Italy	CIHEAM Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari