

September 2021



Global Soil Partnership Plenary Assembly

Ninth session

Virtual, 8-10 September 2021

Report on the financial status of the GSP (GSPPA: IX/2021/4)

Executive Summary

- Despite the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) has continued implementing a wide range of activities and mobilizing resources. Work has been carefully re-organized in order to make sure that outputs were still delivered at Headquarters and other locations without compromising the health of the employees, beneficiaries and other involved participants.
- Furthermore, stakeholders and partners have continued to provide in-kind and some financial contributions for specific activities, for instance through organizing meetings, providing training facilities, as well as inputs into key reports, technical guidelines or policy instruments developed under the aegis of the GSP.
- As was done at previous sessions, a financial report is presented below on an annual basis, i.e. referring to expenditure in the past year (2020) and the likely available budget for the period 2021 - 2022 and beyond (cf. tables 1 and 2 below).

Suggested actions by the GSP Plenary Assembly

The Plenary Assembly may wish to:

- note the progress made in securing additional resources for implementing a number of GSP-sponsored actions and commend the resource partners who have contributed so far; and
- renew its call to all partners, and especially resource partners, to support the implementation of the Global and Regional Implementation Plans and contribute more funds, making use in particular of the Healthy Soils Multi-partner Platform, and providing sufficient in-kind contributions to specific activities.

4.1 Financial status of GSP

1. The GSP is based on cost-sharing principles, whereby each partner may contribute with different inputs to the implementation of approved work.
2. The Plenary Assembly may recall that FAO's contribution from its Regular Budget, as specified in the Terms of Reference approved by the FAO Council, is limited to hosting the GSP Secretariat at FAO headquarters, and only in terms of core support staff. This clearly limits the capacity and flexibility of the Secretariat in providing support to GSP implementation, especially in terms of technical assistance to countries. This situation continues to be in deep contrast with the growing operational complexity and expansion of GSP-related work at all levels.
3. However, as shown in the table below, another important contribution from the FAO Regular Budget came via the implementation of a number of TCP projects (FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme) which are of direct relevance to the GSP.
4. Since the inception of the GSP and particularly after the establishment of the Healthy Soils Facility and successor Healthy Soils Multi-partner Platform, substantial progress has been made in mobilizing extra-budgetary resources. A brief recapitulation of contributions and projects is given in the following paragraphs.
5. Overall, the European Commission has provided EUR 3.5 million since 2015 to date (USD 3.8 million). These funds have been particularly instrumental during the GSP establishment phase, for the functioning of its various components, mainly the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soil (ITPS), the formulation of core normative tools and publications such as the Status of the World's Soil Resources, the Revised World Soil Charter, the implementation of World Soil Day, the Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management (VGSSM), the Global Soil Organic Carbon map, as well as capacity development activities.
6. The Russian Federation has provided funding via two successive projects over the period 2015-2021 amounting to USD 3 million and is therefore so far the second major donor to the GSP. Negotiations on additional funding (total amount USD 2 million) are currently taking place and are expected to be concluded positively. This assistance has been of paramount importance, for instance in facilitating the preparation of VGSSM, the establishment of the Glinka World Soil Prize, the execution of the implementation plan of the Eurasian Soil Partnership, the Global Soil Organic Carbon Map, the State of knowledge of Soil Biodiversity report, the Global Assessment of Soil Pollution report, and different projects on soil salinity and capacity development, etc.
7. The People's Republic of China has provided an Associated Professional Officer to the Secretariat for 2017-2019. Another expert was also seconded to the Secretariat for four months during 2019. China has also contributed USD 1 million for two projects on soil fertility in two African countries (Rwanda and Uganda). The Swiss Confederation has provided an overall contribution of USD 780 000. An initial contribution was made for the implementation of the International Year of Soils (2015) to the tune of USD 100 000 and a further contribution of USD 30 000 was used for organizing the Global Symposium on Soil Organic Carbon (GSOC17). A direct contribution of USD 650 000 was made to the execution of GSP multi-donor projects. This type of contributions is very much appreciated, being very cost effective and it is hoped that this example can be emulated by other donors.
8. The Kingdom of the Netherlands provided funds to a multi donor project of USD 150 000 which ended in 2018 and renewed its support for an amount of USD 450 000 to another multi-donor project for the period 2019-2021 (ending in May 2021). The resources were used for the preparation of

September 2021

campaign materials for World Soil Day, the preparation of various technical reports, training on sustainable soil management, and the organization of global symposia.

9. The Federal Republic of Germany has recently provided USD 1 500 000 for an important project (2019-2022) which is related to Sustainable Soil Management for nutrition-sensitive agriculture. It is being implemented in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and Malawi, and is mainly focused on improving the micronutrient content of food through sustainable soil management.
10. More recently, the Republic of Korea provided USD 1 400 000 for a project focused on the development of the Soil Atlas of Asia and National Soil Information Systems in member countries of the Asian Food and Agriculture Cooperation Initiative (AFACI) for the period 2020-2023.
11. Consistent with the call from the Plenary Assembly to diversify resource partners, the private sector may be an important source of assistance to Global Soil Partnership operations. All potential private donors i.e. non-state stakeholders have to be scrutinized through special internal procedures in order to be considered eligible to become donors. For example, PhosAgro has contributed USD 150 000 to the organization of the Global Symposium on Soil Pollution and the campaign “Be the solution to soil pollution” in 2018. Furthermore, they have contributed USD 1 200 000 for a project focused on the Global Soil Laboratory Network (GLOSOLAN) and the Soil Doctors programme during 2019-2021. Negotiations on additional funding (total amount USD 1 200 000) were concluded successfully and activities will be implemented by June 2023. Hence, PhosAgro has become a very important resource partner of the GSP.
12. The current picture shows that the budget available for 2020 and 2021 has increased in comparison to 2019, while more contributions are expected to materialize. Due attention is being paid to regular reporting (in both narrative and financial form) to the current donors, stressing the good results achieved and thus demonstrating that further support would be worthwhile.
13. It is also important to recognize the small financial and in-kind contributions made by partners, for instance in organizing GSP meetings and seconding staff to the Secretariat. Among others, the following countries have organized and co-financed GSP meetings: Iceland, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova and Thailand, and The University of Basel seconded an expert to the Secretariat for several months.
14. A more complete account of all financial contributions, including from TCP resources, is given in the following paragraph and tables. It is important to note that a regional TCP for the Near East and North Africa (NENA) region is under finalization as well as national TCP projects for Congo and Liberia.
15. Overview of resources to support GSP work, as follows:
 - **Previous years (up to 2015): USD 2 878 274**
 - **Year 2016: USD 1 950 701**
 - **Year 2017: USD 2 759 788**
 - **Year 2018: USD 2 442 661**
 - **Year 2019: USD 3 649 868**
 - **Year 2020: USD 3 054 551**
 - **Overall resources mobilised: USD 16 785 853**

Table 1: Ongoing projects from voluntary contributions and FAO's contributions

Years 2020-2021 available budgets	
Voluntary Contributions (projects)	Budget Available
MTF/GLO/962/PHO (Implementation of Sustainable Soil Management through the Soil Doctors programme and the Global Soil Laboratory Network)	\$1.210.398
GCP/GLO/961/MUL (Support to the promotion of sustainable soil management in the framework of the Global Soil Partnership activities for the 2018-2021 period)	\$778.798
GCP/GLO/853/RUS (Support to promotion of sustainable soil management in framework of Global Soil Partners: Phase II)	\$2.009.465
GCP /GLO/730/GER (Sustainable soil management for nutrition-sensitive agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia period 2018-2021)	\$1.500.000
GCP/GLO/993/EC (Support to FAO for the implementation of the Global Soil Partnership Phase III Period 2019-2021)	\$1.107.200
GCP/GLO/031/ROK (Development of the Soil Atlas of Asia and National Soil Information Systems 2020-2023)	\$1.400.000
GCP/UGA/059/CPR (Capacity development on Sustainable Soil Management for Africa (1) – Uganda)	\$500.000
GCP /RWA/040/CPR (Capacity Development on sustainable Soil Management for Africa (2) – Rwanda)	\$500.000
Total	\$10.205.861
TCP projects	
TCP/BHU/3703 (Strengthening Soil Laboratory facilities and performance to support evidence-based decision-making)	\$125.000
TCP/THA/3703 (Strengthening the CESRA network and activities in Asia region for sustainable soil management)	\$150.000
TCP/LIR/3804 (Strengthening soil analysis and information systems to enhance sustainable soil management and support evidence based decision making in Liberia)	\$440.000
TCP/RAB/3802 (Capacity development for the sustainable management of soil resources in the NENA region to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs))	\$400.000
TCP/CPR/3806 (Conservation and Sustainable Management of Black Soil in Jilin Province)	\$200.000
TCP/STP/3802/C1 (Appui à la caractérisation des sols agricoles de Sao Tomé et Principe)	\$67.000
TCP/TUR/3802/C2 (Enhancement of soil and fertilizer management)	\$95.000
Total	\$1.477.000
Regular Programme	
GSP Secretariat staff	\$770.000
Plenary Assembly of GSP	\$100.000
Total	\$870.000
Overall Budget for 2020 and 2021	\$12.552.861

September 2021

Table 2: Expenditures 2020

Total spent in Year 2020	
Voluntary Contributions	Expenditures
MTF/GLO/962/PHO	\$244.550
GCP/GLO/961/MUL	\$275.721
GCP/GLO/853/RUS	\$762.233
GCP /GLO/730/GER	\$546.304
GCP/GLO/993/EC	\$609.094
GCP/GLO/031/ROK	\$174.698
GCP /RWA/040/CPR	\$6.659
Total	\$2.619.259
TCP projects	
TCP/BHU/3703	\$27.386
TCP/THA/3703	\$81.258
TCP/RAB/3802	\$648
Total	\$109.292
Regular Programme	
GSP Secretariat staff	\$326.000
Total	\$326.000
Overall Expenditures 2020	\$3.054.551

Table 3: Expenditures January – June 2021

Total spent in January – June 2021	
Voluntary Contributions	Expenditures
MTF/GLO/962/PHO	\$419.392
GCP/GLO/853/RUS	\$583.159
GCP /GLO/730/GER	\$263.527
GCP/GLO/993/EC	\$62.039
GCP/GLO/031/ROK	\$555.717
GCP /RWA/040/CPR	\$217.793
GCP /UGA/059/CPR	\$126.703
Total	\$2.228.330
TCP projects	
TCP/THA/3703	\$40.668
TCP/RAB/3802	\$8.884
Total	\$49.552
Regular Programme	
GSP Secretariat staff	\$163.000
Total	\$163.000
Overall Expenditures January – June 2021	\$2.440.882