



2nd Plenary Meeting on Soil Spectroscopy

Decision document GLO/I/2021: *Review the governance of the GLOSOLAN Initiative on Soil Spectroscopy. To be discussed on 2 and 4 November 2021.*

Background

The first plenary meeting on soil spectroscopy of the Global Soil Laboratory Network (GLOSOLAN) was virtually organized by the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) on 23-25 September 2020 on the online platform Zoom. During the meeting, GLOSOLAN members agreed for the Soil Spectroscopy Initiative (GLOSOLAN-Spec) to be represented by one or more working group leader and to count on the support of a working group organized in sub-groups based on the GLOSOLAN work plan for soil spectroscopy (Terms of Reference for these positions available in Annex III of the [meeting report](#)). In this regard, in 2020-2021, the following sub-groups were established:

- General working group on soil spectroscopy: tasked to answer general questions and requests for help from GLOSOLAN members. This working group should be involved in the review of technical documents and training materials.
- Working group on the development of the global soil spectral calibration library: tasked to technically advise and support the development of the library
- Working group on the development of the global soil property estimation service: tasked to technically advise and support the development of the estimation service.

However, in 2020-2021, GLOSOLAN noticed that the current governance does not cover all soil spectroscopy related activities in the working groups well. A few working groups' meetings were organized but no follow-up actions were taken. This might result in a loss of interest of experts in the

working groups in the GLOSOLAN Initiative on Soil Spectroscopy. In this regard, activities tended to be centralized within the working group leaders and on few specific objectives.

Proposal

GLOSOLAN proposes to review the governance of its Initiative on soil spectroscopy. The Initiative will be represented by only one Chair supported by a Steering Committee and a working group. The proposed Terms of Reference (TORs) for these positions are herewith reported. Please note that no change is proposed to the TORs for the position of regional champion laboratories and/or institutes on soil spectroscopy.

- **Chair on Soil Spectroscopy**

The GLOSOLAN Initiative on Soil Spectroscopy (GLOSOLAN-Spec) is led by the GLOSOLAN Chair on Soil Spectroscopy that works in coordination with the GLOSOLAN Chair, the GLOSOLAN vice-Chair, and the GLOSOLAN Coordinators at the Global Soil Partnership. The term for the leader is two years after election. The appointment of the Chair of GLOSOLAN-Spec and the extension of his/her mandate to a second term will take place during the annual plenary meeting on soil spectroscopy.

The Chair of GLOSOLAN-Spec should be selected based on the following criteria:

- Should be an internationally recognized expert on soil spectroscopy;
- Should belong to a laboratory registered to the GLOSOLAN network that preferably does both wet chemistry and spectral analysis;
- Should have time to commit to the implementation of the GLOSOLAN work plan;
- Not have any conflict of interest in regards to the objectives, data, information of the Global Soil Partnership, GLOSOLAN, and the Soil Spectroscopy initiative;
- Should demonstrate interest in all the areas of work of GLOSOLAN-Spec;
- Should agree on the GLOSOLAN vision and policy on transparency, partnership and equality.

The Chair is responsible for:

- i. Supporting and ensuring the timely implementation of the GLOSOLAN work plan on soil spectroscopy;
- ii. Reporting on spectroscopy activities at the annual GLOSOLAN meeting;
- iii. Representing the working group on spectroscopy and GLOSOLAN-Spec at any other GSP meetings or international events;
- iv. Supporting GLOSOLAN in capacity-building and financial-resources mobilization activities;
- v. Ensuring that the activities of the working group are implemented according to the principles of GLOSOLAN, including transparency, inclusivity, and mutual respect; and
- vi. Facilitate the communication between GLOSOLAN and independent projects and initiatives on soil spectroscopy.

- **Steering Committee to GLOSOLAN-Spec**

The Steering Committee to GLOSOLAN-Spec will act under the direction of the GLOSOLAN Chair on Soil Spectroscopy with the support of the GLOSOLAN Chair and the GLOSOLAN vice-Chair. The GLOSOLAN Coordinators will provide support as facilitators.

All members of the Steering Committee should:

- Be top experts on the topic of soil spectroscopy;
- Represent institutions with a major regional or global role on soil spectroscopy;
- Have time to commit to implement the GLOSOLAN work plan on soil spectroscopy; and
- Not have any conflict of interest in regards to the objectives, data, information of the Global Soil Partnership, GLOSOLAN, and the Soil Spectroscopy initiative

The GLOSOLAN Chair and Vice-Chair, and the ITPS representative in GLOSOLAN are members of the Steering Committee by default. Overall, the Steering Committee should be represented by experts that can provide an opinion on all aspects of soil spectroscopy. In this regard, the Steering Committee is tasked to:

- advise and help the working group as needed;
- Identify the priorities in the work plan of GLOSOLAN-Spec – where the most energy should be directed;
- Identify and monitoring potential risks related to the implementation of activities in the GLOSOLAN-Spec work plan;
- Providing input to the development of project proposals;
- Monitoring and assessing the quality of the GLOSOLAN-Spec outputs as they develop;
- make urgent recommendations and sometimes decisions that cannot wait for the organization of a plenary meeting;

Members of the Steering Committee meet three times per year. One time after the plenary meeting, to review the decisions made by GLOSOLAN members. One time six months after the plenary meeting, to review and assess progresses and needs. And another time right before the next plenary meeting, to review progresses and advice on the upcoming plenary meeting. Additional meetings of the Steering Committee can be organized as needed.

- **Working Group on Soil Spectroscopy**

The technical working group will act under the direction of the Chair of GLOSOLAN-Spec, the GLOSOLAN Chair and the GLOSOLAN vice-Chair. The GLOSOLAN Coordinators will provide support as facilitators.

All members of the working group should:

- Be experts on the topic of soil spectroscopy;
- Have time to commit to implement the GLOSOLAN work plan on soil spectroscopy;
- Not have any conflict of interest in regards to the objectives, data, information of the Global Soil Partnership, GLOSOLAN, and the Soil Spectroscopy initiative.

Representatives from the Regional Champion Laboratories/Institutes on soil spectroscopy must also be part of the working group. At least one member of the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS)

should be part of the working group on soil spectroscopy. In this regard, the identified expert(s) should assist the GLOSOLAN Coordinator in reporting on GLOSOLAN activities to the ITPS. Because GLOSOLAN works on harmonization and GLOSOLAN documents are released after long discussions among laboratories, countries, and implementing partners, documents produced under GLOSOLAN do not require the approval of the ITPS before publication. The opinion and clearance of the ITPS and that of the GSP Plenary Assembly are required only for documents that have political implications, such as the “Resolution for the International Exchange of Soil Samples for Research Purposes under GLOSOLAN” (presented and approved at the Seventh GSP Plenary Assembly in 2019), and for the launch of new initiatives, such as the initiative on soil spectroscopy (presented and approved at the Seventh GSP Plenary Assembly in 2019) and the initiative on soil fertilizer analysis (presented and approved at the Eighth GSP Plenary Assembly in 2020).

In accordance with the decision-making process endorsed for this initiative by GLOSOLAN members and partners on soil spectroscopy, the working group should work in close contact with countries and laboratories. Countries and laboratories will provide the working group with data and information to develop standards, tools, and other soil spectroscopy materials and will review draft documents and prototype tools developed by the working group. The number of members in the working group is not limited. The GLOSOLAN Coordinators and the Chair of GLOSOLAN-Spec should ensure to the best of their ability that the working group has an appropriate geographical balance, representation of members and coverage of topics. All GLOSOLAN members receive regular updates on the work of the network on spectroscopy; it is not necessary to register in the working group to be informed of its activities.

The working group on spectroscopy will:

- i. Contribute to the preparation (writing, revision, and finalization) of spectroscopy materials, such as protocols, guidelines, manuals, and training material and videos;
- ii. Advise laboratories working on or interested in working on spectroscopy as needed and support capacity building activities;
- iii. Coordinate the establishment of the global spectral library and the development of tools for its applications;
- iv. Coordinate joint writing of publications;
- v. Support the organization of the annual plenary meetings on spectroscopy;
- vi. Contribute to the development of the annual GLOSOLAN work plan on spectroscopy;
- vii. Promote GLOSOLAN at the global, regional, and national level, motivating other laboratories to join the network; and
- viii. Contribute to the mobilization of financial resources under GLOSOLAN.

- **New members of the working group**

Experts interested in joining the working group can send an expression of interest to the GLOSOLAN Coordinators any time. Each will join the working group after providing a short summary of their experience and interest in the GLOSOLAN work on soil spectroscopy. The summary is intended to ensure that member’s skills are used to best effect and that member’s interests in contributing to GLOSOLAN are met.

The GLOSOLAN Coordinators and the GLOSOLAN Chair on Soil Spectroscopy will consider the applicant's:

- Reputation as an expert on spectroscopy;
- CV and publication list;
- Participation in projects that could help to implement the GLOSOLAN work plan on soil spectroscopy; and
- Time available to commit to GLOSOLAN.

- **Work plan and functioning**

Every year, the GLOSOLAN work plan on soil spectroscopy is discussed at the plenary meeting on soil spectroscopy, which is attended by all GLOSOLAN members and partners on soil spectroscopy. The work plan lists all the activities on soil spectroscopy to be implemented by GLOSOLAN for one year, assigns tasks to partners, and specifies deadlines. The work plan is presented at the annual GLOSOLAN meeting for final endorsement. To ensure the active and constructive participation of all experts, the GLOSOLAN Coordinator will monitor the activities of the working group and its members. Inactive members will be contacted by the GLOSOLAN coordinator and eventually removed from the working group. The working group is based on the willingness of its members to jointly achieve a common goal. In this regard, all members commit to a positive and constructive approach that facilitates the work

Decision to make at the 2nd Plenary Meeting on Soil Spectroscopy

GLOSOLAN is kindly asking participants to the 2nd Plenary Meeting on Soil Spectroscopy to endorse the revised governance of the GLOSOLAN Initiative on Soil Spectroscopy and the proposed Terms of Reference of the positions of GLOSOLAN Chair on Soil Spectroscopy, Steering Committee and working group.