



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

AGENDA

# Enhancing soil governance: regional and national examples of soil legislation development

9<sup>th</sup> of March 2023



Umwelt  
Bundesamt

Jointly organized by the  
German Environmental Agency and  
the FAO Global Soil Partnership





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# Enhancing soil governance: regional and national examples of soil legislation development

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9<sup>th</sup> of March 2023, 13:00 – 15:00 CET  
Online Webinar (Zoom platform)

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## Background

Soil plays a key role in life on earth. In addition to providing 95 percent of the food we consume, healthy soil provides pivotal ecosystem services that are essential for life, including water storage and purification and flood regulation, carbon sequestration and consequently climate change mitigation, or nutrient cycling, among others.

Moreover, healthy soils are fundamental to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. But despite these essential services provided by soil, around one third of the world's soils are affected by various degradation processes. Unfortunately, it remains one of the least protected natural resources in terms of legislation. Most states relate to soil exclusively as an economic asset and as such is regulated in its various uses, which is why, even where they exist, soil protection regulations are scattered among different land uses regulations.

Black soils are an invaluable land resource that is suitable for crop growth due to its rich organic matter content, high fertility, and good physical properties. Black soils are considered as the major *food basket* in the world, producing large quantities of agricultural products, and thus playing a critical role in eliminating global hunger. They are also paramount for climate change mitigation and adaptation as they contain 8.2 percent of the world's SOC stocks and can provide 10 percent of the global total SOC sequestration potential. In addition, black soils host a massive of plants, animals, and microorganisms, and are therefore fundamental in preserving biodiversity and maintaining nutrient cycling and balance in ecosystems.





## The Global Soil Partnership

The Global Soil Partnership (GSP) was established in 2012 with the aim of promoting sustainable soil management and improving soil governance at all levels. Created within the framework of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the GSP is in a strategic position to bring together all actors and draw the state-of-the-art scientific evidence to policy development. It is in the wake of this activity that this webinar is proposed.

## German Environment Agency

As Germany's main environmental protection agency, the work of the German Environment Agency (UBA) centers around gathering data concerning the state of the environment, investigating the relevant interrelationships and making projections – and then, based on these findings, providing federal bodies such as the Ministry of the Environment with policy advice. In addition, the UBA provides the general public with information and answer your questions on all of the various issues that we address. Apart from these activities, UBA implements environmental law by making sure that it is applied in areas such as CO<sub>2</sub> trading and approval processes for chemicals, pharmaceutical drugs and pesticides.

## Objective

The objective of this webinar, framed in the series of seminars on soil governance carried out by the GSP since 2021, is to analyze in detail different legislative strategies for sustainable soil management and, taking as an example the development of the novel Chinese legislation on Black Soil protection, to discuss the importance of a multidisciplinary legislative development based on the best scientific evidence and knowledge. Given the current global food crisis and taking into account the important role of black soils in feeding the world, this seminar is very timely. It will connect the latest developments in black soil knowledge and mapping, including the Global black soil distribution map launched by the GSP in July 2022 and the Global black soil report launched in December 2022, with the virtuous example of black soil law of China. Other regional and national examples of soil legislation development will also be presented to highlight the process of shaping soil protection legislation and thus inspire those with regulatory power to take such measures. Advancing soil protection in national programmes and building national capacity for law-making and enforcement are key to ensuring sustainable use and management of soil and ultimately achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



# Agenda

**9<sup>th</sup> of March 2023, 13.00 -15.00 CET**

**13:00-13:10 | OPENING REMARKS**

*Mr Lifeng Li, Director of Land and Water Division, FAO*

*Ms Lilian Busse, Vice President of the German Environment Agency (UBA)*

**13:10–13:25 | Black Soil Protection Law of the People's Republic of China: the importance of the legislation and governance actions**

*Prof WANG Jian, China Agriculture University*

**13:25–13:40 | Proposal for a global agreement on black soils protection for global food security**

*Prof Ivan Vasenev, chair of the International Network on Black Soils (INBS)*

**13:40–13:55 | Designing a Model law for Africa: regional and national considerations**

*Dr Harald Ginzky, German Environment Agency*

**13:55–14:10 | Soil governance and sustainable agriculture in Mexico**

*Dr Sol Ortiz, Director General of Prospective Policies and Climate Change, Mexico's Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER) (tbc)*

*Dr Blanca Prado, National Autonomous University of Mexico, University Programme for Interdisciplinary Soil Studies (PUEIS-UNAM) (tbc)*

**14:10–14:30 | Panel discussion: from global to national approaches, what are the successful mechanisms for improving soil governance?**

**14:30–14:50 | Open discussion with audience**

**14:50–15:00 | CONCLUSION**

*Mr Ronald Vargas, FAO GSP*

*Moderator: Ms Natalia Rodríguez Eugenio, FAO GSP*





The Global Soil Partnership (GSP) is a globally recognized mechanism established in 2012. Our mission is to position soils in the Global Agenda through collective action. Our key objectives are to promote Sustainable Soil Management (SSM) and improve soil governance to guarantee healthy and productive soils, and support the provision of essential ecosystem services towards food security and improved nutrition, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and sustainable development.

