



Dear INSOP members,

This is your quarterly update from the International Network on Soil Pollution



INSOP annual meeting:

Date	Venue
26-28 November, 2024	Online

We are pleased to announce that the second [INSOP annual meeting](https://fao.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYofuiuqD0uHdejP86b4i_KGC5ydfu5k0#/registration) will be held virtually from 26 to 28 November, 2024. The link to the registration can be found here:

https://fao.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYofuiuqD0uHdejP86b4i_KGC5ydfu5k0#/registration

The overall goal of this 3-day session is to review the progress done by the network, discuss and agree on the next steps to be prioritized for 2025, launch the peer-review process among the members on the FAO Technical Guidelines on Soil Pollution Assessment, Mapping, Monitoring and Risk Communication and strengthen the cooperation between INSOP members. Several guest speakers have been invited on the second day to discuss and bring attention to the following topics:

- Mapping arsenic in the European topsoils using LUCAS;
- How to communicate soil pollution to the general public;
- Military-impacted areas and dioxins pollution in Viet Nam and South America;
- Microplastic and how to detect it in the soil; and
- New soil pollution emerging tool and the threshold values for soil contaminants.

Education posters for Soil Doctors Programme on soil pollution

As part of the Food Safety Working Group, INSOP held two technical meetings with its members to design educational posters aimed at farmers. These posters explain the concept of soil pollution, its sources and effects, and how to prevent it in agricultural fields.

After thorough discussions, INSOP members have completed two posters, which are now accessible on the GSP webpage. The first training session to educate farmer communities about soil pollution is scheduled for January 2025 in Trinidad and Tobago. You can access the posters through the following link:

[What is Soil Pollution](#)

[How to prevent Soil Pollution](#)

SOP for heavy metal determination in phosphate fertilizer materials

As part of the collaborative efforts between INSOP and the International Network on Soil Fertility and Fertilizers (INSOILFER), members of both networks developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to determine heavy metals in phosphate fertilizer materials. This document provides essential guidance for laboratory technicians on evaluating fertilizer quality and monitoring heavy metal content. It is a critical step toward the healthier and more sustainable use of mineral fertilizers, particularly those containing phosphorus, which is vital for agricultural productivity.

The SOP is now available on the FAO website here: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/c55edb95-44a9-47dc-b4a4-7a99c821926e>

As a next step, INSOP and INSOILFER are planning a joint workshop. The lead author of the SOP will explain the principles for determining heavy metals in phosphate fertilizers at the workshop, which is scheduled for 17 December. The registration link will be shared soon.

Workshop findings on threshold values for soil contaminants

As part of the Assessment Working Group's action plan, INSOP members, in collaboration with the [Common Forum on Contaminated Land in Europe](#) and the [ARAGORN project](#), are actively working on collecting soil pollution threshold values from around the world. During an online workshop held on 3 October, the progress of this global database of threshold values was presented. It was decided to continue gathering data and identifying countries with and without established threshold values until the end of the year.

The workshop recordings and presentations are now available on the INSOP webpage here:

<https://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/resources/events/detail/en/c/1709058/>

INSOP will also host additional workshops, inviting countries to share their methodologies for developing and implementing threshold values. The second workshop is scheduled for January 2025, and the date has yet to be confirmed.

Call for expressions of interest: Soil Specialists

Date	Venue
4 November, 2024	Online

https://jobs.fao.org/careersection/fao_external/jobdetail.ftl?job=2403240

The Land and Water Division (NSL) aims at enhancing the agricultural productivity and advancing the sustainable use of land and water resources through their improved governance, development and

management. It addresses the challenges member countries face in ensuring productive and efficient use of land and water resources in order to meet present and future demands for agricultural products, while ensuring the long-term sustainability of the land, soils and water quantity and quality. It promotes equitable access to these natural resources with a view to enhancing productivity, livelihoods and ecosystem services. It provides assistance to member nations in developing policies and programmes and adopting best practices and tools in the fields of irrigation and drainage, soil and water conservation, drought mitigation, water rights and access to natural resources.

In Central America and sub-Saharan Africa, the Soil Mapping for Resilient Agrifood Systems (SoilFER) project stands out as a unique framework aimed at unearthing valuable information from soils to guide policymaking and fertilizer recommendations both at national and field scale. The project's emphasis on strengthening capacities as well as empowering stakeholders with full ownership and control over the data and tools underscore its long-term ambition to sustainably equip both participating governmental institutions and farmers.

The purpose of this call is to provide FAO's NSL with a list of qualified candidates for a number of profiles with different specializations to support the implementation of relevant projects and the work as indicated below:

- Soil Spectroscopy and Proximal Sensing
- Soil Laboratories (Wet Chemistry)
- Soil Information and Data
- Soil Fertility and Fertilizers

Contracts will be based in FAO HQs with required travel for field missions, where relevant. You apply for the vacancy via the following [link](#).

Kind regards,

Sergejus Ustinov

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The State of Soils in Europe

<https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC137600>

The Joint Research Center (JRC) has released a report that delves into the intricate interplay between drivers, pressures and impacts on soil in the 32 Member States of the European Environment Agency (EEA), along with six cooperating countries from the West Balkans, Ukraine and UK, shedding light on the multifaceted challenges facing soil conservation efforts. The analysis shows the complex interactions among various factors, both anthropogenic and natural, shaping soil degradation processes and their subsequent consequences. The report highlights key findings, including the significant impacts of soil degradation on agriculture, ecosystem resilience, water quality, biodiversity,

and human health, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive soil management strategies. Moreover, the examination of citizen science initiatives underlines the importance of engaging the public in soil monitoring and conservation efforts. This work emphasises the policy relevance of promoting sustainable soil governance frameworks, supported by research, innovation, and robust soil monitoring schemes, to safeguard soil health and ensure the long-term resilience of ecosystems.

You can access the full report [here](#).

SETAC 2025: Call for abstract

<https://setac.secure-platform.com/vienna2025/solicitations/102006/sessiongallery/94142>

Date	Venue
20 November, 2024	Online

Advancements in analytical techniques allow for more realistic contamination assessments and a better understanding of the fate and behavior of environmental contaminants. This supports addressing contamination challenges beyond specific environmental contexts. Monitoring programs are, as a driver and as a consequence of these developments, becoming more comprehensive in terms of number of compounds and matrices. A wide spectrum of contaminants have been identified in urban and rural environments, with pharmaceuticals, pesticides, Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and plastics being the dominant types. The sources, environmental pathways, and potential effects of these contaminants are relatively well known. SETAC session, Co-occurrence of Contaminants in Urban and Rural Environments is looking for new data on contaminant distribution (ideally multi-group contaminants from various environmental matrices), new approaches/uses of monitoring data (e.g., deriving soil screening values), new modelling approaches (e.g., specifically targeting the fate of multi-group contaminants), new data on the transport, bioavailability, and degradation of contaminants, and a focus on co-occurrence effects. Do not hesitate to submit your abstract by November 20: <https://www.setac.org/discover-events/global-meetings/setac-europe-35th-annual-meeting/programme/abstract-submission.html>

World Soil Day 2024: Caring for Soils: Measure, Monitor, Manage

<https://www.fao.org/world-soil-day/en/>

Date	Venue
5 December, 2024	Online

World Soil Day (WSD) is held annually on 5 December as a means to focus attention on the importance of healthy soil and advocating for the sustainable management of soil resources.

The theme for this year is "*Caring for Soils: Measure, Monitor, Manage*," which underscores the importance of accurate soil data and information in understanding soil characteristics and supporting informed decision making on sustainable soil management for food security.

Read more about WSD [here](#)!

FAO's report on plastic used in agriculture

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/68dce2f5-d724-4869-9288-4fdc21a0eb1e>

FAO has recently released the new report, prepared in collaboration with the Norwegian Institute for Water Research, NIVA, which compiles insights from over 100 stakeholders, offering recommendations on improving the lifecycle sustainability of agricultural plastics and addressing key knowledge gaps. To inform the development of a Voluntary Code of Conduct on the Sustainable Use and Management of Plastics in Agriculture (VCoC), the FAO in 2023 engaged interested stakeholders through the Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN Forum). Stakeholders provided valuable insights into current practices in the use and management of agricultural plastics, discussing sustainability challenges, existing regulatory frameworks, and considerations for the design and implementation of the VCoC. This report analyses the feedback gathered from the 108 stakeholders who participated in the consultation.

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/68dce2f5-d724-4869-9288-4fdc21a0eb1e>

E-learning courses on Pesticide Registration Toolkit

<https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=936>

The FAO [Plant Production and Protection Division](#) (NSP) and FAO e-learning academy, together with the European Union, the Swedish Chemicals Agency (KEMI) and the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), including WHO, UNDP, ILO, UNEP, UNITAR, OECD, UNIDO, World Bank and FAO are extremely pleased to announce the publication of the joint certified e-learning course: "Pesticide Registration Toolkit", available free of charge, as a global public good, through the FAO e-learning academy:

In this course, you will learn about:

- The use of pesticides in agriculture and public health, and the associated benefits and risks.
- The importance of pesticide registration.
- FAO's role in pesticide management.
- Contents and structure of the Pesticide Registration Toolkit.
- Pesticide registration strategies.

The course is available at: <https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=936>

