



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

8th European Soil Partnership Plenary Meeting

Virtual meeting | 24 June 2021



Global Soil Partnership Governance

The GSP is an **open**, interactive, responsive and **voluntary partnership (as an initiative of its members and other partners)** which includes FAO Member countries and GSP partners - Governmental Organizations, Universities, Civil institutions, Research centers, Soil science societies, UN agencies, NGOs, Private companies, Farmer associations, Donors.

The key objectives of the GSP are to improve soil governance, ensure healthy and productive soils in all land uses across the globe and position soils in the global agenda

Global Soil Partnership Governance

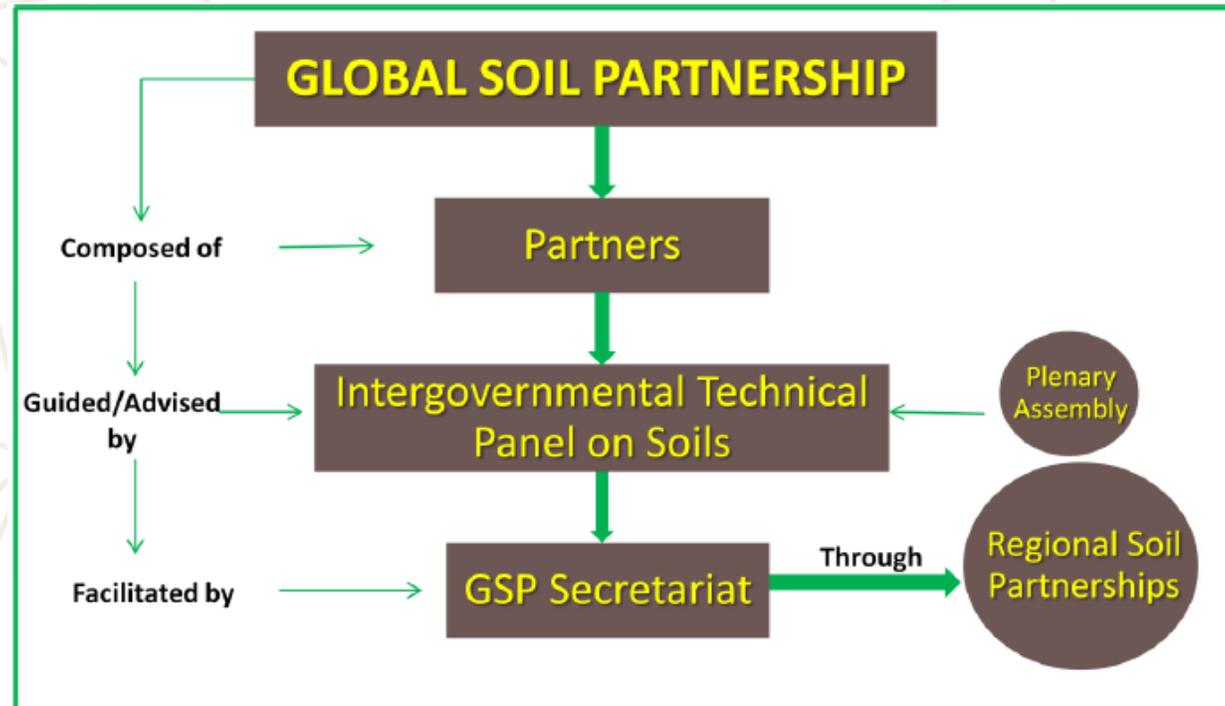
ToR, RoP:

Plenary Assembly: Chair, Co-Chair, Rapporteur

Pillars and Plans of Action

ITPS

Regional and subregional partnerships: close cooperation with FAO Regional Offices



- “simple” governance with few specifications (detailed governance is optional: chairs, ToR for RSP, global and regional implementation plans)
- Implementation structure

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Governance



Implementation system



FAO governing bodies:

FAO **Council** endorses proposals by COAG, meets annually

COAG reviews and appraises agricultural and nutritional topics; it is open to all Members, meets biannually

Important policy documents (with binding nature to FAO members) are prepared by (ad-hoc) **Open-Ended Working Groups**, composed of **Permanent Representatives to FAO**

COAG has reviewed the ToR of the GSP with special attention to institutional and policy implications and to prepare the final version for endorsement by the Programme Committee, and subsequently, the Council. The Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) was particularly active.



FAO European Regional Group (ERG)

- Each FAO region has an **informal** group of FAO Member Countries to coordinate positions and nominations, it represents the membership base for the regional conference
- ERG: 48 member states plus the European Union (EU has no voting rights and cannot take roles in elective bodies), EU members dominate, **no** ERG statements in governing bodies (Asia and Africa different), rotating chair
- EU statements and official position are coordinated by the resp. EU Council WG (**FAO AGRI**)
- ERG members represent “37 percent of FAO’s assessed contributions and close to half of all voluntary contributions to FAO” (as of 2018)

Example of the most recent ERG activity for GSP: nomination of a replacement for the GSP Vice-Chair by an ESP member

- FAO requests nomination to ERG
- ERG requests positions/proposals by its members (Permanent Representatives to the FAO)
- Country representatives request their national counterparts (Ministry of Agriculture, or other) for guidance
- ERG Chair collects country positions and informs FAO Protocol of ERG decision

EU Council: “FAO AGRI”

- Council of the EU: representatives from each member state at ministerial level (Agriculture and Fisheries Council, AGRIFISH)
- The Council is supported by the **Committee of Permanent Representatives** of the Governments of the Member States to the EU (Coreper), and more than 150 highly specialised **working parties** and committees, known as the '**Council preparatory bodies**'.
 - **Coordination Working Party**: coordinates member states' positions for meetings of various international organisations, such as for FAO and OECD.
 - Positions are provided to the FAO governing bodies through the chair (delegate of the country holding the EU-presidency)

Facit and recommendations to ESP members

Objective:

- Improvement of information flows between soil experts and advisors, and their national representations (which are effective in decision making)
- National level and EU-level decision making processes on soil protection (technical, political) are complex. Thus, familiarity with the EU soil governance is important, e.g. the Expert Group on Soil Protection (will be described in detail in the new EU Soil Strategy)

Country focal points: ensure contact to permanent representatives to the resp. Council Working party, and to the Permanent Representation to the Rome-based Agencies (in particular: FAO)

Other ESP partners: to proactively support your country focal points

ESP-Steering Committee: to include a representative of Country Focal Points (*selection rules, roles and functioning to be decided*)