



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Policy briefs

Leila Ben Dhiab

Pillar char 2

**7th NENA Soil
Partnership
Meeting**

22-23 March 2022



The main objective of Pillar 2 has been to generate activities aimed at highlighting the multiple roles of soil and lobbying governments to create or strengthen policies to manage and protect soil resources.





Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

The multi-faced role of soil in the Near East and North Africa

GLOBAL SOIL PARTNERSHIP
POLICY BRIEF
1
2019

Regional challenges

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

The multi-faced role of soil in the Near East and North Africa

GLOBAL SOIL PARTNERSHIP
POLICY BRIEF

Key messages

- 11.2 percent of the Near East and North African region's (NENA) soils are affected by various levels of salinity and sodicity. Human-induced soil salinization in the region is rapidly increasing, both in irrigated and non-irrigated lands.
- Salinization drastically reduces crop yields, forcing communities to abandon their agricultural lands. Its negative impacts extend to environmental health and local economies.
- Sustainable Soil Management (SSM) practices are key to prevent and combat salinization. Indeed, SSM decreased soil salinity by 28 percent and increased barley yield by 30 percent in the Euphrates Valley of Syria.
- The FAO's Global Soil Partnership (GSP) is launching a series of activities on soil salinity aiming to build national capacities on assessing, mapping, monitoring and managing this soil threat (Global Soil Salinity Map) as well as the establishment of the International Network of Salt-Affected Soils (INSAS).

2
2019

Salt-affected soils

Salt-affected soils

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

The multi-faced role of soil in the Near East and North Africa

GLOBAL SOIL PARTNERSHIP
POLICY BRIEF

Key messages

- In the most arid region of the world, the Near East and North Africa (NENA) region, water scarcity issues are foreseen to increase in the coming decades;
- Green water comes from precipitation and is stored in the topsoil and root zone;
- Green water flows are dominant in the hydrological cycle of arid and semi-arid regions where they can lead to major changes in downstream water flows;
- Green water is fundamental for rainfed agricultural systems and for the recharge of aquifers, but if soils are degraded water is lost by runoff instead of being stored. This increases the risk for erosion and flooding;
- Sustainable soil management practices improve green water infiltration and retention and increase water use efficiency and productivity;
- In drylands or savannah regions, the increase of green water use from 10-30 percent to 50 percent lead to significant increases in yields;
- Green water should be included in the national water budget;
- Awareness should be raised on the link between soil and water as their management cannot be addressed separately.

3
2019

Soils and green water

Soils and green water



The topics proposed in 2021: Policy briefs



1	Life and soil biodiversity
2	Soil pollution in the NENA countries
3	Soil fertility and implementation of sustainable soil management (SSM) to boost soil productivity
4	Best practices to prevent soil erosion (including water harvesting)
5	Conservation agriculture and carbon sequestration
6	Soil sealing

	Statut of Document	Drafting Doc	Working groupe review	GSP for final review
1	Life and soil biodiversity	Manhal Alzoubi (Syria)		
2	Soil pollution in the NENA countries	Manhal Alzoubi (Syria)		
3	Soil fertility and implementation of sustainable soil management (SSM) to boost soil productivity	Talal Darwish (Lebanon)	X	X
4	Best practices to prevent soil erosion (including water harvesting)	Ayda Ben Rhouma (Tunisia)	X	X
5	Conservation agriculture and carbon sequestration	Rachid Musadak (Morocco), Manhal Alzoubi (Syria) and Leila ben Dhiab (Tunisia)	X	X
6	Soil sealing	postponed to 2022 workplan		

Proposal for 2022

- Finalize the policy briefs on (i) life and soil biodiversity and (ii) soil pollution in the NENA countries
- Work on the policy brief on soil sealing
- National policy briefs
- Other proposals





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*Thanks for your
attention*

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