



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

9th Asian Soil Partnership MEETING

23 - 24 April 2024

Initiatives on soil governance

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Soil governance involves policies, strategies, and the processes of decision-making by nation states and local governments on how the soil is utilized.

Notes: Governing the soil requires international, national and local collaboration between governments, local authorities, industries and citizens. This is to ensure the implementation of coherent policies that encourage practices and methodologies that regulate the usage of the soil resource to avoid degradation and conflict between users.

Coordination of efforts between nations is also needed to avoid/limit the occurrence of conflicts related to the **transboundary impacts of soil degradation/unsustainable soil management practices** (e.g. air pollution related to the burning of agricultural fields).



1.Policies: Policies are **overarching statements or guidelines** set by governments or organizations to address specific issues or achieve certain objectives. Policies provide a framework for decision-making and action but are not legally binding. **They often outline goals, principles, and approaches to be followed.**

2.Frameworks: Frameworks are **structured outlines or plans** that provide guidance for addressing complex issues or achieving specific goals. Frameworks often serve as a basis for developing policies, laws, and strategies. They may include principles, methodologies, and criteria for decision-making.

3.Strategies: Strategies are **action plans or approaches** developed to achieve specific objectives or goals. They outline the steps, tactics, and resources needed to implement policies and achieve desired outcomes. Strategies often involve prioritizing actions, allocating resources, and monitoring progress toward objectives.

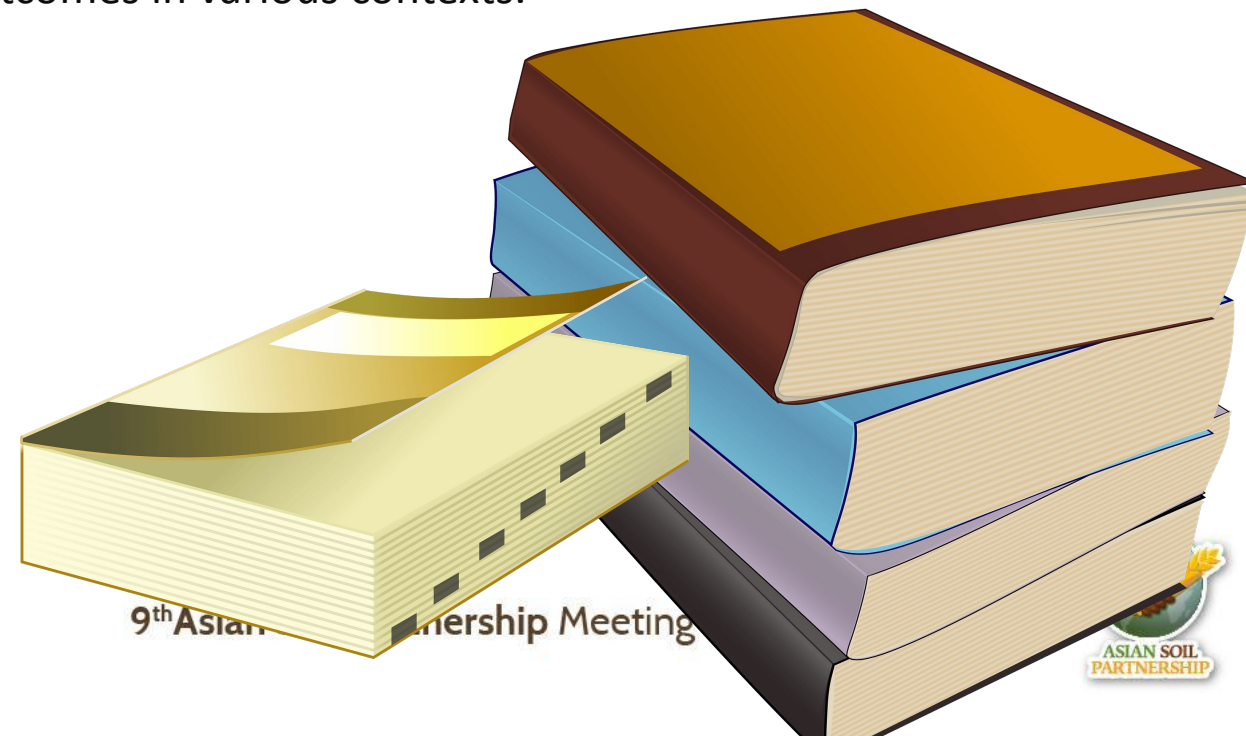
4.Laws: Laws are **legally binding rules or regulations** established by a governing authority, typically a government, to regulate behavior and enforce standards within a society or organization. Laws are enforceable through legal means and may prescribe penalties for non-compliance.

5.Regulations: Regulations are **detailed rules or requirements** established by government agencies or regulatory bodies to implement and enforce laws and policies. Regulations provide specific instructions on how laws are to be applied in practice and may include standards, procedures, and restrictions.

Policies provide guidelines, **frameworks** offer structured approaches, and **strategies** outline action plans to achieve goals.

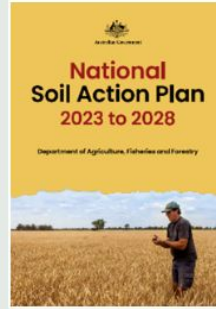
Laws establish legal obligations, and **regulations** detail specific requirements, and.

These terms are often interconnected and used in conjunction to address complex issues and achieve desired outcomes in various contexts.



Soil governance is becoming a hot topic in the region with countries taking concrete actions to advance on the topic.

A few examples come from Australia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.



National Soil Action Plan 2023 to 2028

This is the first of four action plans to be developed under the National Soil Strategy, released in 2021. It was endorsed by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry on 28 November with the support of all state and territory jurisdictions.

 **National Soil Action Plan 2023 to 2028 (PDF 34.6 MB)**

 **National Soil Action Plan 2023 to 2028 (DOCX 1.2 MB)**

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Eighteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4446**

Introduced by **Hon. DEOGRACIAS VICTOR 'DV' B. SAVELLANO**

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING A NATIONAL SOIL HEALTH PROGRAM FOR THE OPERATIONALIZATION OF NATIONWIDE SOIL ANALYTICAL SERVICES AND PROMOTION OF SOIL CONSERVATION AND FERTILITY MANAGEMENT OF ALL AGRICULTURAL LAND IN THE COUNTRY AND APPROPRIATE FUNDS THEREOF TO ABATE SOIL DEGRADATION AND IMPROVE AGRICULTURAL LAND PRODUCTIVITY AND THEREBY ENSURE FOOD SECURITY

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

Section 1. Short Title. This Act shall be known as the National Soil Health Program Act of 2016

Section 2. Declaration of Policy. The Philippine Constitution's Article II, Section 16 specifies that "*The State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord*

September 8, 2023 | The governments of the Philippines and Australia signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in a bid to further strengthen the national soil health strategy of the two countries.

The two countries aimed to cooperate in developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating initiatives on the development of a 'National Soil Health Strategy' to improve soil and land management strategies.



Photo by the Presidential Communications Office, Philippines



In 2023, a short survey (<https://forms.gle/DVSwuVQ84BhT3XTF6>) was launched to enquire on countries perspectives and needs on soil governance for FAO to provide support as appropriate. Only 2 countries (Laos and Bhutan) replied.

Can you please take 5-10 minutes to complete the survey?

Proposed way forward

1. Analyze survey results
2. Divide countries into groups depending on their general needs and status on soil governance
3. Write country profiles on soil governance: agree on a common outline that allows countries to report on their specificities. This can be tested in some countries at first (e.g. Vietnam, **where else?**)

(National level)

4. As soon as a country profile is ready, bring it to the attention of policy makers and develop a plan to address priority areas of work on soil governance, including project proposals writing.

(Regional level)

4. Once all country profiles are ready, analyze information using a regional perspective. Writing of a regional assessment on soil governance.

Outline country profiles

- Introduction:

- Brief country presentation: extension of arable, forest, urban, etc. land. Dominant soil threats and overview of soil status
- what is the attention given to soil (management and preservation) in the country? Who legislate on soil resources (name office) – brief history on soil legislation in the country? Who is in charge of implementing and monitoring the implementation of the laws (if any)?
- Scope of the policy brief and description of the evaluation criteria used for analysing existing legal frameworks and their impacts

- Legal frameworks:

- Presentation of existing legal frameworks. Link to SoILEX
- Gaps analysis looking also at the implementation and monitoring of impacts of the frameworks under analysis

- Recommendations and conclusions

- How can soil governance be improved? What policies are missing? What mechanisms need to be strengthened?



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Thank you

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