



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



**Concept Note**  
**International Network on Soil Pollution (INSOP)**  
**Online Workshop on Soil Pollution Threshold Values**  
**Thursday, October 3**



**Problem definition:**

The concept of soil pollution threshold values refers to values that, when exceeded, require further investigation or risk assessment to determine if the risk is acceptable. These values may be known by different names depending on the regulatory context. Some examples of terms that refer to threshold values are soil guideline values, soil standards, screening values, trigger values, acceptable concentrations, target values, intervention values, clean-up values, and action values. The use of threshold values can vary, from establishing long-term quality objectives and triggering further investigations to enforcing remedial actions. The methods for deriving threshold values are based on scientific and political factors and differ from country to country and sometimes from region to region.

At the annual meeting in 2023 of the International Network on Soil Pollution (INSOP), the Steering Committee and its members recognized the critical need for a comprehensive global threshold value database encompassing national threshold values from countries worldwide. Such a database is essential for various stakeholders, including policymakers, governments, academia, the private sector, and UN agencies, to enhance soil governance. INSOP has already compiled national threshold values from 32 countries across all continents, with more than half the countries worldwide having not yet endorsed them at the national level, highlighting a significant gap that needs to be addressed.

Furthermore, INSOP, together with the international regulatory community and other partners, aim to develop and publish a global report on soil pollution threshold values methodologies by 2027. This report will elucidate the derivation processes and explain the substantial variations in threshold values from one country to another. By providing this clarity, INSOP will support informed decision-making and foster international cooperation on soil pollution standards.

Other organizations, such as European Environment Agency (EEA), COMMON FORUM (<https://www.commonforum.eu/>), and the ARAGORN Horizon project (<https://aragorn-horizon.eu/>) have already initiated similar efforts at the European level. It is imperative to avoid duplicative efforts. By collaborating with partners, INSOP can spearhead the creation of

a global database of soil pollution threshold values, ensuring a unified and efficient approach to addressing soil pollution on a global scale.

**Workshop objectives:**

This workshop, jointly organized by INSOP, the University of Copenhagen, and COMMON FORUM on Contaminated Land in Europe, aims to discuss the best approaches for constructing a global database of soil threshold values and open the call for experts to develop a Global Soil Pollution Threshold Values Technical Report under the patronage of the Global Soil Partnership. The specific objectives of the workshop are as follows:

- Present the available threshold values collected by INSOP and the ARAGORN Horizon project;
- Introduce the work conducted by the ARAGORN Horizon project on compiling soil threshold values;
- Overview European concepts for establishing soil threshold values by COMMON FORUM;
- Introduce the derivation methodology of soil threshold values from other regions (Asia, Australia, North America); and
- Develop a roadmap for building the database and developing a Global Soil Pollution Threshold Values Technical Report.

**Expected outcome:**

This workshop is the first step towards creating a global database of soil pollution threshold values and a discussion of the importance of developing the Global Soil Pollution Threshold Values Technical Report. Both deliverables will be indispensable tools for policymakers, government and the private sector, enabling them to formulate the best policies and technical measures to prevent soil pollution. The workshop will serve as a platform for sharing knowledge about existing threshold values across different countries and understanding the methods behind their derivation. The insights gained will foster a collaborative environment for setting clear timelines and defining the next steps.

**Registration Link:**

[https://fao.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYpf-ugqz0jE9I1-cQM8k2M7QXWqv25\\_nmG#/registration](https://fao.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYpf-ugqz0jE9I1-cQM8k2M7QXWqv25_nmG#/registration)

| Time (CET)  | Thursday, 3 October 2024  |   |
|-------------|---|---|
| 12:00-12:05 | Opening   | Natalia Rodriguez Eugenio<br><i>FAO GSP</i>                                   |
| 12:05-12:20 | National threshold values collected by INSOP members  | Sergejus Ustinov<br><i>FAO GSP</i>  |
| 12:20-12:35 | ARAGORN Horizon project and its work in threshold values compilation  | Nathalie Briels<br><i>Arche Consulting</i>                                    |
| 12:35-12:50 | A comparison of concepts for establishing soil threshold values – common denominators and differences in Europe   | Dietmar Müller-Grabherr<br><i>COMMON FORUM on Contaminated Land in Europe</i> |
| 12:50-13:05 | National threshold values and their application in the Russian Federation   | Ivan Semenov<br><i>Moscow State University</i>                                |
| 13:05-13:20 | National threshold values and their application in China  | Deyi Hou<br><i>INSOP Vice-Chair</i>   |
| 13:20-13:55 | Open discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identification of further countries with/without soil pollution threshold values</li> <li>- INSOP Roadmap for building the database and developing a Global Soil Pollution Threshold Values Technical Report</li> </ul> |   |
| 12:55-14:00 | Conclusion  | Ravi Naidu<br><i>INSOP Chair</i>  |

*Moderated by Mr Sergejus Ustinov, FAO-GSP Secretariat*