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The NENA Soil Partnership: Current Status, challenges and opportunities

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NENA Soil Partnership Chair*



NENA Soil Partnership

19 countries in two sub-regions (North Africa: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt) and Near East: Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, and Palestine).

- Established in [April 2012](#) to enhance collaboration between member countries in the region.
- The partnership aims to facilitate knowledge and data sharing, overcome the challenges of food security, increased carbon sequestration, land degradation, and encourage environment protection and sustainable soil management practices to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate.
- National needs and priorities were translated into regional actions through the [NENA implementation plan](#), which is revised at the yearly NENA plenary meetings. To note that the lack of financial resources hampered the timely implementation of the plan, which needs to be updated to the new GSP Action Framework.



NENA Soil Partnership

As per the decision of the national focal points, between 2023 and 2025 the NENA Soil Partnership will be represented by:

- NENA Soil Partnership Chair: Rachid Moussadek, Morocco;
- NENA Soil Partnership Vice-Chair: Imad Ghanma, Palestine
- and a dedicated steering committee comprised of one member for each of the following three subregions:
 - ❖ North Africa: Rafla Attia (Tunisia);
 - ❖ Gulf countries: Hamad Al-Thuhli (Oman);
 - ❖ Near East: Muhammad Manhal Alzoubi (the Syrian Arab Republic).



Priorities for 2023-2025

The following priorities and activities have been identified for the NENA Soil Partnership in 2023 and 2024:

- Develop a project proposal in close collaboration with the GSP Secretariat and the NENA regional office to be funded either by the GEF or any other relevant entity, focusing on the following priorities:
 - ❖ The establishment of both a National Soil Information System and a Regional Soil Information System
 - ❖ Build capacities on soil data management and mapping specifically focusing on salt-affected soils and soil organic carbon;
 - ❖ Support and invest in soil laboratories; and
 - ❖ Strengthen coordination and collaboration among various stakeholders within the region.
 - ❖ Strengthen knowledge about soil biodiversity in the region



Recent achievements

- ❑ The two-year TCP/RAB/3802 project started in October 2020. The project ultimately involved 11 countries in NENA (Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, and Yemen) and focused on:
 - 1.enhancing the understanding of soil and challenges and management practices;
 - 2.strengthening national capacities for the implementation of SSM tools; and
 - 3.strengthening regional and inter-regional collaboration on SSM.

- ❑ In Oct.2023, a national TCP in Morocco launched with the support from FAO and ICARDA to develop a national legal and institutional framework for Soil (Moroccan Soil Law). This initiative could be shared with other countries in the region and beyond.



NENA SP contribution to GSP Action Framework



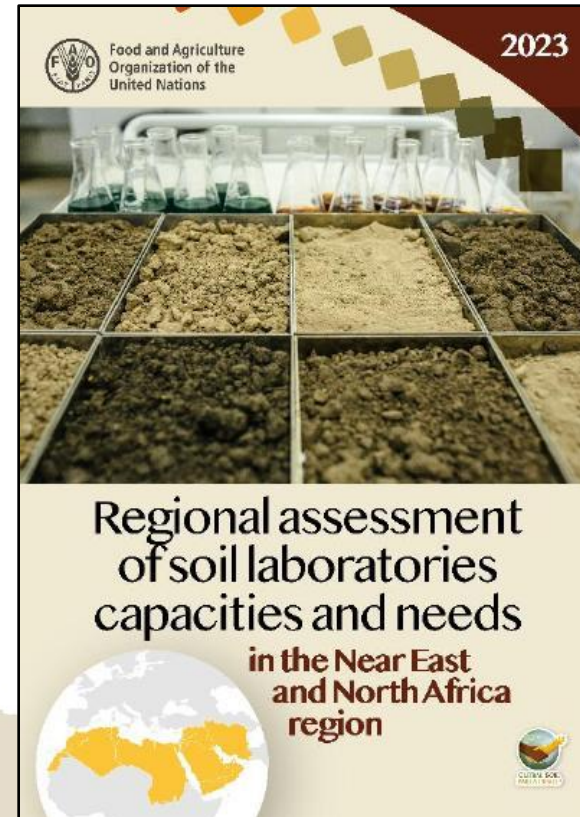


New governance (2023-2025):

- Chair: Mr Karim Shahbazi (Islamic Republic of Iran)
- Vice-Chair for the Near East: Ms Yara Khairallah (Lebanon)
- Vice-Chair for North Africa: Mr Jalal Elgadi (Libya)

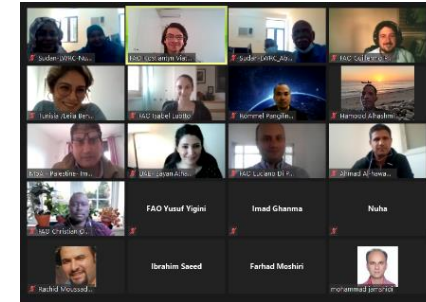
Regional inter-laboratory proficiency test (PT)

- Participating labs from Africa and NENA
- Targets: SOC, total N, available P
- 18 laboratories from 10 NENA countries participated. Results collected, currently under analysis



NENA SP Participation to the Global Soil Nutrient and Nutrient Budget Map (GSNmap)

Country	NE Appointed	Trained Experts	Submissions
Algeria	Yes	2	
Bahrain	No		
Egypt	No		
Iran	Yes	8	
Iraq	Yes	1	
Jordan	Yes	2	
Kuwait	No		
Lebanon	No		
Libya	Yes		
Morocco	Yes	3	
Oman	Yes		
Palestine	Yes		
Qatar	No		
Saudi Arabia	No		
Sudan	Yes	2	
Syria	Yes	3	Submitted
Tunisia	Yes	1	
United Arab Emirates	No		
Yemen	Yes	4	



Opportunities for GSP NENA

- During the (COP28) took place in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), several high level GSPP NENA highlighted in several side events, the need to scale up the activities of the GSP related to climate change, specifically linked to soil organic carbon to mitigate CC.
- A new EU-PRIMA projects (Soil4Med, React4Med, etc) projects launched in the region involving several countries from NENA (Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan, etc) to support some actions highlighted in the new GSP NENA POW.
- Under CGIAR initiatives (such as EiA, ClimBer, etc), soil management was a key factor for climate adaptation in the region, which is in synergy with GSP NENA activities.
- Several donors in the region to support SSM(EU PRIMA, IsB, Arab funds, Gulf funds, OCP, etc)
- In 2024 'Soil Health and Fertilizers Africa' Summit in Nairobi, several countries from NENA participated with a high-level support to the soil health agenda was noted (e.g: Morocco, Egypt, etc).
- Morocco will launch the RecSoil program in 2024. this experience will be shared with other countries in the region
- During the 9 th international SOM24 Congress, held in Morocco, a carbon flagship initiative was launched to support the sustainable soil management to enhance the soil fertility in Africa (which include NA)





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Thanks for your attention

