



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

8 - 10  
September  
2021

VIRTUAL  
MEETING

# Implementation of the Recommendations of the GSP Evaluation (GSPPA:IX/2021/2)

Ronald Vargas, GSP Secretary

## GLOBAL SOIL PARTNERSHIP 9<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly





# Recommendations of the GSP Evaluation

**Recommendation 1:** The Secretariat and ITPS should embark on the formulation of a revamped GSP Action Framework under the mantle: ‘Healthy Soils to meet SDGs, Biodiversity and Climate Change Goals’, including transforming the current Pillars into Outcome Areas for Soil Health.

**Recommendation 2:** Recognize two distinct functions within the Secretariat: a Programme unit and a Resource Mobilization unit in order to formulate and support implementation of a portfolio of cogent projects and interact with resource providers more systematically.

**Recommendation 3:** Undertake consultations involving the relevant departments up to the senior leadership of FAO, on the prospects for elevating the GSP to a more formal statutory body or subcommittee under the aegis of COAG, and submit the necessary background documents for consideration by COAG and further organs as appropriate

**Recommendation 4:** Revamp the present regional and national structural arrangements, building closer links to FAO’s own decentralized structures, and establish Centres of Excellence.

**Recommendation 5:** The GSP should also prepare firmer Partnership Framework Agreements with key international conventions and organizations, especially UNCCD, UNEP, UNCBD and UNFCCC.

# Recommendations of the GSP Evaluation

**Recommendation 2:** Recognize two distinct functions within the Secretariat: a Programme unit and a Resource Mobilization unit in order to formulate and support implementation of a portfolio of cogent projects and interact with resource providers more systematically.

The Secretariat is exploring ways of addressing this recommendation, as per resources availability.

**Recommendation 4:** Revamp the present regional and national structural arrangements, building closer links to FAO's own decentralized structures, and establish Centres of Excellence.

The Secretariat has sought to organize meetings with FAO technical officers associated with soils in the Regional and Sub-regional offices to ensure maximum awareness of the GSP at all levels. Furthermore, concrete collaboration is taking place with the regional offices in areas where sustainable soil management is getting major interest and joint projects were/are under preparation/implementation (Regional TCPs in NENA, LAC). It is also worth mentioning that the Asian Soil Partnership has established CESRA as the first regional Center of excellence on soils.

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**Recommendation 5:** The GSP should also prepare firmer Partnership Framework Agreements with key international conventions and organizations, especially UNCCD, UNEP, UNCBD and UNFCCC.

Currently, the GSP particularly through its ITPS has a very strong collaboration links with these conventions. Indeed, many joint activities were organized with quite successful results. Establishing formal agreements beyond this solid collaborative spirit is somehow challenging given the current institutional setting.



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The 27<sup>th</sup> session of COAG (<http://www.fao.org/3/ne021en/ne021en.pdf>) acknowledged the findings of the evaluation of the GSP and requested the Secretariat to carry out a detailed analysis of the legal and financial implications of this eventual institutionalization, including on the involvement of non-state actors, the decision-making process, the roles of the Regional Soil Partnerships and Focal points. The Committee asked that the findings of the assessment be submitted to its 28th Session.

The Secretariat will recruit consultants who will perform this assessment as per COAG request (they have to be very knowledgeable of FAO).

The draft report will be submitted to senior management, legal office, etc. Then, it will be presented to 10<sup>th</sup> GSP Plenary Assembly (for information) and then to COAG for consideration.

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# Recommendations of the GSP Evaluation

- **Currently soils high in the agenda:** Global Forum for Food and Agriculture 2022 “Sustainable Land Use: food security starts with the soil”.
- **When making the assessment regarding the institutionalization, due attention should be given to emerging initiatives on soil governance:**
  - the European Parliament has recently issued a resolution (2021/2548(RSP) on soil protection ([https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0143\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0143_EN.html):) “The EU Parliament understands the importance of cooperation at all levels to effectively address all soil threats; calls on the Member States, therefore, to lead by example and to consider initiating a soil convention within the UN”.
  - Under the Food Systems Summit: Global Soil Hub - now called the Coalition of Action for Soil Health (CA4SH) .
- **What is the position of members/partners on these developments? Proliferation of initiatives vs strengthening of existing ones.**

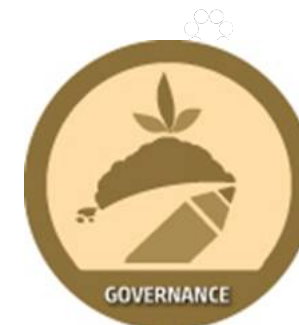
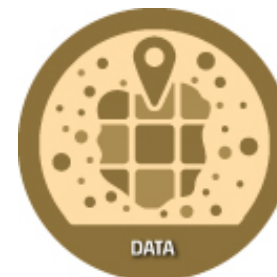
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- The Secretariat has prepared “The GSP action framework: healthy soils for a healthy life: from promotion to consolidation of Sustainable Soil Management: a GSP Action Framework 2021- 2030”
- It is based on an assessment of what worked and what does not work after 9 years of GSP implementation.
- It is an evolution, from establishment to consolidation of the GSP
- Focused on soil threats and emerging issues
- Need to have targets so that all your efforts can be recognized and can guide actions to identify where the gaps are. Where investment should be directed?
- Numbers of targets are based on a rapid consideration of the multiple targets available in the different conventions, UN targets, etc.

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- We are not intending to establish a Target setting process as that is a long process (experience from UN conventions).
- A system of indicators is not foreseen as there are many countries who do not even have a basic soil information system.
- Moving out from Pillars is important given that Pillars are too broad and not attractive to donors. Target activities and emerging topics are more easy to implement.
- Pillars can be maintained but efforts should not be focused on designing implementation plans that are challenging to execute.



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