

# Soil Partners' Day

13 July 2023 | 14:00 15:00

German room

## Water Smart Agriculture / Agua y Suelo para la Agricultura (ASA)

Catholic Relief Services (CRS)

**GLOBAL SOIL  
PARTNERSHIP**  
11<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly  
12-14 July 2023



# AGENDA

**Water Smart Agriculture/Agua y Suelo para la Agricultura (ASA) – a decade successfully restoring soils and revitalizing rainfed agriculture of smallholder farmers in the Central American dry corridor under a changing climate.**

Climate change endangers the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of smallholder hillside farmers in Central America. Traditional farming practices deplete soils threatening local economies, natural resources, and food security across the region. CRS Water Smart Agriculture/Agua y Suelo para la Agricultura (ASA) program optimizes rainwater productivity by adapting conservation agriculture principles and Integrated Soil Fertility Management to local farm conditions. Since 2015 ASA conducted on-farm experimentation with  $\approx$ 3,000 farmers in 5 countries (co-learning), strengthened extension systems' capacity of key agricultural institutions by developing competence models and certification processes for core ASA soil restoration practices, introduced Digital Soil Mapping to close the soil information gap, implemented a multi-channel communication campaign incl. interactive voice response systems for farmers, and setup a regional University Master Course on sustainable soil management. Project evidence shows that 95% of participating farmers consider ASA practices favorable to their livelihoods and food security. ASA partnered with more than 200 organizations, including ministries of agriculture, 45 farmers' organizations and 46 local governments, to reach >100,000 farmers with training and tools to implement ASA practices. Evidence gathered from >3000 ASA farms demonstrated highly significant ASA yield improvements over comparison plots in maize (40%) and beans (52%). ASA has clearly demonstrated that soil functions can be restored. Soil organic carbon increased 15% on average across countries and cropping systems. Soil moisture increased by 26% during critical periods in the crop cycle. The ASA implemented multi-channel communications campaign (social media, IVR, WhatsApp) and radio programming reached some 3.7 million listeners and allowed ASA to reach institutional partners and farmers and provide technical support even throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Agenda

- Summary presentation of the WSA/ASA program results and a short outlook into future lines of work
- Farmers from Central America reporting on their experience implementing ASA practices.
- Time for Q&A

Interactive online discussion and brainstorming exercise on soil & water management.

**Main speaker:** Dr. Axel Schmidt, Agriculture Science & Research Advisor, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), [axel.schmidt@crs.org](mailto:axel.schmidt@crs.org)