

Bishkek COMMUNIQUÉ

February 29- March 2, 2016 Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic

We, the Eurasian Soil Partnership focal points and representatives of 13 countries from Eurasia (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan), as well as representatives of ICARDA, ICBA, CIMMYT, GIZ and the Kyrgyz Soil Science Community participated in the Eurasian Soil Partnership workshop, held in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic from 29 February till 2 March 2016. The workshop was convened under the International Forum on Eurasian Food Security and Nutrition Network and Eurasian Soil Partnership jointly organized by ECFS, FAO, the World Bank and GFAR. As active partners of the Eurasian Soil Partnership, we would like to summarize our work via this communiqué to be shared with stakeholders of EASP and GSP partners.

Recognizing that Sustainable Soil Management constitute a feasible vehicle for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially related to food security and nutrition, climate change adaptation and mitigation, achieving land degradation neutrality targets and the provision of overall ecosystem services.

Highlighting that soil degradation (in its various forms, especially soil salinity, soil erosion, loss of soil organic carbon) in the region is a serious issue that prevents the full delivery of ecosystem services of soils affecting food production, rural development, climate change adaptation and mitigation and overall development.

We commit to the full execution of the Eurasian Soil Partnership Implementation Plan with a horizon of five years in partnership with different partners and stakeholders, and developing synergies with similar initiatives such as the CACILM2.

We, the participants of this third workshop of the Eurasian Soil Partnership, hereby:

- Fully commit to implement the activities of the workplan 2016-2017 that is presented in Annex I;
- Present the identified barriers and shortcomings that prevent the full implementation of sustainable soil management in the region (a summary in Annex 2 and to be fully available as a separate publication) and commit to overcome those that are already addressed in the Regional Implementation Plan. However, we request our decision makers to address those of more institutional nature;
- Agree with the need to strengthen the Eurasian Soil Partnership, but we considered that the establishment of a Eurasian Soil Commission is a premature proposal that carries implications to which our decision makers are not committed to. Therefore, we require our decision makers and other international organizations and resource partners to support the full implementation of the activities of this already established partnership;

- Finally, we hereby commit to organize and participate at the next EASP Plenary Meeting in 2017 on dates to be decided as progress demands.

Bishkek Communiqué (Bishkek, 29.02 – 02.03.2016)

Country	Function	Signature
Armenia		
Azerbaijan		
Belarus		
Georgia		
Kazakhstan		
Kyrgyzstan		
Moldova		
Russian Federation		
Tajikistan		
Turkmenistan		
Turkey		
Ukraine		
Uzbekistan		

Annex 1: Workplan 2016-2017

Components	Outcomes	Activities	Dates
<i>Pillar 1: Promote sustainable management of soil resources for soil protection, conservation and sustainable productivity</i>			
1.1 Barriers preventing SSM application are assessed and appropriate sustainable soil management practices and systems are identified	1.1.1.	On-line consultation	01-02/2016
	1.1.2	Open discussion (Bishkek meeting)	
	1.1.3	Approval of the recommendations	02-03/2016
	1.1.4	(Bishkek meeting) Publication of the report	04/2016
1.2. The SSM is included in sectorial policy, regulative and institutional bodies.	1.2.1. (1.2.2.)	Communication with governing bodies Mass-media Contacts with NGOs	2016-2017 (continuous)
1.3. Best Practices up-scaled at regional and national level	Not scheduled for the current year		
1.4. Support of small projects of implementation of SSM practices	Not scheduled for the current year		
<i>Pillar 2. Encourage investment, technical cooperation, policy, education awareness and extension in soils</i>			
2.1. Key messages to promote informing politicians and decision makers on the activities of the Eurasian Soil Partnership	2.1.1.	Communication with governing bodies Mass-media	2016-2017 (continuous)
	2.1.2.	Contacts with NGOs	
	2.1.3.		
	(2.1.4.)		

2.2. The knowledge and skills of stakeholders at all levels enhanced.	2.2.1. 2.2.2.	Development of distant learning courses	2017
2.3. Capacity development on sustainable soil management, soil conservation / restoration, soil information management and extension services promoted.	2.3.1. 2.3.2. 2.3.3. 2.3.4.	Capacity building courses on soil information management (Kazakhstan) Capacity building on salinity management (Ukraine) Capacity building on DSM (Tbilisi) Consultative service development (“Soil Doctor”), AIT, Thailand	05/2016 09/2016 TBD TBD
2.4. Legacy and recent research results published	2.4.1. 2.4.2. 2.4.3	Publication of the 1 st volume of the “Eurasian Soil Partnership Report” (Food Security and Land Resources of CAC) Publication of the 2nd volume of the “Eurasian Soil Partnership Report” (Salinity management, a practical manual)	05/2016 09/2016
<i>Pillar 3. Promote targeted soil research and development focusing on identified gaps and priorities and synergies with related productive, environmental and social development actions</i>			
3.1. The productivity of agricultural systems through sustainable land and soil management enhanced	3.1.1. 3.1.2. (3.1.3.)	Establishment of the Eurasian Innovation Platform for SSM (kick-off meeting) Small grants for soil salinity studies distributed	TBD 03/2016-03/2017

3.2. Research on the Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) encouraged	3.2.1. (3.2.2.) (3.2.3.)	Extension of the ELD activities in the frames of the MSU Lab of Economics of Land Degradation	2016/2017 (continuous)
<i>Pillar 4. Enhance the quantity and quality of soil data and information: data collection (generation), analysis, validation, reporting, monitoring and integration with other disciplines</i>			
4.1. National soil-geographical databases designed and introduced to different stakeholders and soil monitoring system established.	4.1.1. 4.1.2. (4.1.3.) (4.1.4.)	E-consultation on the platform for the database, software and sharing of data Meeting for the agreement on the platform etc. (Kazakhstan?) Survey of the needs for soil information	04-05/2016 05/2016
4.2. The Protocol for surface and remote soil monitoring and Manual for field sampling, laboratory analyses, sources and methods of processing remote sensing data, place and form of storage of data established and adopted	4.2.1. 4.2.2. (4.2.3.)	Protocol agreement (kick-off meeting, Kazakhstan) Manual text agreed, prepared and published	05/2016 TBD
4.3. National soil reference information resources with open Internet access and joint Eurasian Soil Portal supported	4.3.1. 4.3.2.	Develop the structure of the Eurasian Soil Portal Upload information and support of the Portal Set up Eurasian Soil Portal for national and regional public awareness and training	10/2016 2016-2017 (continuous)

	4.3.3.		
<i>Pillar 5. Harmonization of methods, measurements and indicators for the sustainable management and protection of soil resources</i>			
5.1. The GSP harmonization principles introduced to the EASP Partners	5.1.1.	Participation of EASP focal points and experts in international harmonization meetings	2016-2017 (continuous)
	5.1.2.	Joint meeting on soil information management and harmonization (Kazakhstan)	05/2016
5.2. Terminology, soil classification, methods, indicators and procedures for saline and sodic soils on the Eurasian scale harmonized	5.2.1.	Organization and functioning of working groups	05/2016 2017
	(5.2.2.)	Organization of workshops?	(to be specified)
	(5.2.3.)	Development of conversion tables?	
5.3. A system of intergovernmental standards for saline and sodic soils, including the development of standards samples of these soils harmonized across Eurasian region	5.3.1.	Development of a Technical Committee of the EASP on standardization of saline and sodic soils	09/2016
	5.3.2.	Harmonization of the use of existing national standards on the intergovernmental level	2017
	(5.3.3.)	Development and approval of new standards on saline and sodic soils	(to be specified)

Annex 2. Summary of barriers to sustainable soil management in Eurasia and possible ways of overcoming them

Aspects	Barriers*	Ways of overcoming	The level of decision-making
1. Legal	1.1. Limitations of legislation basis for resource mobilization and encouraging mechanisms	Development of the Law on soil usage and soil fertility; National program and strategy for soil protection; establishment of soil protection service	Legislative bodies, the Ministries
		Unified admissions for agricultural producers to get the governmental support independently on forms of ownership	Ministries
		Equal access to financial and production resources for women – owners of small farms	Ministries
2. Financial	2.1. Low/insufficient level of investments and/or low/insufficient attention from governmental sector to the wide adaptation of SLM/SSM practices	One of the possible forms of state support for the introduction of modern agricultural technologies can be the high-priority access for the most effective farmers to get governmental financial support and tax exemptions subsidizing farmers who applies modern resource-saving technologies	Ministries
		Providing the governmental subsidies to compensate for the costs of agrarian producers on measures on soil fertility recovering and decreasing the bank rate	Ministries
		Encouraging the agricultural producers to the rational use of natural resources: - differentiated rent payment depending on the level of soil fertility and environmental risks; - priority rights for the purchasing agricultural land and getting the government financial support.	Municipal authorities

		Encouraging farmers to use advanced irrigation techniques and technologies for the preventing irrigation erosion and repeated salinization.	
	2.2. Insufficient financing of the private sector	Attracting financial resources to the private sector	Municipal authorities
3. Legislative regulations, normatives	3.1. The need in harmonization and improvement of the methods of diagnostics, classification and agroecological typization of soils	The creation of the unified data bases and information systems, the digitizing of maps, bringing them into line with the requirements of FAO and WRB	Research institutions
4. Scientific and information	4.1. Unsatisfactory or unsettled unified state register and cadaster of agricultural land categories	Inventory and monitoring of the categories of agricultural land, the determination of their quality and prospects of various directions of use; assessment of salinity and land degradation, impact analysis and risk mitigation of climate change, the prevention of threats to biodiversity loss	Research institutions Ministries
	4.2. The of scientific evidence of efficiency of resource saving technologies, taking into account local soil and landscape conditions	Conducting experiments and observations in different soil and landscape conditions	Research institutions
	4.3. Lack / insufficiency of personnel capacity and low participation of young personnel	Organization of trainings for young personnel	Agrarian universities, agrarian faculties
5. Organizational	5.1. Fragmented pattern (disunity) of agricultural lands	- Analysis of the current state of land fragmentation ; study of the views of stakeholders on effective use of agricultural land; preparation of a national land consolidation strategy or plan as well as improving the institutional capacity in this direction	Legislative bodies, the Ministries, Research institutions

		- Facilitating the process of formation of cooperatives, in particular, to improve access and provision of agricultural machinery, fertilizers, diesel fuel, high-quality seeds and etc.	
	5.2. The absence of institution on coordination of extension service	Establishing and strengthening of special departments at the ministries to facilitate coordination of rural advisory services (RAS). This institution should have a real opportunity to support and develop RASs and could mobilize resources and funds.	Ministries
	5.3. Lack of awareness of the public and the private sector.	Publication of successful technologies, organization of exhibitions and sales of local products produced with the use of resource-saving technologies.	Research institutions Ministry
	5.4. Insufficient development of technology testing and mechanisms of its transfer to stakeholder.	Creating a State Commission (in the structure of line ministries) for testing and implementation of land use management technologies in extensive production areas	Ministries
	5.5. The problem with the sale of agricultural production	Stimulating the development of the processing industry and refrigeration units, increase of agricultural export	Ministries

* In the countries of the Eurasian region, the various combinations of barriers are represented.

Annex 3. Participants of the plenary session of the Eurasian Soil Partnership

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