



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

# The International Network on Soil Biodiversity



**Mainstreaming soil biodiversity  
to halt biodiversity loss  
and ensure healthy soils  
for sustainable development**


**itps**

INTERGOVERNMENTAL  
TECHNICAL PANEL ON SOILS



# NETSOB

aims to unite  
soil biodiversity  
experts and existing  
initiatives to become  
the human talent  
that contributes to  
the implementation  
of the Global  
Soil Biodiversity  
Observatory  
(GLOSOB)



## What is NETSOB and why does it matter?

Soil biodiversity contributes to the provision of multiple ecosystem functions and services and is therefore emerging as a nature-based solution to global challenges.

Despite the substantial progresses made in obtaining knowledge about soil biodiversity and its functions, only around one percent of soil organisms have been identified so far.

The loss of soil biodiversity remains one of the main threats in many regions of the world and could be greater than estimated due to the scarcity of data.

### **How can we protect and preserve something we do not fully know?**

We must take advantage of the mounting interest and concern that exists about soil biodiversity loss by implementing sound policies and actions to craft sound conservation, management and sustainable use of soil biodiversity.

The International Network on Soil Biodiversity (NETSOB) is a timely response by the global community to improve understanding about soil biodiversity.

The NETSOB will be open to scientists, researchers, international organizations, institutions, decision-makers, and any other relevant stakeholders with expertise in the assessment, mapping, monitoring, and sustainable use of soil biodiversity.

All participants of the Global Symposium on Soil Biodiversity (GSOBI21), organized by FAO in April 2021, and all existing initiatives on soil biodiversity are welcomed.

# How does NETSOB and GLOSOB contribute to the SDGs and the new FAO strategic framework?

Soil biodiversity is essential for most of the ecosystem services and functions that soils provide and perform. Understanding the value of ecosystem services linked to soil organisms is vital for decision-makers when considering sustainable soil management and land-use change. Soil biodiversity is integral to the survival of life on Earth.

Many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as those related to food shortages, water scarcity, climate change, biodiversity loss, and health threats are closely linked to or dependent on soil biodiversity. Evidence supports the vital connections between soil biodiversity and the SDGs, and emerging knowledge is shaping the actions we can take to build a more sustainable future.

**The work of NETSOB and GLOSOB will contribute to progress towards the achievement of SDGs 2, 3, 6, 13, and 15.** This Network is also a clear example of how partnerships and cooperation are key to achieving common goals and contributing to the fulfilment of SDG 17.

The new FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 aims to move towards sustainability by addressing the four betters (4Bs): better production, better environment, better nutrition, and a better life.

**Soil biodiversity will address the 4Bs as it serves as a crosscutting theme that will contribute to achieving more efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable natural and agri-food systems.**

2 ZERO HUNGER



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



13 CLIMATE ACTION



15 LIFE ON LAND





## NETSOB

The overall objective of the NETSOB is to **promote the sustainable use and conservation of soil biodiversity**. To meet this goal, the NETSOB:

- Provides the **human talent** for the implementation/coordination of the **GLOSOB**;
- Offers **reliable evidence to support better decision-making** both in the field and at policy level in the sustainable use and conservation of soil biodiversity;
- **Strengthens knowledge** about soil biodiversity;
- Contributes to the development of **internationally accepted biological indicators**;
- Improves the **monitoring of soil biodiversity** status and loss;
- Promotes actions to increase the **sustainable use of soil biodiversity and overall soil health**;
- Encourages the **adoption of good practices that enhance soil biodiversity and hence the availability and safety of food**;
- Identifies knowledge gaps and fosters **investment and cooperation in soil biodiversity research**.

## What are the main areas of work that the NETSOB will work on?

NETSOB is organised into four technical working groups that address:

- measurement, assessment and monitoring of soil biodiversity;
- sustainable use, management, and conservation of soil biodiversity;
- the economics of soil biodiversity;
- policies and legal instruments related to soil biodiversity.

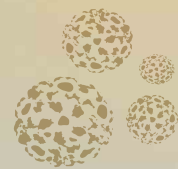
# Invest in soil biodiversity to build a sustainable future

## Why join this Network?

By joining the NETSOB you will contribute to improving knowledge on soil biodiversity on all levels. You will participate in the decision-making process for the development of global standards, indicators, and best practices for the sustainable use and conservation of soil biodiversity. You will help to disseminate and raise awareness of the importance of soil biodiversity in addressing the major environmental and socio-economic challenges of our time, such as climate change, pollution, and food insecurity. NETSOB actions will contribute to position soil biodiversity on the international policy agenda. You will have free access to technical advice, training programmes, and educational materials while contributing to their development according to your areas of expertise. Your institution/organization will be part of an overarching system committed to sustainable soil management and will be able to have a positive impact at national, regional, and global levels.

## How do I join the Network?

All interested stakeholders with expertise in the assessment, mapping, monitoring, and sustainable use and management of soil biodiversity are invited to join NETSOB. Once your [registration form](#) has been processed, your organization will be indicated on the NETSOB's [interactive map](#). All institutions receive a certificate when they register in NETSOB. Please note that there is no registration fee or any annual cost to join NETSOB.





## Why the GSP?

The Global Soil Partnership (GSP) is an interactive partnership where global soil issues are discussed and addressed by multiple stakeholders. It is composed by 197 FAO members and over 500 non-governmental partners.

**Our key objectives are to promote sustainable soil management and improve soil governance to guarantee healthy and productive soils, and support the provision of essential ecosystem services towards food security and improved nutrition, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and sustainable development.**

Capacity development is at the heart of the GSP mandate, as countries can only achieve the SDGs by reinforcing their local capacities.

### **For more information:**

Global Soil Partnership  
Land and Water Division  
[GSP-Secretariat@fao.org](mailto:GSP-Secretariat@fao.org)

[Rosa.CuevasCorona@fao.org](mailto:Rosa.CuevasCorona@fao.org)

Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations - Rome, Italy



Thanks to the financial support of



Ministry of Finance of the  
Russian Federation



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation



**Australian Government**

Department of Agriculture,  
Water and the Environment



Some rights reserved. This work is available  
under a CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO licence