



THE EARTH INSTITUTE  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

***GlobalSoilMap.net – A new Digital Soil Map of the World***  
**April 7, 2010 - World Bank, Washington D.C.,**

**MEETING SUMMARY**

On April 7, 2010, a donor consultation meeting was held at the World Bank in Washington, with the purpose of presenting the *GlobalSoilMap.net* project. About 50 people attended, including representatives from the World Bank, Inter American Development Bank, Google, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Heinz Center, Pioneer/DuPont, ARS-USDA, USAID, FAO, UNEP, CGIAR Fund, Conservation International, IPNI, IFAD, Terra Global Capital, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and AGRA, as well as from the *GlobalSoilMap.net* Consortium partners: ISRIC – World Soil Information, Embrapa, NRCS-USDA, CSIRO, Jordan Ministry of Agriculture, San Simon University-Bolivia, RDA-Korea, CIAT, and the Earth Institute at Columbia University.

The meeting was opened by Juergen Voegelé, the World Bank Director of the Agriculture and Rural Development Department, who stated that this is the time for large scale initiatives. “We have to do this, and we have to do it big and bold. We should approach this through the angle of climate change. The world can not deal with climate change without looking at soil. This program is absolutely key. The digital soil map is an essential project; it provides tools and instruments to alleviate poverty and climate change.”

Jeffrey D. Sachs, director of the Earth Institute and special advisor to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, stressed the importance of the *GlobalSoilMap.net* project as a public good. “This is where the Gates Foundation, AGRA, the World Bank and funding agencies come in, to make sure that this information will be available. Let’s think about this in a broad context, we must build a platform of relevant data, a modeling system. These digital soil maps are key to address the most pressing challenges in policy making. We can also link this with the new global fund for smallholder farmers that the World Bank is managing.”

An open discussion followed where a panel formed by scientists from the *GlobalSoilMap.net* nodes from around the world answered questions raised by the audience. There was unanimous approval in the mission of *GlobalSoilMap.net* consortium about the delivery of digital maps of soil properties and soil functions at fine resolution. *GlobalSoilMap.net* products have multiple possibilities of extension and applications for the future. The idea of mobile-agronomy came up and was strongly supported by Jeffrey Sachs who said: “We should develop the tools needed to empower agriculture. A user interface could be an important breakthrough in soil health.” Google is currently developing similar related projects with the Bank and expressed their enthusiasm to undertake this challenge as they manage large databases serving multiple users. Google is a potential partner to set up the user interface to deliver *GlobalSoilMap.net* products.

Christian Witt and Roy Steiner from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation provided their perspective: the *GlobalSoilMap.net* project addresses the strategic vision of the Foundation, adhering to the highest scientific standards with a high probability of success. Not only is the project adding value, but it is also a

prerequisite for success in attaining food security. It is a revolution in the way soil information will be used and the remark was made that it is one of their proudest projects.

Pedro Sanchez from the Earth Institute at Columbia University explained the project, including the funding situation and requirements. There are 150 million km<sup>2</sup> of land on Earth. The estimated cost for the digital soil map is US \$ 2/km<sup>2</sup> so a total budget of US \$ 300 million is needed; this is equivalent to US \$ 0.02 per hectare or US \$ 0.008 per acre.

The funding target of US \$0.3 billion was regarded by the audience as a low figure when considering the expansion possibilities of producing a soils information platform that allows feedback with users concerning the exchange of data, knowledge, best practices etc. and the delivery of multiple services.

The main goal is to get the project started in all nodes and to build a long-term commitment with donors to continue updating this information system. We envision it should be dynamic and flexible to adapt to the needs of users and technical advancements. Most of our scientists are currently donating their time and knowledge as in-kind contributions as well as our partner institutions are facilitating the training needed to produce the *GlobalSoilMap.net* products.

After the meeting there was a working lunch and very supportive comments were received about the impact of the project and exciting funding possibilities from the donor audience.

### ***GlobalSoilMap.net* Budget**

<b>Nodes</b>	<b>Area: Million km<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Budget: Million US \$</b>	<b>So far: Million US \$</b>	<b>Current donors</b>
Sub-Saharan Africa	23.9	47.8	18.0	✓ <b>BILL &amp; MELINDA GATES</b> ✓ <b>AGRA</b>
Eurasia	23.7	47.4	0	✓ <b>EUROPEAN COMMISSION (delivery of final product according to specifications as in-kind contribution)</b>
North America	20.6	41.2	0.9	
Latin America & Caribbean	18.4	36.8	0.1	
Central & West Asia/North Africa	15.4	30.8	0.2	
East Asia	13.6	27.2	0.4	
Oceania	10.7	21.4	0.2	
South Asia	4.4	8.8	0	
<b>TOTAL NODES</b>	<b>130.7</b>	<b>261.4</b>	<b>19.8</b>	
Coordination	-	6.0	0.2	
Research	-	15.6	1.1	
Training	-	17.0	0	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>21.1</b>	