

# Submission for the Belém Mission to 1.5

While transitioning the global energy and mobility sector is vital, the 1.5°C target cannot be achieved or sustained without revitalizing the Earth's largest active terrestrial carbon store and the basis for its natural cooling system: our soil. Soil health is the foundational bridge between climate mitigation and climate adaptation. By increasing organic matter in global agricultural soil, the world can sequester massive amounts of carbon while drastically increasing resilience to droughts, floods, and food insecurity. Consequently, the Save Soil movement asks the UNFCCC and parties to position soil as the foundational, under-recognised bridge between mitigation and adaptation.

## 1. Action Areas & Solutions with High Impact Potential

### Priority Solutions & Innovations

- **Policy Mandates for Soil Organic Matter (SOM):** NDCs and NAPs should establish SOM as a core national indicator to track agricultural health and climate resilience. Policy frameworks should focus on defining and monitoring a positive growth trajectory for SOM. Progress against this indicator directly supports carbon drawdown, stabilizes food production, and enhances Earth's water cycle through evapotranspiration to further cool the atmosphere.
- **Practices (Regenerative Agriculture & Agroforestry):** Incentivise and train farmers, pastoralists, rangeland managers, indigenous people, local communities and other land managers to scale low-cost, high-impact techniques such as cover cropping, crop rotation, minimal tillage, and integrating livestock. These practices keep soil covered, shaded, and biologically active which leads to more resilience to enhance adaptation efforts alongside mitigation objectives.
- **Technology & Finance (Soil Micro-Biome and Financial Enablers):** Parties must scale up the integration of field soil sampling with satellite tracking and AI to provide farmers and investors with real-time, reliable data on soil health. Crucially, international frameworks must link these data insights to targeted financial support to protect smallholders from risk as they transition to regenerative agriculture.

### Finance, Capacity Building, and Institutional Opportunities

- **Agricultural Subsidy Realignment:** Shift existing global agricultural subsidies from soil degrading practices and substances like heavy chemical inputs and redirect them toward rewarding farmers based on measurable increases in soil organic matter.
- **Carbon & Biodiversity Credits:** Integrate soil carbon sequestration into compliance and voluntary carbon markets, ensuring that carbon-credit capital flows directly to smallholder farmers.

- **Farmer-to-Farmer Training Networks:** Establish decentralized, community-led capacity building where peer learning reduces the risk of transitioning to soil-friendly practices.

### **Most Significant Barriers & Solutions**

To realize soil's potential for climate mitigation, we identify several main points which are currently holding back progress and suggest respective solutions:

- **Agricultural Finance:** Financial systems must be aligned with long-term ecological outcomes by developing investment, insurance, and lending mechanisms that reward soil regeneration rather than short-term extraction. They serve as the intellectual commons redesigning the underlying logic of agricultural capital. This redesigning will also provide transitional economic buffers or insurance for farmers during the 2-3 year soil-rebuilding phase.
- **Soil Data:** Current databases are not reliable or accurate enough. Improved granular, decision-ready, country-level soil data systems will provide the empirical verification layer to eliminate the information gap that currently prevents large-scale policy and financial intervention. Establishing globally recognized, affordable protocols for measuring soil organic carbon (SOC) and soil health under the UNFCCC in collaboration with other MEAs like the UNCCD and UNCBD is a fundamental barrier to realizing soil's potential for climate mitigation.
- **Fragmented Policy:** Break down silos between Ministries of Agriculture and Ministries of Environment so NDCs directly reflect farming policies.

## **2. Strengthening International Cooperation**

To enhance ambition and enable the effective implementation of NDCs and NAPs, global climate governance must view soil as a cross-cutting global asset rather than a localized agricultural concern.

- **A Unified Global Soil Framework:** Leverage existing processes like the *Just Transition Work Programme* or/and establish a new streamlined mechanism following the completion of the *Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on Agriculture and Food Security* to enhance international collaboration and reward nations for scaling up soil organic carbon.
- **Knowledge and Technology Exchange:** Facilitate two-way knowledge sharing and technology cooperation that recognizes geography-specific agricultural expertise across both the Global North and Global South. This includes scaling up collaborative platforms (such as the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work Knowledge-Sharing Platform) to exchange open-source agritech, drought-resistant seed varieties, affordable soil-testing toolkits,

and process optimization practices that can be adapted to local conditions worldwide.

- **Triadic Financing Windows:** Channel a share - proportional to the potential - of newly expanded climate finance targets (such as the \$1.3 trillion annual goal) toward soil and food-system transformation through existing instruments.