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SOTER-based soil parameter estimates for Latin America and the Caribbean

(Version 1.0)

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SUMMARY

This report presents a harmonized set of soil parameter estimates for Latin America and the Caribbean. A revised version of the 1:5M Soil and Terrain Database for Latin America and the Caribbean (SOTERLAC, ver. 2.0) and the ISRIC-WISE soil profile database provided the basis for the current study.

The land surface of Latin America and the Caribbean has been characterized using 1585 unique SOTER units, corresponding with 5855 polygons. The major soils have been described using 1660 profiles, selected by national soil experts as being representative for these units. The associated soil analytical data have been derived from soil survey reports. These sources seldom hold all the physical and chemical attributes ideally required by SOTER. Gaps in the measured soil profile data have been filled using a step-wise procedure that uses taxotransfer rules, based on about 9600 soil profiles held in the WISE database, complemented with expert-rules.

Parameter estimates are presented by soil unit for fixed depth intervals of 0.2 m to 1 m depth for: organic carbon, total nitrogen, pH(H_2O), CEC_{soil}, CEC_{clay}, base saturation, effective CEC, aluminium saturation, $CaCO_3$ content, gypsum content, exchangeable sodium percentage (ESP), electrical conductivity of saturated paste (ECe), bulk density, content of sand, silt and clay, content of coarse fragments (> 2 mm), and available water capacity (-33 to -1500 kPa). These attributes have been identified as being useful for agro-ecological zoning, land evaluation, crop growth simulation, modelling of soil carbon stocks and change, and analyses of global environmental change.

The current parameter estimates should be seen as best estimates based on the current selection of soil profiles and data clustering procedure. Taxotransfer rules have been flagged to provide an indication of the possible confidence in the derived data.

Results are presented as summary files and can be linked to the 1:5M scale SOTERLAC map in a GIS, through the unique SOTER-unit code.

The secondary data set is considered appropriate for studies at the continental scale. Correlation of soil analytical data should be done more rigorously when more detailed scientific work is considered.

Keywords: soil parameter estimates, Latin America and the Caribbean, environmental modelling, WISE database, SOTER database, secondary data set

1. INTRODUCTION

ISRIC, FAO and UNEP, under the aegis of the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS), are updating the information on world soil resources in the World Soils and Terrain Digital Databases (SOTER) project. Once global coverage has been attained, SOTER is to supersede the 1:5M Soil Map of the World (FAO 1995; FAO-Unesco 1974-1981).

The SOTER methodology has been applied at scales ranging from 1:250 000 to 1:5M. Continental scale SOTER databases are available for Latin America and the Caribbean (Dijkshoorn 2005; FAO *et al.* 1998), Central and Eastern Europe (FAO and ISRIC 2000), and Southern Africa (FAO and ISRIC 2003).

Primary SOTER databases are composed of two main elements: a geographic and an attribute data component (van Engelen and Wen 1995). The first shows the delineations of the SOTER units, while the second holds information on their composition in terms of main soil types described by a suite of representative profiles.

Representative soil profiles for SOTER are selected from existing soil survey reports. Often there are gaps in the associated soil analytical data, in particular the soil physical data. This precludes the direct use of primary SOTER data in models, requiring varying approaches to gap-plugging (Batjes and Dijkshoorn 1999; Mantel and van Engelen 1999; van Engelen *et al.* 2004). ISRIC has therefore developed a uniform methodology for filling gaps in primary SOTER databases, for general purpose applications. The taxotransfer rule-based (TTR) procedure draws heavily on soil physical and chemical data held in the ISRIC-WISE soil profile database (Batjes 2003).

This report[1] discusses the application of the TTR-scheme to a revised version of the SOTERLAC database for Latin America and the Caribbean (Dijkshoorn 2005).

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[1] Having the same scope, all reports describing secondary SOTER data sets have a similar structure.

Chapter 2 describes the materials and methods with special focus on the procedure for preparing the secondary SOTER sets. Results are discussed in Chapter 3, while concluding remarks are drawn in Chapter 4. The structure of the various output tables is documented in the Appendices, which also include a brief description of the contents of the secondary data file for Latin America and the Caribbean (Appendix 5).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Source of data

Release 2.0 of the Soil and Terrain database for Latin America and the Caribbean provided the basis for this study (Dijkshoorn 2005). The underlying soil geographical and attribute data have been harmonized into SOTER format by various national soil survey organizations and ISRIC, using disparate data sources. SOTERLAC has a generalized scale of 1:5M, but the detail and quality of primary information available within the various countries varies widely (Dijkshoorn 2005; FAO *et al.* 1998).

2.2 SOTER methodology

The SOTER methodology allows mapping and characterization of areas of land with a distinctive, often repetitive, pattern of landform, lithology, surface form, slope, parent material, and soils (van Engelen and Wen 1995). The approach resembles physiographic or land systems mapping. The collated materials are stored in a SOTER database linked to GIS, permitting a wide range of environmental applications (see Batjes 2004; Falloon *et al.* 1998; Mantel *et al.* 2000; Nachtergaele *et al.* 2002).

Each SOTER database is comprised of two main elements, a geographical component and an attribute data component (Figure 1). The *geographical database* holds information on the location, extent and topology of each SOTER unit. The *attribute database* describes the characteristics of the spatial unit and includes both area data and point data. A geographical information system (GIS) is used to manage the geographic data, while the attribute data are handled in a relational database management system (RDBMS).

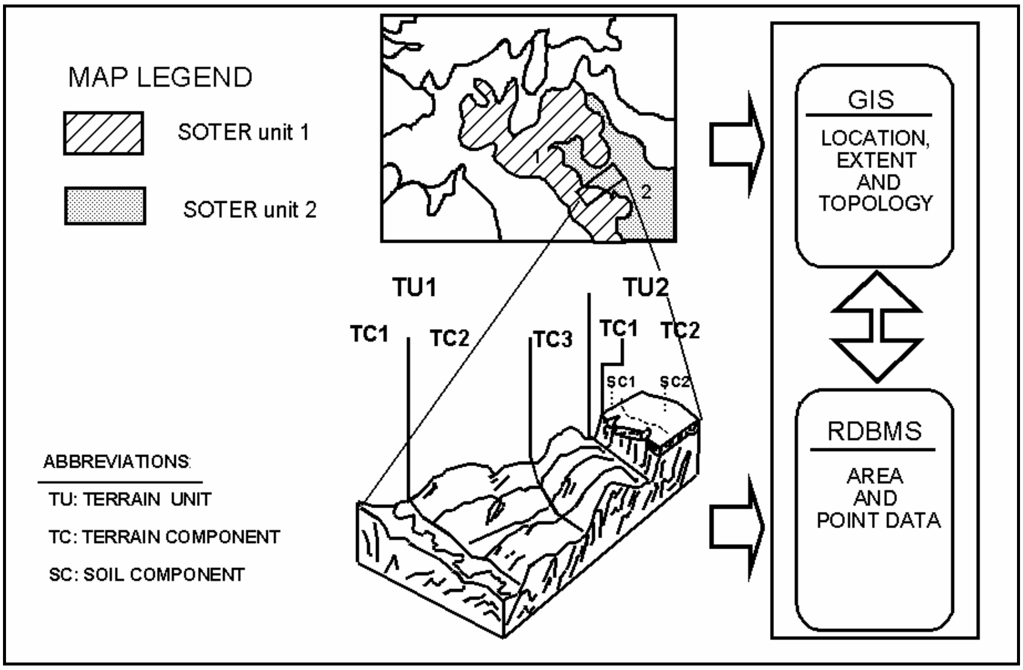

Figure 1. Schematic representation of two SOTER units and their terrain and soil components

Each SOTER unit in the geographic database has a unique identifier, called SOTER unit-ID (SUID). This primary key provides a link to the attribute data for its constituent terrain, terrain component(s) (TCID) and soil component(s) (SCID) (see Appendix 4).

Each soil component within a SOTER unit is described by a profile (PRID), identified by the national soil experts as being regionally representative. This selection is based on purposive sampling (Webster and Oliver 1990). Profiles are characterised according to the Revised Legend of FAO (1988) and World Reference Base for Soil Resources (WRB 1998). Representative profiles are selected from available soil survey reports, as the SOTER program does not involve new ground surveys. Batjes (1999) reviewed issues of data acquisition, quality control and sharing in the context of SOTER projects. Various sources of uncertainty remain in the available soil geographic and attribute data, and these should be gradually corrected in revised versions of the primary data sets.

2.3 Preparation of secondary SOTER data sets

2.3.1 List of soil parameters

Special attention has been paid to the key attributes (Table 1) commonly required in studies of agro-ecological zoning, food productivity, soil gaseous emissions/sinks and environmental change (see Batjes *et al.* 1997; Bouwman *et al.* 2002; Cramer and Fischer 1997; Fischer *et al.* 2002; Scholes *et al.* 1995).

Table 1. List of soil parameters

Organic carbon
Total nitrogen
Soil reaction (pH$_{H2O}$)
Cation exchange capacity (CEC$_{soil}$)
Cation exchange capacity of clay size fraction (CEC$_{clay}$) • ‡
Base saturation (as % of CEC$_{soil}$) ‡
Effective cation exchange capacity (ECEC) † ‡
Aluminium saturation (as % of ECEC) ‡
$CaCO_3$ content
Gypsum content
Exchangeable sodium percentage (ESP) ‡
Electrical conductivity of saturated paste (ECe)
Bulk density
Coarse fragments (> 2mm, volume %)
Sand (mass %)
Silt (mass %)
Clay (mass %)
Available water capacity (AWC; from -33 to -1500 kPa; % w/v) ‡ □

‡ Calculated from other measured soil properties.

† ECEC is defined as exchangeable (Ca^{++}+ Mg^{++}+ K^{+}+ Na^{+}) + exchangeable (H^{+}+ Al^{+++}) (van Reeuwijk 2002).

- CEC_{clay} was calculated from CEC_{soil} by assuming a mean contribution of 350 $cmol_c$ kg^{-1} OC, the common range being from 150 to over 750 $cmol_c$ kg^{-1} (Klamt and Sombroek 1988).
- The soil water potential limits for AWC conform to USDA standards (Soil Survey Staff 1983); typically, these estimates are smaller than those reported for the -10 to -1500 kPa range commonly used by FAO (Doorenbos and Kassam 1978).

Table 1 does not consider soil hydraulic properties. Although essential for many simulation studies, these properties are seldom measured during soil surveys. As a result, the corresponding records are lacking in databases such as SOTER and WISE. Information on soil hydraulic properties and pedotransfer functions for Western Europe and the USA may be found in auxiliary databases (Nemes *et al.* 2003; Wösten *et al.* 1998) but similar work for tropical soils has just begun (Tomasella and Hodnett 1997, 1998; van den Berg *et al.* 1997).

2.3.2 Procedure for filling gaps in the measured data

The standardized procedure for filling gaps in key measured data in primary SOTER data sets includes three main stages (Batjes 2003):

a) Collating additional measured soil data where these exist, in uniform SOTER format;

b) Using expert estimates and common sense to fill selected gaps in a secondary data set;

c) Using taxotransfer rule (TTR) derived soil parameter estimates for similar FAO soil units, based on some 9600 profiles held in the global WISE profile database (Batjes 2002b), complemented with the application of expert rules.

The desirability of the above stages decreases from highest (a) to lowest (c). Step a) has essentially been carried out during the revision of the SOTERLAC database, using readily accessible data (Dijkshoorn 2005). In the context of this follow-up study, the focus thus has been on applying step c).

The updated SOTERLAC set contains 1660 representative soil profiles with measured data. This corresponds to an average density of profile observation of 0.09 per 1000 km^2.

There still are no representative profiles for parts of the SOTERLAC region. Therefore, the primary data set includes also 204 virtual profiles for which only the FAO and WRB classifications have been given, based on the available regional soil maps. Fictitious depth ranges were assigned to all virtual profiles — with reference to their classification (FAO 1988) and auxiliary information held in SOTERLAC — to permit application of the taxotransfer scheme.

The SOTERLAC database is known to include some expert-based estimates, for example for bulk density (Peters and van Engelen 1993). However, such values have not been flagged in the primary data set. Therefore, it was assumed that all physical and chemical data were measured values.

Having been subjected to the routine integrity checks developed for primary SOTER databases (Dijkshoorn 2005; Tempel 1997), all soil classifications and measured data for SOTERLAC, version 2.0, were taken at face value. Some of the current classifications, however, may still have to be updated in future revisions of the primary SOTERLAC database.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 General

Latin America and the Caribbean have been described using 1585 unique SOTER units. These comprise 3844 soil components and correspond with 5855 mapped polygons, including miscellaneous units such as water bodies and large urban areas.

At the small scale under consideration, most SOTER units will be compound units. SOTER units in SOTERLAC are comprised of up to 5 soil components, with an average of 1.5 components.

Some of the spatially minor soil units may be of particular relevance for specific applications. For example, organic soils in the Pantanal region may be of great importance for regional inventories of carbon stocks and projected changes. Therefore, end-users should consider all component soil units of a SOTER unit in their assessments or model runs.

The type of research purpose will determine which parameter estimates or single value maps are of importance in a special case. The full map unit composition can best be addressed with tailor made programs depending on the scope of the application.

Measured soil values, as collated for SOTERLAC, reflect both variations in the soil and those associated with the methods of sampling and measurement. Much of the total variability in soil parameters over a large region — as represented by a SOTER unit and its constituent soil components — can occur within small areas (< 1 ha). The coefficients of variation of individual soil properties within soils mapped as single series commonly range from 20% to 70% (Landon 1991) and even more when soils are mapped at a higher hierarchical level (Batjes 2002b). Variations tend to be largest for chemical properties, which are most readily modified by differences or changes in land management. These aspects are reflected in the soil parameters shown here for the various soil units and their attributes.

3.2 SOTER unit composition

The full composition of each SOTER unit in terms of its dominant soils – each one characterized by a regionally representative profile – and their relative extent, has been summarized in a table called *SOTERunitComposition* (see Appendix 1). The relative extent of each soil unit has been expressed in 5 classes to arrive at a compact map unit code: 1 – from 80 to 100 per cent; 2 – from 60 to 80 per cent;

3 – from 40 to 60 percent; 4 – from 20 to 40 per cent, and 5 – less than 20 percent.

3.3 Soil Parameter estimates

The depth-weighted primary and TTR-derived data, by layer, for the 18 soil properties under consideration (Table 1) have been stored in a secondary SOTER data set called *SOTERparameterEstimates*. Appendix 2 shows the structure of the corresponding file.

The type of TTR used, if any, has been flagged by profile and depth layer in table *SOTERflagTTRrules* (Appendix 3). The field TTRsub indicates that the data substitution for a given attribute, in table *SOTERparameterEstimates*, was based on WISE-derived parameter estimates for similar soil units. Otherwise, should the corresponding population in WISE be too small ($n_{WISE} < 5$) for a meaningful substitution, the rules were flagged under TTRmain (see Batjes 2003).

Each flag consists of a sequence of letters followed by a numeral (see under TTRsub and TTRmain in Figure 2). The letters indicate soil attributes for which a TTR has been applied, using coding conventions listed in Table 4. The number code reflects the size of the sample population in WISE, after outlier rejection, on which the statistical analyses were based (Table 2).

Table 2. Criteria for defining confidence in the derived data

Code	Confidence level	n_{WISE}
1	Very high	> 30
2	High	15-29
3	Moderate[†]	5-14
4	Low	1-4
-	No data	0

* n_{WISE} is the sample size after the screening procedure (see Figure 2)
[†] The cut-off point in the TTR-approach is $n_{WISE} < 5$

When a small letter is used, the substitution considered median data for the corresponding textural class (for example, Fine and n_{WISE} > 5). Otherwise, when a capital is used, this indicates that the substitution is based on the whole set for the corresponding soil unit and depth layer, irrespective of soil texture (i.e. undifferentiated or 'u'). The same coding conventions apply for TTRmain. This is depicted schematically in Figure 2 for the upper 0 to 20 cm of a hypothetical profile from country XX (XXhyp04).

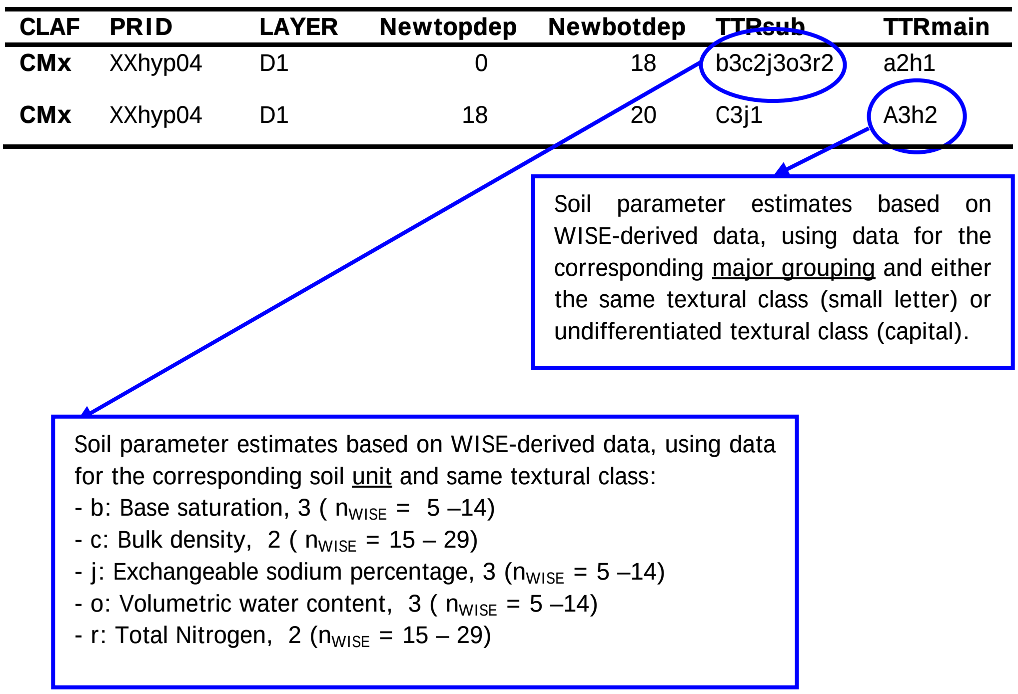

Figure 2. Schematic representation of application of taxotransfer scheme

The presently used version of the TTR-scheme was based on statistical analyses of some 9600 profiles held in the WISE database (Batjes 2002a, 2003), corresponding with over 43,000 horizons. Analyses of these data, so far, permitted to define 38,683 rules in total. These include 28,167 rules for TTRsub and 10,516 rules for TTRmain (Table 3). The cut-off point for defining and applying any TTR is n_{WISE} < 5.

Table 3. Number and type of taxotransfer rules

Taxotransfer rule	Textural class	Number of rules
TTRsub	C, M, F, Z and V	18510
	Undifferentiated	9657
TTRmain	C, M, F, Z and V	7987
	Undifferentiated	2529

Note: For details about codes used for soil textural classes, see Appendix 6. For each parameter (Table 1), TTR-rules are defined per 20 cm depth layer, coded from D1 to D5, up to 1 m where applicable.

The overall assumption in applying the TTR-scheme is that the confidence in a TTR-based parameter estimate should increase with the size of the sample populations present in WISE, after outlier rejection. In addition, the confidence in soil parameter estimates listed under TTRsub should be higher than for those listed under TTRmain.

A high confidence rating, however, does not necessarily imply that the soil parameter estimates shown will be representative for the soil unit under consideration. Profile selection for SOTER, as for any other soil database, is not probabilistic but based on available data and expert knowledge. Several of the soil attributes under consideration in Table 1 are not diagnostic in the Revised Legend (FAO 1988). In addition, several properties are readily modified by changes in land use or management, for example soil pH, aluminium saturation, and organic matter content, while information on land use/management history is seldom available.

In spite of the rather large number of TTR-rules already available, it has been necessary to introduce a number of expert-based rules. Such expert-rules take into consideration whether certain combinations of soil parameter estimates are considered pedo-chemically feasible or relevant for a given soil unit. For example, the aluminium saturation percentage cannot be more than zero in soils with a high pH or, alternatively, a high base saturation is unlikely to occur at low pH values. So far, 28 expert-rules have been defined (Table 4). Inherently, the scheme of expert-rules was applied after application of the taxotransfer scheme, as a 'final check' of the TTR-derived data.

Table 4. Conventions for coding taxotransfer and expert rules

Type of rule	Soil Variable	Flag	Description
Taxotransfer:			
TTR-ALSA	ALSAT	A	exchangeable Aluminium percentage (% of ECEC)
TTR-BSAT	BSAT	B	base saturation (% of CECs)
TTR-BULK	BULKDENS	C	bulk density
TTR-CECC	CECCLAY	D	cation exchange capacity of clay fraction (corr. for org. C)
TTR-CECS	CECSOIL	E	cation exchange capacity
TTR-CLAY	CLAY	G	clay % (see also Y for texture (g, m & n))
TTR-ECEC	ECEC	H	effective CEC
TTR-ELCO	ECE	I	electrical conductivity
TTR-ESP	ESP	J	exchangeable Na percentage (% of CECs)
TTR-GRAV	GRAVEL	F	coarse fragments
TTR-GYPS	GYPSUM	K	gypsum content
TTR-PHAQ	PHH2O	L	pH in water
TTR-SAND	SAND	M	sand %
TTR-SILT	SILT	N	silt %
TTR-TAWC	TAWC	O	volumetric water content (-33 to - 1500 kPa)
TTR-TCEQ	CACO3	P	carbonate content
TTR-TOTC	ORGC	Q	organic carbon content
TTR-TOTN	TOTN	R	total nitrogen content
Expert-rule:			
XR1-Alsa	ALSAT	1	Expert rules for ALSAT *vs* soil pH (5 rules)
XR2-Bsat	BSAT	2	Expert rules for BSAT *vs* soil pH (6)
XR3-Elco	ECE	3	Expert rules for ELCO *vs* pH (1)
XR4-Gyps	GYPS	4	Expert rules for GYPSUM *vs* pH (1)
XR5-CaCo	TCEQ	5	Expert rules for CACO3 *vs* pH (5)
XR6-CECc	CECc	6	Expert rules for CECclay (2)
XR7-Hist	HISTO	7	Expert rules for organic soils (for Histosols; 1)
XR8-LAC	LAC	8	Expert rules for CECclay (for Low Activity (LAC) soils; 6)
XR9-ECEC	ECEC	9	Expert rules for effective CEC (for LAC and Andosols; 1)

Note: Codes for taxotransfer-rules start with TTR, while expert-based rules begin with the letters XR. Several subdivisions are possible for each expert-rule; these have been coded with numerals (e.g., 6a, 6b etc. for rules determining the parameter estimates for CECclay). The number of conditions defined for each expert-rule is shown in brackets.

Table 5 lists how often each type of rule has been applied as a percentage of the total number of horizons (up to a depth of 100 cm) in the secondary SOTER database; details for each profile, layer and soil attribute may be found in table *SOTERflagTTRrules* (Appendix 3).

Table 5. Type and frequency of rules applied

Rules	Code	Frequency of occurrence (%)			
		TTRsub	TTRmain	TTRsummary	TTRfinal
XR1-Alsa	1	-	-	-	74
XR2-Bsat	2	-	-	-	23
XR3-Elco	3	-	-	-	67
XR4-Gyps	4	-	-	-	67
XR5-CaCo	5	-	-	-	90
XR6-CECc	6	-	-	-	11
XR7-Hist	7	-	-	-	1
XR8-LAC	8	-	-	-	4
XR9-ECEC	9	-	-	-	68
TTR-ALSA	A	13	49	62	-
TTR-BSAT	B	69	2	71	-
TTR-BULK	C	61	2	63	-
TTR-CECc	D	27	1	28	-
TTR-CECs	E	14	0	14	-
TTR-GRAV	F	17	0	17	-
TTR-CLAY	G	12	0	12	-
TTR-ECEC	H	65	7	72	-
TTR-ELCO	I	32	7	39	-
TTR-ESP	J	72	2	74	-
TTR-GYPS	K	24	15	39	-
TTR-PHAQ	L	11	0	11	-
TTR-SAND	M	12	0	12	-
TTR-SILT	N	12	0	12	-
TTR-TAWC	O	88	11	99	-
TTR-TCEQ	P	32	7	39	-
TTR-TOTC	Q	14	0	14	-
TTR-TOTN	R	35	1	36	-

Note: For definitions of abbreviations see text and Figure 5; also see the footnote in Appendix 3. The abbreviation '-' stands for not applicable.

Exchangeable aluminium (ALSA), base saturation (BSAT), exchangeable sodium (ESP), and Effective CEC (ECEC), for example, have been estimated using TTRs in some 60 to 75% of the cases; this is a reflection of the fact that exchangeable bases and exchangeable acidity were not considered in the original database structure for SOTERLAC (FAO *et al.* 1998; Peters and van Engelen 1993).

For base saturation (BSAT), TTR-derived values were mainly derived from soil parameter estimates for similar soil units (see TTRsub), while for ALSAT they were mainly derived from measured data for major soil groups (see TTRmain). Table 5 shows also that there are almost no measured soil physical data (BULK, TAWC) in the primary SOTERLAC database.

Expert rules have commonly been used for exchangeable aluminium (XR1-ALSA), electrical conductivity (XR3-Elco), Gypsum (XR4-GYPS) and content of calcium carbonate (XR5-CaCo). In case of Histosols, the soil textural class has always been recoded to "O" (organic materials; XR7-Hist). Rule XR9-ECEC was applied to all profiles that were not classified as low activity clays soils (LAC) and Andosols in SOTERLAC, version 2.0.

3.4 Linkage to GIS

Aggregated information about the SOTER unit composition and results of the TTR-work can be linked to the SOTER map using GIS. In transnational databases such as SOTERLAC, however, this linkage must be through the NEWSUID, which is a combination of the country's ISO code plus SUID code (see Appendix 4).

Most SOTER units in Latin America and the Caribbean comprise more than one soil component, with a maximum of five. In the primary database, the associated information is stored in a range of relational databases to enhance data storage and management efficiency. To assist end-users, a new table has been created that incorporates data held in the primary SOTER database and the present information on soil parameter estimates (Appendix 4). Clearly, this wealth of information, although needed for modelling work, complicates linkage to GIS.

For visualization and analysis in GIS, it will often be necessary to make an extra selection. For example, in the case of the RothC and Century carbon models (Falloon *et al.* 2002; Paustian *et al.* 1997), information may be required about the properties of the topsoil – that is layer D1: 0-20 cm – for the dominant soil. In this case, the necessary selection will be for the first Terrain Component

(TCID=1), first Soil Component (SCID= 1) and the upper most layer (D1). The corresponding selection is included as a separate table in the secondary database for Latin America and the Caribbean, as an example. The database structure is detailed in Appendix 4.

Figure 3 schematically shows the procedure for linking the various secondary attribute data to the geographical SOTER data held in the GIS. For ease of visualization, it considers only the upper layer (D1) of the spatially dominant (first) soil component of hypothetical SOTER unit BR19, as an example.

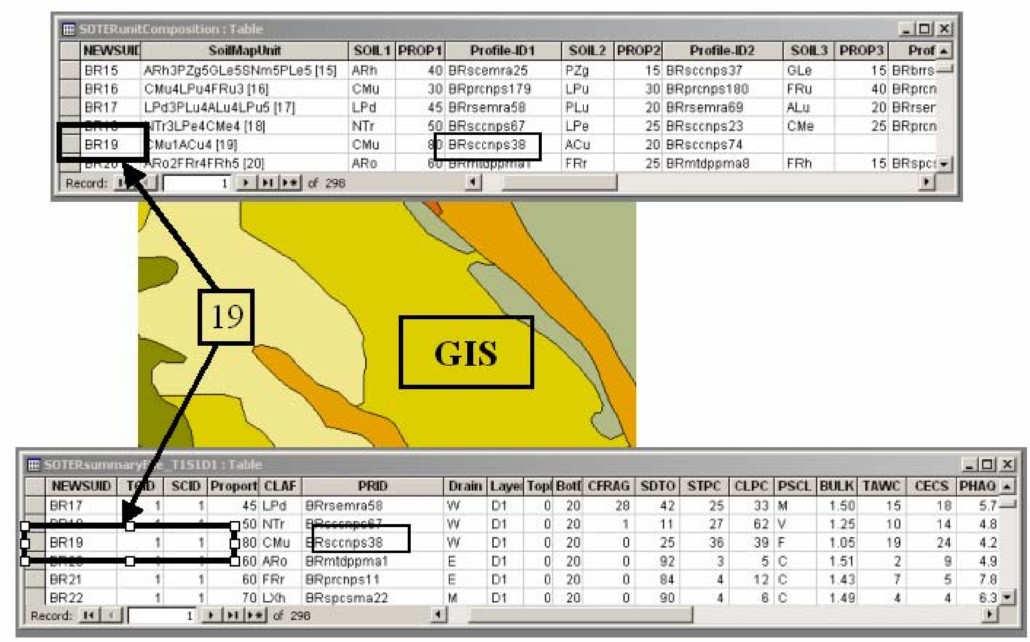

Figure 3. Linking soil parameter estimates for the top 20 cm of the dominant soil of a SOTER unit with the geographical component of SOTER

All geographic data in SOTER are presented in vector format. However, should grid-based soil layers be required, these can be generated using the convert-to-grid module of the spatial analyst extension to ArcView (ESRI 1996). The minimum legible delineation implied by the scale of 1:5M is about 625 km^2. Gridding should be based on the NEWSUID field to permit subsequent linkage with the various attribute tables discussed in this report. The overall procedure will be same as depicted earlier in Figure 3.

Information on landform, lithology and slope has been derived from the primary SOTERLAC database (Dijkshoorn 2005). The coding conventions are detailed in the SOTER Procedures Manual (van Engelen and Wen 1995) .

4. CONCLUSIONS

- Linkage between soil profile data and the spatial component of the SOTERLAC map, for environmental applications, required generalisation of measured soil (profile) data by soil unit and depth zone. This involved the transformation of variables that show a marked spatial and temporal variation and that have been determined in a range of laboratories, according to various analytical methods.
- A pragmatic approach to the comparability of soil analytical data has been adopted. This was considered appropriate at the present scale of 1:5M, but must be done more rigorously when more detailed scientific work is considered.
- The present set of soil parameter estimates for Latin America and the Caribbean should be seen as best estimates based on the currently available selection of profile data held in SOTERLAC, version 2.0, and WISE. The uncertainty attached to some of the parameter estimates shown, however, remains high.
- Modellers should familiarize themselves with the assumptions and taxotransfer rules used to develop the set of soil parameter estimates, before using these in their models.
- The detail and quality of primary information available within the various countries of Latin America and the Caribbean resulted in a variable resolution of the products presented.
- The secondary data set is considered appropriate for studies at national scale, including agro-ecological zoning, land evaluation, and modelling of carbon stocks and changes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: SOTER unit composition file

This summary table gives the full composition of each SOTER unit in terms of its main soil units (FAO and ISRIC, 2003), their relative extent, and the identifier for the corresponding representative profile. It contains information aggregated from a number of primary SOTER tables, *viz. SoilComponent* and *Profile*. It can be easily linked to the SOTER geographical data in a GIS through the unique SOTER unit code – NEWSUID, a combination of the fields for ISO and SUID – and linked to the table holding the soil parameter estimates through the unique profile identifier (PRID, see Appendix 2 and Figure 3).

Structure of table *SOTERunitComposition*

Name	Type	Size	Description
ISOC	Text	2	ISO-3166 country code (1994)
SUID	Integer	2	The identification code of a SOTER unit on the map and in the database
NEWSUID	Text	10	Globally unique SOTER code, comprising fields ISOC plus SUID (sometimes called: ISOCSUID)
SOIL1	Text	3	Characterization of the first (main) soil component according to the Revised Legend (FAO, 1988)
PROP1	Integer	2	Proportion, as a percentage, that the main soil Component occupies within the SOTER unit
PRID1	Text	15	Unique code for the corresponding representative soil profile (as selected by the national soil experts)
SOIL2	Text	3	As above but for the next soil component
PROP2	Integer	2	As above
PRID2	Text	15	As above
SOIL3	Text	3	As above but for the next soil component
PROP3	Integer	2	As above
PRID3	Text	15	As above
SOIL4	Text	3	As above but for the next soil component
PROP4	Integer	2	As above
PRID4	Text	15	As above
SOIL5	Text	3	As above but for the next soil component
PROP5	Integer	2	As above
PRID5	Text	15	As above

(cont.)

SOIL6	Text	3	As above but for the next soil component
PROP6	Integer	2	As above
PRID6	Text	15	As above
SOIL7	Text	3	As above but for the next soil component
PROP7	Integer	2	As above
PRID7	Text	15	As above
SOIL8	Text	3	As above but for the next soil component
PROP8	Integer	2	As above
PRID8	Text	15	As above
SOIL9	Text	3	As above but for the next soil component
PROP9	Integer	2	As above
PRID9	Text	15	As above
SOIL10	Text	3	As above but for the next soil component
PROP10	Integer	2	As above
PRID10	Text	15	As above

Note: Generally, not all 10 available fields for $SOIL_i$ will be filled in SOTER.

Appendix 2: Taxotransfer rule-based soil parameter estimates

This table lists soil parameters estimates for all representative profiles considered in a given SOTER database. This information can be linked to the geographical component of the SOTER database – in a GIS – through the unique profile code (PRID, see Appendix 1).

Structure of table *SOTERparameterEstimates*

Name	Type	Size	Description
CLAF	Text	3	Revised Legend FAO (1988) code
PRID	Text	15	profile ID (as documented in table *SOTERunitComposition*)
Drain	Text	2	FAO soil drainage class
Layer	Text	8	code for depth layer (from D1 to D5; e.g. D1 is from 0 to 20 cm)
TopDep	Integer	4	depth of top of layer (cm)
BotDep	Integer	4	depth of bottom of (cm)
CFRAG	Integer	2	coarse fragments (> 2mm)
SDTO	Integer	2	sand (mass %)
STPC	Integer	2	silt (mass %)
CLPC	Integer	2	clay (mass %)
PSCL	Text	1	FAO texture class (see note at end of this report for codes)
BULK	Single	4	bulk density (kg dm^{-3})
TAWC	Integer	2	available water capacity (cm m^{-1}, -33 to -1500 kPa conform to USDA standards)

(cont.)

CECS	Single	4	cation exchange capacity ($cmol_c$ kg^{-1}) for fine earth fraction
BSAT	Integer	2	base saturation as percentage of CECsoil
CECc	Single	4	CECclay, corrected for contribution of organic matter ($cmol_c$ kg^{-1})
PHAQ	Single	4	pH measured in water
TCEQ	Single	4	total carbonate equivalent (g kg^{-1})
GYPS	Single	4	gypsum content (g kg^{-1})
ELCO	Single	4	electrical conductivity (dS m^{-1})
TOTC	Single	4	organic carbon content (g kg^{-1})
TOTN	Single	4	total nitrogen (g kg^{-1})
ECEC	Single	4	effective CEC ($cmol_c$ kg^{-1})

Note: These are depth-weighted values. In view of the TTR-rules applied and depth weighting, the parameters listed for TOTC and TOTN should not be used to compute C/N ratios!

The above table should be consulted in conjunction with table *SOTERflagTTRrules* which documents the taxotransfer rules that have been applied (see Appendix 3).

Appendix 3. Flagging taxotransfer rules

The type of taxotransfer that has been used when creating the table *SOTERparameterEstimates* (Appendix 2) is documented in table *SOTERflagTTRrules*. Further details on coding conventions may be found in the text (Section 3.3).

Structure of table *SOTERflagTTRrules*

Name	Type	Size	Description
CLAF	Text	3	Revised Legend (FAO, 1988) code
PRID	Text	15	Unique identifier for representative profile
Newtopdep	Integer	2	Depth of top of layer (cm)
Newbotdep	Integer	2	Depth of bottom of layer (cm)
TTRsub	Text	50	Codes showing the type of taxotransfer rule used (based on data for soil *units*; see text)
TTRmain	Text	50	Codes showing the type of taxotransfer rule used (based on data for *major units*; see text)
TTRfinal	Text	25	Codes showing the type of expert rule used

Note: For example, the exchangeable aluminium percentage (ALSA) has been set at zero when pH_{water} is higher than 5.5. Similarly, the electrical conductivity (ELCO), content of gypsum (GYPS) and content of carbonates (TCEQ) have been set at zero when pH_{water} is less than 6.5. Finally, the CEC of the clay fraction (CEC_{clay}) has always been re-calculated from the depth-weighted measured and TTR-derived data for CEC_{soil} and content of organic carbon, assuming a mean contribution of 350 $cmol_c$ kg^{-1} OC (Klamt and Sombroek 1988). When applicable, this has been flagged in the field TTRfinal; coding conventions are given in Table 3.

Appendix 4: SOTER summary file

Interpretations of a SOTER database, in combination with the current set of soil parameter estimates requires a good knowledge of relational database handling systems and a sound understanding of the SOTER database structure. This may be an obstacle to end-users with limited programming expertise. Therefore, to facilitate access to the data and its ultimate linkage to GIS, a SOTER summary file has been created. The structure of the corresponding table is shown below.

Structure of table *SOTERsummaryFile*

Name	Type	Size	Description
ISOC	Text	2	ISO-3166 country code (1994)
SUID	Integer	2	The identification code of a SOTER unit on the map and in the database
NEWSUID	Text	10	Globally unique SOTER code, comprising fields ISOC Plus SUID
TCID	Integer	1	Number of terrain component in given SOTER unit
SCID	Integer	1	Number of soil component within given terrain component and SOTER unit
PROP	Integer	3	Relative proportion of above in given SOTER unit
CLAF	Text	3	Revised Legend FAO (1988) code
PRID	Text	15	Profile ID (as documented in table SOTER-unitComposition)
Drain	Text	2	FAO soil drainage class
Layer	Text	8	Code for depth layer (from D1 to D5; e.g. D1 is from 0 to 20 cm)
TopDep	Integer	4	Upper depth of layer (cm)
BotDep	Integer	4	Lower dept of layer (cm)
CFRAG	Integer	2	Coarse fragments (> 2mm)
SDTO	Integer	2	Sand (mass %)
STPC	Integer	2	Silt (mass %)
CLPC	Integer	2	Clay (mass %)
PSCL	Text	1	FAO texture class (see Figure 8)
BULK	Single	4	Bulk density (kg dm^{-3})

(cont.)

TAWC	Integer	2	Available water capacity (cm m^{-1}, -33 to -1500 kPa, USDA standards)
CECS	Single	4	Cation exchange capacity ($cmol_c$ kg^{-1}) of fine earth fraction
BSAT	Integer	2	Base saturation as percentage of CECsoil
CECc	Single	4	CECclay, corrected for contribution of organic Matter ($cmol_c$ kg^{-1})
PHAQ	Single	4	pH measured in water
TCEQ	Single	4	Total carbonate equivalent (g kg^{-1})
GYPS	Single	4	Gypsum content (g kg^{-1})
ELCO	Single	4	Electrical conductivity (dS m^{-1})
TOTC	Single	4	Organic carbon content (g kg^{-1})
TOTN	Single	4	Total nitrogen (g kg^{-1})
ECEC	Single	4	Effective CEC ($cmol_c$ kg^{-1})

Notes:
1) These are depth-weighted values, per 20 cm layer.
2) Terrain Components, and their constituent Soil Components, within a given SOTER unit are numbered starting with the spatially dominant one. The sum of the relative proportions of all Soil Components within a SOTER unit is always 100 per cent.
3) A condensed file showing only soil parameter estimates for the main Terrain Component (TCID= 1) and Soil Component (SCID =1) for the upper layer (D1) is attached as table *SoterSummaryFile_T1S1D1*. This type of tables can be created directly in the GIS, in the table mode, using the SQL-connect option.
4) A limited number of TTR-derived records may contain a -1 value; this indicates that it has not yet been possible to plug the corresponding gaps using the current set of taxotransfer rules.
5) From a pedo-chemical perspective, estimates for effective CEC are only presented for low activity clay (LAC) soils and Andosols.

Appendix 5: Contents of GIS-folder

The SOTER-GIS files for Latin America and the Caribbean and soil parameter estimates are provided in one single zip file called: SOTWIS_LAC_ver1.zip.

By default, this compressed file should be unzipped to folder X:\SOTWIS_LAC_ver1.0 which contains:

1) The project’s apr-file, called SOTWIS_LAC_01.apr. This file can best be accessed from within ArcView.

2) The SOTER shape, legend and documentation files for Latin America and the Caribbean, in three separate subfolders.
3) The access database containing the soil parameter estimates (SOTWIS_LAC_1.mdb; see Appendices 1 to 4).

The first time the project file is opened on a new system, the folder information will be automatically updated in the apr-file.

The current project file only shows a limited number of selections for the upper soil layer (D1= 0 to 20 cm or less for shallow soils) for the dominant soil of a SOTER unit, including content of organic carbon, pH, clay content, CECsoil, bulk density, and FAO drainage class. Should other selections be needed, the underlying MS Access database (SOTWIS_LAC_1.mdb) can be queried via the SQL-connect option of ArcView.

If grid-based soil layers are required, these can be generated using the convert-to-grid module of the spatial analyst extension to ArcView (ESRI 1996). Gridding should be based on the NEWSUID field to permit subsequent linkage with the various attribute tables discussed in this report. Gridding should also take into account the minimum legible delineation of a map unit implied by the scale of the SOTERLAC map (see Section 3.4).

Appendix 6: Limits for soil textural classes

The textural classes (PSCL, see Appendix 2 and 4) used in this study follow the criteria of FAO (1988) and CEC (1985). The following abbreviations are used: C–coarse, M–medium, Z–medium fine, F–fine and V–very fine. The symbol 'u' is used for undifferentiated (i.e. C + M + F + Z + V). The class limits are shown in Appendix 6.

The textural class for all Histosols has been coded "O", for organic materials.

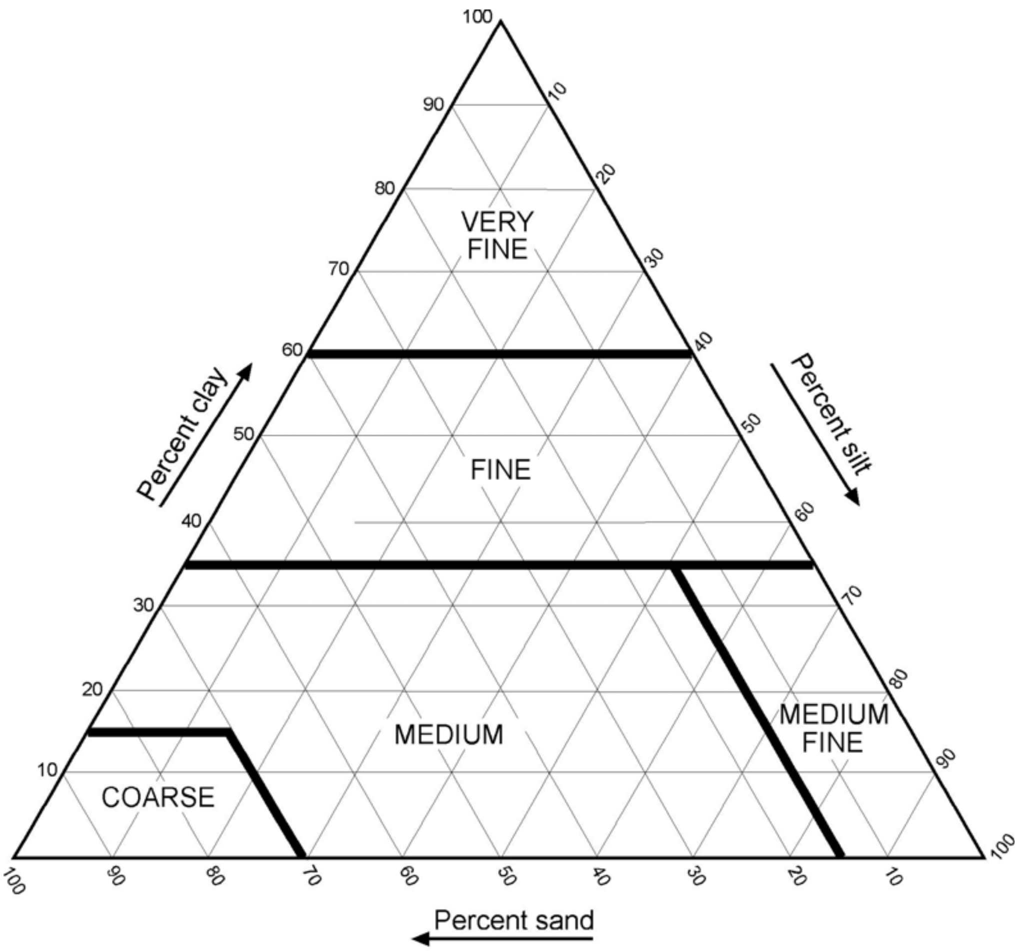

Figure 4. Soil texture classes