

Virtual Symposium Agenda

Sustainable Financing for Soil Remediation Projects in China and Beyond

19-21 October 2021
11:30 – 13:30 (GMT/UTC)

https://iisd-elp.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_KbZq10EZQ--dGOTiy5inhw

Sustainable finance has gained considerable traction in the finance industry in recent years, but a massive gap still exists in mobilizing adequate financial resources to address legacy and existing environmental and climate problems. One such example is the remediation of contaminated or otherwise degraded soil.

While maintaining healthy soil is crucial to tackling climate change, human activities (including impacts from climate change) are contributing to an increasingly alarming rate of soil contamination and degradation. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has erased years of development progress and resulted in major setbacks to all sources of finance for sustainable development.

As the world faces a common challenge in finding adequate funding sources for soil remediation projects due to the fact of technological complexity, liability identification, large capital demand and long payback cycle, the aim of this three-session virtual symposium is to share most recent research findings on this topic, to engage in broader discussions with experts and practitioners in this field, and to establish a community of global experts and practitioners where they can exchange experiences and discuss emerging trends in the area of environment financing.

SESSION 1 – GOVERNANCE PERSPECTIVE

19th October

This session will focus on the governance perspective on soil remediation projects. Soil management practices of governments around the world seem to be rather fragmented and little governmental reporting considers soil remediation, particularly in their climate mitigation strategies. Soil remediation projects in China, EU, and US are governed in different ways and each of these jurisdictions has a unique approach to carrying out such projects as well as can present a different perspective, experienced challenges, and ideas for future solutions. Public sector representatives from China, EU, and US, as well as experts from NGOs will discuss governance issues faced by governments while treating contaminated land.

Moderator: **Hongqiao Liu**, Journalist and China environment policy expert

Speakers:

- **Dimitri de Boer**, Chief Representative for China, ClientEarth
- **Zhanfeng Dong**, Deputy Director, Department for Environmental Policy, Chinese Academy of Environmental Planning, Ministry of Environmental Protection (China)
- **Dietmar Müller-Grabherr**, General Secretary, Common Forum on Contaminated Land
- **Steve Wolfson**, Senior Attorney, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

11:30 – 11:35	Welcome remarks by Nathalie Bernasconi-Osterwalder, Executive Director of IISD Europe
11:35 – 11:40	Introduction to the session
11:40 – 12:05	Speakers' presentations Guest speakers from China, EU, and US will briefly introduce the current state of play of soil remediation governance within their respective jurisdictions.
12:05 – 12:45	Moderated discussions Each panellist will address questions posed by the moderator and engage in moderated dialogues among the panel. Topics will cover governance challenges in implementing soil remediation projects, such as the science-policy gap, inadequate policies, difficulties in identifying liabilities, and limited public budgets.
12:45 – 13:25	Participants' Q&A Audience will be able to submit questions in writing anytime during the session. Participants will also have opportunity to engage in interactive discussions directly with the panellists during this segment.
13:25 – 13:30	Conclusion of the session

This session will focus on the industry position and technical issues faced while performing soil remediation projects. Soil remediation is a technical process, requiring extensive knowledge in the field, research on contamination, and finally the use of appropriate technology and tools. One of the biggest problems for the industry is the missing capacity, that applies to both land users and stakeholders carrying out remediation projects. The latter ones often miss practical information on how to carry out and manage such projects efficiently. Hence, it is crucial that investors have the opportunity to understand the whole process from the technical side, to minimize their concerns and understand the prospective benefits. Experts representing research institutes and industry will share experiences and discuss issues faced by industry while treating contaminated land and innovative solutions that could be applied in the future.

Moderator: **Hongqiao Liu**, Journalist and China environment policy expert

Speakers:

- **Nikolai Friberg**, Research Director for Biodiversity, Norwegian Institute for Water Research
- **Arne Pettersen**, Section Leader for Environmental Chemistry, Norwegian Geotechnical Institute
- **Xiaoming Wan**, Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences
- **Hua Zhang**, Institute of Geochemistry, Chinese Academy of Sciences

11:30 – 11:35 **Recap and introduction**

11:35 – 11:40 **Welcome remarks by Thorjørn Larssen, Deputy Managing Director, NIVA**

11:40 – 12:05 **Speakers' presentations**

Guest speakers representing research institutes and industry will briefly introduce the innovative technology and tools under research or already deployed in soil remediation projects.

12:05 – 12:45 **Moderated discussions**

Each panellist will address questions posed by the moderator and engage in moderated dialogues among the panel. Topics will cover the challenges faced by different industries in carrying out soil remediation projects, such as missing education and capacity, risks associated with contamination (e.g. technical or health risks), and mobilising private investment.

12:45 – 13:25 **Participants Q&A**

Audience will be able to submit questions in writing anytime during the session. Participants will also have opportunity to engage in interactive discussions directly with the panellists during this segment.

13:25 – 13:30 **Conclusion of the session**

SESSION 3 – FINANCING PERSPECTIVE

21st October

This session will focus on challenges associated with the financing of soil remediation projects. Soil remediation can be costly and the cost depends on a multitude of factors. Aside from the size of the area to be remediated, soil remediation projects face numerous other issues, such as identifying the actor(s) principally responsible for the contamination and the beneficiaries of remediation efforts. As public budgets tighten, governments around the world are looking at opportunities to attract private capital to both land remediation and its productive use and redevelopment thereafter. To address the financing gap for soil remediation, public and/or private investors can employ a variety of financing instruments such as grants, concessional loans, green bonds proceeds and/or climate funds' investments. Experts from the private and public sectors will discuss the challenges in financing soil remediation and share innovative sustainable financial solutions that could be applied in the future.

Moderator: Hongqiao Liu, Journalist and China environment policy expert

Speakers:

- **Thiago Chagas**, Lead Legal Consultant, Climate Focus
- **Ingvild Skumlien Furuseth**, Research Assistant, Norwegian Institute for Water Research
- **Kenneth Patterson**, Director of the Regional Support Division, Office of Site Remediation Enforcement, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- **Lan Wang**, Associate Professor of Law, East China Normal University
- **Chenghui Zhang**, Former Director-General, Research Institute of Finance, Development Research Center of the State Council (China)

11:30 – 11:35	Recap and introduction
11:35 – 11:40	Welcome remarks by Matthew Gouett, Sustainable Finance Analyst, Economic Law and Policy, IISD
11:40 – 12:05	Speakers' presentations Guest speakers representing private and public sector as well as academia will briefly introduce emerging trends on sustainable financing and innovations on mobilizing financial resources to tackle environmental issues.
12:05 – 12:45	Moderated discussions Each panellist will address questions posed by the moderator and engage in moderated dialogues among the panel. Topics will cover the challenges related to financing of soil remediation projects, such as efficient use of public funding, attracting private stakeholders, and innovatory sustainable financing solutions.
12:45 – 13:25	Participants' Q&A Audience will be able to submit questions in writing anytime during the Session. Participants will also have opportunity to engage in interactive discussions directly with the panellists during this segment.
13:25 – 13:30	Closing of the Virtual Symposium