

Participation and Funding Support for 5th International Soil Judging Contest in Nanjing, China (June 2-6, 2026)

Venue: Nanjing & Jurong, Jiangsu Province, China

Date: 2–6 June 2026

Price and Board Basis: Approximately \$2500 per team of 4 competitors and 1 coach. A second coach can be included in the team for \$500 extra (\$150 extra for single room).

Board Basis: Full Board. This includes accommodation, all meals, and local transportation during the competition, but not national (within China) or international travel.

Eligibility Criteria

All teams and team members must meet the following conditions to be eligible for the Soil Judging Contest.

Team Composition and Participant Requirements

- Each team shall consist of four members representing a single country or a group of countries. All must be nominated by their national soil science societies.
- At the time of competition, all team members must fulfill at least one of the following criteria:
 - a. Be registered as a student at an academic institution located within the represented country; or
 - b. Hold nationality of the represented country.
- All competing team members must also satisfy the following:
 - a. Be present for the entire duration of the competition;
 - b. Be registered as a student (undergraduate, Master's, or Ph.D. candidate) at the time of the competition or in the semester before.

Registration Guidelines

- **Registration must be submitted by national soil science societies; individual registrations will not be accepted. Registration should be submitted to soiljudging@issas.ac.cn**, which includes a motivation letter with an introduction of team members.
- **Deadline for registration is January 15, 2026 (UTC+8).** Each country, or group of countries acting together, may nominate up to two teams. If a country or group of countries nominates two teams, the priority team must be indicated. A second team can only be admitted after the first team of every country or group is admitted.

Funding Support and Selection

- The Soil Science Society of China will provide funding up to \$20,000 to support two eligible teams/10 person. \$5,000 of this is from waiving the two registration fees, leaving \$15,000 to be spent by the teams.

- Funding is limited to teams or individuals from low-income, lower-middle income, and upper middle-income countries in regions such as Africa, South America, and Asia, as defined by the World Bank (<https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/opendata/understanding-country-income--world-bank-group-income-classifica>).
- Application for funding support needs a max. two-page motivation letter (including brief introduction of team members), and a detailed budget. **Application is accepted from a national soil science society or an individual, and submitted to soiljudging@issas.ac.cn.** Applications for support will be evaluated by the WCSS2026 organizers. **Deadline for application is January 15, 2026 (UTC+8).** Successful winners will be notified via email by February 15, 2026 (UTC+8). Results will also be posted on the official WCSS2026 website (<https://www.23wcss.org.cn/>).

About the Contest

A handbook and scoresheet will be sent out to all registered teams before the contest. Contest handbook, an example scoresheet, list of activities, lodging, travel, and meal information, and other important materials will be posted on the Congress web page.

An example of a completed soil contest can be found here: European Soil Judging Contest - <https://esjc.es/>. Students and coaches are asked to bring soil description materials such as color books and digging tools with them. Liquids used in the description will be provided by the host.

During the contest week, students will attend training lectures and, guided by international teachers, and describe multiple soil pits in practice. This will help prepare them for the contest and educate them about the resources of the contest region.

After that, the contest starts: Descriptions include site properties, parent materials and soil morphology properties. Students then answer questions about suitability of the soil for major land uses in the contest region, soil hydrology, runoff and potential erosion, and soil classification and horizon designation using both WRB and US Soil Taxonomy. Each team will describe two pits as a group, and then each individual will describe two more pits. The handbook and reference materials will be allowed during the contest, but no electronic communication devices are allowed.

Awards will be given for group judging, individual judging, and for specific performances. The World Congress begins after the contest.

Soil Judging Programme (subject to change)

Date	Activity
June 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Registration at ISSCAS (Institute of Soil Science, Chinese Academy of Sciences), Nanjing• Accommodation (Jinfan Wanyuan Hotel, near ISSCAS)• Welcome Reception• Committee meeting
June 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome Speech• Lecture 1: Introduction of Soil Judging Contest (by John Galbraith)• Lecture 2: Soils of China and Chinese Soil Taxonomy (by Ganlin Zhang)• Lecture 3: Local soils and soil-forming factors (by Biao Huang)• Lecture 4: Soil description and judging methods (by Peter Schad)• Visit ISSCAS Soil Museum (500 soil monoliths) (guided by Fei Yang)• Urban soil/ Loessic soil demonstration near ISSCAS (1 profile) (by Ganlin Zhang, John Galbraith, Peter Schad)• Coaches meeting
June 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lecture 5: Introduction to Soil Taxonomy (by John Galbraith)• Lecture 6: Introduction to WRB (by Peter Schad)• Lecture 7: Soil utilization interpretation (by Liz Eroshenko, and Will Hernandez)• Transfer by bus to hotel near Weilan Eco-Farm• Practical training at Wutiaojie, Jurong (2 profiles)• Coaches meeting
June 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practical training at Zhaojiawan Village (2 profiles)• Practical training at Duanjia Village, Jurong (2 profiles)• Coaches meeting
June 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competition (Teams) (2 profiles)• Competition (Individual) (2 profiles)• Committee meeting: Scoring (individual, team and overall)• Party at Weilan Eco-Farm• Announcement of Results and Awards Ceremony
June 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transfer by bus to the Congress venue