



CREDIBLE
EU carbon farming



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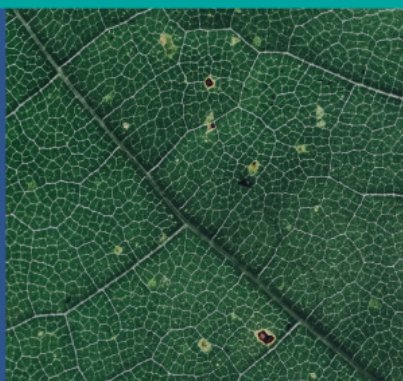
The issue of scale for the carbon certification framework

Project CREDIBLE: “Building momentum and trust to achieve credible soil carbon farming in the EU”.

Funded by the European Union under the Grant Agreement n° 101112951.

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Executive summary

This document is part of the EU-funded project CREDIBLE, Grant Agreement 101112951, and it captures the main outputs of the first round of conversations had within the Focus Group on “The best scale for a carbon certification framework”.

The main goal of this Focus Group is to generate recommendations/opinions that could be used in the development/deployment of relevant policies around carbon farming, and particularly in the definition of the Carbon Removal Certification Framework. These informed opinions have emerged through the active participation of experts (details provided in Tables 1 and 2) in a number of activities (with the main ones listed in Table 3).

In order to convey the recommendations to the broader possible audience, the following sections have been included in the document: i) an introduction, which helps clarifying the problem and why addressing this topic was considered important by the CREDIBLE consortium; ii) a short process report, which summarises the conversations held by the Focus Group, highlighting the key points and tensions that emerged and; iii) a summary of recommendations, listing in a concise way the opinion of the Focus Group on how to best solve some of these tensions.

1. Focus Group participation and activities

Table 1 - Partners of CREDIBLE who participated in the Focus Group.

Name of the expert	Affiliation	Role	Country
DIEBOLT Clara	AC3A	Task leader	FR
FOUCHEROT Claudine	AC3A / Regional Chamber of Agriculture of Normandy	Member	FR
MARTEL Simon	I4CE	Member	FR
GRIMAULT Julia	I4CE	Member	FR
MAL Mathieu	EEB	Member	BE
GRANHOLM Kaj	BSAG	Member	FI
ZIMMER Daniel	EIT Climate Kic	Member	EU

Table 2 - Members of the Focus Group external to CREDIBLE.

Name of the expert	Affiliation	Role	Country
ROSIERS Marc	ELO	Member	BE
DEBOECK Anna	ELO	Member	BE
ROSTAING Anne	Coopérative du Carbone La	Member	FR



	Rochelle		
LHOTE Anaïs	Idele	Member	FR
DON Gerard	Bax & Co	Member	ES
FONTENIAUD Johan	ACCLENA	Member	FR
GUICHARD Charlotte	SYMBIOSE	Member	FR
LOUBÈRE Dominique	Alli'home	Member	FR
RULLIER Marie	Solenat	Member	FR
MOUNSEY John	DFAM	Member	IE
ALCANTARA-SHIVAPATHAM Viridiana	VERRA	Member	GE
KUREL Vaclav	Carboneg	Member	CZ
PURROY Francisco	Land Life	Member	ES

Table 3 - List of main activities carried out to steer the conversations.

General description of the activity	Date of execution
#1 meeting : discussion with a group of expert in payment for ecosystem services on local specificities to be considered in the future European framework (Symbiose, Alli'homme, Acclena,	01.09.2023
Preparation of a survey on the optimal scale of governance for each component of the future CRCF in cooperation with I4CE and CRAN (to be disseminated in 2024)	Sept-April 2024
#2 meeting : discussion with a group of experts of carbon removal and certification (I4CE, ELO, EIT Climate KIC, submission	28.02.2024
Meetings for the preparation of the EU Carbon Farming Summit with FG members	January-March 2024
Plenary session presentation + panel discussion	07.03.2024
#3 meeting : panel discussion at the EU Carbon Farming Summit, with different representatives of existing schemes and	07.03.2024



scales of governance (Verra, LandLife, Label Bas Carbone, Gold, Irish Government)	
#4 meeting : workshop at the EU Carbon Farming Summit on the pros and cons of 4 scenario of governance for the future European Framework (European, Member State, Existing international standards, existing local standards) – about 70 participants	07.03.2024
Post summit discussions, summary, key messages	March 2024

2. Introduction

A centralised European carbon farming certification framework can provide greater clarity for funders, reduce transaction costs and ensure the same level of requirements for everyone. Conversely, a decentralised approach can be better tailored to local circumstances and easier to use for local operators. This session will focus on sharing experiences from stakeholders involved in international, national, and local certification frameworks, to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the different scales and predict potential interaction of overlapping schemes at different levels.

3. Short process report

#1 Discussion – Meeting with Payment for Ecosystem Services associations

Experts involved in the discussion :

- Johan FONTENIAUD, ACCLENA
- Charlotte GUICHARD, SYMBIOSE
- Dominique LOUBERE, ALLI’HOMME
- Marie RULLIER, SOLENAT

Moderator : Claudine FOUCHEROT, Chamber of Agriculture of Normandy/AC3A

Topics discussed :

Participants are stakeholders in the Label Bas Carbone in France. They support the development of low-carbon projects and act as intermediaries between project proponents



and financiers. The aim of the meeting was to provide feedback on the Low Carbon Label. What's working well? What needs to be improved? Feedback from the Bas Carbone label can be used to formulate recommendations for the future European framework. The main points to come out of this meeting were :

- The 1st interest for farmers is not to sell carbon credits but to benefit from personalised support from a farm advisor.

- This raises the question of the skills of agricultural advisers: carrying out carbon diagnostics is relatively simple, but supporting changes in practices is more complicated and not all advisers are well trained in this area.

- As far as funding is concerned, it is not sufficiently attractive (35 euros for carbon credits, etc.).

- The administrative side is too cumbersome: there are long validation times and too many documents to be provided.

- Low-carbon projects run counter to the soya model in south-west France. Farmers are not ready to change their system.

- Carbon storage is more expensive than emissions reductions: differentiated carbon credit prices are needed.

- Project developers have little information on the costs of low-carbon projects (investment, increased expenses, lower yields, training, etc.). There is a need for harmonised tools to calculate these costs.

#2 Discussion – Meeting with experts on carbon schemes to collect feedback on the survey prepared by the T.2.2 on the optimal scale of governance.

Experts involved in the discussion:

- Simon Martel, I4CE
- Julia Grimault, I4CE
- Claudine FOUCHEROT, CRAN / AC3A
- Kaj GRANHOLM, BSAG
- Daniel Zimmer, EIT Climate Kic
- Marc Rosiers, ELO
- Anna DeBoeck, ELO
- Anne Rostaing, La Coopérative Carbone La Rochelle
- Anaïs L'hote, Idele

Moderator : Clara DIEBOLT, AC3A



Topics discussed : Presentation of the survey prepared by AC3A, CRAN and I4CE on the optimal scale of governance for each components of the CRCF. Collection of feedback from the expert group to improve it.

#3 Discussion – 7.3.2024 - Panel discussion at EU Carbon Farming Summit (BOS 10)

Feedback form existing standards, representing different scale of governance

Panelists contributing the discussion and representing different scales of governance or existing schemes:

- Viridiana Alcantara-Shivapatham, Verra, (GE)
- Vaclav Kurel, Carboneg Group (CZ)
- John Mounsey, Department of Food Agriculture and the Marine (IE)
- Fransisco Purroy, Land Life Company (ES)
- Anne Rostaing, Coopérative du carbone (FR)

Moderation : Simon Martel, I4CE (FR)

Topics discussed:

What could be the added value of the European certification framework?

- Harmonisation is critical as many regional standards are emerging with varying quality (example in Spain). General guidelines at the EU level would be welcome.
- EU framework can bring trust for investors if it targets quality projects
- A European framework can improve the MRV tools and provide many data : for instance soil monitoring through technologies.
- In countries where no national standard exists, there is a big hope that CRCF drives fundings.
- Global standards are struggling to find skilled and trustable auditors in Europe and the CRCF can help to train auditors.
- A common registry at the EU level would bring trust and help avoid double-counting. A common “currency” would facilitate funding. - Rules at the EU level could help protect farmers, in terms of value sharing for example.

Will there be room for existing frameworks and in what form ?

Some existing global standards already work with other frameworks : for example VERRA validate projects under Californian methodologies (CAR) or CDM methodologies.

National Standards are just starting their development now in EU countries, showing that these standards are expected to exist alongside the CRCF.



What are the challenges to ensure the European framework fits in well with existing frameworks?

A challenge is to spread the costs. The prices of the certificates will also be an important challenge.

Under what conditions will the European framework be operational on the ground and adaptable to local issues?

Inclusion of emission reductions from livestock is needed for countries where agri emissions are high because of methane emissions (e.g. Ireland). Cooperation with the ground level is important. Local stakeholders can help to increase ambition.

High MRV cost should be avoided, so procedures should be simple.

In a nutshell, what would be the key success factors for a European framework that is well combined with other scales and existing standards?

Trust, mobilise farmers, visibility over long period of time, need to de-risk farm transformation

Learn from previous mistakes, standardisation of baseline, risk buffer assessment, communication across initiatives, methodologies should remain open, be sure that all registers will be connected.

Discussion #4 : workshop at the EU Carbon Farming Summit (BOS 10)

Workshop moderated by Simon Martel, I4CE

Rapporteurs :

- Clara Diebolt, AC3A
- Claudine Foucherot, CRAN/AC3A
- Julia Grimault, I4CE
- Gerard Don, Bax & Co
- Daniel Zimmer, EIT Climate Kic

Overview of the audience

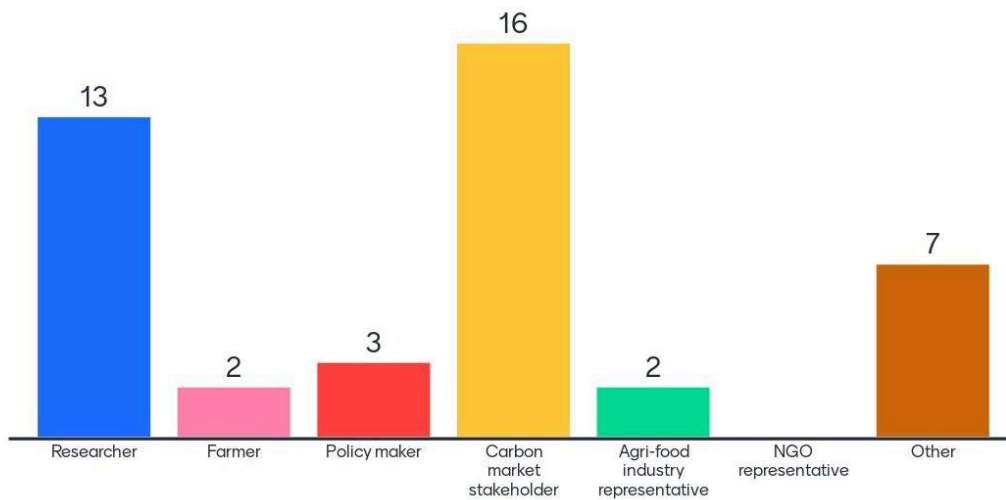
We estimate having around 50 – 75 participants from the answers gathered at the beginning during the icebreaker and the occupation of the room.

Their background:

Where are they from

Instructions for the workshop:





The participants were split into 4 tables of discussion, each table illustrating 1 scenario of governance described in the figure below. They were asked to discuss pros and cons of each scenario in terms of **methodology development and validation**.

Mentimeter

Four illustrative scenarios

Decentralisation level			
Scenario A 'European governance'	Scenario B 'Member State governance'	Scenario C1 'Existing global standards governance'	Scenario C2 'Existing regional standards governance'
Highly centralised scenario with most of the certification components produced and approved at the EU level	National level plays a strong role in the European Framework with a strong involvement of Member States	The governance process will be based on existing global standards (e.g. Verra or GoldStandard).	The governance process will be based on existing regional standards (e.g. Moor Future, Land Life...).

- None of the scenario will be **applied in its entirety**
- The 4 scenarios will be combined with choices made for every certification item



Scenario	Benefits	Risks
scenario A "european governance"	<p>Common Registry needed</p> <p>Make it possible to take the best of current methods</p> <p>Creates trust</p> <p>Ensures comparability between methods</p>	<p>Tension on the baseline (which level?)</p> <p>Not sufficiently adjusted to local context : need of flexibility</p> <p>Difficulty to adjust existing methodologies to EU ones</p> <p>Too long process to agree at EU level</p> <p>EU should be more a referee than a super ruler</p>
scenario B "MS governance"	<p>Take into account of local specificity and national regulation</p> <p>Good ideas from the MS could be missing if process too centralised</p> <p>Going faster than at EU scale</p>	<p>Could raise inter-regional competition (Italy, Spain)</p> <p>Less acceptability</p> <p>Bottom development of methods perhaps, but under the EU umbrella</p>
Scenario C1 "Global standards governance"	<p>Standards are already operational and international.</p> <p>Benefit from methodological work done over last decades</p> <p>Better connection with international label requirements such as SBTi and GHG protocol</p> <p>Using now existing standards avoid to lose years before EU methodologies are available.</p>	<p>Global standards are perhaps more market driven and less working in the farmer interests</p> <p>Difficult to meet higher demand for these standards</p>
Scenario C1 "regional standards governance"	<p>Adapted to local needs</p> <p>Move faster with more flexibility</p> <p>Reduces risk of double counting(?)</p>	<p>Less credibility/trust</p> <p>Potentially less expertise at local level</p> <p>Heterogeneity between MS about region scale and strength</p> <p>Top down may result in solutions more difficult for farmers</p>



4. Summary of recommendations

- European Carbon Certification is awaited to bring trust to fund carbon farming projects.
- Providing visibility and trust through a single register are important expectations of funders and project developers.
- Certification Standards exist only in a few countries and international standards are not widely operating in the EU. Thus, CRCF will offer new funding opportunities for carbon farming in many countries.
- As private standards are unequal in terms of supported practices and quality criteria, CRCF is expected to bring harmonisation of carbon farming practices and equality between farmers all over the EU.
- The CRCF has to take into account local natural conditions. Beside local data, local expertise from farmers need to be considered, in particular for baseline definition.
- Certification alone does not work. There is a need for strong support from farm advisors and agricultural development stakeholders.
- Examples of combination of overarching standards with private and public schemes already exist: example of global framework certifying projects through external methodologies.
- Many stakeholders are ready to develop carbon farming projects and are worried that a fully centralised framework at the EU level (including the design of methodologies), will take too long to be operational. To save time, EU methodologies can build on best practice and take advantage of feedback from existing standards. Choices of governance level should consider timing issues in order to be able to address the climate emergency.
- A tension exists between the need for European harmonisation on the one hand and the need to stay adapted to local contexts and specificities. A good balance has to be found to meet these two expectations : general guidelines which would set minimum requirements, while allowing regional specificities would be seen as ideal.





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