Soil carbon management for climate change mitigation and adaptation: framing and integrating the issue in the evolving policy environment

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Outline

- Introduction
- Soil carbon management in the current regulatory framework
- Challenges for better integration of soil carbon management in future policies
Soil carbon management in the current regulatory framework

- Importance of soil recognized at a strategic level:
  - Soil Thematic Strategy, 2006
  - Communication on land as a resource, expected 2014

- No overarching policy framework for soil protection

- Soil carbon management (soil organic matter) not targeted by existing policies
<table>
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<th>Management practices</th>
<th>Relevance to objectives of existing policies</th>
<th>Policy instrument</th>
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<td>Organic manure input</td>
<td>Nitrates Directive</td>
<td>Nitrate vulnerable zones, Nutrient budget plans, CAP cross-compliance</td>
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<td>Incorporation of crop residues</td>
<td>WFD, Nitrates Directive, Resource Efficiency Roadmap, Adaptation Strategy</td>
<td>CAP cross-compliance (ban on arable stubble burning)</td>
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<td>Organic farming</td>
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<td>Maintenance of permanent grassland</td>
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<td>Primarily CAP rural development, LIFE+, Pillar 1 greening payments for grassland protection, RBMPs</td>
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<td>Conversion of arable land to grassland in risk areas</td>
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<td>Afforestation of cropland / woodland creation in risk areas</td>
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Soil carbon management in the Common Agricultural Policy

- Pillar 1 (direct farm payments)
  - Greening measures: → 30% of Pillar 1 budget
  - Cross-compliance: GAEC standards, Statutory Management Requirements, Farm advisory → BUT missed opportunity: GAEC 7 on protection of carbon rich soils

- Pillar 2 (rural development)
  - A large choice of measures: Agri-environment-climate, organic farming, environmentally friendly investments; Farm advisory support
Challenges in developing policies for soil carbon management

- How should soil carbon management be framed?
- The need for a horizontal mechanism
- Soil carbon benefits are difficult to demonstrate and convey
- Complexity of translating science into policy
- Lower political urgency at the local level
- Institutional and financial capacities
Thank you for your attention.

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