PRESS RELEASE **Brussels, 23 September 2024**

Soil experts gather in Brussels to discuss International Carbon Certification Schemes

Europe must coordinate its research and innovation efforts on soil carbon with international soil stakeholders, researchers, and policymakers. It's worth pointing out that **a third of the world's soils are currently degraded and carbon depleted.** On 26 September, **public and private schemes for promoting soil organic carbon (SOC) storage** will be up for discussion during a high-level policy workshop in Brussels. In the framework of the Soil Carbon International Research Consortium (IRC), the Horizon Europe ORCaSa project is organising this event to foster collaboration, knowledge exchange, and advance policy discussions on carbon certification and **the European Carbon Removals Certification Framework (CRCF).**

A global perspective on soil carbon storage

The workshop will feature presentations from key international experts, offering insights into SOC initiatives from **the United States, Australia, the Pacific region, and Europe.** The agenda includes discussions on the certification frameworks, public and private approaches, and how these efforts can support global climate-neutrality goals, in line with the Paris Agreement and the EU Green Deal.

Among the speakers, workshop participants will hear from:

- **Christian Holtzleitner** (European Commission's Directorate-General for Climate Action) will discuss the European context of the CRCF.
- **Bruno Basso** (Michigan State University) and **Amy Swan** (Colorado State University) will provide an overview of the agricultural carbon market in the USA.
- **Senani Karunaratne and Ben Mac Donald** (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) will present the Australian perspective and share insights into the country's decade-long national policy on carbon storage.
- **Liisa Pietola** (Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra) will explain what the EU Soil Mission is and its objectives.

This workshop will also underscore the importance of **coordinating international research and innovation efforts on soil carbon**, emphasising that such collaboration is crucial for achieving the EU's Soil Mission and promoting healthy soils globally. **Jean-François Soussana** (INRAE) and **Edouard Lanckriet** (Agrosolutions) will moderate a debate on aligning public and private sector efforts to enhance carbon storage initiatives.

The Soil Carbon IRC is powered by the ORCaSa project, which has received funding from the European Union.

👉 **To register, click here (the workshop will also be live-streamed).**

Outcomes and future directions

An anticipated outcome of the workshop will be **the publication of a policy brief,** supporting future policy developments on carbon certification. This aligns with ORCaSa's broader mission to expand its research beyond agricultural soils to include **forests, pastures, wetlands, and urban areas,** addressing a comprehensive range of soil carbon storage challenges.

About ORCaSa

Launched in September 2022, ORCaSa is a Horizon Europe project standing for **Operationalising the International Research Cooperation on Soil Carbon.** Coordinated by the French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and the Environment (INRAE), the project aims to bring together stakeholders working on **soil carbon capture and storage techniques** at an international level.

Over the next three years, ORCaSa's seven European and five international partners will expand the scope to include not only agricultural soil carbon but also **soil carbon stored in forests, pastures, wetlands, and urban areas.**

About the Soil Carbon IRC

At the forefront of the **Soil Carbon International Research Consortium (IRC)** that has emerged in November 2023 from the ORCaSa project, stands the firm belief that **a Soil Deal for Europe** is needed if we want to meet our climate goals – healthy soils, healthy planet and that **international collaboration is key.**

Supporting the ORCaSa's vision is **the five-year Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA),** superseding the SRIA under CIRCASA project, whose sole focus was on agricultural soils. Taking things a step further, the Soil Carbon IRC will expand its scope to include all soils, and at the same time advance carbon solutions through research funding, alignment of research activities and knowledge sharing.

Aided by **Impact4Soil, a dedicated online platform** for collecting and sharing knowledge on soil carbon, the Soil Carbon IRC and its international partners (regional nodes) aim to provide better access to research, methods and practices related to soil carbon. It has been **designed for different types of users:** researchers, policymakers, funding agencies, private companies, NGOs, etc. It provides key information on **the latest research and their results,** as well as **maps, practices, networks, and data from scientifically verified sources.** Bringing these stakeholders and methodologies together will have a significant impact on climate change.

Hand in hand with the international "4 per 1000" Initiative, the Soil Carbon IRC also aims at proposing **an harmonised Monitoring Reporting and Verification (MRV) framework** applicable in different

contexts and situations. Indeed, increasing soil carbon stocks and knowing how to better measure them are directly aligned with the Paris Agreement and the UN SDGs. Today, there is a wide range of tools, parameters, data, and application contexts that enable MRV methods for soil carbon stock changes. In that way, and considering **the diversity of soils** (agricultural land, forests, pastures, wetlands, urban areas, etc.), having an easy-to-use harmonized framework will **greatly facilitate the day-to-day work of many experts in the environmental sector.** Other stakeholders from the Soil Carbon IRC are also keen to learn about how to implement, in their specific context, such an efficient and affordable framework that can support the implementation of soil carbon practices.

Find out more

- ORCaSa website
- Impact4Soil
- The letter of interest to join the Soil Carbon IRC

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