



CARBONICA
Brain Gain Conference #1
“ERATOSTHENES CoE Living Labs
Opportunities and Challenges in
Carbon Farming for a Success
Story in Cyprus and the EU”

Summary and Key Outcomes



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CARBONICA Brain Gain Conference #1

Title: ERATOSTHENES CoE Living Labs & Opportunities and Challenges in Carbon Farming for a Success Story in Cyprus and the EU

Date: April 9, 2024

Location: Parallel Session – 10th RSCy Conference, Paphos, Cyprus

Lead Working Group: Cyprus

Invited Diaspora expert speaker: Dr Panos Panagos (JRC, European Commission – Soil Observatory) (Policy)

Other keynote invited speakers:

- Dr Jelena Vidovic -DG AGRI – Soil Mission Secretariat (Policy)
- Frida Sund Falkevik, DG CLIMA – CRCF Regulation (Policy)

Overview:

The first Brain Gain conference was a first milestone in the implementation of CARBONICA's brain gain strategy. The event focused on integrating research, policy, and innovation in carbon farming and sustainable land management. The conference was split into two main thematic sessions followed by a panel discussion:

Panel Discussion – Key Outcomes (Session I)

Theme: “Carbon Farming and Quadruple Helix Perspectives on Carbon Farming Policy, Research, Innovation, and Community Engagement”

- There was an overall agreement that moving to performance-based subsidies (carbon footprint) is a radical shift. Tools and education are needed to support this transition.
- Many smallholder farmers lack digital skills and knowledge, urgent need for targeted training and incentive frameworks.
- Representatives from the Cyprus Agriculture Ministry confirmed that legal and funding frameworks are in progress to support verified carbon farming practices.
- A general industry perspective is that exporters need recognized product labelling and certification to meet rising market demands in the EU.
- NGO's such recognise the benefits of carbon farming and provide emphasised outreach and awareness campaigns.
- CARBONICA and other EU projects are developing MRV-compatible, ecosystem-adapted methodologies for practical implementation.

Panel Discussion – Key Outcomes (Session II)

Theme: “Harnessing Living Labs for Sustainable Agriculture”

- Stakeholder engagement must be built on trust, shared value, and a flexible long-term approach—especially in LLs with diverse participants.
- LLs need to adapt to the constraints of small-scale farmers while ensuring usability and benefit visibility.
- Institutions like ECoE are digital infrastructures with open data to provide the backbones for real-world testing and innovation, especially through Earth Observation services.
- Ensuring gender & diversity in participation increases solution relevance and innovation diversity.
- Living Labs provide academia and industry synergies by serving as a valuable bridge for students, researchers, and industry to co-create field-ready tools.
- LLs contribute to resilience planning and long-term climate adaptation strategies in Mediterranean and semi-arid regions.

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