



## **CARBONICA Brain Gain Roundtable #9**

# **“Carbon Farming Practices: Synergies for Resilient and Sustainable Food Systems”**

## **Summary and Key Outcomes**



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**Date:** March 30, 2026

**Lead Working Group:** Cyprus-**Moderator:** Maria Prantsidou, Eratosthenes Centre of Excellence, Cyprus

**Working Group speakers:** Thanos Arampatzis, Reframe Food, Greece (CARBONICA’s Project Coordination team)

**Invited Diaspora expert speaker:**

- Ioannis Manikas, Senior Researcher, Czech University of Life Sciences, Prague, Greek Diaspora (Academia)

**MAP Representatives invited speakers:**

- Irene Christoforou, Technical Manager of the Geochemistry Laboratory, Geological Survey Department of Cyprus, Cyprus (Policy)
- Elias Papanikolaou, IT consultant in Agri Business, Greece (Business)
- Riste Zlatevski, owner of “Darion DOO, North Macedonia (Farmer)

### **Key outcomes**

#### **•Carbon farming must be embedded within resilient and food-secure systems**

Carbon farming can only deliver meaningful impact when integrated with food security, biodiversity, and climate resilience objectives, in line with EU policy frameworks. By improving soil fertility and water retention, it supports more reliable yields, lower input costs, and stable food production under climate stress.

#### **• Moving from carbon as a metric to resilience as a governance objective**

A key shift is moving beyond carbon as a standalone metric toward carbon farming as a tool for systemic resilience, aligning policies, monitoring systems, and practices with long-term food system stability.

#### **• Multi-actor platforms and living labs are key to translating knowledge into practice**

The CARBONICA approach showed how **multi-actor platforms and living labs** bring together farmers, researchers, policymakers, and industry to identify needs, co-develop solutions, and test them in real conditions. This ensures innovations are practical, locally adapted, and scalable.

#### **• Synergies between EU initiatives can reduce fragmentation and increase impact**

The exchange with the ECO-READY project highlighted strong opportunities for collaboration through shared living labs, data integration into observatories, and joint policy engagement. Aligning efforts across projects can enhance monitoring capacity and support coordinated responses to climate and food security challenges.

#### **• Carbon farming solutions must be viable for mainstream farmers and intermediaries**

The success of climate and soil policies depends on their applicability to the average farmer, advisor, cooperative, and business, not only frontrunners. Adoption requires simple, cost-effective, and regionally adapted solutions.

#### **• Clear economic incentives and shared value-chain responsibility are critical for adoption**

Financial viability is a precondition for uptake. Farmers, advisors, and cooperatives are unlikely to adopt new practices unless these reduce costs, protect income, or create reliable market opportunities, while industry must also take a more active role in sharing transition risks and rewarding sustainable production.

#### **• EU soil policy frameworks will play a critical enabling role**

The EU Soil Monitoring Law establishes a framework for soil health assessment, monitoring, and reporting, requiring common indicators and regular updates across Member States. By improving data consistency, transparency, and support for land managers, it can enable carbon farming, despite implementation challenges related to costs, limited expertise, and harmonisation.

#### **• Practical, low-cost solutions demonstrate immediate potential**

The farmer case from North Macedonia showed how cover crops, minimal soil disturbance, and low-input practices can improve soil moisture retention, soil health, and resilience with limited machinery and labour, highlighting the practicality and accessibility of carbon farming.

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