



CARBONICA
Brain Gain Conference #5
“From Diaspora Insights to
Local Action:
Advancing Carbon Farming for
Resilient
Agriculture in Cyprus”

Summary and Key Outcomes



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CARBONICA Brain Gain Conference #5

Title: “From Diaspora Insights to Local Action: Advancing Carbon Farming for Resilient Agriculture in Cyprus”

Date: April 28, 2026

Location: Aliathon Holiday Village, Paphos, Cyprus (hybrid event)

Lead Working Group: Cyprus

Moderator: Dr Christiana Papoutsas, Deputy Coordinator of the Environment & Climate Department, ERATOSTHENES Centre of Excellence (ECoE), Cyprus

Working group speaker: Dr Maria Prantsidou, Researcher, Eratosthenes Centre of Excellence (ECoE), Cyprus

Invited diaspora expert speaker: Dr Nikolaos Tsoulias, Senior researcher and lecturer, Hochschule Geisenheim University, Germany (Academia)

Panel Discussion:

“How can carbon farming practices support the resilience and sustainability of agricultural sector?”

Moderator: Dr George Papadavid, Officer, Agricultural Research Institute, Cyprus Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, Cyprus

Panelists:

Diaspora Expert: Dr Nikolaos Tsoulias | Senior Researcher and Lecturer, Hochschule Geisenheim University (GER)

Academia: Dr Marinos Stylianou | Assistant Professor, Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, Lab of Chemical Engineering and Engineering Sustainability - Open University of Cyprus (CY)

Policy: Mr George Theophanous | Officer, Department of Agriculture - Cyprus Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment (CY)

Industry: Mr Nikos Larkos | Agronomist & Managing Director, AgroTech Innovations Ltd (CY)

Farming Sector: Mr Nakis Kyprianou | New Farmer, Agros Village (CY)

Civil Society/NGO: Mrs Sofia Matsi | Executive Director, Cyprus Environment Foundation (CY)

Overview:

The 5th CARBONICA Brain Gain Conference brought together stakeholders from academia, policy, industry, farming, and civil society to explore how carbon farming can support the resilience and sustainability of the agricultural sector in Cyprus. The session combined project insights from CARBONICA, a diaspora perspective on digital agriculture and carbon monitoring and a multi-actor panel discussion. The discussion highlighted the need to move from conceptual frameworks to practical, scalable, and economically viable solutions.

Stakeholder Perspectives (Quadruple Helix):

Civil Society / NGOs

Civil society from the perspective of a NGO, highlighted that farmer education is the foundation of the transition, emphasising the need for accessible tools and knowledge, regenerative practices, and certification schemes that add value to products.

Academia

Academia stressed the importance of co-creation and applied research, with living labs and demonstration sites bridging the gap between knowledge and practice, while acknowledging challenges such as delayed impacts and resource constraints.

Policy

Policy perspectives pointed to existing support through CAP schemes, but identified gaps in education, implementation, and farmer engagement, while also highlighting the importance of aligning incentives and strengthening consumer awareness to support transition in the long-term.

Industry / Agri-tech

Industry emphasised its role as a bridge between research and practice, highlighting the need for advisory systems, knowledge translation, and capacity building to support farmers in adopting innovation.

Farming Sector



Farmers identified finance and bureaucracy as the main barriers, stressing the need for simplified procedures, improved access to funding, and practical support to enable transition.

Diaspora Expertise

The diaspora perspective highlighted the complexity of measuring carbon in perennial systems, stressing that the key challenge lies in converting data into usable decision-making tools and improving traceability across the value chain to enhance the consumer awareness and support market development.

Key Conclusions:

- **Education and capacity building are the foundation of the transition**

All stakeholder groups emphasized that without knowledge, training, and advisory support, carbon farming cannot be effectively implemented.

- **Financial incentives are essential to drive adoption**

Farmers are unlikely to adopt new practices without clear economic benefits, highlighting the importance of subsidies, eco-schemes, and future carbon markets.

- **Bridging the gap between research and practice is critical**

Effective translation of innovation into practical solutions requires stronger advisory systems, co-creation approaches, and demonstration activities.

- **Carbon farming depends on functioning value chains**

The transition is influenced by consumer behaviour. Without market recognition and willingness to pay for sustainable products, farmers lack incentives to adopt new practices. Consumer awareness and certification schemes are therefore essential to support adoption.

- **Digital technologies must deliver usable insights**

The value of digital agriculture lies in turning complex data into practical decision-support tools, not simply in data collection.

- **Structural barriers must be addressed**

Financial constraints, bureaucracy, and farm fragmentation remain key obstacles to implementation, particularly for young farmers.

- **Policy alignment and certification mechanisms are needed**

Participants highlighted the need for better alignment of subsidies with sustainable practices, development of certification schemes (e.g. carbon or regenerative labels), policy frameworks adapted to local conditions

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