



Ecosystem services for SHBMs

PRACTICE ABSTRACT 3

Problem encountered and objective

There is limited clarity on how soil-related ecosystem services are integrated into business models and how their impacts are measured. This inventory aims to map existing soil-health-focused initiatives and assess their monitoring indicators and methods.

Main Results and Outcomes

The study identified over 70 soil health business models and programs across Europe and beyond, all of which integrate soil health or ecosystem services. Most use soil parameters and farming practices as indicators, with carbon sequestration being the most frequently addressed ecosystem service.

Practical recommendations

For farmers, the key takeaway is that there are growing opportunities to get compensated for good soil practices, particularly through carbon farming schemes. To benefit, farmers should keep records of their practices, consider soil tests, and join initiatives with clear and fair monitoring systems. Getting involved can lead to better soil, extra income, and reduced risks through future-oriented farm management.

When developing soil health business models, prioritize business models that combine farming practices with measurable soil parameters like soil organic carbon. When designing or evaluating a model, assess whether it is activity-based (rewarding actions) or results-based (rewarding outcomes), keeping in mind the trade-off between cost and precision. Incorporate both qualitative and quantitative methods and consider modeling tools like the Cool Farm Tool or RothC to improve scalability. Remote sensing and lab analyses can enhance data reliability, while simpler tools like questionnaires may suit early-stage pilots or low-budget initiatives. Balance transparency, scientific rigor, and farmer engagement to ensure meaningful, scalable soil health improvements.



ABOUT SOILVALUES

SoilValues is a Horizon Europe project that will contribute to the development of successful soil health business models across the EU to improve soil quality and provide land managers with the necessary incentives.

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USEFUL LINKS

 <https://soilvalues.eu/>

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 <https://zenodo.org/communities/heuropesoilvalues>

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