

Problem encountered and objective

Healthy soils provide crucial ecosystem services, but many soils are at risk of losing these functions, as maintaining soil health often involves upfront costs with delayed benefits. While many incentive (schemes) exist to overcome these challenges, a comprehensive overview of the effectiveness of these incentives is often missing. We develop a framework based on adoption, soil health contribution, and economic impact for farmers to evaluate a number of soil health incentives.

Main Results and Outcomes

The various identified incentives can be categorized into three categories: (1) security, which focuses on reducing uncertainty associated with current and future financial statuses, (2) technical support, which equips farmers with essential knowledge and tools needed to implement new practices, and (3) financial support, which provides immediate or future financial gains to encourage adoption of new practices.

Stakeholders highlight the importance of combinations of financial and non-monetary incentives. In addition to financial instruments such as carbon finance, price premiums and targeted public sector funding, non-monetary incentives such as mentoring programmes and peer-to-peer learning are seen as crucial for the stabilization and scaling of soil health business models.

Practical recommendations

- Focus on farmers' needs, recognizing the specificities of the local context, and combining practice and outcome-based targets to design incentives that benefit both farmers and the soil.
- Mix financing, de-risking, and technical support to equip farmers with all the necessary resources to navigate the challenges of the initial stages of transition.
- Aggregate farmers and enabling multi-stakeholder collaboration for scale.

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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