

European Soil
Bureau Network



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NORWEGIAN FOREST AND
LANDSCAPE INSTITUTE

SoCo project

Sustainable Agriculture and Soil Conservation

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18 – 11 - 2008



Introduction

- > European Parliament requested the European Commission in 2007 to carry out a project concerning "Sustainable Agriculture and Soil Conservation through simplified cultivation techniques"
- > Project implemented by Institute for Environment and Sustainability (IES – Ispra) and Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS – Sevilla) in close cooperation with DG Agri.
- > Project needs to finished within 31.12.2008



Objectives

- > To improve the understanding of soil conservation practices in agriculture and links with other environmental protection objectives
- > To analyse how farmers can be encouraged to adopt soil conservation practices through appropriate policy measures
- > To make this information available to relevant stakeholders and policy makers in a EU wide context.



Structure SoCo project

- > WP 1: Stocktaking of the current situation within an EU wide perspective
- > WP 2: Case studies on soil/land management and policy measures
- > WP 3: Conclusions and recommendations
- > WP 4: Dissemination



Scientific Advisory Board

- > Members covering topics from different perspective: soil – soil-conservation – economics – regulations.
- > Task: comment and complete scientific reports

- > Meetings:
 - > Combined SAB/SG meeting 11-03-2008
 - > Stakeholder meeting 22-05-2008

- > Reviewing report WP 1: June 2008
- > Reviewing Synthesis report case studies: to be expected very soon
- > To be done:
 - > Reviewing Final Report November 2008



Results WP1: State of the art (1)

- > Agriculture plays an important role in maintaining natural resources and cultural landscapes as a precondition for other human activities in rural areas.
- > Both intensification and extensification/abandonment can have negative impact on the natural resources.
- > *Soil degradation related to agriculture*
 - > Soil threats do have links with agriculture
 - > Risk is assessed through parametric and empirical models, using European Soil database and Corine Land Cover database.



Results WP1: State of the art (2)

- > *Agricultural practices for soil protection and conservation*
 - > Reviewed are 11 agronomic technical measures and 2 farming systems (Organic farming and Conservation Agriculture)
 - > All techniques are assessed from an agronomic, environmental and economic point of view
 - > 3 techniques (reduced, no tillage and cover crops/crop rotation) are investigated in more detail.



Results WP1: State of the art (3)

- > *Regulatory environment and policy instruments*
 - > No specific EU regulation addressing soil protection
 - > EU regulations covering agriculture and rural development do address soil protection issues.
 - > Statutory Management Requirements (SMR): 5 of the 19 SMR's within Cross Compliance concern (indirectly) soil protection issues.
 - > Rural Development regulation: some agro-environmental measures explicitly deal with soil protection



WP 2 Case studies

- > 10 case studies throughout Europe to get more detailed information on application of soil practices, their extent and their effect on the environment. BE – BG – CZ – DE – DK – ES – FR – GR – IT - UK
- > Regional workshops
- > Reviewing Synthesis report: to be expected very soon.