COP27
SHARM EL-SHEIKH
EGYPT 2022

CA4SH
COALITION OF ACTION 4 SOIL HEALTH

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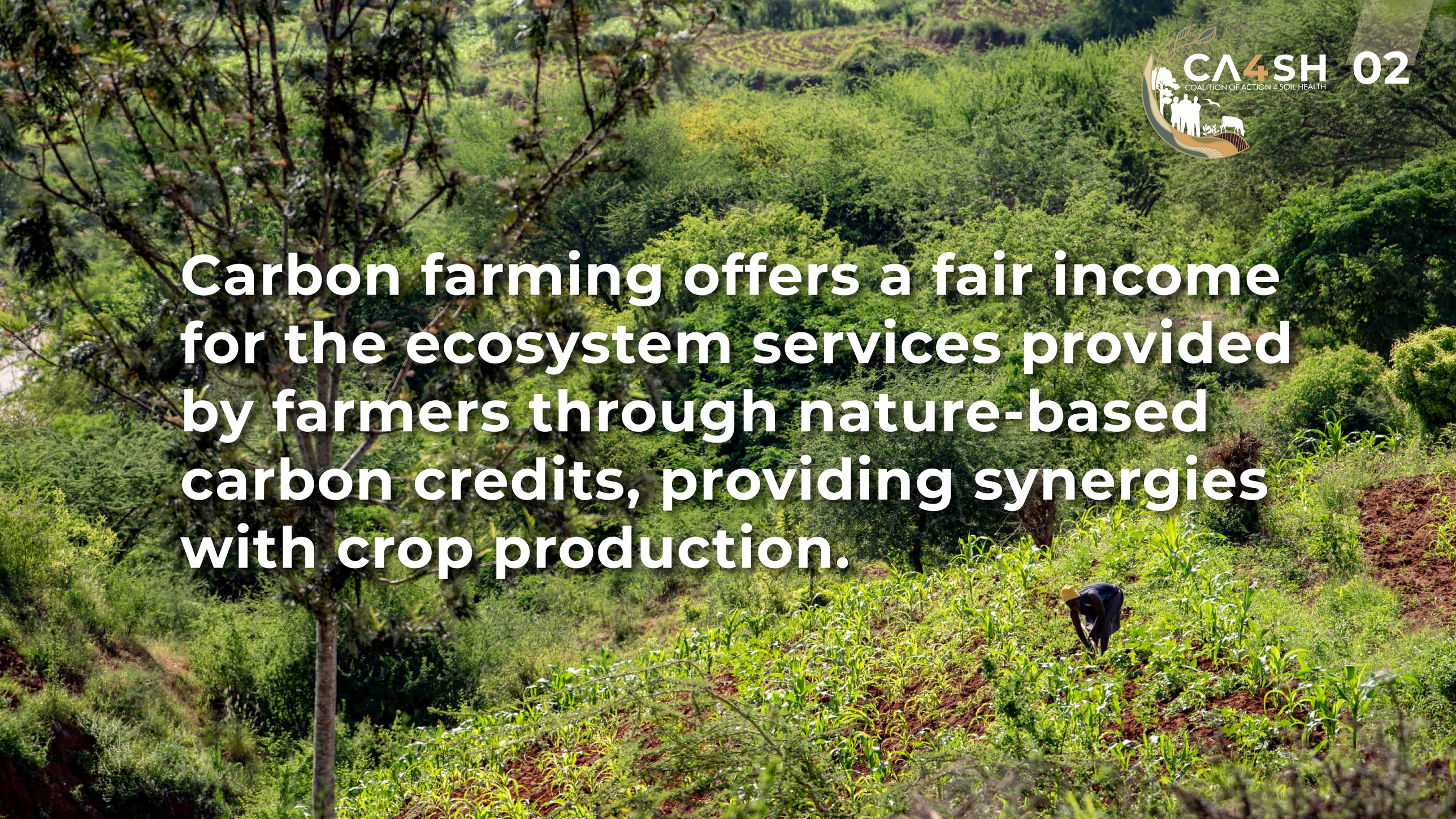
Soil health resolution COP27

#COP27SOIL

A commitment to enable and scale soil carbon sequestration practices to mitigate climate change

To achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, we now need to pull out all the stops. For a long time, energy-based solutions were the sole focus of climate policies. However, carbon solutions that use and increase the absorption capacity of natural carbon sinks (nature-based solutions) may offer long underexposed advantages and co-benefits.

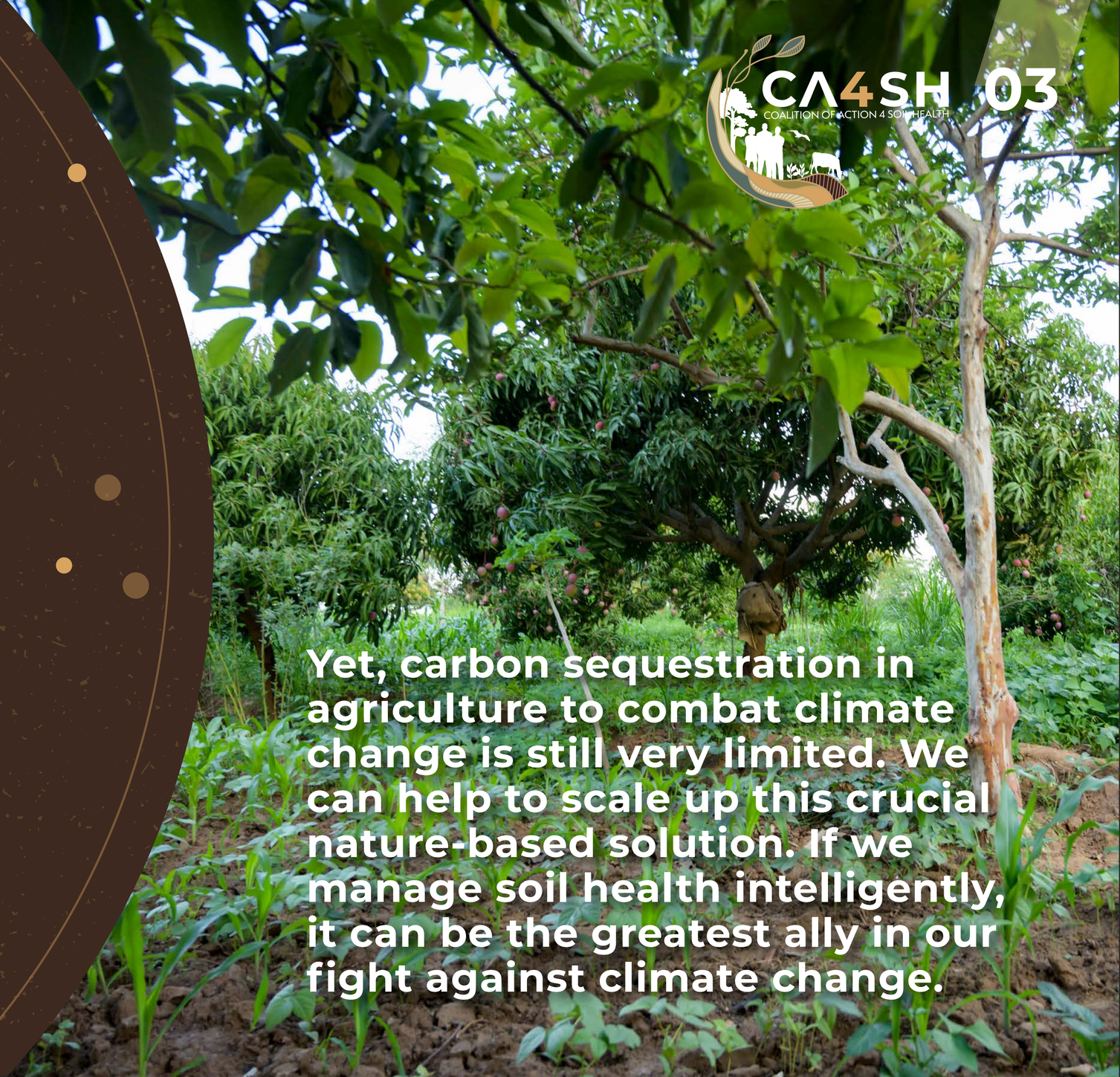


Carbon farming offers a fair income for the ecosystem services provided by farmers through nature-based carbon credits, providing synergies with crop production.

Nature-based solutions can make an essential contribution to combating climate change. The latest **IPCC report** shows that the potential of nature-based solutions is much more significant than previously thought.

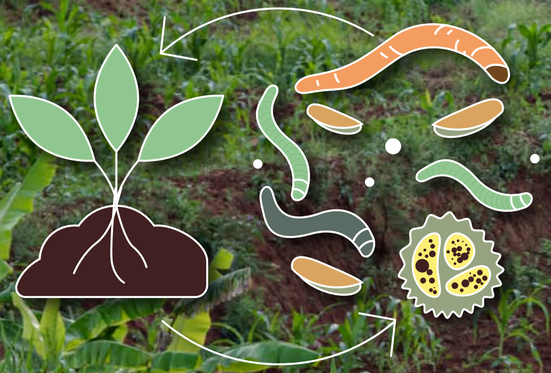
The projected economic mitigation potential of the options in agriculture via improved and sustainable crop and livestock management, and carbaon sequestration in agriculture, can contribute **1.8-5.5 Gigaton CO2(eq) per year in 2030**.[1] This is comparable to the potential of wind energy.

[1] Figure SPM.7 in the IPCC report, Summary report for policymakers.

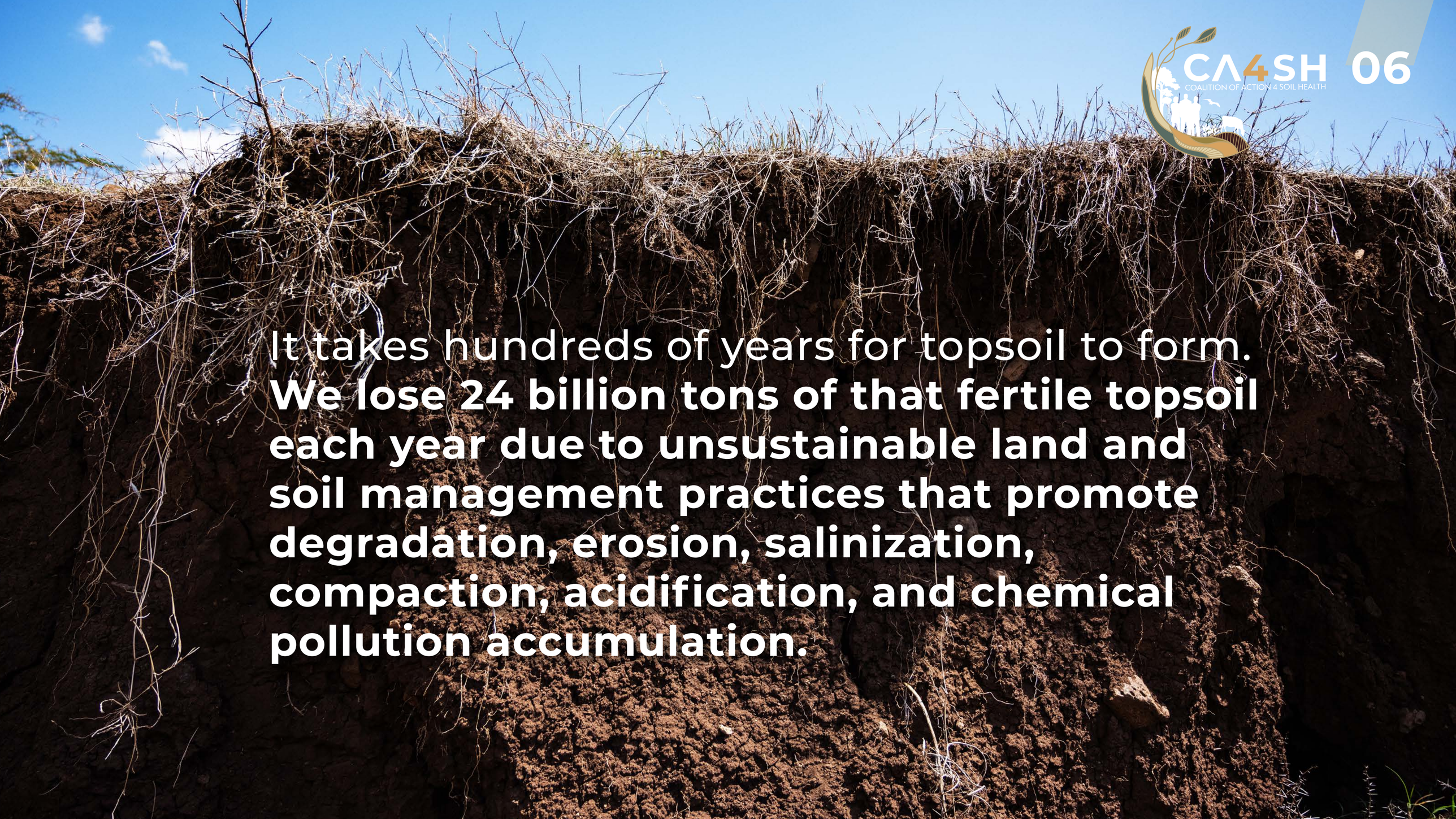


Yet, carbon sequestration in agriculture to combat climate change is still very limited. We can help to scale up this crucial nature-based solution. If we manage soil health intelligently, it can be the greatest ally in our fight against climate change.

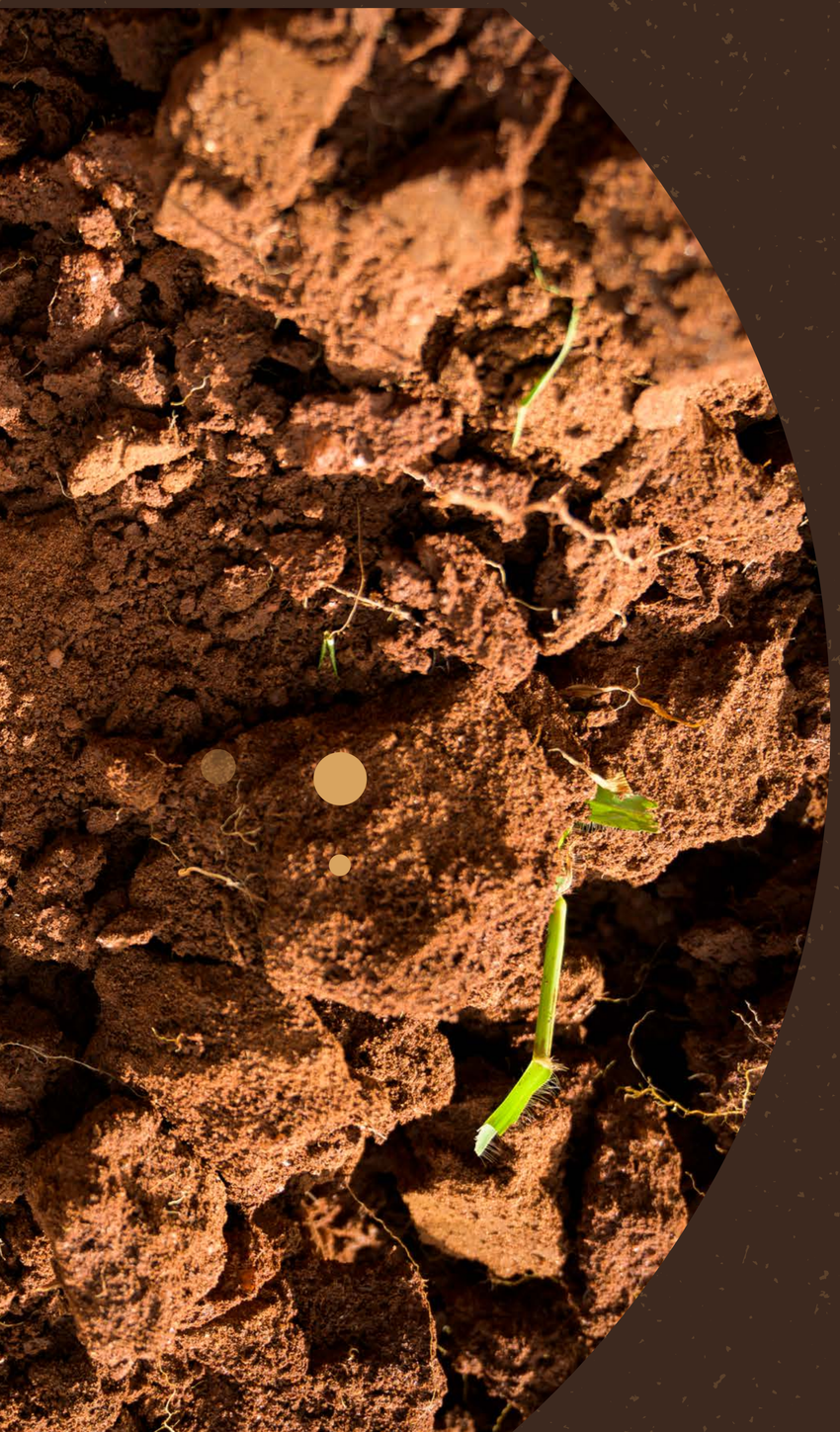
Healthy soils are the foundation of sustainable and regenerative food systems and provide vital ecosystem services, while they represent significant emission saving opportunities.



Sequestering carbon in agricultural soils can have mutual benefits for climate change mitigation and food security, if soil fertility is improved. Soil carbon sequestration then helps to combat climate change. It can also restore biodiversity, improve water resilience, increase nutritious yields and enhance food security. It helps to build nature-positive food production systems.

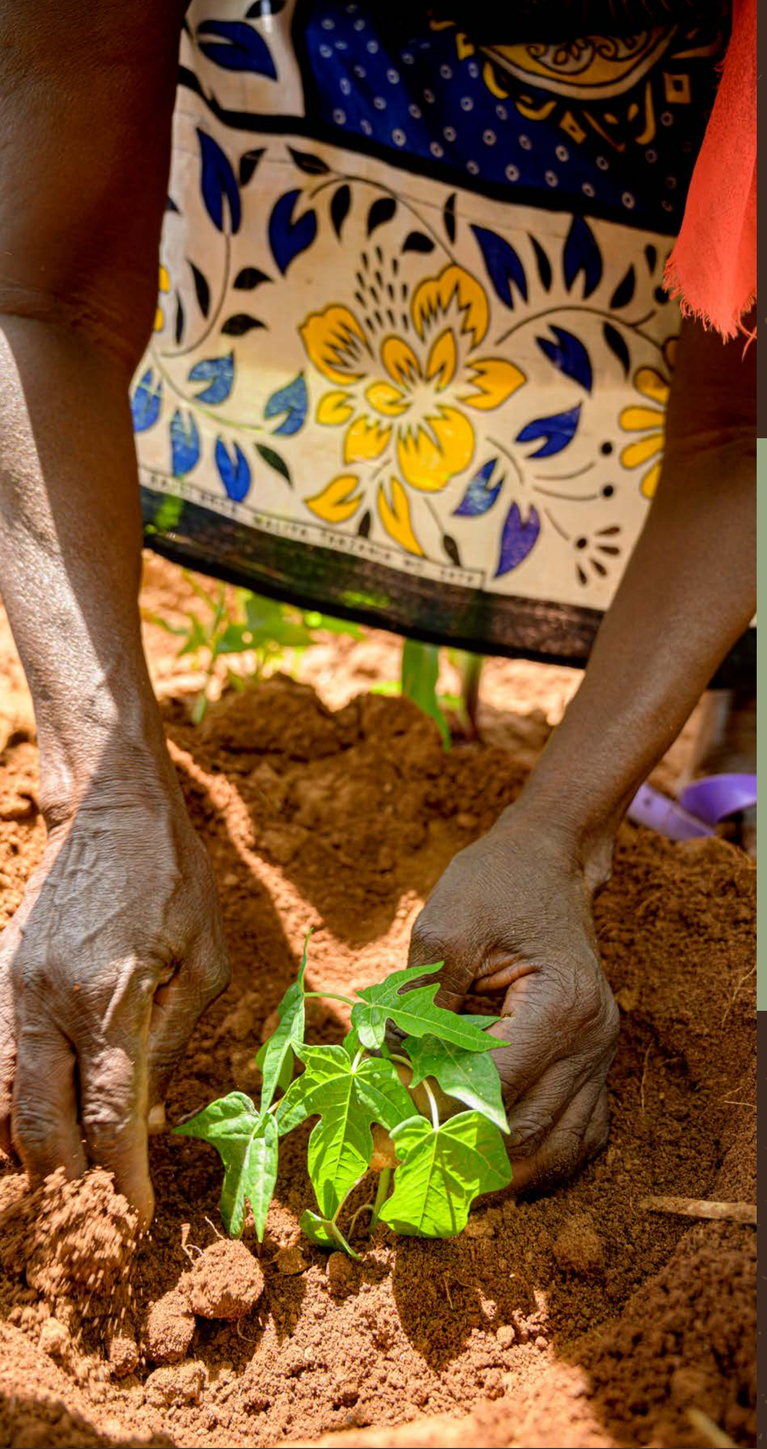


It takes hundreds of years for topsoil to form. **We lose 24 billion tons of that fertile topsoil each year due to unsustainable land and soil management practices that promote degradation, erosion, salinization, compaction, acidification, and chemical pollution accumulation.**



By changing their practices to regenerative farming, farmers all over the world can be a significant part of the solution.

They grow the trees and crops and work the soils that can meet the increased need for food, and at the same time reduce greenhouse gas emissions and remove carbon from the atmosphere and sequester it in their land. This is called carbon farming.



SOIL HEALTH DECLARATION

Therefore, the undersigned parties (government leaders, private sector, farmer representatives):

01 **RECOGNIZE** that soils are the basis of life and soil health[2] is the foundation of sustainable and regenerative food systems and food and nutrition security, and for improving livelihoods and supporting economic development;

02 **AFFIRM** that agricultural systems are part of the solution, mainly through large-scale adoption of sustainable soil and land management practices that benefit nature and people, serving as nature-based solutions such as regenerative agriculture, agroecology[3], and other approaches for mitigating global warming while also ensuring long-term productivity and enhanced resilience;

[2] Soil health is “the ability of the soil to sustain the productivity, diversity, and environmental services of terrestrial ecosystems” (ITPS, FAO 2020).

[2] https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=81

03 **STRESS** the importance of aligning UN conventions for climate change, biodiversity, and land-degradation neutrality would further reduce overlapping organizational efforts and accelerate the identification of regional priority areas;

Convention on Biological Diversity

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

04 **CONSIDER** the critical role played by increased soil health to achieve the objectives of the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration;

05 **REAFFIRM** the need for further international action and cooperation to revert current soil degradation processes and that Member states have yet to support a resolution on soil health at the UNFCCC, based on the outcome of the UN Food Systems Summit and the development of the Coalition of Action for Soil Health (CA4SH) and the Private Sector Guiding Group Coalition on Soil Health.

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TO HELP SCALE SOIL CARBON SEQUESTRATION PRACTICES, THEY COMMIT TO:

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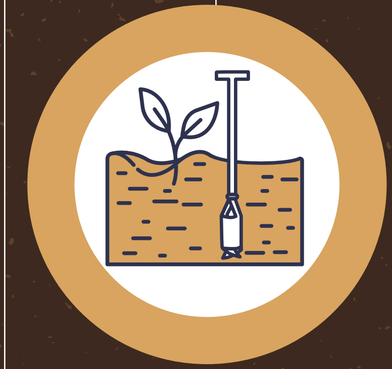
Increase the role of responsible soil health policies in their national strategies

Support work towards an international soil information system to link soil health attributes to outcomes

Scale the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests (VGGT) - the VGGT offer a framework under international law for policy making on soils

Set up time-bound, science-based, realistic national goals to stop soil degradation



Include a specific soil health practices improvement target into their national Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

Soil as a key national asset

Soil as a key national asset

Proposing investments, incentives, and instruments for customized solutions on the farm, including transition finance, soil monitoring, and farmers’ support

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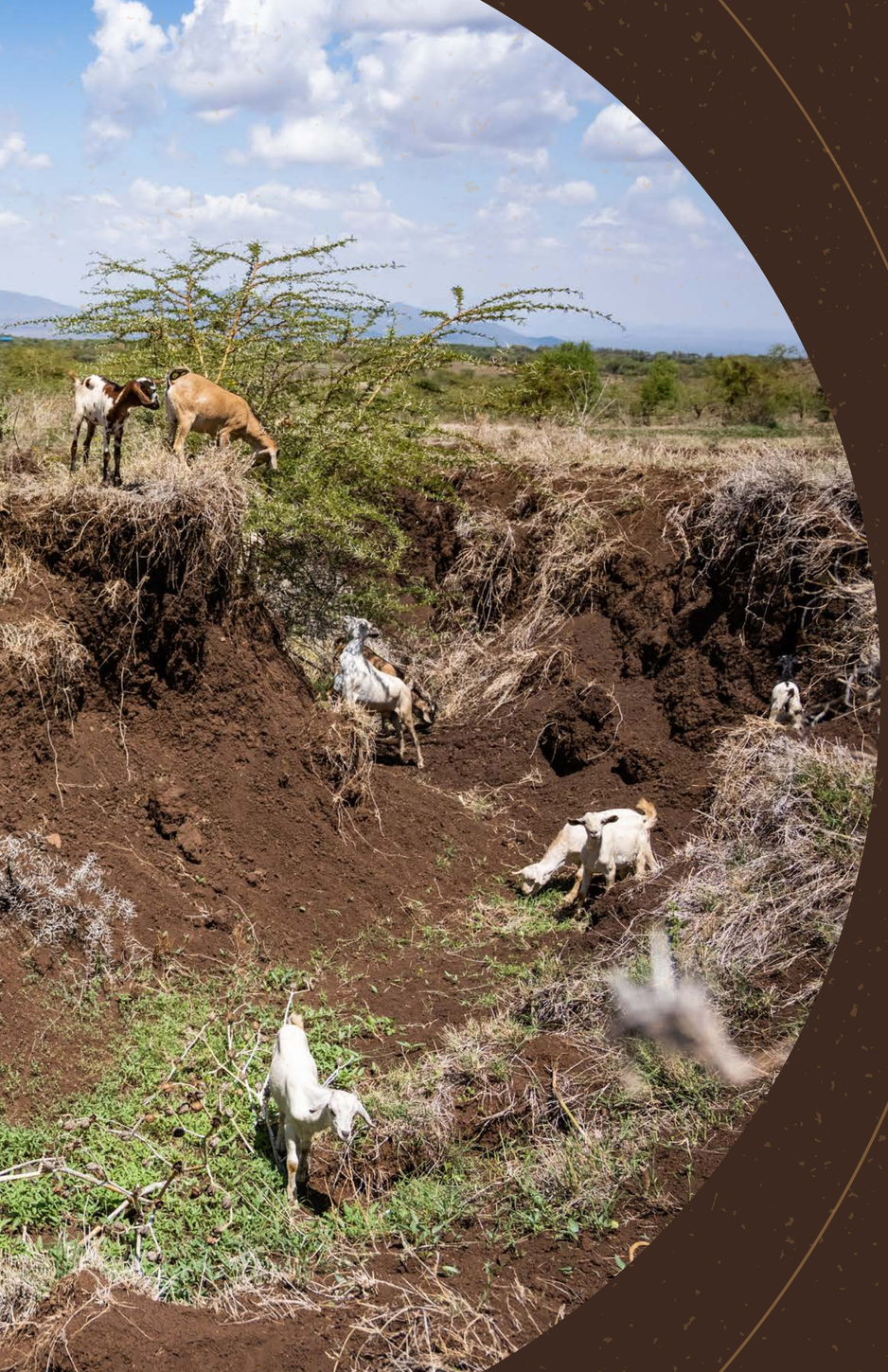
Developing soil mapping

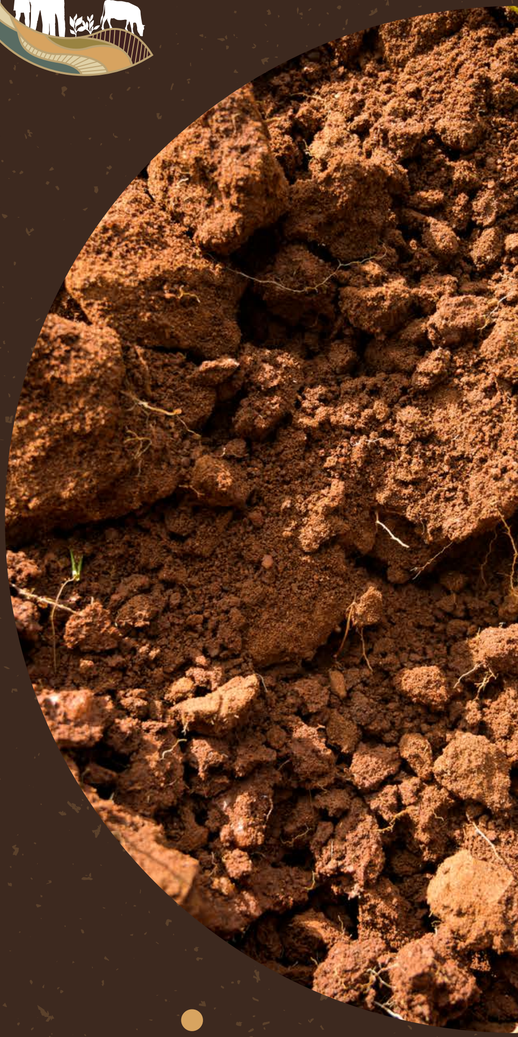
Accompanying the farmers through advisory, on-field measurements, trainings etc. to enable them to adopt better practices

Welcoming and encouraging new public-private and business models that align soil health and ecosystem services to value chains, including new business models and reward schemes for farmers

Recognizing that soil carbon sequestration can become a potential income source for farmers through the use of verifiable, creditable carbon markets



Acknowledging and advocating for soil security as the roadmap towards a sustainable future, understanding soils as the main connector of our major societal challenges and provider of life-supporting ecosystem services



COP 27 desired outcome / conclusion in formal negotiations

The UNFCCC calls on governments of countries worldwide to contribute to the scaling of nature-based solutions in agriculture through the following measures:

1. Develop a uniform definition of soil health
2. Setting up a publicly available data set with information per GPS coordinate
3. Enabling research to improve understanding of the variation in soil carbon sequestration
4. Allowing closer cooperation between private and public parties on carbon farming
5. Develop a reward system for keeping carbon stored in soils
6. Adapt the lease system on public agricultural land
7. Changing criteria for current government subsidies
8. Work together with farmers organizations
9. Coordinate all regulations, projects, and subsidies
10. Implementing an efficient and just carbon tax
11. Urging corporates to set a Paris agreement-aligned net-zero emission target

COP 27 desired outcome / conclusion in formal negotiations

Develop a uniform definition of soil health that becomes the standard worldwide. This means naming all the variables that are important for soil health. Now, different variables are used in one country than in another. This hampers the scaling up of a global carbon market for nature-based solutions.

COP 27 desired outcome / conclusion in formal negotiations

2. Setting up a publicly available data set with information per GPS coordinate on all relevant soil health variables as part of the soil information system.

3. Enabling research to improve understanding of the variation in soil carbon sequestration across soil types and climatic conditions and effective restoration:

COP 27 desired outcome / conclusion in formal negotiations

a. Improve soil and yield gap information systems for different regions of the world. Identify and specify the tangible short-term and long-term benefits for farmers of management practices for carbon sequestration to trigger their adoption and introduce mechanisms to incentivize the adoption of such practices.

COP 27 desired outcome / conclusion in formal negotiations

b. Reliable predictions of local and regional yield development per ton sequestered carbon. Soil sequestration potential includes the entire GHG balance and considers possible interactions between the carbon and nitrogen cycles that could affect applied practices' climate change mitigation potential.

COP 27 desired outcome / conclusion in formal negotiations

c. Highlight the importance of the correct management of soil fertility as an enabler of soil health and carbon sequestration, particularly on the importance of identifying the most limiting factors for plant biomass production in each given site.

COP 27 desired outcome / conclusion in formal negotiations

4. Allowing closer cooperation between private and public parties on carbon farming, without jeopardising the additionality of the credits. Governments investing in carbon farming projects make it difficult for private parties to guarantee additionality, which is necessary to realise high integrity credit on the voluntary carbon market. Governments that invest in soil sequestration out of good intentions might then discourage the private sector from also investing in soil sequestration. **It is important to enable private-public co-investment instead of crowding out private initiative**.

COP 27 desired outcome / conclusion in formal negotiations

5. Develop a reward system forkeeping carbon stored in soils next to the reward system beased on carbon credits for storing extra carbon. Rewarding farmers that are already following the regenerative agriculture pathway and developing a sustainable agriculture will help prevent carbon losses and maintaining current carbon stocks. That is just as important as the influx of extra carbon in soils.

COP 27 desired outcome / conclusion in formal negotiations

a. Ensure that untouched soils are protected and comply with conservation goals.

b. Acknowledge the importance of fertile soils to optimize carbon sequestration and biomass production per unit of area, sparing native vegetation from being incorporated into the productive system.

COP 27 desired outcome / conclusion in formal negotiations

6. Adapt the lease system on public agricultural land so that the lease is lower for farmers who improve soil health through carbon farming and regenerative practices.

COP 27 desired outcome / conclusion in formal negotiations

7. Changing criteria for current government subsidies so that these subsidies stimulate farmers to transition to carbon farming and regenerative practices.

8. Work together with farmers' organizations to share success stories and best practices on carbon farming to learn from each other.

COP 27 desired outcome / conclusion in formal negotiations

9. Coordinate all regulations, projects, and subsidies for the various ecosystem services farmers can provide. This is necessary because many different nature-based solutions are now jumbled together in some countries, such as nitrogen reduction, nature conservation, biodiversity restoration, water scarcity, and climate change.

COP 27 desired outcome / conclusion in formal negotiations

10. Implementing an efficient and just carbon tax that further stimulates private initiatives like carbon farming credits projects. If greenhouse gases emissions become more expensive, companies will have a continuous incentive to reduce and, compensate where this is not feasible.

COP 27 desired outcome / conclusion in formal negotiations

11. Urging corporates to set a Paris agreement -aligned net-zero emission target. Because these corporations will want to offset the emissions that they cannot yet avoid, the demand for high-quality credits, such as soil-related carbon credits, will increase.