

On November 16, GLOBE EU hosted a conference on Regenerative Agriculture: “Dud or Silver Bullet?”. MEPs and GLOBE EU members Sirpa Pietikäinen, Martin Hojsík, and Juozas Olekas welcomed representatives¹ from Nestlé, Unilever, the World Business Council on Sustainable Development’s (WBCSD) One Planet Business for Biodiversity (OP2B) coalition, and the World Resources Institute (WRI) to present key policy levers at the EU level, focusing on accelerating the transition to regenerative agriculture.

Based on the outcome of the conference, GLOBE EU is pleased to recommend the following:

- **Accelerate the alignment of a regenerative agriculture framework with a reporting structure and integrate them into relevant EU policies.**

Science-based evidence showing the benefits of regenerative agriculture is steadily increasing. The EU therefore needs to support the shift to regenerative agriculture through its recognition in relevant upcoming policies (e.g., soil health law, carbon removals certification, EU Nature Restoration Law) and the integration of relevant definitions in farm policies. Not only will this support nature restoration, build food system resilience, and help avoid greenwashing & criticism, it will create a trusted and verifiable level playing field for farmers, businesses, and consumers as well.

OP2B member companies have developed — in consultation with the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (SAI) platform — a common language on regenerative agriculture through a framework that outlines four principles for the scaling-up of regenerative agriculture, along with eight impact indicators, based on existing and available data, that can serve as a baseline to measure the transition to regenerative agriculture and report on progress.

- **Provide financial support and adequate incentives for the transformation.**

Moving from conventional to regenerative agriculture requires a profound overhaul of the farmer’s business model. Although the new on-the-ground practices add value to farmers’ products, the transition requires significant investments. Indeed, upfront payments often create an income gap for farmers during the first years of implementation.

¹ See details below.

The transition to and maintenance of regenerative agriculture practices therefore needs financial and skill support from the EU through subsidies and incentives. This will require a serious rethink of the next CAP with a larger budget for eco-schemes and redirection of current 'destructive' subsidies. Changing what subsidies incentivize and how they are delivered should not, however, result in reduced support for farmers.

Based on their experiences, OP2B companies have identified three critical stages in the transition, each stage calling for specific (financial) support.

- 1. The beginning of the transition, where most of the needs concentrate on investment into facilities, action-based incentives, and risk insurance.*
- 2. Securing the "stabilization phase" for which farmers need long-term commitments from their clients and action-based subsidies rewarding their role as nature custodians.*
- 3. A multifaceted farming business model: in the long term, farmers need access to result-based payments such as carbon bonds, that complement their income while securing their tie-in into the practice.*

- **Foster local and cross-sectorial cooperation to build a landscape approach**

GLOBE EU believes that regenerative agriculture is the way forward for the betterment of farmers, the climate, and to increase resource efficiency.

Given the diverse range of climates, soils, and crops across the EU, regenerative agriculture cannot provide a "one-size-fits-all" solution. Practices must be adapted to suit geographical, climatic, environmental, and crop conditions and needs.

Farmers thus have a key role to play. On-field research must be favored, and cooperation between farmers, scientists, and authorities to find, disseminate, and boost locally adapted solutions must be encouraged.

Capacity-building among farmers, knowledge sharing, and community management at the local level are therefore critical to guarantee a successful, long-lasting uptake of regenerative agricultural practices in the most effective and inclusive way.

Panelists (members of the GLOBE EU Bee Group and its Partner Organizations):

- Katja Seidenschnur, Sustainability Director Europe, Nestlé.
- Dorothy Shaver, Sustainability Director, Nutrition & Ice Cream, Unilever.
- Dana Rakha-Michalon, Manager, WBCSD.
- Morgan Gillespy, Director Food and Land Use Coalition, WRI.