

Union certification framework for carbon removals

2022/0394(COD) - 21/11/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, partial vote at 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 448 votes to 65, with 114 abstentions, **amendments** to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Union certification framework for carbon removals.

The matter was referred back to the committee responsible for interinstitutional negotiations.

Subject matter

The objective of this Regulation is to facilitate and encourage the deployment and enhancement of carbon removals, carbon farming and carbon storage in products by operators or groups of operators as a complement to the irreversible and gradual reduction of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors. To that end, this Regulation establishes a **voluntary Union framework for the certification of carbon removals, carbon farming and carbon storage in products**.

Rules on the issuance and use of units

A new article has been included on the rules on the issuance and use of units. It stated that carbon farming sequestration and emission reduction units should be issued by 31 December each year, provided that an annual monitoring check does not show any non-compliance with the requirements set out in this Regulation and does not show a reversal. The certification body should be responsible for the annual monitoring check based on reliable real-world data.

Sustainability

A carbon storage in product activity should at least have a neutral impact on each of, and should generate co-benefits for at least one of, the following sustainability objectives:

- the avoidance of the risk of carbon leakage in third countries;
- climate change adaptation;
- sustainable use and protection or improvement of water quality and marine resources;
- transition to a circular economy, including the efficient use of sustainably sourced bio-based materials;
- pollution prevention and control;
- protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems.

Innovative carbon removal technologies

Under the EU certification framework, activities that, under normal circumstances, ensure the permanent storage of atmospheric or biogenic carbon for several centuries through geological storage of CO₂, such as bioenergy with carbon capture and storage and direct air carbon capture and storage, or through permanently bound carbon mineralisation, should be considered **permanent carbon removals**.

Carbon farming and carbon storage in products

Members amended the definition of ‘**carbon farming**’ to mean an activity related to land management, coastal management or animal husbandry, that results in carbon farming sequestration or carbon farming emission reductions **for a period of at least five years**.

Members also stated that carbon farming activities should not negatively affect the Union’s food security and shall not lead to land grabbing or land speculation.

In light of the uncertainties in the measuring and monitoring methodologies related to many potential applications of carbon storage in products in early development stages, the certification of **carbon storage in products** should initially be limited to harvested wood products or materials for construction storing atmospheric and biogenic carbon stored for **at least five decades**.

Platform on Carbon Removal, Carbon Farming and Carbon Storage in Product Activities

Members called for the establishment of a Platform on Carbon removal and Carbon farming Activities which should, *inter alia*:

- advise the Commission on the technical certification methodologies, including on the minimum sustainability requirements, as well as on the possible need to update those certification methodologies;
- analyse the impact of the technical certification methodologies in terms of the potential costs and benefits of their application;
- monitor and regularly report to the Commission on trends at Union and Member State level regarding carbon removal and carbon farming.

Certification of compliance

The amended text stressed that the certification scheme should appoint a **certification body** which should conduct a certification audit to verify that the requested information is accurate and reliable. When multiple different carbon farming activities take place at farm level, the certification audits may be conducted on a single occasion.

Periodic re-certification audits should take place at least every 5 years for carbon farming activities, and at least every 10 years for other activities, following a risk-based approach.

Union registry

The Commission should establish and maintain an interoperable and public Union registry in order to ensure transparency, trustworthiness and full traceability of certificates, and to avoid the risk of fraud and double counting. All information in the Union registry should be easy to navigate and search.

Review

The Commission should assess the possible benefits and trade-offs of the inclusion of other long-lived carbon storage products based on the latest scientific evidence. By 12 months from the date of entry into force of this Regulation, the Commission should report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the establishment of Union targets for permanent carbon removals and for land-based sequestration as an integral part of the post-2030 Union climate framework.