Union certification framework for carbon removals

2022/0394(COD) - 10/04/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 441 votes to 139, with 41 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Union certification framework for carbon removals.

The position adopted by the European Parliament at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure is as follows:

Subject matter

The aim of this Regulation is to develop a **voluntary Union certification framework** for permanent carbon removals, carbon farming and carbon storage in products, with a view to facilitating and encouraging the uptake of high-quality carbon removals and soil emission reductions, in full respect of the biodiversity and the zero-pollution objectives, as a complement to sustained emission reductions across all sectors.

To that end, this Regulation establishes a voluntary Union framework for the certification of carbon removals and soil emission reductions by laying down:

- quality criteria for activities that take place in the Union;

- rules for the verification and certification of carbon removals and soil emission reductions generated by activities;

- rules for the functioning and recognition by the Commission of certification schemes;

- **rules on the issuance and use of certified units**.

Definitions

The amended Regulation modifies several definitions:

- '**permanent carbon removal**' means any practice or process that, under normal circumstances and using appropriate management practices, captures and stores atmospheric or biogenic carbon for several centuries, including permanently chemically bound carbon in products, and which is not combined with enhanced hydrocarbon recovery;

- '**carbon farming**' means any practice or process, carried out over an activity period of at least five years, related to terrestrial or coastal management and resulting in capture and temporary storage of atmospheric and biogenic carbon into biogenic carbon pools or the reduction of soil emissions;

- '**carbon storage in products**' means any practice or process that captures and stores atmospheric or biogenic carbon for at least 35 years in long-lasting products and which allows on-site monitoring of the carbon stored and certified throughout the monitoring period.

There will be different units for these different categories due to their differences and environmental impact. The amended Regulation tasked the Commission to develop different certification methodologies for these categories.

To promote the sustainable and efficient use of limited biomass resources, the certification methodologies should ensure consistency with the application of the principle of the cascading use of biomass as laid down in the amended Renewable Energy Directive.

For any activity to qualify for certification it must **go beyond both EU and national requirements** for individual operators and the incentive effect of the certification must be needed for the activity to become financially viable.

Sustainability requirements

An activity should not significantly harm and may generate co-benefits for one or more of, the following sustainability objectives:

- climate change mitigation beyond the net carbon removal benefit and net soil emission reduction benefit;

- climate change adaptation;

- sustainable use and protection of water 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 including soil health, as well as avoidance of land degradation.

A carbon farming activity should at least generate co-benefits for the sustainability objective. The minimum sustainability requirements should promote the sustainability of forest and agriculture biomass raw material in accordance with the sustainability and GHG saving criteria for biofuels, bioliquids and biomass fuel.

Union wide register

By 4 years from the entry into force of this Regulation, the Commission should establish and duly maintain a Union wide registry for permanent carbon removals, carbon farming and carbon storage in products, to make publicly available the information related to the certification process, in an accessible way, containing, as a minimum, the information concerning the certification procedure. The Union registry should be financed by annual fixed fees payable by users, proportionate to the use of the registry.

Certified units should be issued by certification registries or, by 4 years from the entry into force of this Regulation, by the Union registry, only after the generation of a net carbon removal benefit or net soil emission reduction benefit, based on a valid certificate of compliance resulting from a re-certification audit.

Review

No later than 31 July 2026, the Commission should review the application of the Regulation to the reduction of emissions from **enteric fermentation and manure management** and present a report to the European Parliament and the Council, if appropriate, accompanied by a legislative proposal.