



REA RIVISTA DI ECONOMIA AGRARIA

The economic, social and environmental aspects for healthy soils: Assessment for Sustainable Development

CALL FOR PAPERS: **ISSUE 3/2016**

Deadline: 5 September 2016

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During recent years, the renewed recognition of the central role of soil and its ecosystem services, including food and biomass production, retention, recycling and renewal of nutrient and water, and carbon sequestration, have triggered numerous regional and international activities. Promoting sustainable management of soil resources for soil protection, conservation and sustainable productivity is now an essential aim.

In fact, over the last 50 years, the amount of arable land per capita in Europe has halved, and many of the remaining areas were affected by severe soil degradation and environmental impacts. Agricultural soils are threatened by diverse processes such as erosion, which led to soil and organic matter losses, soil contamination, crusting, soil compaction, salinization and other negative impacts due to intensification, marginalization, and resource degradation, that are likely to intensify as a result of climate change and population growth.

This increasing negative trend and the extent of soil degradation processes, due to mismanagement and land use changes, are threatening this resource and urgent action is needed to reverse this trend.

Sustainable soil management and responsible land governance have a great potential for achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs). Specifically, sustainable land management contributes in achieving several of SDGs, such as land degradation neutrality, an ambitious climate policy and the biodiversity agenda, as highlighted by FAO's Global Soil

Partnership (GSP), which is already implementing actions in all regions to promote the sustainable management of our global soils.

We invite contributions on a special issue about “The economic, social and environmental aspects for healthy soils: Assessment for Sustainable Development”. The goal of this special issue is to bring together current researches on soil degradation and sustainable land management from economics, environmental, sociological and policy point of views into a single interdisciplinary and integrated approach. We are interested in the research of papers and mini-reviews providing an overview of various aspects related to soils at different levels, from farm to broader local and sub national levels, up to a basin level.

In particular, this proposal seeks to answer at:

- i) appropriate and practical methods for improving soil health in term of economic, social and environmental aspects
- ii) what are the economic, social and environmental costs of land degradation and net benefit resulting from taking actions compared to inaction
- iii) how knowledge and information can be transferred to farmers and policymakers as well as to other actors in order to improve soil management for a more sustainable food system