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THE PRESERVATION OF FOREST SOIL: AN AMBITION FOR ADEME

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The French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME) is active in the implementation of public policy in the areas of the environment, energy and sustainable development. The Agency provides expertise and advisory services to businesses, local authorities and communities, government bodies and the public at large, to enable them to establish and consolidate their environmental action. As part of this work ADEME helps finance projects, from research to implementation, in the areas of waste management, soil protection, energy efficiency and renewable energy, air quality and noise abatement.

The Department of Agriculture and Forestry of ADEME focuses on following issues:

- Improving knowledge on the resources, deposits and markets.
- Encouraging the collection of forest biomass for various uses.
- Developing and integrating environmental endpoints (including on the soil and climate change) during the harvesting of biomass, in particular with a view to guaranteeing the sustainability of ecosystems, resources and sectors.

Actions to monitor and protect soils have – until recently – essentially been focused on agricultural soil (e.g. coordinating the GESSOL⁽¹⁾ programme of the Ministry of Ecology, developing bioindicators for assessing soil quality⁽²⁾, participation to the GIS Sol⁽³⁾). Faced with the multiple and increasing challenges of forest spaces, it is now needed to reinforce our interest in forest soils.

Works have already been carried out on the subject: in this way, in 2005, a guide entitled⁽⁴⁾ « *La récolte raisonnée des rémanents en forêt* » (“Sustainable harvesting of residue in the forest”) published by ADEME/AFOCEL/IDF/INRA has made it possible to support forest administrators in their analysis on the feasibility of the harvesting of wood residue. Currently this guide is undergoing a revision, in collaboration with GIP ECOFOR, around which the takeholders of forest and wood sectors are in particular associated.

Actions made by ADEME on forest soil must be able to contribute in the medium term to:

- Proposing physical, chemical and biological operational indicators that make it possible to assess the quality of forest soil.

(1) www.gessol.fr.

(2) <http://www2.ademe.fr/servlet/getDoc?id=81046&cid=96&m=3&p1=3&ref=1720>.

(3) www.gissol.fr.

(4) <http://www2.ademe.fr/servlet/getDoc?id=96&m=3&id=33691&p1=02&p2=08&ref=17597>.

– Quantifying the contribution of the “soil” compartment to the “greenhouse gas” balance of forests as a function of the nature of the soil, forest species and forestry practices notably with a view to estimating carbon storage variations in the forest.

– Identifying and proposing forestry management practices that guarantee the sustainability of the “soil” resource and that maximise the forest’s contribution to climate change mitigation.

In order to develop such actions, these research issues have been integrated in the research calls for tender led by ADEME and in particular the REACTIF call for tender « REcherche sur l’Atténuation du Changement Climatique par l’agriculture et la Forêt » (REsearch on the mitigation of Climate Change by agriculture and Forest).

Taking into account its ambitions as regards the protection of forest soil, it was natural that ADEME has associated itself with the REGEFOR 2013 workshop and the publication of this work, which will make it possible to produce an exhaustive state of knowledge report on the assessment and maintenance of the quality of forest soils.

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