



**A proposal and an appeal for the establishment  
of a Working Group for Climate Neutral and  
Nature Positive Agriculture**

Proposed by:  
Mateusz Ciasnocha & the European Carbon Farmers

Stobiec, Poland; 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021



## **A proposal and an appeal for the establishment of a Working Group for Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Agriculture**

**This document is an official proposal and at the same time an appeal of Mateusz Ciasnocha and the European Carbon Farmers for the establishment of a Working Group for Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Agriculture**, submitted to the most important Institutions of the Republic of Poland and the individuals serving in those positions, including the President of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Andrzej Duda and the Prime Minister, Mr. Mateusz Morawiecki.

### **Structure of the Document**

This document is divided into five parts:

1. Presentation of the proposal to establish a Working Group for Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Agriculture,
2. The origin of the proposal,
3. Justification for the necessity to establish the proposed Working Group,
4. Proposed structure and activities of the Working Group,
5. A proposal for further concrete actions in the context of the submitted proposal to establish a Working Group on Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Agriculture.

### **Proposal to establish a Working Group for Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Agriculture**

The most important objective of this document is to present a proposal and at the same time to appeal for **the establishment of the Working Group for Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Agriculture at the level of the Republic of Poland as soon as possible. This appeal is an appeal of an individual farmer, Mateusz Ciasnocha, and an institutional appeal of the European Carbon Farmers – the association of Polish farmers founded by Mateusz Ciasnocha in the form of a limited liability company – both of which are on the mission to place farmers at the centre of climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts in a profitable way, thus achieving carbon neutrality and nature positive agriculture by 2050 at the latest.**

### **The genesis of the proposal to establish a Working Group for Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Agriculture**

The proposal presented in this document builds on the three pillars of experience and knowledge:

1. First-hand experience of running and transitioning an individual farm,
2. Involvement in the process of developing the Strategic Plan of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for the years 2023-2027 and active participation in the creation of other strategic documents regulating the agricultural sector in Poland and the European Union,

3. Knowledge of and active involvement in the global processes of economic development, including agriculture, in particular the efforts to adapt and mitigate climate change and transform food systems.

Experience of running and regenerative transition of an individual farm

Ciasnocha Family Farms [stewards over 700ha of permanent grassland in the Żuławy Wiślane Region of Poland](#). Since 2004 – thanks to the support made possible by the CAP – the farm has evolved its production profile from degenerative to regenerative, which, according to calculations of [the Cool Farm Tool](#), leads to additional soil carbon sequestration of 6,5 t CO<sub>2</sub>e per hectare per year for twenty years since the land use change, which in the case of our farm is 2008.

Mateusz Ciasnocha, as an active farmer, and as a representative of a wider group of farmers from all over Poland gathered around the European Carbon Farmers, shows that **firstly**, farms in Poland are changing in the way, which is consistent with the EU's Green Deal ambitions and **secondly**, this change is taking place in a bottom-up and a proactive manner due to the lively interest of farmers.

Involvement in the process of developing the Strategic Plan of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for the years 2023-2027 and active participation in the creation of other strategic documents regulating the agricultural sector in Poland and the European Union

**In 2021, Ciasnocha Family Farms and the European Carbon Farmers took an active part in the process of co-creating the CAP Strategic Plan for the years 2023-2027**, the version of which ready to be sent to the European Commission [was adopted in the resolution of the Council of Ministers on December 14, 2021](#). The European Carbon Farmers participated in the above-mentioned consultations three times:

1. On February 10, 2021 in the first round of public consultations of the Strategic Plan,
  - a. Attached to this proposal are the comments sent in this consultation (file name [available in Polish only]: *20210210\_European Carbon Farmers - Stanowisko na temat Planu Strategicznego dla Wspólnej Polityki Rolnej\_podpisane*),
2. On September 13, 2021 in the second round of public consultations of the Strategic Plan,
  - a. Attached to this proposal are the comments sent in this consultation (file name [available in Polish only]: *20210913\_European Carbon Farmers - Stanowisko na temat Planu Strategicznego dla Wspólnej Polityki Rolnej wrzesień 2021\_podpisane*),
3. On November 25, 2021 in the public consultation conducted as part of the strategic environmental impact assessment of the Strategic Plan,
  - a. Attached to this proposal are the comments sent in this consultation (file name [available in Polish only]: *20211125\_European Carbon Farmers - Stanowisko na temat Planu Strategicznego dla Wspólnej Polityki Rolnej listopad 2021\_podpisane*).

**It was in the above-mentioned comments of the European Carbon Farmers** presented in the public consultation on the CAP for the years 2023-2027, starting with the first comments sent in February 2021, **that we initially presented the proposal to establish the Working Group**, and in our last comments sent in November 2021 **we committed to presenting a document describing the necessity to establish a Working Group for Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Agriculture. It is the very document that you are holding in your hands.**

**Building on the comments sent three times to the CAP Strategic Plan, we managed to establish a dialogue with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and various other key bodies aimed at supporting the development of the Polish rural areas and the Polish farmer**, such as the Parliamentary Lower Chamber's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and its Deputy Chairman, MP Jarosław Sachajko. The dialogue with the Ministry took place, inter alia, during on-line meetings with Representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and its various Research Institutes on May 5 and June 9, 2021, as well as in a face-to-face meeting in the Ministry building on June 30, 2021, at a conference organized by the Agricultural Advisory Center in Brwinów on September 2, 2021 and again in the Ministry building on October 1, 2021 with Minister Anna Gembicka. **We are very grateful for all these constructive opportunities for dialogue so far and we build on them by presenting this document.**

**The above-mentioned activities** - although very numerous - **are only a small part of the measures taken by us, Mateusz Ciasnocha and the European Carbon Farmers, to transform the agri-food systems of the European Union, including Poland, with the farmer at the centre** in line with the global ambition of achieving climate neutrality by 2050 at the very latest and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, as well as following the principles of the Integral Human Development.

**In order to emphasize the systemic and strategic commitment of Mateusz Ciasnocha and the European Carbon Farmers in this area, we would like to present two more actions undertaken in 2021.**

**The first one is participation in consultations of the European Commission's Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas** (COM (2021) 345), in which the European Carbon Farmers, as one of a very few entities in Poland, sent feedback to, which is available in Polish (attachment name: *20210913\_PL\_European Carbon Farmers - Long-term vision of EU rural areas - September 2021\_podpisana*) and in English (attachment name: *20210913\_EN\_European Carbon Farmers - Long-Term Vision for EU Rural Areas - September 2021\_signed*).

**The second one is the cooperation with [the Foundation Institute for Eco-Development](#) for the creation of the report *Climate Neutral Agriculture in Europe and Poland 2050* available for download at [this](#) link (ISBN: 978-83-89495-68-6). In the first half of 2022, the aforementioned report, developed as part of the European Union's *LIFE\_UNIFY project - uniting the European Union for climate action*, will be published in a paper version. As soon as this is the case, the addressees of this proposal and appeal will receive a printed version of the report.**

Knowledge of and active involvement in the global processes of economic development, including agriculture, in particular the efforts to adapt and mitigate climate change and transform food systems

The year 2021 is considered by many commentators as “**the mega year for agriculture and climate**”. This is due to two events:

First, [the United Nations Food Systems Summit](#) (UN FSS) held [on-line on September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2021](#), accompanied by the **UN FSS Pre-Summit** held in Rome and [on-line on 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> July 2021](#), as well as hundreds of [Food Systems Summit Dialogues](#), divided into **National Dialogues** and **Independent Dialogues**.

Second, [the 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties \(COP26\) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change – UNFCCC](#), held on October 31<sup>st</sup>-November 12<sup>th</sup> 2021 in Glasgow, the United Kingdom.

**Mateusz Ciasnocha and the European Carbon Farmers actively participated and continue participating in both of these events, as well as much wider processes accompanying those two events.**

**We have been and remain committed to the United Nations Food Systems Summit as:**

1. **Mateusz Ciasnocha as a member of [the United Nations Food Systems Summit Champions Network](#)** by appointment of the Secretary General of the United Nations, António Guterres, at a special personal invitation issued by [Dr. Agnes Kalibata, the Special Envoy of the Secretary General of the United Nations for the Summit on Food Systems](#),
2. **The European Carbon Farmers as a member of the Producers Group**, the official body representing farmers from around the world in the process of the UN Food Systems Summit,
  - a. **The European Carbon Farmers is the only organization from Poland that is a signatory to [the Producers Declaration](#)** developed as part of the UN Food Systems Summit,
3. **The European Carbon Farmers as an active participant in the work under [the Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production](#) and [the Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress](#),**
  - a. **The European Carbon Farmers joined [the Coalition of Action 4 Soil Health – CA4SH](#)**, which was established as part of the UN Food Systems Summit process,
4. **Mateusz Ciasnocha organized and participated in numerous Dialogues organized as part of the UN Food Systems Summit,**
  - a. Within this area of work it is particularly important to emphasize the intense and constructive communication of Mateusz Ciasnocha, in his role as the UN Food Systems Summit Champion, with the Office of Minister Anna Gembicka, the National Coordinator, in particular in the context of the development of Polish National Pathway and the Polish involvement in the UN Food Systems Summit process.

At the 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the UN Climate Change Convention (UN FCCC), Mateusz Ciasnocha was serving as [the Regenerative Agriculture Youth Fellow in the High Level Champions for Climate Action Team led by Nigel Topping and Gonzalo Munoz](#). [In his role](#), Mateusz played a key role in supporting Non-State Actors (NSA), in particular farmers, in the negotiation and representation process before and during the COP26. Mateusz – as the Regenerative Agriculture Fellow and using his direct experience as a farmer – played the key role in the conceptualization and announcement of [the Regen10 Coalition](#), which was announced at the COP26.

### Justification for the necessity to establish the proposed Working Group

The presented justification for the necessity to establish the proposed Working Group will be divided into five levels:

1. Farmer,
2. Poland,
3. European Union,
4. Global,
5. Private and non-governmental.

#### The farmer level

As we noted in the section “The genesis of the proposal to establish a Working Group for Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Agriculture” of this proposal, **the first and key reality prompting us to propose the Working Group and appeal for its creation is the primary perspective of the individual farmer, who hears a lot about the opportunities that activities aimed at adapting and mitigating climate change may bring her, but she does not see any specificity in this area.** This – unfortunately – is exactly our experience as the Ciasnocha Family Farms.

**Despite the above-mentioned state of affairs, farms in Poland and globally – including our family farm, as well as many others, also those represented by the European Carbon Farmers – are already undertaking a number of activities in the area of mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Recognizing and acknowledging this state of affairs, as well as creating policies based on the actions already undertaken by farmers, is an absolute necessity, which – unfortunately – is not always reflected in practice.**

**In conclusion: farmers need and are requesting the Working Group on Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Agriculture proposed in this document.**



## The Polish level

At the Polish level, numerous arguments can be put forward confirming the necessity to establish the proposed Working Group. In this document, we will present four (4) such arguments.

**The first (1) argument** comes from the analyses accompanying the Polish CAP Strategic Plan for 2023-2027, which clearly state that the average level of carbon in agricultural soil in Poland is 21 g/kg, while the European average is 43,1 g/kg. **Polish soils are in an agonal state and – on average – are subject to a natural desertification process, which threatens the security of the existence of individual farms, as well as, more broadly, the national security of the Republic of Poland.**

**The second (2) argument** is also derived from the Polish CAP Strategic Plan for 2023-2027, which states that **inter-ministerial cooperation, especially between the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and the Ministry of Climate and Environment, is necessary to achieve the ambitious climate goals of the European Union.** It is clear that the authors of the Strategic Plan saw the necessity to establish the Working Group proposed in this document. **As the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, or any other organizational unit of the Polish government, does not respond to this need emphasized in the Polish CAP Strategic Plan for 2023-2027 itself, Mateusz Ciasnocha and the European Carbon Farmers present this document.**

**We draw the third (3) argument** from the fact that Poland is a member of the European Union. As a Member State of the European Union, we should look in the same direction as the Union – which is our Union – and the other Member States are looking. It is clear that **the overriding ambition of the present, but also the former, European Commission is to create a series of harmonized legal mechanisms that allow the entire European Union, individual Member States and specific occupational groups and sectors to achieve climate neutrality in a just manner.** It is worth mentioning that this ambition is consistent and responds to the scientific realities of rapidly progressing climate change, led by the reports of [the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#). **By proposing to establish the Working Group, we appeal to abandoning the narrative of division, which divides instead of building and divides instead of uniting. Climate change is a fact and we can – and at the same time must – take action to mitigate and adapt to it. The proposed Working Group is precisely this new quality for which we strongly appeal.**

**The fourth (4) argument** comes from the Catholic Social Teaching (CST), in which **the main principle is the principle of subsidiarity**, i.e. the principle of delegating the possibility to decide on a given matter to the lowest social unit that can decide about it. **The establishment of the proposed Working Group** is precisely such an effort to create a platform that **allows farmers to build agency** in the face of adaptation and mitigation activities to climate change with a legal and regulatory environment that actively supports farmers in these efforts, and does not discourage or limit those, as – unfortunately – is often the case today.

### The European Union level

The first and fundamental fact that leads to a conclusion that establishment of the proposed Working Group is an absolute necessity is **the European Union's ambition to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 at the very latest** and reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 55% compared to 1990 levels.

The second – equally crucial – fact calling for the creation of the proposed Working Group is **the challenge and at the same time an opportunity for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Union to play a key role in supporting farmers in their transition to climate neutral and nature positive agriculture. Although this potential is dormant in the CAP – unfortunately – the Polish version of the CAP Strategic Plan adopted in the resolution by the Council of Ministers on December 14<sup>th</sup> 2021 does not use this potential.**

The third argument for the creation of the proposed Working Group is **the multitude of strategies and goals impacting agriculture and the climate at the European Union level, with a direct impact on individual Member States, including Poland.** Here are just a few of the most important of them:

1. **The climate neutrality target by 2050 included in the European Green Deal** presented on December 11<sup>th</sup> 2019 (COM (2019) 0640),
2. **The Circular Economy Action Plan** presented on March 11<sup>th</sup> 2020 (COM (2020) 98),
3. **The Farm to Fork Strategy** presented on May 20<sup>th</sup> 2020 (COM (2020) 381),
4. **The European 2030 Biodiversity Strategy** presented on May 20<sup>th</sup> 2020 (COM (2020) 380),
5. **The EU Carbon Farming Initiative** presented initially on April 27<sup>th</sup> 2021 (ISBN: 978-92-76-30205-6),
6. **“Fit for 55” package** presented on July 14<sup>th</sup> 2021 (COM (2021) 550),
7. **The European 2030 Soil Strategy** presented on November 17<sup>th</sup> 2021 (COM (2021) 699),
8. **The European Sustainable Carbon Cycle Initiative** presented on December 15<sup>th</sup> 2021 (COM (2021) 800).

**We would like to emphasize at this point that there is nothing wrong with the multitude of strategies and goals in themselves, as we are talking about a complex economic-food-biological-climate system and we must not lose the systemic perspective in an attempt to regenerate this system.** Nevertheless, **the complexity of the system should not paralyze us from acting**, or even encourage the negation of the reality visible to the naked eye for every farmer in Poland, **which – unfortunately – is currently taking place on many levels.** The objective of the proposed Working Group will be enabling a systemic approach to agriculture, including the legal and regulatory environment affecting it, and proactive support of the farmer in the transition to climate neutrality and nature positivity using the existing and newly emerging legal framework.



## Global Level

The first global argument that the proposed Working Group is needed are [the reports of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#), which clearly state that climate change is taking place and that people must therefore, take adaptation and mitigation measures. Awareness of these scientifically proven facts, along with the experience of millions of people around the world – including many farmers – was the foundation on which **the Paris Agreement** was written and later ratified at **the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Climate Change Convention**, which took place in Paris in 2015. The Paris Agreement confirmed the global ambition and the need to keep the level of global warming below 2°C compared to the average temperature before the Industrial Revolution, and **the Glasgow Pact** agreed at **the 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Climate Change Convention**, which took place in Glasgow in 2021, confirmed and building on the latest scientific data, raised this ambition to keep the level of global warming below 1.5°C compared to the average temperature before the Industrial Revolution.

It is necessary to remind that in the framework of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Climate Change Convention, including the latest 26<sup>th</sup> in Glasgow and the ground-breaking 21<sup>st</sup> in Paris, the key role of agriculture in mitigating and adapting to climate change is well understood and emphasized. This thesis is confirmed by **the 4p1000 Initiative** (from the French [“four per thousand”](#)) established at COP21 in Paris, **to which the Republic of Poland is a signatory and the European Carbon Farmers is a member**. This initiative aims – and the participating stakeholders, including the Republic of Poland and the European Carbon Farmers, voluntarily strive to achieve this goal – to increase the level of carbon in soil by four thousandths per year (hence the name of the Initiative). **This example clearly shows that we know the key element of the solution to the climate crisis, which is the maintenance and increase of the organic carbon content in the world’s soils, which is exactly what the European Carbon Farmers proposes in each of the so far submitted consultations on the Polish CAP Strategic Plans for 2023-2027, specifically proposing changing the structure of the CAP from action- to result-based payments centred on soil carbon maintenance and enhancement.**

The second argument demonstrating that the proposed Working Group is necessary are **the results and conclusions of the United Nations Food Systems Summit**. Soil health and its development is absolutely central conclusion emerging out of the UN FSS with recommendations for specific actions under **the National Paths**, which was also developed by the Republic of Poland, as well under [the Coalitions of Actions](#). Particularly noteworthy is [the Coalition of Action 4 Soil Health – CA4SH](#), of which the European Carbon Farmers is a member. It is worth mentioning that as part of systemic actions to achieve climate neutrality while achieving the Goals for Sustainable Development – or better regeneration – with farmer and agriculture at the centre [the Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\) of the United Nations](#) has created **the Office for Sustainable Development Goals**, the purpose of which is to coordinate all FAO activities for systemic change that FAO and the wider UN wants to achieve. **By proposing the Working Group, we think**

of it as a similar organ to the one developed by the FAO, which will support us in achieving in the most effective way the goals we all strive for.

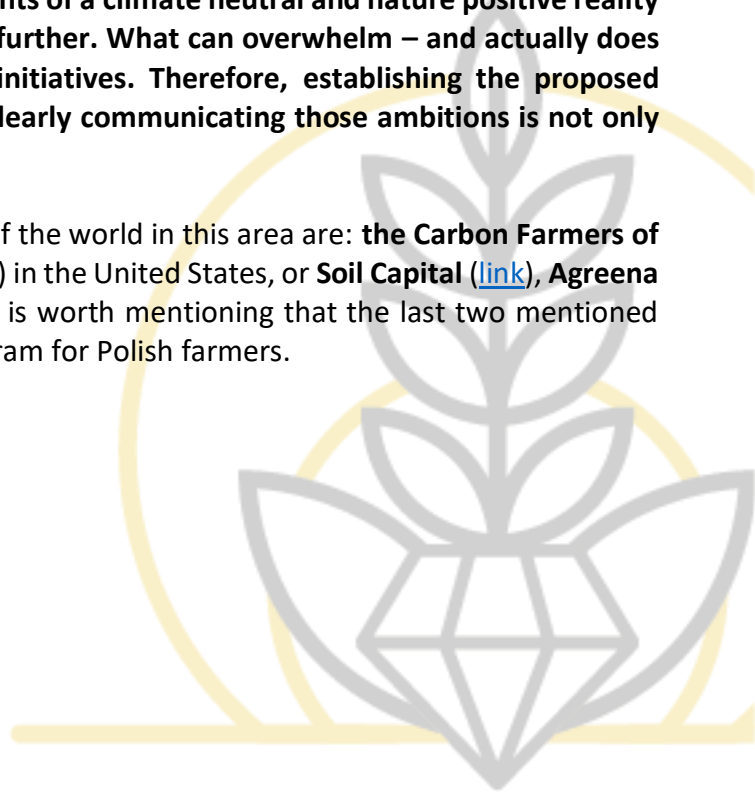
The third global argument for the proposed Working Group is the scientific data presented in the State Biodiversity Review of the World commissioned by Her Majesty's Government chaired by Professor Partha Dasgupta and published under the name Dasgupta Review in early 2021. **The Dasgupta Review clearly shows that the state of global ecosystem biodiversity is deteriorating drastically despite rising world levels of wealth as measured by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).** The above fact is already present in the awareness and operation of various institutions, which not only try to mitigate and adapt to climate change, but also achieve it in a way that leads to regeneration. The activities of [Costa Rica Regenerativa](#), [Savory Institute](#), [the Drawdown Project](#) and [the Regeneration Project](#) can be mentioned as examples here.

**If the above-mentioned arguments leave a shadow of doubt as to whether the establishment of the proposed Working Group should go ahead and receive resources from the Offices of the President and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland, we would like to invoke the last argument, which is COVID-19.** Just as we thought a world-wide lockdown was impossible, now we may think that perhaps the climate change will not be as bad as we are told by scientists and millions of people – including farmers – already affected by the climate crisis. Although the proposers of the creation of the Working Group – Mateusz Ciasnocha and the European Carbon Farmers – do believe scientists and millions of people already experiencing and suffering from climate change, even if we doubted this reality, **the damage caused by the global pandemic shows us that prevention is better than cure. Farmers want to be at the centre of these systemic efforts in a profitable way and they want to proactively co-create this future through the proposed Working Group.**

#### Private & Non-Governmental Sector Level

**As a representative of the non-governmental sector, we know that only cooperation with the regulator allows for the systemic change the farmers want to see and which is presented in this document. As the above paragraphs of this document show, the components of a climate neutral and nature positive reality at all each level already exist and are being developed further. What can overwhelm – and actually does overwhelm – farmers is the sheer volume of these initiatives. Therefore, establishing the proposed Working Group with an objective of synthesising and clearly communicating those ambitions is not only needed but absolutely necessary.**

Examples of private sector activities from various parts of the world in this area are: **the Carbon Farmers of Australia** in Australia ([link](#)), **Nori** ([link](#)) and **Indigo Ag** ([link](#)) in the United States, or **Soil Capital** ([link](#)), **Agreena** ([link](#)) and **eAgronom** ([link](#)) from the European Union. It is worth mentioning that the last two mentioned companies are already developing a carbon credits program for Polish farmers.



**Another example of cooperation between the government and non-governmental sector that we would like to promote at the Polish level through the proposed Working Group are the COMET-Farm ([link](#)) created by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), on which the model developed by the company Nori mentioned in the previous paragraph is build, or Moja Global ([link](#)), which was created thanks to the funding of the Governments of Canada and Australia, on which the model developed by the Carbon Farmers of Australia also mentioned in the previous paragraph is build.**

**It is worth mentioning that Mateusz Ciasnocha's work in the area of bridging the government, science and the private sectors together with an objective to place farmers at the centre of climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts in a profitable way has been recognized by [the Department of State](#) of the United States of America, who invited Mateusz – [as the only Polish participant](#) – to join [the prestigious Youth Transatlantic Innovation Leaders Initiative Fellowship Program \(YTILI\)](#), thanks to which he will learn about the details of the cooperation of these three sectors in the USA in order to transplant the best practices from the other side of the Atlantic into Poland and the European Union. One of the reasons for the Working Group proposed, justified and developed in this document is precisely this and other international experiences of Mateusz Ciasnocha.**

### **Proposed structure and activities of the Working Group**

In the penultimate part of the proposal and the appeal for the establishment of the Working Group on Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Agriculture, we would like to detail (1) Purpose, (2) Structure, (3) Proposed activities and (4) Financing along with other organizational issues of the proposed Group Working. We will expand on each of these areas in the following paragraphs.

#### Purpose of the Working Group

**As the name of the proposed Working Group on Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Agriculture indicates, its establishment has two goals: firstly, to support the farmer in achieving emission neutrality of her/his farm and to ensure maximum contribution of the farmer in achieving emission neutrality at the level of the entire economy AND, at the same time, secondly, achieving natural positivity, and thus regeneration, at the level of the individual farmer and the entire ecosystem and economy.**

**The proposed Working Group must act, make decisions and support the understanding of entire systems, including agri-food, but also climate, commercial, social and financial systems. However, it is the farmer and her/his economic achievement of climate neutrality AND simultaneously natural positivity that stands in the absolute centre of thought and action of the Working Group. Thus, the overriding goal of the Working Group's activities is emission neutrality by 2050 with SIMULTANEOUS regeneration of ecosystems, including social and environmental ecosystems, which ambitions are enshrined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.**

**Establishing the proposed Working Group should begin with acknowledging at the level of the Highest State Authorities – the President and Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland – that Poland wants to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest, and this ambition is precisely where we want to go as a country. Farmers can – and should – be a key part of this future, and actually will be the key part of this future. Ensuring this reality is the objective of the proposed Working Group.**

**Thanks to the establishment of the proposed Working Group, we want Poland to take a key step towards creating a policy consistent with the scientific guidelines – presented in the reports of the International Panel on Climate Change of the United Nations – and thus consistent with the carbon budget.**

**At the European Union level, with the farmer at the centre, the proposed Working Group will aim to develop the Common Agricultural Policy in a way consistent and complementary with the other policies of the European Union, in particular its climate policy, in a way that supports the farmer.**

**The most measurable goal of the proposed Working Group should be at least to maintain, and preferably to increase, the average level of carbon in agricultural soil in Poland, which – let us recall – is twice lower than the European average (21 g/kg vs. 43.1 g/kg), which threatens security of individual farms and the broader national security.**

### Structure

In the current political and regulatory conditions, **we consider it the most appropriate to establish the Working Group as a separate Department in the Chancellery of the Prime Minister – with the formal patronage of the President of the Republic of Poland – reporting directly to the Prime Minister. The Chairman of the Working Group should be the Minister, preferably in the rank of Deputy Prime Minister.** The Working Group should consist of full-time employees, as well as expert and advisory groups members, with particular importance of the farmer and scientific experts.

**The above recommendation builds on the diagnosis presented in the Strategic Plan of the CAP for 2023-2027, which stated that the integration of the approach to the implementation of agricultural, climate and energy policies is the critical factor in achieving climate neutrality.** Therefore, we consider it absolutely necessary to establish the Working Group consisting – at the very least – of representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry of Climate and the Environment and units subordinate to these ministries, such as the National Center for Emissions Management (KOBiZE) or the National Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów and – most importantly – farmers.

We consider it necessary to underline the fact that **although the active participation of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Climate and Environment, and therefore also the relevant Ministers heading those Ministries, is absolutely necessary for the efficient functioning of the Working Group, the proposed Working Group cannot be located in any of these Ministries.** Therefore, it

should be **housed only and exclusively in the organizational structure of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland**, in order to ensure strategic and objective work with the farmer at the centre.

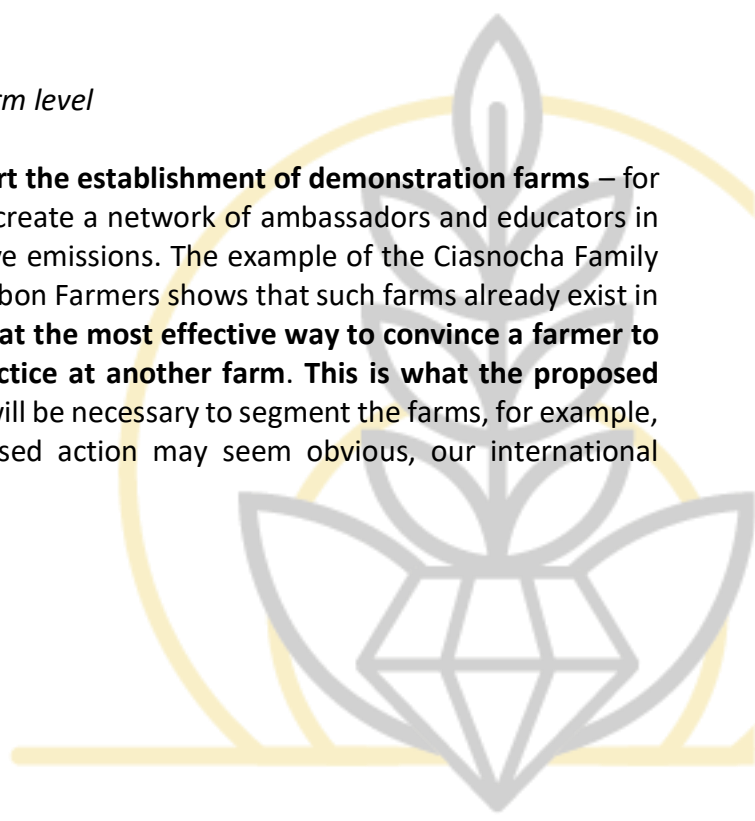
As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the recommended hosting of the Working Group is a Department within the structure of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland is considered to be the most appropriate housing in the present reality. Having said that, **we consider it absolutely necessary to establish an institution at the level of the Republic of Poland, modelled on [the British Climate Change Committee \(CCC\)](#) and [the Natural Capital Committee \(NCC\)](#)**. In Poland, it may be **only one institution named**, for example, **the Commission for Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Economy**. Just as this document is a proposal and at the same time an appeal for the establishment of the proposed Working Group as soon as possible, **this document is also an appeal for the establishment at the Polish level of the equivalents of the British Committees on Climate Change and Natural Capital**. In the event of the establishment of equivalent institutions at the level of the Republic of Poland, **we consider it necessary to transfer the Working Group proposed in this document into the structures of this new institution, which should be created as soon as possible**.

#### Activities of the Working Group

As we have shown and explained in the previous parts of this document, **only the systemic actions of the proposed Working Group with the farmer in the centre allow for the achievement of climate neutrality by 2050**. Even though, in this section we will present the proposed activities of the Working Group broken down into five sections in order to facilitate the structuring of many potential activities – (1) Individual Farm, (2) Region, (3) Poland, (4) the European Union and (5) World – **we must always remember that any action of the proposed Working Group must be located in systemic thinking and action, which can only be achieved by undertaking a comprehensive set of activities undertaken at different levels**. The creation of the synergy and convergence effect between those various activities is exactly what is currently missing in the reality in which the farmer operates. Achieving this effect of synergy and convergence is precisely the greatest task facing the proposed Working Group.

#### *Individual farm level*

**At the level of an individual farm, we propose to support the establishment of demonstration farms** – for example, one in each powiat or commune – in order to create a network of ambassadors and educators in the field of farms' transition to net-zero or even negative emissions. The example of the Ciasnocha Family Farms and other farms represented by the European Carbon Farmers shows that such farms already exist in Poland. Moreover, **the farmer's experience shows us that the most effective way to convince a farmer to take any action is to demonstrate this solution in practice at another farm**. This is what the proposed activity would aim for. If this task is to be carried out, it will be necessary to segment the farms, for example, based on the production profile. Although the proposed action may seem obvious, our international





experience shows that the creation of the proposed network of farms is an absolutely necessary action, as without the farmers we will not achieve either emission neutrality nor nature positivity.

#### *Voivodeship/regional level*

**At the regional level** – most likely on the voivodeship level, building on the Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centres, although it may also be at the commune, powiat or above voivodeship level – **the key activity of the proposed Working Group should be to conduct training and field demonstrations on test farms in order to explain the individual components of emissions neutral and negative agriculture enhanced by real support for farmers in the form of knowledge and resources, including financial, needed in implementation of those practices.**

**The second** – extremely urgent – **action** to be carried out at the regional level and contributing to activities at other levels, as well as building on the knowledge transferred in the first proposed action at this level **should be conducting workshops and consultations in order to develop a shared vision of the farmers on how they want to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest. Only such a vision developed by and with the farmers has a high chance of being implemented and achieved.** The action proposed here aims to achieve this vision – climate neutral and nature positive agriculture – which, to be implemented, must become our vision: the farmers' vision.

#### *National level*

**At the national level, the proposed Working Group aims to coordinate all activities related to the agri-food industry, especially the farmer, in order to achieve carbon neutrality and nature positive industry by 2050 at the latest. Specifically, this means undertaking activities in three areas:**

1. **Supporting activities** that are already contributing to the achievement of this reality.
2. **Identifying and taking action to end activities** that distract us or slow us down in achieving this reality.
3. **Initiating actions** that we must perform – at various levels – to achieve this future.

**Due to the key role of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in influencing the shape, development and decisions made at the individual farm level in Poland, it is the CAP and its transition that should be the key area of the Working Group's activity.**

**In particular, we consider it necessary to develop a result-based payment mechanism focused on maintaining and increasing the level of soil organic carbon, including in particular the development of monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) system for the flow of greenhouse gases on the level of an individual farm. One of the possibilities for the development of such a system is the localization of solutions already available on the world market – such as, for example, [the Cool Farm Tool](#), which was**

created and is being **managed by the Cool Farm Alliance Consortium, of which [the European Carbon Farmers is also a Member](#)** – by translating this Tool into Polish and updating emission factors to accurately reflect the actual state of the Polish affairs.

**The above recommendation emerges from a detailed analysis of the recommendations presented in *the EU Carbon Farming Initiative*, which clearly indicates that in the subsequent CAP programming perspectives, the amount of funding available for action-based payments will be reduced with a high possibility of the CAP supporting only result-based activities.** In this situation, the task of the Working Group should be to work out with the farmers and various other stakeholders such a result-based vision of the CAP, as well as mechanisms to implement this vision in order to proactively prepare for this future. **Thus, it is considered absolutely necessary at the national level to initiate and test activities and programs that Poland would like to implement under result-based payments framework in the future CAP, thus not only being a recipient of solutions proposed by the CAP, but also being an active co-creator of the CAP with the Polish farmer in the centre.**

**Following what has already been written in *the EU Carbon Farming Initiative*, we can see that the Working Group should prioritise work on the five areas mentioned in the Initiative, namely:**

1. Peatland management,
2. Agroforestry,
3. Maintaining and increasing the content of soil organic carbon (SOC) in mineral soils,
4. Animal husbandry and manure and slurry management,
5. Nutrient management on arable land and permanent grassland (meadows and pastures).

**The last – mentioned here – area of activity of the proposed Working Group at the national level should be supporting the conceptualization and subsequent implementation of the National Pathway, the outline of which was created during the United Nations Food Systems Summit.**

#### *The European Union level*

Building on all the data and conclusions presented so far in this document, **the key action facing the proposed Working Group at the European Union level is conducting work for the transformation of the structure of the Common Agricultural Policy from action-based payments – in which we are now, and therefore, the CAP's structure being qualitative – to result-based payments – in which we want to be, and therefore, move the CAP structure to quantitative – focused on maintaining and increasing level of soil organic carbon.**

**According to our analysis and the understanding of high-level policy objectives of the European Union,** such action will allow to simultaneously achieve policy objectives of the agricultural policy the objectives of various other policies of the European Union, including its climate policy, or biodiversity and the circular

economy policies. **As this document shows, achieving both is possible. It only requires strategic action and the coordination of various activities that are already taking place. This is exactly the task of the proposed Working Group.**

Although at the level of the European Union official, strategic and proactive cooperation with the Institutions of the European Union is the key area of activity of the proposed Working Group, **cooperation with non-governmental institutions working in the same area is equally important.** Such institutions include **the Baltic Sea Action Group** ([link](#)) from Finland, and **the SCARF Network** ([link](#)), with both of which the European Carbon Farmers is already cooperating.

### *Global level*

The key activities of the proposed Working Group on a global level are to cooperate with the initiatives and consortia already mentioned in this document, i.e. **the 4p1000 Initiative** ([link](#)), **the CA4SH – Coalition of Action for Soil Health** ([link](#)) and **Regen10** ([link](#)). Mateusz Ciasnocha and the European Carbon Farmers are already actively cooperating with each of these initiatives and their management.

In addition, **critical area of work for the Working Group on a global level is conducting study trips, learning visits and cooperation with Partners who are more advanced in the areas of supporting agricultural development towards carbon neutrality and natural positivity than Poland is, in particular Great Britain, New Zealand, Canada, Australia, the United States and Brazil.** The specific initiatives from these countries that the Working Group should be engaging with include [the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gasses](#), [the Voluntary Carbon Markets Transparency Initiative \(VCMI\)](#) and [the Just Rural Transition \(JRT\)](#). It is necessary to add that for years now Mateusz Ciasnocha has been building relationships and explores the possible frameworks for collaboration with the above-mentioned potential Partners of the Working Group. It is worth recalling that Mateusz will continue this process thanks to the YTILI Scholarship of the US Department of State.

### Financing of the Working Group and other organizational matters

Given that the proposed hosting location for the Working Group is the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland, **the budget of the Working Group should come from the budget of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister and should be a multi-annual budget.** Such a financing structure of the Working Group will ensure continuity and strategic undertaking of activities, while ensuring the independence of the Working Group.

**Building on the many years of work for the development of climate neutral and nature positive agriculture, Mateusz Ciasnocha and the European Carbon Farmers would like to confirm they full and unconditional readiness to support the process of creating the proposed Working Group on the pro bono basis till March 31<sup>st</sup> 2022.** In this matter, we are always available via phone (+48-692-477-747), e-mail

([Mateusz.Ciasnocha@EuropeanCarbonFarmers.com](mailto:Mateusz.Ciasnocha@EuropeanCarbonFarmers.com)) and post (Mateusz Ciasnocha, European Carbon Farmers Sp. z o.o., Stobiec 21, 82-103 Stegna).

### **Proposed further concrete actions in the context of the submitted proposal to establish the Working Group on Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Agriculture**

**Building on this document created at the end of 2021 and sent in paper and electronic forms to a wide group of stakeholders, including the President of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Andrzej Duda, and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Mateusz Morawiecki, as well as the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, the Senate Environmental Commission, the Senate Extraordinary Committee on Climate, the Senate Committee on National Economy and Innovation, the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, the Parliamentary Committee on Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry, as well as the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Minister of Climate and Environment, the Institute of Environmental Protection – the National Research Institute, the National Centre for Balancing and Emission Management “KOBiZE”, the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management “NFOŚiGW”, the Agricultural Advisory Center in Brwinów and the Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation – the National Research Institute (IUNG), we kindly ask and at the same time appeal to the President of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Andrzej Duda, and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Mateusz Morawiecki, to establish the Working Group for Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Agriculture presented in this document.**

In order to increase the success of our warmest appeal, below we suggest concrete next steps to continue this process accompanied by the suggested timeline.

**At the strategic level, in coordination between the Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland and the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland, with the emphasis that the Chancellery of the Prime Minister should be the main coordination unit on this topic and in cooperation with the other key entities, including Ministries, but not only do we ask for undertaking two specific actions:**

- 1. By March 31<sup>st</sup> 2022, making a decision and announcing to the public that the Working Group for Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Agriculture will be established, along with presentation of the date of the formal establishment of the Working Group and the process of its formation, including details of the possibilities of involving various stakeholders in the process of establishing the Working Group.**
- 2. By June 30<sup>th</sup> 2022, completing the formal establishment of the Working Group for Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Agriculture with a clear mandate and specific available resources – including, but not limited to political, financial, human and equipment – to support the Polish farmer and agriculture in achieving climate neutrality and nature positivity by 2050 at the latest.**

We are aware that for each of the above decisions, which we would like to see implemented in the proposed period of time, there is a significant amount of preparatory work in which – **if only there is a will of the President and the Prime Minister – Mateusz Ciasnocha and the European Carbon Farmers willingly will be involved in. Both in the preparatory work preceding the creation of the Working Group and the subsequent operation of the Working Group itself**, for the creation of which we ourselves ask and appeal, as the central reason for our work is to place farmers at the centre of climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts in a profitable way, and thus achieve emission neutrality and nature positivity in agriculture by 2050 at the latest.

### Conclusion

**Concluding this document, which is an official proposal and at the same time an appeal of Mateusz Ciasnocha and the European Carbon Farmers to establish the Working Group for Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Agriculture**, submitted to the most important Institutions of the Republic of Poland and those serving Poland in those Institutions, headed by the President of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Andrzej Duda, and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Mateusz Morawiecki, **we would like to thank you for devoting your time and attention to reading and analysing our proposal. For this, we are extremely grateful.**

**At the same time, we would like to express our gratitude for the actions that each of you is taking to place farmers at the centre of climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts in a profitable way** and more broadly the transition of agriculture to climate neutrality and natural positivity by 2050 at the latest. **For this, we are extremely grateful.**

**Having that said – as we show in this document – without a systemic approach with the farmer at the centre and therefore, the establishment of the proposed Working Group on Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Agriculture, reaching this future will be very difficult, if not impossible. Therefore, being grateful for the time devoted to us, we would like to conclude by renewing our appeal to establish the Working Group for Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Agriculture presented in this document authored by Mateusz Ciasnocha and the European Carbon Farmers, as well as the farmers we represent. For taking this action, we are the most grateful.**

Yours sincerely,

[The original version of this document in Polish has been signed electronically by Mateusz Ciasnocha at 21:07:27 CET on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021.  
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Mateusz Ciasnocha  
Farmer & CEO, the European Carbon Farmers

A proposal and an appeal to establish a Working Group for Climate Neutral and Nature Positive Agriculture submitted by Mateusz Ciasnocha and the European Carbon Farmers

