



1 **Semantics about soil organic carbon storage: DATA4C+, a comprehensive**
2 **thesaurus and classification of management practices in agriculture and**
3 **forestry**

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36



37 **Abstract**

38 Identifying the drivers of soil organic carbon (SOC) stock changes is of utmost
39 importance to contribute to global challenges like climate change, land degradation,
40 biodiversity loss or food security. Evaluating the impacts of land-use and management
41 practices in agriculture and forestry on SOC is still challenging. Merging datasets or
42 making databases interoperable is a promising way but still with several semantic
43 challenges. So far, a comprehensive thesaurus and classification of management
44 practices in agriculture and forestry is lacking, especially while focussing on SOC
45 storage. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to present a first comprehensive thesaurus
46 for management practices driving SOC storage (DATA4C+). The DATA4C+ thesaurus
47 contains 226 classified and defined terms related to land management practices in
48 agriculture and forestry. It is organized as a hierarchical tree reflecting the drivers of
49 SOC storage. It is oriented to be used by scientists in agronomy, forestry and soil
50 sciences with the aim of uniformizing the description of practices influencing SOC in
51 their original research. It is accessible in Agroportal
52 (<http://agroportal.lirmm.fr/ontologies/DATA4CPLUS>) to enhance its findability,
53 accessibility, interoperability and re-use by scientists and others such as laboratories
54 or land managers. Future uses of the DATA4C+ thesaurus will be crucial to improve
55 and enrich it, but also to raise the quality of meta-analyses on SOC, and ultimately help
56 policy-makers to identify efficient agricultural and forest management practices to
57 enhance SOC storage.

58

59 **Keywords**

60 interoperability, data, FAIR movement, climate change, soil carbon sequestration



61 **1. Introduction**

62 Soil organic carbon (SOC) represents about 25% of the potential of natural climate
63 solutions (NCS) to mitigate climate change (Bossio et al., 2020). Maintaining or
64 increasing SOC stocks can play a significant role to tackle global challenges like
65 climate change, but also land degradation, biodiversity loss or food security (IPCC,
66 2019). Identifying and addressing the drivers of SOC stock changes is therefore crucial
67 to contribute to Sustainable Development Goals (e.g. SDGs 2, 13 and 15) adopted by
68 the United Nations in 2015 (UN General Assembly, 2015).

69 Wiesmeier et al. (2019) reported a large number of drivers at various scales, from
70 climate to soil physico-chemistry, including land-use and management practices. Land-
71 use and management practices shape carbon inputs and outputs at the plot scale,
72 quality of carbon inputs, and may modify the turnover of soil organic matter (SOM) and
73 SOC stocks (e.g. Fujisaki et al., 2018; Paustian et al., 2016; Poeplau et Don, 2015;
74 Powlson et al., 2016). Evaluating the efficiency of management practices (e.g. no
75 tillage, organic amendments) and improving our understanding of processes involved
76 in SOC storage is still challenging and discussed (Chenu et al., 2019; Erb et al., 2017).
77 Consequently, large datasets are necessary to make statistically robust analysis of
78 SOC storage and its drivers. In that perspective, the number of systematic reviews or
79 meta-analyses is growing (e.g. Beillouin et al., 2021; Bolinder et al. 2020; Cardinael et
80 al., 2018; Fujisaki et al. 2018). Data-driven soil research and the inference of soil
81 knowledge directly from data by using computational tools and modelling techniques,
82 are becoming more and more popular (Wadoux et al., 2020). Merging datasets or
83 making databases interoperable to have global datasets is another promising way (e.g.
84 Lawrence et al., 2020; Wieder et al., 2020). Open Science (OCDE, 2015) and the FAIR



85 – i.e. Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, Reusability- guiding principles
86 (Wilkinson et al., 2016) offer opportunities to explore this path.

87 However, two conditions for drivers, such as land-use and management practices, are
88 compulsory for systematic reviews, meta-analyses or interoperability of databases on
89 SOC storage: 1) have standard definitions and 2) be homogeneously described.

90 Harden et al. (2018) highlighted the need for harmonized description of land-use and
91 management practices. Todd-Brown et al. (2021) emphasized the role that semantics
92 should play to overcome the challenges above. Indeed, there are currently two major

93 limitations for these drivers of SOC change: subjectivity of the semantics and limited
94 scope of the terms. Many global scale studies do not always clearly define the
95 management practices, and use subjective terms like “improved management”, or
96 “best management practices” (Batjes, 2019; Paustian et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2020).

97 Consequently, comparisons between studies might be impossible as improvement or
98 best management practices are highly context dependent (i.e. agronomic, climatic,
99 socioeconomic, or time context) (Rosenstock et al., 2016). Reversely, meta-analyses
100 or original studies that evaluate the effect of specific land management practices on
101 SOC storage provide detailed description of the land-use and management practices
102 but their scope is generally limited to one land cover type, one broad category of land
103 management practice, or focus on a climatic zone, a region or a country (Cardinael et
104 al., 2018; Corbeels et al., 2019; Li et al., 2018; Poeplau and Don, 2015; Maillard and
105 Angers, 2014).

106 Several standards are available for the description of land cover (e.g. FAO Land Cover
107 Classification System, System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA)) and
108 more recently of land-use (e.g. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, SEEA)
109 (Jansen and DiGregorio, 2002; Pesce et al., 2018). Three standards for farming



110 practices are listed by the Agrisemantics map of data standards (Pesce et al., 2018):
111 a list of agricultural practices established by the FAO
112 (<https://vest.agrisemantics.org/node/20351>), the land-use categories in World Census
113 of Agriculture (<https://vest.agrisemantics.org/node/20353>), and the SEEA Land-use
114 Classification (<https://vest.agrisemantics.org/node/20352>). However, a comprehensive
115 thesaurus and classification of management practices is lacking, especially while
116 focussing on SOC storage. For instance, the standards for " farming practices " listed
117 in the Agrisemantics map (<https://vest.agrisemantics.org/by-theme/7705/7705/7713>)
118 are not exhaustive (e.g. empirical farmers' practices in Southern countries), nor
119 harmonized or/and specific to SOC storage. As far as we know, there has been no
120 attempt to deal with these shortcomings to be able to understand, quantify or
121 extrapolate processes and drivers of SOC storage in agriculture and forestry using
122 large databases. Therefore, the objectives of this study were: i) to compile a
123 comprehensive thesaurus, i.e. a list of standards and specifically defined terms, for
124 management practices driving SOC storage, ii) to keep such thesaurus easy to use for
125 non-scientists such as soil test laboratories or land managers, and iii) to define a
126 classification of these drivers to further enhance interoperability of databases on SOC.
127 The aim of this paper is to present a first comprehensive thesaurus and classification
128 of management practices in agriculture and forestry with a focus on soil organic carbon
129 called DATA4C+.

130



131 **2. Materials and Methods**

132 **2.1. Identification of SOC drivers related to land** 133 **management practices**

134 In the present work, land management practices covered croplands, grasslands and
135 forestry practices established at the field scale, without any change in land-use. We
136 identified land management practices which are recognized in scientific literature to
137 influence SOC change. Original papers (e.g. Cardinael et al., 2018; Mayer et al., 2020;
138 Smith et al., 2020, see Table 1 for some examples and Supplementary material for the
139 full list), technical and institutional reports (e.g. Chotte et al., 2019; Pellerin et al., 2020;
140 Sanz et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2007) were used to identify these land management
141 practices.

142 Only land management practices explicitly described were retained. Therefore,
143 management practices labelled as “improved” were discarded. Consequently, we
144 included practices considered as nominal or conventional (e.g. monoculture,
145 conventional tillage). Agroforestry was considered in this study as a land management
146 practice, since it is defined as an agroecosystem where “forest species of trees and
147 other wooded plants are purposely grown on the same land as agricultural crops or
148 livestock, either concurrently or in rotation” (FAO, 2015).

149

150 **2.2. Definition of drivers**

151 Definitions of land cover classes, land-use classes, and land management practices
152 were found in data standards (e.g. World Census of Agriculture, FAO, 2015), thesaurus



153 and scientific literature collected at the former step of driver identification. In case a
154 definition was lacking in the primary data source, it was collected through thematic
155 glossaries (e.g. IPCC, 2019; “Landmark Glossary”; “WOCAT Glossary”).

156

157 **2.3. Classification of land management practices**

158 As there is currently no comprehensive thesaurus for land management practices
159 which directly or indirectly affect SOC dynamics, we classified the single management
160 practices gathered in the previous steps into a hierarchical tree. This hierarchical tree
161 was built thanks to existing classifications of land management practices found in
162 literature. These classifications usually rely on the manipulation of several components
163 of the agroecosystem which often affect C inputs and C outputs from soils, such as the
164 plant management, water management or soil tillage management for example (Table
165 1). We considered, in the hierarchical tree, only single land management practices.
166 Integrated land management practices (e.g. conservation agriculture, organic
167 agriculture) were not included as a whole, but described by their single components
168 (e.g. conservation agriculture = no tillage, permanent soil cover, rotation/crop
169 diversification).



170 Table 1. Examples of land-use change and land management practices classification for the assessment of soil organic carbon

171 stock change (see supplementary material for the full list used)

Reference	Forests	Annual and perennial croplands	Grasslands	Land-use change
(Smith et al., 2008) IPCC report for GHG mitigation in agriculture		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved agronomic practices - Nutrient management - No till & residue retention - Water management - Manure application 		
(Paustian et al., 2016) Land management practices for climate- smart soils		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Add nutrients; add lime; grow N fixing species - Grow cover crops; reduce or vegetate fallow fields - Reduce to economic-optimal rates - Reduce or halt tilling; implement residue retention - Improve timing and placement; use enhanced efficiency fertilizer - Rotate perennials; use agroforestry; use high-C input species; grow cover crops - Add amendments such as compost and biochar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convert to perennial vegetation - Restore to wetland 	
(Griscom et al., 2017) Evaluation of land management practices for GHG mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Natural forest management - Improved plantations - Avoided woodfuel - Fire management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Biochar - Trees in croplands - Nutrient management - Conservation agriculture - Improved rice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grazing-feed management - Optimal intensity - Legumes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reforestation - Avoided forest conversion - Avoided grassland conversion



<p>(Chotte et al., 2019) Sustainable land management practices for land degradation neutrality</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Agroforestry- No/minimum tillage- Crop rotation- Intercropping- Green manuring- Composting/mulching- Manuring- Integrated crop/livestock systems- Conservation agriculture- Fertilizer use	<p>- Reduce herd densities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Afforestation- Reforestation
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<p>(Smith et al., 2020) Land management practices for food security, climate change mitigation, and against desertification and land degradation</p>	<p>Improved forest management refers to management practices in forests for the purpose of climate change mitigation. It includes a wide variety of practices affecting the growth of trees and the biomass removed, including improved regeneration (natural or artificial) and a better schedule, intensity, and execution of operations (thinning, selective logging, final cut; reduced impact logging, etc.).</p>	<p>- Improved cropland management is a collection of practices consisting of (a) management of the crop: including high carbon input practices, for example, improved crop varieties, crop rotation, use of cover crops, perennial cropping systems, integrated production systems, crop diversification, agricultural biotechnology; (b) nutrient management: including optimized fertilizer application rate, fertilizer type (organic manures, compost, and mineral), timing, precision application, nitrification inhibitors; (c) reduced tillage intensity and residue retention; (d) improved water management: including drainage of waterlogged mineral soils and irrigation of crops in arid/ semiarid conditions; (e) improved rice management: including water management such as mid-season drainage and improved fertilization and residue management in paddy rice systems; and (f) biochar application</p> <p>- Practices that increase soil organic matter content include a) land-use change to an ecosystem with higher equilibrium soil carbon levels ; (b) management of the vegetation: including high carbon input practices, for example, improved varieties, rotations and cover crops, perennial cropping systems, biotechnology to increase inputs and recalcitrance of below ground carbon; (c) nutrient management and organic material input to increase carbon returns to the soil: including optimized fertilizer and organic material application rate, type, timing, and precision application; (d) reduced tillage intensity and residue retention; and (e) improved water management: including irrigation in arid/semiarid conditions</p>	<p>Improved grazing land management is a collection of practices consisting of (a) management of vegetation: including improved grass varieties/sward composition, deep rooting grasses, increased productivity, and nutrient management; (b) animal management: including appropriate stocking densities fit to carrying capacity, fodder banks, and fodder diversification; and (c) fire management: improved use of fire for sustainable grassland management, including fire prevention and improved prescribed burning (see also fire management as a separate practice below)</p>	<p>- Reduced grassland conversion to cropland - Reduced deforestation and degradation - Reforestation and forest restoration - Afforestation - Land-use change to an ecosystem with higher equilibrium soil carbon levels (e.g., from cropland to forest)</p>
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<p>(Bai et al., 2019) Effect of climate-smart agriculture practices on soil carbon stocks</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conservation tillage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no-till - reduced tillage - Cover crops - Biochar - Other agronomic practices: crop residues, nitrogen fertilization, irrigation, and crop rotation 		
<p>(Chambers et al., 2016) 4P1000 potential in the USA</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conservation cover - Conservation crop rotation - Residue and tillage management, no-till - Strip till - Contour farming - Contour buffer strips - Residue and tillage management, reduced till - Field border - Filter strips - Grassed waterways - Strip-cropping - Vegetative barriers - Herbaceous wind barriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forage and biomass planting - Prescribed grazing - Range planting 	
<p>(Corbeels et al., 2019) 4P1000 potential in sub-Saharan Africa through agroforestry and conservation agriculture</p>		<p>Conservation agriculture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimum/no tillage - Minimum/no tillage + residues - Minimum/no tillage + residues + intercropping or rotation <p>Agroforestry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alley cropping Multistrata systems Fallows Parklands 	<p>Parklands</p>	



<p>(Pellerin et al., 2019) 4P1000 potential in mainland France</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No-tillage - Cover crops - Increase of temporary grasslands in crop rotations - Increase exogenous organic matter application - Agroforestry - Hedgerows - Cover crops in vineyards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moderate intensification of grasslands: fertilization, increase leguminous species, increase grass export - Haying rather than grazing 	
<p>(Conant et al., 2017) Effect of grassland management on soil carbon stocks</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fertilization - Fire - Grazing - Grass ley - Reclamation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultivation to grass - Native to grass
<p>(Baïjes, 2019) Effect of grassland management on soil carbon stocks</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Controlled grazing - Adjusting stocking rates - Improved pastures with leguminous crops - Fire management 	
<p>(Mayer et al., 2020) Effect of forest management on soil carbon stocks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nitrogen addition - Selection of species with N-fixing associates - Trees species selection - Management of tree species diversity - Management of stand density and thinning - Removal of forest residues - Herbivory regulation - Fire management 			<p>Afforestation</p>

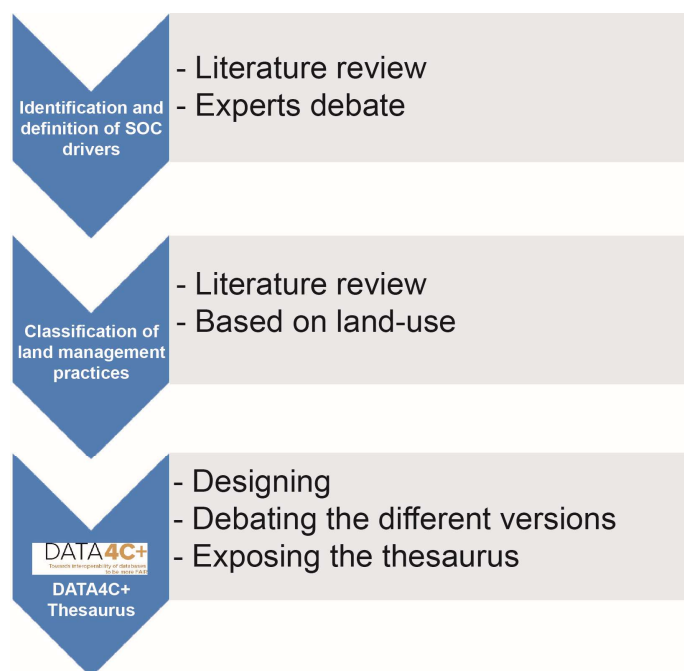


(Cardinael et al., 2018) IPCC Tier 1 coefficients for agroforestry systems	- Alley cropping - Fallows - Hedgerows - Multistrata systems - Shaded perennial-crop systems - Silvo-arable systems - Parklands	- Parklands - Silvopastures - Hedgerows	
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173 **2.4. Design and quality control of the thesaurus**

174 From October 2019 to October 2020, participants to the project DATA4C+
175 (<https://www.data4c-plus-project.fr/en>) carried out the editing phase of the thesaurus.
176 Participants were junior and senior scientists from 3 French research institutions (i.e.
177 Cirad, INRAE, IRD) that joined their expertise about organic carbon dynamics in
178 temperate and tropical soils. A first version of the thesaurus and classification was
179 shared and discussed among them in October 2020. The consolidation phase was
180 carried out from November 2020 to June 2021. A second version of the thesaurus and
181 classification was shared, discussed and validated among participants of the project in
182 July 2021. From July 2021 to September 2021, editors of the thesaurus checked its
183 consistency before its first available on-line version, as presented in this paper (see
184 Fig. 1).



185



186 *Figure 1 – Summary of the different steps to build the DATA4C+ thesaurus*

187 **3. Results**

188 **3.1. Land management practices**

189 Land management practices were classified in three main categories according to
190 land-use: i) land management practices in annual and perennial croplands, ii) land
191 management practices in grasslands, and iii) land management practices in forests
192 and tree plantations. We chose to classify the land management practices inside large
193 categories of land-use rather than land cover for several reasons. Land-use categories
194 are well harmonized between different standards (FAO, IPCC, SEEA, World Census
195 of Agriculture, see Gong et al., 2009), whereas the matching of land cover categories
196 between the main standards is less straightforward (see, for instance, Herold et al.
197 (2009) and Yang et al. (2017) for the harmonization of FAO Land Cover Classification
198 System with other land cover standards). Land-use categories suit well with
199 greenhouse gas (GHG) balance accounting thanks to the IPCC framework (IPCC,
200 2006). Furthermore, some management practices may induce a change in land cover
201 without changing in land-use, such as management practices regarding plant
202 management like agroforestry practices.

203 In these categories, several sub-categories were created, regarding plant, biomass
204 (through grazing and animal management in grassland, residue management in
205 croplands, biomass fluxes in forests), and amendments management, but also erosion,
206 water, fire, and land clearing management in the case of agroecosystems implanted
207 after land clearing. These sub-categories are mainly inspired from Smith et al. (2020).
208 They rely on management techniques from the point of view of the land managers,



209 which is commonly used in literature for the classification of land management
210 practices that affect SOC dynamics (Table 1). Another classification of land
211 management practices could be specifically based on the mechanisms affecting SOC
212 dynamics, i.e. modification of carbon inputs and/or modification of SOM turnover.
213 However, this approach would be less handy for a non-scientific audience.
214 Furthermore, there are still knowledge gaps regarding the processes involved in SOC
215 sequestration after the establishment of several management practices (Chenu et al.,
216 2019).

217

218 **3.2. The DATA4C+ thesaurus: technology, content and browsing**

219 The DATA4C+ thesaurus is freely available at the following URL address:
220 <http://data4c-plus.net/admin/thesaurus/index>.

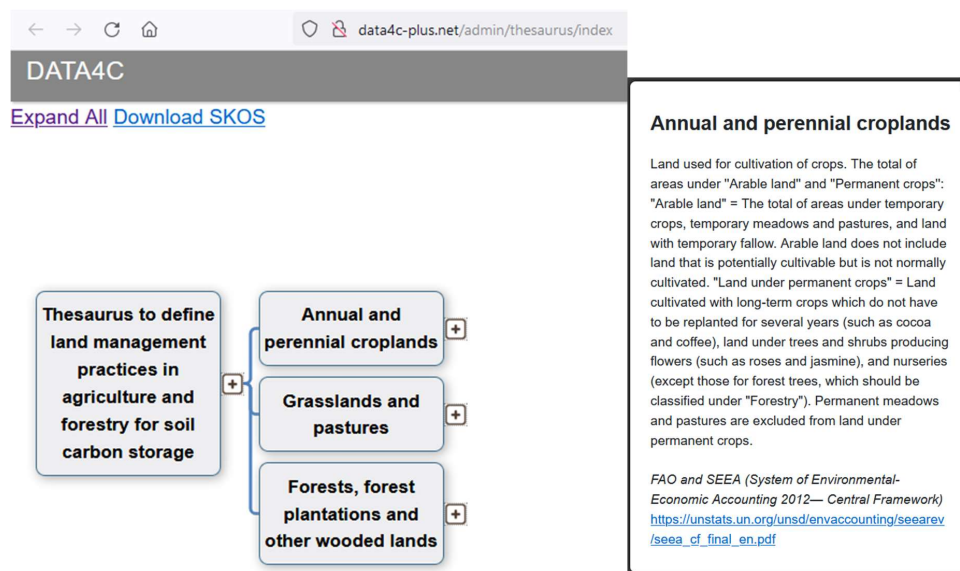
221 The DATA4C+ thesaurus is connected to a PostgreSQL® database. The intuitive web
222 interface uses the jsPlumbTree function of the jQuery library, which is a plugin that
223 renders a reducible and extensible tree structure representing the hierarchical
224 relationship between different nodes. In addition, the plugin uses the jsPlumb library to
225 draw connection lines using Bézier curves between nodes. The tree is drawn
226 dynamically from left to right and top to bottom when connecting to the database.

227 Each term of the database is defined by four nodes:

- 228 ● data-id: term identifier. Must be unique throughout the tree
- 229 ● data-parent: identifier of the parent node
- 230 ● data-first-child: identifier of the first child node
- 231 ● data-next-sibling: identifier of the next sibling node



232 The DATA4C+ thesaurus was developed by Cirad. All the source programs are
233 available on the forge <https://gitlab.com/ecosols> and can be freely accessed on request
234 under the [CC BY-SA 4.0 FR license](#). To facilitate re-use of the DATA4C+ thesaurus, it
235 can be downloaded as Simple Knowledge Organisation System ([SKOS](#)) format (W3C,
236 2009). The DATA4C+ thesaurus is accessible in Agroportal
237 (<http://agroportal.lirmm.fr/ontologies/DATA4CPLUS>) to enhance its findability,
238 accessibility, interoperability and reusability by scientists in agronomy, forestry and soil
239 sciences. It may also be used by other end-users such as soil test laboratories to
240 describe the soil samples analysed or by land managers to describe and report their
241 practices (e.g. for carbon farming programmes). Additionally, the Comma Separated
242 Values (CSV) file of DATA4C+ thesaurus is available on the data depository of Cirad
243 (<https://dataverse.cirad.fr>) under the CC-BY 4.0 FR license with the DOI:
244 <https://doi.org/10.18167/DVN1/HMCPMF>. The DATA4C+ thesaurus classifies 226
245 defined terms related to land management practices in agriculture and forestry. It is
246 organized as a hierarchical tree reflecting the drivers of SOC storage. To have access
247 to the definition of a given term, the user must find the term in the tree and click on it.
248 Then a “pop up” appears with the definition of the term and the source of the definition
249 (Fig. 2). A link to the source of the definition (URL or DOI) is given for each term. By
250 clicking on this link, a new web page appears.



251

252 **Figure 2 – Browsing hierarchical tree and definition in the DATA4C+ thesaurus**

253 (<http://data4c-plus.net/admin/thesaurus/index>)

254 4. Discussion

255 4.1. Less subjectivity of land-use and management practices will 256 improve re-use of data and quality of meta-analyses

257 The terms “improved management practice” or “conventional agricultural” are currently
258 used in the scientific literature despite their subjectivity (Sumberg & Giller, 2022). The
259 use of this term implicitly means comparing one practice to another practice and
260 describing the improved actions, which is hardly ever done. The DATA4C+ thesaurus
261 gives a framework to describe the practices. This is vital to produce robust meta-
262 analyses. For instance, the term “improved management of pastures” encompasses
263 diverse agronomic practices (e.g. introduction of leguminous species, switch from
264 mineral to organic fertilizers, no burning for land clearing, reduced grazing intensity).



265 The description of each of these agronomic practices is specific: species' names and
266 plant density for the introduction of leguminous, type, amount and date of application
267 of fertilizers for the switch from mineral to organic fertilizers, amount of biomass left on
268 site for no burning for land clearing. Besides, their impacts on SOC stocks are highly
269 different as highlighted by Maia et al. (2009), Conant et al. (2017), or Fujisaki et al.
270 (2018).

271

272 **4.2. More genericity in the description of management practices**
273 **will improve re-use of data and quality of meta-analyses**

274 The DATA4C+ thesaurus intends to facilitate data sharing for the evaluation of soil
275 carbon storage through land management practices, thanks to the genericity of the
276 proposed terms. We evaluate the DATA4C+ thesaurus against land management
277 practices used in several meta-analyses (Table 2). In many situations, there is an
278 adequate matching between terms used in the meta-analyses and terms used in the
279 thesaurus.

280 However, some studies use levels of details uncovered in the thesaurus, such as the
281 species family of plants sown in the fields (Bai et al., 2019), or several tillage
282 techniques (Jian et al., 2020), that can be grouped into larger categories used in the
283 thesaurus (conventional vs reduced tillage). These very detailed levels were not
284 covered in the thesaurus because of the current lack of the evaluation of their effect
285 on SOC dynamics. Indeed, the effect of soil tillage on soil carbon storage is still
286 discussed by soil scientists (Chenu et al., 2019), and the use of numerous categories
287 of tillage practices may weaken the significance of the observed trends.

288 On the other hand, several studies use broader categories than in the present
289 thesaurus, which may prevent re-use of the dataset. This is the case for land



290 management practices in grasslands studied by Conant et al. (2017), where categories
291 such as "grazing" and "fire" are not further detailed, despite the wide response range
292 of soil carbon stocks according to the intensity of grazing for instance (Abdalla et al.,
293 2018).

294 Concerning meta-analyses of SOC, Beillouin et al. (2022) identified issues of low
295 transparency, reproducibility, and updatability. Improving the quality and reliability of
296 synthesis papers is of utmost importance as they are increasingly used to inform policy
297 decisions with possibly large environmental and socioeconomic implications (Krupnik
298 et al., 2019). Nosek et al. (2015) noted that advances must be made to give full and
299 unbiased access to scientific data in line with open science practices. In that
300 perspective, the transparency and the genericity of the terms defined in the DATA4C+
301 thesaurus, mostly inventoried in original papers, technical and institutional reports, will
302 contribute to increase the quality of data and ultimately to merge and analyze data from
303 various sources.



304 Table 2. Matching evaluation of land management practices assessed in meta-analyses against land management practices in the
 305 DATA4C+ thesaurus.

Source	Land management category in paper	Land management practice evaluated	Land management practice or variable in the DATA4C+ thesaurus	
Bai et al. (2019)	Climate Smart Agriculture practices	No-till	No-till	
		Reduced tillage	Reduced tillage or minimum tillage	
		Cover crop	Cover crop	
			Biochar	Biochar
	Crop residue	Return	Mulched residues OR Shredded residues OR Buried residues	
		Remove	Exported residues	
	Nitrogen fertilization	1-100	Partially covered: mineral fertilization practice is included but not the quantity supplied	
		101-200	Partially covered: mineral fertilization practice is included but not the quantity supplied	
		> 200	Partially covered: mineral fertilization practice is included but not the quantity supplied	
	Water management	Irrigation	Irrigation	
	Crop sequence	Rotational	Rotation of annual crops	
		Continuous	Monoculture	
	Cover crop species	Poaceae	Not covered in the thesaurus	



Conant et al. (2017)	Grassland management	<i>Fabaceae</i>	Not covered in the thesaurus		
		<i>Poaceae + Fabaceae</i>	Not covered in the thesaurus		
		Fertilizer	Mineral fertilization		
		Grazing	Several choices required in "Grazing management"		
		Sowing improved grass species	Plant breeding		
		Grass ley in rotation	Temporary grassland in crop rotation		
		Fire	Several choices in required in "Fire management"		
		Earthworms	Not covered in the thesaurus		
		Irrigation	Irrigation		
		Reclamation	Not covered in the thesaurus		
		Silvopastoralism	Silvopastures		
		Shi et al. (2018)	Agroforestry practices	Alley cropping	Alley cropping
				Homegardens	Multistrata systems
Silvopastures	Silvopastures				
Windbreaks	Hedges				
Han et al. (2016)	Crop fertilization	Unbalanced application of chemical fertilizers	Partially covered: mineral fertilization practice is included but not the appreciation of balanced vs unbalanced application		
		Balanced chemical fertilization	Partially covered: mineral fertilization practice is included but not the appreciation of balanced vs unbalanced application		
		Straw retention and	Mulched residues OR Shredded residues OR Buried residues AND		



	application of chemical fertilizers	Mineral fertilization
Jian et al. (2020)	Application of manure and chemical fertilizers	Solid manure OR liquid manure AND Mineral fertilization
	Disk tillage	Conventional tillage
	Sweep	Conventional tillage
	Tandem disk	Conventional tillage
	Full-tilled	Conventional tillage
	Mouldboard ploughing	Conventional tillage
	Harrowing	Conventional tillage
	Moldboard plowing	Conventional tillage
	Turnplow	Conventional tillage
	Plow-till	Conventional tillage
	Ridge-till	Ridge tillage
	Mulch tillage	Reduced tillage or minimum tillage
	Chisel	Reduced tillage or minimum tillage
	Slit tillage	Reduced tillage or minimum tillage
	Light tillage	Reduced tillage or minimum tillage
	Strip-tiller tillage	Strip tillage
	Deep-till	Conventional tillage
	No-tillage	No-till



Jian et al. 2020	Conservation type	Agriculture forest system	Several choices required in the category Agroforestry
			Cover crop
			No-till
			Reduced tillage or minimum tillage
			Organic agriculture
			Mulched residues
			Not covered in the thesaurus
			Ridge tillage
			Rotation of annual crops
			Not covered in the thesaurus
			Intercropping
			Not covered in the thesaurus
			Organic agriculture AND Cover crop
Organic agriculture AND No-till			



308 **4.3. Future development of the DATA4C+ thesaurus: uses and**
309 **accrual**

310 The DATA4C+ thesaurus is expected to be used by scientists in agronomy, forestry
311 and soil sciences with the aim of uniformizing the description of practices influencing
312 SOC in their original research. As it was developed to be simple and easy-to-use, the
313 thesaurus may also be used by several end-users as land managers (e.g. to report
314 their practices for carbon farming) or by laboratories to describe the soil samples
315 analysed (e.g. metadata on the sample). The generated data will therefore be more
316 easily to retrieve and to be integrated to perform meta-analyses in particular. Another
317 perspective will be to mobilize the DATA4C+ thesaurus to feed models on SOC
318 dynamics with more site-specific data. However, such perspective would need to
319 enrich the DATA4C+ thesaurus with vocabulary related to annual carbon inputs to
320 enhance carbon inputs to soil (e.g. Bolinder et al., 2007). Accrual of the DATA4C+
321 thesaurus could also be focused on emerging practices and empirical farmers'
322 practices, which are poorly studied by researchers. Peer-reviewing of the updated
323 versions of the DATA4C+ thesaurus will be performed by the Scientific and Technical
324 Committee of the 4 per 1000 Initiative (<https://4p1000.org/>). Versioning of the
325 DATA4C+ thesaurus will be done at the following URL address: [http://data4c-](http://data4c-plus.net/admin/thesaurus/index)
326 [plus.net/admin/thesaurus/index](http://data4c-plus.net/admin/thesaurus/index), in Agroportal
327 (<http://agroportal.lirmm.fr/ontologies/DATA4CPLUS>) and on the data repository of
328 Cirad (<https://doi.org/10.18167/DVN1/HMCPMF>). Suggestions of accrual could be
329 sent to the corresponding author or at the following email address: data4c@cirad.fr.



330 **5. Conclusion**

331 The DATA4C+ thesaurus is the first attempt to compile and classify the land-use and
332 management practices in agriculture and forestry influencing SOC storage. Future
333 uses of the DATA4C+ thesaurus will be crucial to improve and enrich it, but also to
334 raise the quality of meta-analyses on SOC, and ultimately help policy-makers to identify
335 efficient agricultural and forest management practices to improve SOC storage. In that
336 sense, the DATA4C+ thesaurus is a contribution to SDG 17 “Partnerships for the goals”
337 (i.e. goals 17.6 and 17.7).

338

339 **Appendix**

340 Supplementary material: the full list of references, technical and institutional reports
341 used to identify the land management practices.

342

343 **Code availability**

344 The DATA4C+ thesaurus was developed by Cirad and Khaméos. All the source
345 programs are available on the forge <https://gitlab.com/ecosols> and can be freely
346 accessed on request under the CC BY-SA 4.0 FR license.

347

348 **Data availability**

349 The DATA4C+ thesaurus is accessible in Agroportal
350 (<http://agroportal.lirmm.fr/ontologies/DATA4CPLUS>). The CSV file of DATA4C+
351 thesaurus is available on the repository of Cirad in the Dataverse CIRAD



352 (<https://dataverse.cirad.fr>) under the CC-BY 4.0 FR license with the DOI:

353 <https://doi.org/10.18167/DVN1/HMCPME>.

354

355 **Author contributions**

356 Kenji Fujisaki led the inventory and analyses of resources to build the thesaurus.

357 François Thévenin (Khaméos) and Jean-Baptiste Laurent did the informatic

358 development of the thesaurus. Antonio Bispo, Tiphaine Chevallier and Julien

359 Demenois supervised the conceptualization of the thesaurus. Kenji Fujisaki and Julien

360 Demenois prepared the manuscript with contributions from all the co-authors. All the

361 co-authors reviewed the thesaurus and the manuscript.

362

363 **Competing interest**

364 The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

365

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377

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