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# COMPARISON OF EMPIRICAL AND PROCESS-BASED MODELLING TO QUANTIFY SOIL-SUPPORTED ECOSYSTEM SERVICES ON THE SACLAY PLATEAU (FRANCE).

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Figure 1: Land-use map according to Corine digital land cover (2015) and Soil map of the Saclay plateau adapted from regional geographic soil database at 1 : 250 000 of the Ile-de-France region

Figure 2: Rescaled soil contribution to the provision of plant biomass using empirical, process-based modelling and direct measurement (data from Chalhoub et al., 2020) during the crop cycle 2017/2018. The errors bars correspond to the standard error observed between the 20 years of simulation for the process-based modelling. The process-based modelling for 2018 is also presented to allow direct comparison of direct measurement and process-based modelling for the same soil, the crop and crop management.

Figure 3: Rescaled soil contribution to the provision of water using empirical and process-based modelling and direct measurement (data from Chalhoub et al., 2020) during the crop cycle 2017/2018. The errors bars correspond to the standard error observed between the 20 years of simulation for the process-based modelling. The process-based modelling for 2018 is also presented to allow direct comparison of direct measurement and process-based modelling for the same soil, the crop, and crop management.

Figure 4: Rescaled soil contribution to the regulation of water quality using empirical and processbased modelling and direct measurement (data from Chalhoub et al., 2020) during the crop cycle 2017/2018. The errors bars correspond to the standard error observed between the 20 years of simulation for the process-based modelling. The process-based modelling for 2018 is also presented to allow direct comparison of direct measurement and process-based modelling for the same soil, the crop, and crop management.

Figure 5: Rescaled soil contribution to the regulation of global climate using empirical and processbased modelling.

Figure 6: Map on the Saclay plateau territory of the joint delivery of provisioning (biomass and water) and regulating (water quality and global climate) ecosystem services according to empirical (a) and process-based (b) modelling

#### 1 I. Introduction

Since its inception in the 1950s until just a few years ago, the literature on nature's services, referred 2 to as "ecosystem services" (ES) after 1997, focused largely on defining concepts, identifying and 3 classifying services, and debating the extent to which a monetization of these services was feasible 4 (e.g., Westman, 1977; Gómez-Baggethun et al., 2010; Baveye et al., 2013, 2016, 2020; Baveye, 2014). 5 6 In the last few years, the emphasis has shifted to the operationalization of the concept (van Dijk et al., 2018), i.e., to use information about the ecological, sociocultural, or economic values of ES to 7 help implement various strategies for sustainable land, water, or urban management (Dick et al., 8 2018, Harrison et al., 2018). Many decision-support tools have emerged to fill the gap between 9 theoretical concepts, the biophysical assessment of ES, and their practical application for decision-10 making. Bagstad and al. (2013) found and compared seventeen such decision-support tools, and the 11 list has steadily grown since (Grêt-Regamey and al. 2017). 12

The accuracy of most available tools and models, defined as the degree to which they reproduce 13 the real distribution and abundance of an ES (Schröter et al., 2015), remains an object of debate at 14 this juncture. This is particularly the case when, beyond recognizing and increasing awareness of ES, 15 one attempts to capture their value as requested for priority setting (e.g., identifying areas critical for 16 ES provision) or instrument design (e.g., development of payment schemes for ES). One problematic 17 aspect of current tools is that due to the strong ecosystem bias that characterizes the bulk of the 18 research on ES, the soil component is often completely ignored (Baveye et al., 2016, 2018). For 19 example, in the sizeable body of literature involving capacity matrices linking land use/land cover 20 types to ES bundles, soil heterogeneity inside land use/land cover patches is essentially overlooked 21 (Burkhard et al., 2009; Jacobs et al., 2015; Roche and Campagne, 2019). In the best cases, soils are 22 only poorly represented (Dominati et al., 2016) using surface- or mean key physical, chemical or 23 biological properties as simplified proxies for soil ES (Rutgers et al., 2012; van Wijnen et al., 2012; 24 25 Hewitt et al., 2015). Such strategies are reasonable for ES unrelated to soils (e.g., the service of pollination). However, this is not the case for the numerous ES that are strongly linked to soil 26 processes and properties, as emphasized in several frameworks linking soil processes and properties, 27 associated soil-supported ES, and in some cases potential indicators for these services (Robinson et 28 al., 2009; Dominati et al., 2010; Adhikhari and Hartemink 2016; Buneman et al., 2018; Vogel et al., 29 2019; Fossey et al., 2020). Indeed, different soils under the same land use sometimes evince 30 considerable differences in their ES levels and their economic values (Hewitt et al., 2015; Dominati et 31 al., 2016). Integration of a more realistic representation of soil diversity, complexity (e.g., depth-32 distributions of soil properties), and soil spatial variation in soil-supported ES assessment thus 33 appears necessary to reduce the uncertainty attached to traditional assessment methods, and 34 ultimately to determine how land-use and land-management planning may be used to improve the 35

ES delivery according to stakeholders and policy-makers preferences (Schulp *et al.*, 2012; Lavorel at
 al., 2017; Muller *et al.*, 2020).

In this context, and if one considers that, to be most efficient, decision-support tools should embody 38 modelling in one way or another, the existence of a wide array of models of soil processes should be 39 viewed as encouraging. Among the large diversity of models that could be used to assess soil-40 41 supported ES, some are based on empirical relationships that are either statistically established or derived from expert knowledge (Debeljak et al., 2019). The Storie Index (Storie, 1978) or the 42 Universal Soil Loss Equation (Wischmeier and Smith, 1978) are widely used examples that quantify 43 the provision of biomass or the regulation of soil erosion, respectively. These types of empirical 44 relationships generally assess the capacity of a soil to deliver a specific service more or less 45 independently of any explicit consideration of land use and land management (Greiner at al., 2017). 46 The possibility to use empirical modelling for services strongly linked to biotic processes such as the 47 climate or water quality regulation services is however unclear. Estimation of biogeochemical and 48 biotic processes from classical soil data still remains an unresolved challenge (Van Looy et al., 2017). 49

In contrast with empirical models, process-based models involve mechanistic representations of soil 50 processes. They have recently received considerable attention (Dominati el al., 2016; Francesconi et 51 al., 2016; Demestihas et al., 2018; Ellili-Bargaoui et al., 2021). They include explicitly site-specific 52 environmental factors such as climate, as well as temporal or spatial variations in land-use and land-53 management (Greiner et al., 2017). They are often viewed as potentially more accurate than 54 empirical models and applicable to a range of soil-supported services for which empirical models or 55 the possibility of direct measurements may be lacking at this point (Vereecken et al., 2016). For 56 example, Dominati et al. (2014 and 2016) used a crop model to quantify food provision, flood 57 mitigation, nutrient filtering, organic carbon (OC) storage and greenhouse gas regulation under dairy 58 grazed pastures. The benefits of process-based modelling are however still uncertain as the potential 59 60 gains in accuracy linked to a more realistic representation of soil functioning are limited by the availability, the spatial and temporal variability, or the reliability of the underlying data, and a 61 correspondingly limited capacity for independent application by most stakeholders (Bagstad et al., 62 2013). 63

At this stage, the different modelling approaches, either empirical or process-based, that are available to estimate the soil-supported ES in natural, forested, or cultivated areas have yet to be compared with each other, and especially, to actual measurements of services (Dominati *et al.*, 2016, Harrison *et al.*, 2018; Zulian *et al.*, 2018). In agreement with the general ES research, the lack of direct measurements of soil-supported services is a critical issue (Remme *et al.*, 2014; Baveye *et al.*, 2016, Baveye 2017). Fortunately, progress is being achieved in this respect. A first set of field measurements of soil-supported ES was obtained recently by Chalhoub *et al.* (2020), and the

resulting data can now be used to test the accuracy of empirical or process-based models. These
 actual measurements are still limited in scope, since they concern only a small subset of all services,
 but one might argue that they are an encouraging first step.

In this general context, the overall objective of the research described here is to evaluate our current 74 ability to assess and map two provisioning and two regulating soil-supported ES across a landscape 75 76 made of imbricated natural, forested, and cultivated areas. The former two ES relate to biomass and water provision, and the latter two encompass regulation in terms of water quality and the global 77 climate. ES assessment is carried out under the constraints that it i) integrate a realistic 78 representation of soils, considered here as a mandatory step for an accurate assessment and 79 mapping of, at least, the soil-supported ES, and ii) is based only on easily-available data and models 80 in order to be routinely used in ES-based decision making. More specifically, two approaches of 81 increasing complexity (empirical versus process-based modelling) are adapted to the context of the 82 Saclay plateau (France) using the best available data and models. These two approaches are 83 compared for their ability i) to be close to the actual field measurements obtained by Chalhoub et al., 84 (2020) in a cultivated soil (absolute accuracy), and; ii) to translate strong gradients of inherent and 85 manageable soil properties into differences in levels of the soil-supported ES (relative accuracy). This 86 research is then in line with ongoing efforts to better assess the influence of model choices on ES 87 estimates (Bagstad et al., 2018) 88

89

#### 90 II. Material and methods

91 II.1. Study area and soil data

92 II.1.1. The Saclay plateau

The Saclay plateau, of an area of 10,406 ha, is located in the Ile-de-France region, southwest of Paris 93 (Figure 1). Its geological stratification is typical of the Parisian Basin (Jamagne, 2011) with loess 94 deposits several meters deep overlaying a claybed rich in millstone called "argiles à Meulières", a 95 sand deposit called "sables de Fontainebleau" of several tens of meters thick, and, finally, marl 96 deposits (Megnien, 1989). Since its artificial drainage through a complex network of swales at the 97 end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, this previously marshy area evolved into a fertile plateau characterized by 98 dynamic agricultural activities (Tedesco et al., 2017). Forests, contrastingly, dominate the 99 surrounding slopes and the valleys when not urbanized (Figure 1). 100

101

102 II.1.2. Soil data

The soil map presented in Figure 1 originates from the regional geographic soil database at 103 1: 250 000 scale (Roque, 2004), called "Référentiels Régionaux Pédologiques" (RRP), which is the 104 most precise source of soil information in almost the whole continental France. In the RRP, soils are 105 mapped as a set of Soil Map Units (SMU), each one including one or several Soil Type Units (STU) that 106 are not spatially delineated but are described, quantified area-wise, and characterized in a soil 107 108 database. We took advantage of a soil-sampling program carried out on the Saclay plateau, to describe and characterise the most abundant soil type in each SMU according to the specifications of 109 the RRP (INRA Infosol, 2005). Tables 1 and 2 provide a summary of, respectively, the main descriptive 110 and analytical soil properties considered in the assessment of soil-supported ES. Methods of soil 111 analysis are described in the supplementary material S1. 112

On nearly level top positions of the Saclay plateau, silty loam to silty clay loam Stagnic Luvisols 113 developed in thick loess deposits, with calcareous loess encountered between 100 and 120 cm depth 114 (SMU 29, Figure 1 and Table 1). When the thickness of the loess deposit decreases progressively 115 toward the borders of the Saclay plateau, thinner Stagnic Luvisols directly lie on the more or less 116 redistributed "argiles à Meulières" clay layer (SMU 30, Figure 1 and Table 1). Along the edge of the 117 Saclay plateau (SMU 31, Figure 1 and Table 1), Planosols developed in the superposition of a stony 118 and silty loamy slope deposit of 50 cm depth over the "argiles à Meulières" clay layer. These 119 Planosols on clay were formerly cultivated but most of them are currently under fallow. On the 120 forested medium slopes, Planosols are formed by sandy loam deposits several tens of centimetres 121 deep, rich in "sables de Fontainebleau" and in coarse fragments, overlying silty loamy deposits (SMU 122 33, Figure 1 and Table 1). Finally, Gleysols are encountered in the valleys (SMU 102, Figure 1 and 123 Table 1). 124

Overall, the five studied soils show very contrasted particle-size distribution, organic carbon (OC) 125 content, or cation exchange capacity (Table 2). These properties are sometimes considered as key 126 127 determinants of the levels of several soil-supported ES (Adhikari and Hartemink, 2016) and hence are frequently used as proxies to assess, for example, the regulation of climate (Eigenbrod et al., 2011; 128 Clec'h et al., 2016) or the regulation of nutrients and contaminants (Calzolari et al., 2016). A high 129 variability in the levels of such soil-supported services may thus be expected over the Saclay plateau, 130 which makes it very suitable to assess the ability of empirical and process-based modelling to 131 translate variability in soil properties into differences in the levels of soil-supported ES. 132

133

134 II.2. Quantification of soil-supported ES

135 II.2.1. Land use and management homogenization

No single empirical or process-based model encompassing a realistic representation of soils 136 processes and properties could be identified to model soil-supported ES across the Saclay plateau. 137 Models developed in recent years to quantify, map, and is some cases monetarily valuate ES are 138 generally based on lookup tables linking land cover and/or land uses to mean service values (Bagstad 139 et al., 2013; Sharps et al., 2017). They tend to be of little use to translate gradients in soil properties 140 141 into differences in levels of soil-supported ES. Dynamic global vegetation models are designed to model primary production or water, carbon, and nitrogen cycles across land uses and may thus 142 appear as interesting candidates. These models, however, rely on very simplified and outdated 143 representations of soils properties and processes (Vereecken et al., 2016; Dai et al., 2019; Pontgraz 144 et al., 2019). Most of the models involving a more realistic representation of soil processes and 145 properties are either focused on the modelling of crop growth in cultivated soils (e.g., STICS; Brisson 146 et al., 2003) or on the modelling of specific soil processes like soil water (e.g. HYDRUS-1D; Simunek et 147 al., 2008) or soil carbon dynamic (e.g. ROTH-C; Coleman et al., 1997). Whereas crop models may be 148 useful to assess multiple ES in cultivated soils (Dominati et al., 2014, 2016; Demestihas et al., 2018; 149 Ellili-Bargaoui et al., 2021), they cannot deal with natural or forest vegetation. Contrastingly, specific 150 models are used over various land uses but for just a few ES (Francesconi et al., 2016). Assessing and 151 mapping soil-supported ES over the Saclay plateau would thus require the use of numerous models, 152 when such models even exist, which is not systematically the case for forested soils. 153

To limit the risk of inconsistencies due to the use of different models over contrasted land uses, soilsupported ES were assessed in each soil under a similar succession of winter rapeseed and soft winter wheat including those found in the natural and forested areas (SMU 33, 102, and to a lower extent 31). The assessment and the mapping of ES across a complex landscape consequently turn into a more common land evaluation exercise, a topic that has been dealt with in detail in the literature (Dominati *et al.* 2016). Large numbers of tools and models exist in that context, specifically developed for cultivated soils.

The succession of soft winter wheat following winter rapeseed was chosen because winter wheat is 161 the main crop on the Saclay Plateau (Tedesco et al., 2017) and more largely in France 162 (FranceAgriMer, 2012), and because rapeseed is a very common previous crop for winter wheat 163 (FranceAgriMer, 2012). The winter wheat and rapeseed crop management is described in Table 3. 164 The total N inputs, supposed to be exclusively in mineral form, were assumed to be, respectively, 200 165 kgN ha<sup>-1</sup> and 168 kgN ha<sup>-1</sup> for winter rapeseed and soft winter wheat. The direct measurements of 166 Chalhoub et al., (2020) were performed on the 2017-2018 winter wheat crop cycle with a similar 167 crop management but slightly higher N inputs (251.3 kgN ha<sup>-1</sup>). 168

169

#### 170 II.2.2. Selection of services and metrics

The selection of services was limited to soil-supported ES that are relevant on the Saclay plateau and 171 for which both empirical and process-based models, able to quantify the chosen indicators as a 172 function of basic soil properties, are available. As a result of these limitations, four services were 173 selected (Table 3): 1) "plant biomass provisioning", 2) "water provisioning", 3) "water quality 174 regulation", and finally 4) "climate regulation". Despite being limited, the selection of ES that was 175 made still manifests appreciable diversity (Greiner et al., 2017; Grêt-Regamey et al., 2017) since it 176 includes provisioning and regulating services as well as biotic (biomass provisioning), abiotic (water 177 provisioning) or mixed (water quality and climate regulation) services. 178

Given the simplified and homogenized land use we consider, the provision of plant biomass is 179 defined as the ecological contribution to the growth of cultivated crops that can be harvested and 180 used for food, non-nutritional, or energy production (Haines-Young and Potschin, 2018). It is 181 classically quantified through annual yields (Remme et al., 2014; Ungaro et al., 2014; Crouzat et al., 182 2015; Rinot et al., 2019). Crop yield however clearly involves various capital and labor inputs so that 183 its use as an indicator is controversial (Boyd and Banzhaf, 2007; Remme et al., 2014). Annual yields 184 were nevertheless selected as the metric for the provision of plant biomass for a number of reasons. 185 First, it is practically difficult (Haines-Young and Potschin, 2018), if not impossible (Barot et al., 2017; 186 Costanza et al., 2017), to disaggregate the contributions that the ecological and economic production 187 systems make to cultivated biomass provisioning ES. Furthermore, when implicitly in empirical-, or 188 explicitly in process-based modelling, agricultural practices are kept constant, it seems reasonable to 189 consider that the variability of yields among soils may be used as a measure of the variability of the 190 soil contribution to plant biomass provision. Finally, the development of empirical and process-based 191 models dedicated to the quantification of the soil contribution to yields has a long history in soil 192 science. 193

Water provisioning was defined following Therond et al. (2017) and Haines-Young and Potschin 194 (2018) as the water that is routed to surface water or groundwater bodies through lateral surface 195 and subsurface flows or through deep infiltration. This corresponds to the water that is not directly 196 transpired by the vegetation but remains available for drinking or non-drinking purposes, even if it 197 may be at some distant location and at a much later time. The water yield defined as the difference 198 199 between precipitation and evapotranspiration is a classical indicator for this service (Sharps et al., et al., 2017; Therond et al., 2017). However, this indicator does not identify the fractions of the water 200 that end up in the groundwater or in surface waters. Here, we opted to rely on the quantity of water 201 that infiltrates through the soil until a depth of one meter and the amount of runoff to distinguish 202 the soil contribution to services specifically provided by groundwater and to services specifically 203

provided by surface water (O'Farrell *et al.*, 2010). As almost no runoff was observed over the Saclay plateau, only the infiltration until a depth of one meter was computed and used as indicator for water provisioning (Table 4). It is however likely that only a small part of the amount of water infiltrated at one meter depth participated to the groundwater recharge for various reasons including redirections of the water flows above the "argiles à Meulières" layer or interception of the water flow by artificial subsurface drainage networks (Chalhoub et al., 2019).

The regulation of water quality was defined as the ability of soils to filtrate or degrade contaminants and nutrients (Haines-Young and Potschin, 2018). The application of synthetic fertilizers on agricultural fields results in large inputs of nitrogen (N), some of which undoubtedly ending up in the groundwater (Tedesco *et al.*, 2017). It makes sense to concentrate on the water quality aspects linked to N. In that context, the regulation of water quality was quantified by the amount of nonleached N (Table 4), i.e., the N used by crops, stored in the soil or volatilized (Dominati *et al.*, 2014; Therond *et al.*, 2017).

The contribution of soils to the climate regulation was defined by the reduction of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere (Haines-Young and Potschin, 2018) as a result of OC storage in soil, as well as the reduction of emissions of N<sub>2</sub>O and CH<sub>4</sub> from soils. It is quantified by OC storage in soils (0-30 cm depth) according to Dominati *et al.* (2014) or Therond *et al.* (2017) rather than by OC stocks as usually done, e.g., by Ungaro *et al.* (2010), in order to be closer to the service definition. Attenuation of N<sub>2</sub>O and CH<sub>4</sub> emissions have not been integrated in a global balance of greenhouse gas emissions due to a lack of appropriate empirical or process-based models to quantify it.

224

#### 225 II.2.3. Quantification by empirical modelling

Empirical or statistical models tend to be strongly biased toward the pedoclimatic context for which 226 they were developed or calibrated, and their efficiency rapidly drops outside of this particular 227 228 context (Van Looy et al., 2017). This is particularly critical for models developed for the traditional assessment of soil capability that postulate rather than explicitly integrate climatic or land use and 229 management conditions. To increase the assessment accuracy, the choice of models is then limited 230 to the ones that have been developed, calibrated and, when possible, successfully tested for rainfed 231 winter wheat cropping with high levels of management in temperate zones and for pedological 232 conditions as close as possible to those observed on the Saclay Plateau. 233

234

#### 235 II.2.3.1. Provision of plant biomass

The Muencheberg Soil Quality Rating (M-SQR) expert-based tool was selected (Table 4) to assess the soil's suitability to grow wheat using soil descriptive and analytical properties (Mueller *et al.,* 2007). This tool was tested favorably in various pedoclimatic contexts and for many grain crops (Mueller *et*  *al.*, 2010, 2013) including rainfed winter wheat in temperate zones (Abdollahi *et al.*, 2015). It
generates scores between 1 and 100 from the values of eight basic indicators, namely soil substrate,
depth of the A-horizon, topsoil structure, subsoil compaction, rooting depth, profile available water,
wetness and ponding, and finally slope and relief. Single basic indicators are evaluated using
matching tables, empirically weighted, and summed to obtain the M-SQR basic score. Although it is
possible to add hazard indicators, only the basic indicators were used in this study.

245

#### 246 II.2.3.2. Provision of water

Only one model, called SENSIB in Table 4 according to Aveline et al. (2009), developed for soils of the 247 great Paris Basin could be found (Cam et al., 1996). Similarly to the M-SQR, SENSIB assesses the soil 248 sensitivity to infiltration by scoring and summing six criteria (i.e., topsoil texture, presence of an 249 impermeable layer, soil depth, profile available water, soil profile permeability, and velocity of water 250 flow), through lookup tables based on nine descriptive or analytical soil properties. This model has 251 not been formally assessed and is not widely known. Cam et al. (1996) however tested it on various 252 soil types and demonstrated that the indicator provides coherent distinctions between soils with low, 253 moderate, and high capacity for deep infiltration. One weakness of this expert-based scoring is that it 254 relies on soil properties alone but does not take into account climatic or vegetation characteristics 255 (Aveline et al., 2009). This does not particularly matter in this study as empirical modelling is carried 256 out under climatic conditions over the Saclay plateau that are both spatially homogeneous and 257 roughly similar to those considered in the development of Cam et al.'s (1996) model. This model 258 however assesses the soil inherent capability to contribute to service provision rather than the soil 259 performance under a specific use. 260

261

#### 262 II.2.3.3. Regulation of water quality

The regulation of water quality is assessed using the composite expert-based model MERLIN v2 263 (Aimon-Marie et al., 2001) developed to evaluate the risk of nitrate leaching, given that no empirical 264 model able to assess the proportion of the applied and produced N retained in the soil or the soil-265 plant system could be found. MERLIN has been chosen because it was developed for an area of the 266 great Paris Basin similar to the Saclay site from a pedological point of view. MERLIN is easy to use, 267 and its suitability has been successfully tested over a wide range of soil types and crops, including 268 155 cases of wheat cultivation around Paris (Aveline et al., 2009). MERLIN relies on the aggregation 269 of three sub-indicators that evaluate respectively the soil capacity for deep infiltration according to 270 Cam et al. (1996), the N balance between plant requirements and N inputs, and finally the N uptake 271 capacity of the potential soil cover before the beginning of the drainage period (Aimon-Marie et al., 272

273 2001). As MERLIN was designed to assess the risk of leaching rather than the level of non-leached N,
274 the three classes, namely low, intermediate, and high risk of leaching were inverted to obtain three
275 classes of non-leached N: sufficient (value 3), insufficient (value 2), and highly insufficient (value 1).
276 Whereas MERLIN takes land use, land management, and level of inputs explicitly into account, this is
277 not the case for climatic characteristics.

278

#### 279 II.2.3.4. Regulation of climate

The capacity of soils to store OC was assessed through the "carbon saturation" approach (Table 4), 280 which estimates the OC pool that is associated with the fine soil fraction and can consequently be 281 protected for a sufficiently long residence time to act positively on climate mitigation (Hassink, 282 1997). Although criticized (e.g., Barré et al., 2017), this approach was preferred to data-driven 283 approaches because it proved successful when applied to French agricultural topsoils (Angers et al., 284 2011) and because the latter require a large and generally unavailable amount of measured OC 285 stocks (Calzolari et al., 2016; Barré et al., 2017). The OC saturation, i.e., the inherent maximum stock 286 of stable OC, was calculated according to the following equation (Hassink, 1997): 287

288

$$C_{sat} = 4.09 + 0.37(Clay + fSilt)$$
 (1)

where  $C_{sat}$  is the C saturation expressed in gC kg<sup>-1</sup>; Clay and fSilt are respectively the clay (0–2  $\mu$ m particles) and the fine silt (2–20  $\mu$ m particles) content in g 100g<sup>-1</sup>.

291

#### 292 II.2.4. Quantification by process-based modelling

Yields, water flows at one meter-depth, non-leached N, and finally OC storage (0-30cm) were
 modelled using the CERES-EGC crop model (Gabrielle *et al.,* 2006) This model was chosen because it
 has been tested favorably for various pedoclimatic and agricultural conditions, as well as extensively
 used for crop modelling in temperate climate and for soils similar to those of the Saclay plateau.

CERES-EGC runs on a daily time step and is composed of three main modules. A physical module 297 simulates the transfer of heat, water, and solutes in soils as well as plant water uptake and 298 evapotranspiration in relation with climatic conditions. Water infiltrates down the soil profile 299 following a tipping-bucket approach and may be redistributed upwards after evapotranspiration has 300 dried some soil layers. The soil OC turnover is modelled in the plough layer using the sub-model 301 NCSOIL that comprises six soil OC pools with specific turnover rates: pool 0, the "zymogenous 302 biomass"; pool I, the "microbial biomass"; pool II, the "mineralisable soil OC"; pool III, "highly-303 humified OC"; pool "Exogenous OC," and pool plant residues (Noirot-Cosson, 2016). Finally, crop 304 growth and development are modelled through net photosynthesis. A more precise description of 305

306 CERES-EGC and of NCSOIL may be found in Jones *et al.*, (1986), Gabrielle *et al.* (1995, 2006), and
 307 Noirot-Cosson *et al.* (2016).

Model inputs include soil properties and external drivers such as climate and management practices. 308 Soils are described over a one meter-depth as a superposition of layers of roughly ten centimeters 309 following the soil horizonation (Table 1). Each of the soil layers is characterized by its particle-size 310 311 distribution, bulk density, pH, C and total N contents, as well as C/N ratios (Table 2), from which water retention and hydraulic conductivity characteristics are computed by means of pedo-transfer 312 functions (Supplementary Material S2). Roots are distributed throughout the profile depth 313 proportionally to root density (Table 1). Finally, CERES-EGC was a priori parametrized according to 314 Gabrielle et al. (1995). 315

In order to test CERES-EGC, the four studied ecosystem services were first computed in a thick Luvisol 316 over loess deposit (SMU 29) for the winter wheat crop cycle 2017-2018 and compared with the direct 317 measurements of Chalhoub et al. (2020) performed in a similar, artificially drained soil, for the same 318 crop and the same crop cycle 2017-2018 and for a very similar crop management. The water 319 artificially redirected to nearby streams in this particular situation was assumed to be a good 320 estimate for the amount of water infiltrated at one meter-depth in undrained soils as the subsurface 321 drains were implanted at one meter-depth in the plot studied by Chalhoub et al. (2020). CERES-EGC 322 was subsequently run for twenty consecutive years (1998-2018) using climate data from a nearby 323 weather station (1 km away from the experimental plot). Quantitative yearly outputs computed from 324 daily soil water and nutrient budget were averaged on the ten modelled winter wheat crop cycles 325 and used to quantify the services of plant biomass provisioning, water provisioning, and water 326 quality regulation. OC fluxes were cumulated over the twenty years of modelling to quantify the 327 service of climate regulation (Table 4). 328

329

330 II.3. Spatial co-occurrence of soil-supported ES

The spatial dimension of soil-supported ES delivery resulting from empirical modelling on the one 331 hand and from process-based modelling on the other hand is analyzed through a static spatial co-332 occurrence approach (Obiang Ndong et al., 2020). Such an approach quantifies the spatial overlap of 333 multiple ES rather than the interactions between services in the sense that the drivers and 334 mechanisms underlying the interactions are not explicitly examined (Obiang Ndong et al., 2020). It is 335 however suitable for identifying areas with specific ES-related issues (e.g., the so-called hotspots and 336 coldspots), which is a common and important step in dealing with ES bundles (Mouchet et al., 2014; 337 Obiang Ndong, 2020). The levels of each soil-supported service obtained respectively from empirical 338 and process-based modelling were first rescaled between 0 and 1. To do that, the minimum value is 339 subtracted from each level, and the result is then divided by the difference between the maximum 340

and the minimum values. The minima and maxima used to rescale the soil-supported services levels
(Table 5) were either the lowest and the highest scores of each specific tool (MSQR, SENSIB, MERLIN)
or the lowest and the highest levels observed in France. The scores for each service were eventually
summed to obtain a final score between 0 and 4. Such strategy implicitly gives the same weight to
the different services.

346

#### 347 III. Results

348 III.1. Provisioning services

349 III.1.1. Plant biomass

According to the empirical model, the Luvisol on loess (SMU 29) has the highest potential yield 350 (Figure 2). This yield, classified as "good", but not "very good", according to the M-SQR (Mueller et 351 al., 2007) is coherent with the harvested yield of 8.5 t ha<sup>-1</sup> in 2018 (Table 6) considering that wheat 352 yields frequently exceed 10 t ha<sup>-1</sup> in France (Table 5). The potential yield of this soil is indeed limited 353 by subsoil compaction, the low concentration of OC in the topsoil, and the periodic hydromorphy 354 below 60 cm (Tables 1 and 2). The potential yield is minimal in the Planosol on clay (SMU 31) and in 355 the Gleysol (SMU 102). In these two soils, potential yields are constrained by a strong hydromorphy 356 from the surface downward, by a strong textural gradient above 80 cm (deducted by the M-SQR) and 357 by the clayey texture of subsoil horizons limiting the rooting depth and the available water capacity 358 (Table 1). Finally, the high stoniness of the surface horizons (Table 1) further limits the potential yield 359 in the Planosol on clay. The Luvisol on clay (SMU 30) and the Planosol (SMU 33) show intermediate 360 potential yields (Figure 2) because of periodic hydromorphy occurring below 30 cm depth (Table 1). 361 As secondary reasons, the Luvisol on clay is sharped-edged and low in OC, and the Planosol has a 362 sandy surface horizon. On flat plateau positions, the M-SQR scores (Figure 2, Table 6) decrease from 363 the center (SMU 29) to the edge of the plateau as the thickness of the soil layers developed from 364 365 loess material decreases (SMU 30) and finally vanishes (SMU 31).

The level of plant biomass provision modelled with CERES-EGC shows a pattern that is very similar to that estimated by empirical modelling (Figure 2). CERES-EGC yields are relatively high in the Luvisol on loess and almost identical to the measured ones for the year 2018 (Figure 2). Yields decrease in the Luvisol on clay and further in the Planosol on clay as the clayey layer approaches the surface and limits the rooting depth (Table 1). The Planosol exhibits yields similar to those observed in for the Luvisol on loess, despite the sandy texture of its surface horizons and the periodic hydromorphy observed above 50 cm depth. Finally, very low yields are modelled with CERES-EGC in the Gleysol.

When rescaled from 0 to 1, the yields tend to be lower for the process-based modelling than for the mpirical modelling except in the two Planosols (SMU 31 and 33) where similar yields are observed

(Figure 2). Yields in the two Planosols are potentially underestimated by the empirical modelling,
 overestimated by the process-based modelling, or both.

377

#### 378 III.1.2. Blue water

The water layer infiltrated at one meter depth, estimated with the empirical model, is arbitrarily high 379 380 (value 85 in Table 6) in the Gleysol, due to the proximity of the associated alluvial groundwater in the valley (Figure 3). The infiltration is also high for the Planosol (SMU 33), characterized by its low 381 retention due to a mostly sandy texture (Table 2). The slight decrease of infiltration from the 382 Planosol to the Luvisol on loess is consistent with higher water retention as a result of a silty to silty-383 clay texture. Finally, the low amounts of infiltrated water in the Luvisol on clay and the Planosol on 384 clay are coherent with the presence of clayey deep soil horizons (Table 2), which act like a hydraulic 385 barrier and foster lateral runoffs to the detriment of deep infiltration. The depth at which this barrier 386 appears (80 cm in the Luvisol on clay and 60 cm in the Planosol on clay, Table 2) seems to have no 387 effect on the amount of infiltrated water (Figure 3). 388

The water layer modeled with the process-based model CERES-EGC in 2018 is similar to the measured one (Figure 3). Process-based modeling estimates that a similar quantity of water drains from all of the studied soils (Figure 3), despite the hydraulic barrier in the Luvisol on clay and in the Planosol on clay (but not in other soils), or despite very contrasted soil textures, either sandy in the Planosol, silty in the Luvisol on loess or clayey in the Gleysol.

When rescaled from 0 to 1, the empirical model output gives higher levels of water provisioning than does the process-based modelling (Figure 3). The differences are particularly pronounced in the Gleysol, in the Planosol and in the Luvisol on loess.

397

398 III.2. Regulating services

399 III.2.1. Water quality

According to the empirical model MERLIN, all soils offer a highly insufficient level of non-leached N (value 1 in Table 6), i.e., a null value when rescaled from 0 to 1 (Figure 4). Indeed, significant amounts of N remain available for leaching as a result of i) N inputs exceeding real crop requirements, and ii) the absence of intermediate crops that are likely to trap mineralized N during the Summer or the beginning of the Fall.

In good agreement with empirical modelling, process-based modelling also shows that N retention is insufficient to entirely avoid N leaching from all the studied soils (Table 6, Figure 4). However, with non-leached N, ranging from a minimum of 80% in the Planosol to more than 90% of total N inputs in the four other soils (Table 6), the process-based modelling gives a relatively high level of water quality regulation for all soils when rescaled from 0 to 1 (Figure 4). In the Luvisol on loess, the level of the modelled non-leached N is very close to the measured one (Figure 4). With reference to the
Luvisol on loess, the service of water quality regulation is only slightly higher in the Luvisol on clay, in
the Planosol on clay, and in the Gleysol but it drops in the Planosol, where this service is minimal.
This last soil shows a similar amount of infiltrating water but also the highest soil OC content (Table
2). Mineralization then produces higher amounts of N available for leaching than in the Luvisol on
loess, relatively poor in OC.

416

417 III.2.2. Global Climate

When quantified with the empirical model of Hassink *et al.* (1997), the service of global climate regulation is relatively high in the clayey topsoil of the Gleysol, intermediate in the silt-loamy topsoils of the Luvisol on loess, the Luvisol on clay and the Planosol on clay and finally low in the sandy topsoil of the Planosol (Figure 5).

All of the five studied soils experience significant OC storage as a result of 20 years of a simplified 422 rapeseed/wheat crop rotation without any other organic amendments than rapeseed residue returns 423 (Figure 5, Table 6). The modelled OC storage is maximum in the currently (SMU 29 and 30) and 424 formerly (SMU 31) cultivated soils showing topsoil OC contents lower than one percent (Table 2). The 425 mean annual OC storage slightly decreases in the Gleysol and further decreases in the Planosol: the 426 two forested soils (Table 1) with topsoil OC contents reaching respectively 2 and 5 percent (Table 2). 427 When rescaled from 0 to 1, the levels of services quantified with the process-based model are higher 428 than those quantified with the empirical model except in the Gleysol, in which the level of service is 429 independent of the model used. 430

431

432 III.3. Spatial co-occurrence of soil-supported services

The soils of the Saclay plateau show a joint supply of provisioning and regulating services above the mean, except in the Planosol (Figure 6b), when the assessment is performed with the process-based model. The same soils however exhibit a joint soil services supply that is below average when estimated through empirical modelling (Figure 6a). Under the simplified crop rotation, the studied soils may thus be considered as relatively good to relatively poor services providers depending on the methodology used. The higher scores obtained with the process-based modelling appear to be related to the very high scores obtained for regulating services (Figures 4 and 5).

Soil ranking by ES level varies whether empirical or process-based modelling is performed. Indeed,
the joint supply of ES decreases in the order Gleysol (SMU 102), Luvisol on loess (SMU 29), Luvisol on
clay (SMU 30), Planosol (SMU 33) and finally Planosol on clay (SMU 31) according to the empirical
modelling At the same time, it decreases in the order Luvisol on loess (SMU 29), Luvisol on clay (SMU
30), Planosol on clay (SMU 31), Gleysol (SMU 102) and finally Planosol (SMU 33) according to the

445 process-based modelling. The best supplier of services under crop is the Luvisol on loess according to 446 empirical modelling but the Gleysol according to process-based modelling. Furthermore, the Luvisol 447 on clay and the Planosol on clay are respectively ranked among the first and the last ES suppliers, 448 respectively by the process-based and the empirical modellings.

449

#### 450 IV. Discussion

#### 451 IV.1. Performance of empirical models

The M-SQR empirical model successfully distinguished currently forested soils like the Gleysol and 452 the Planosol with yield potentials too low to have been (recently) cultivated, or soils that have been 453 abandoned in the past years like the Planosol on clay, from the two currently cultivated Luvisols 454 (SMU 29 and 30). The empirical model appears moreover sufficiently sensitive to quantify small 455 changes in yield potential between various cultivated soils. An example is the decrease in yield 456 potential from the Luvisol on loess to the Luvisol on clay resulting from a decreasing rooting depth 457 and an increasing intensity of hydromorphy. Finally, when calibrated with reference to yields 458 commonly observed in cultivated soils in France (Table 5), the yield estimated by the M-SQR 459 empirical model is satisfactorily close to the measured one (Figure 2). Since the M-SQR is able to 460 assess potential yields not only relatively among various soils but also absolutely, it appears to be an 461 efficient tool to quantify the biomass provisioning ES, as already suggested by Mueller et al. (2010, 462 2013). Its efficiency may be explained in two different ways. First, the development of an empirical 463 model dedicated to the assessment of the soil suitability to yield main cereal crops under conditions 464 of high-level management from inherent soil properties relies on a rich and long history dating back 465 at least to the 30s with the development of the Storie Index (Storie, 1978). Moreover, in conditions 466 of high-level management without irrigation, potential yields are chiefly influenced by the soil 467 available water capacity, which may be reasonably well assessed from classically available inherent 468 469 physicochemical soil properties (Van Looy et al., 2017).

Regarding water provisioning, the empirical assessment is consistent with what could be 470 expected from the soil pedological class and characteristics. It limits deep infiltration in case of i) high 471 water retention in deep fine-textured soils like the silt-loam to silty-clay loam Luvisol on loess or ii) 472 lateral water flows promoted by the more or less impermeable clay bed observed in the Luvisol on 473 clay and in the Planosol on clay, as typically described in Planosols (IUSS Working Group WRB, 2015). 474 The empirical model considers implicitly that at least one part of such lateral water flows is 475 redistributed towards the valley bottoms where it infiltrates preferentially at the landscape level. 476 This justifies the high level of water provisioning of the valley soils (here the Gleysol). In such 1D 477 model, the amount of water redistributed at the landscape scale is however only arbitrary but not 478 quantitatively based (Cam et al., 1996). These empirical assessments are moreover independent of 479

climate characteristics (Aveline et al., 2009). When used over the Paris basin, the empirical scores 480 consequently range from no infiltration (value of 0) to infiltration of all the available water (value of 481 100). The maximum amount of water available in the Luvisol on loess defined by the difference 482 between precipitations (around 625 mm) and evapotranspiration (around 450 mm) was in the range 483 of 200 mm for the crop cycle 2017-2018 (Chalhoub et al., 2020). Inversely, the measured and 484 485 process-based modelled infiltration are rescaled in Figure 3 for a considerably larger range of climate and infiltration as observed in France with a maximum of 1,000 mm per year observed in sandy soils 486 under mountainous climate (Table 5). Such discrepancy induces the systematic overestimation of the 487 absolute level of water provisioning estimated empirically compared to the process-based modelling 488 outcomes (Figure 3). Although the empirical scoring of water provisioning must not be interpreted 489 absolutely due to some arbitrary scores and to its implicit climatic dependency, it might however be 490 used for the relative comparison of soils under similar climatic conditions. 491

Field measurements (Chalhoub et al., 2020) as well as the predictions of the empirical and process-492 based models agreed on the fact that the level of water quality regulation was insufficient to 493 completely avoid N leaching from all of the studied soils. This observation suggests that MERLIN is at 494 least effective in identifying such situations, as demonstrated by Aveline et al. (2009). However, 495 MERLIN does not quantify differences in the regulation of water quality among the five studied soils 496 (Figure 4). The Luvisol on loess presents a higher yield potential so higher N consumption by crops 497 than in the Gleysol (Figure 2). On the contrary, lower infiltration is observed in the Luvisol on loess 498 than in the Gleysol (Figure 3). Consequently, for similar N inputs, the Luvisol on loess should logically 499 offer a higher service, using N to grow crops and with a minimal N transport towards the 500 groundwater, than the Gleysol. Since this tool has been created to assess the risk of nitrate leaching 501 in order to protect water resources (Aveline et al., 2009), it seems logical that MERLIN is more 502 sensitive to the excess of the capacity of the soil-plant system to regulate water quality, than to the 503 504 magnitude of this excess.

By construction, C saturation (Hassink, 1997) is proportional to the content in clay plus fine silt-505 sized particles. As a result, soils with finer texture are supposed to show a higher contribution to 506 global climate regulation (Figure 5). In a certain way, this agrees with measured OC stocks (data not 507 shown) except in the Planosol, which has a higher OC stock than the two Luvisols (SMU 29 and 30) 508 and the Planosol on clay. The topsoil OC contents (Table 2) in the silty-clay Luvisol on loess, Luvisol on 509 clay and Planosol as well as in the clayey Gleysol, are lower than the saturation limit (Table 6), 510 suggesting that these soils are far from saturation. Intensely cultivated soils such as the two Luvisols 511 are indeed commonly unsaturated (Angers et al., 2011). By contrast, it is unlikely that OC content 512 further increases in the Gleysol that is already forested and periodically waterlogged at the surface 513 (Table 1). Carbon saturation is indeed rarely reached in fine-textured soils (Angers et al., 2011), 514

suggesting that OC saturation, and thus, the level of global climate regulation, are likely 515 overestimated in such clayey soils. Finally, the OC content in the topsoil of the forested and sandy 516 Planosol is considerably higher than the saturation limit (Tables 2 and 6). According to the estimation 517 of the stable OC proposed by Angers et al. (2011), the Planosol is already oversaturated in carbon, as 518 it is frequently observed for acid sandy soils (Angers et al., 2011). The Planosol is consequently more 519 520 prone to carbon emissions than to additional carbon sequestration. Although OC saturation is very easy to use and seems helpful to rank various soils according to their inherent capability of climate 521 regulation, it may hide considerable differences in current OC stocks and in additional soil OC 522 sequestration potential as a result of contrasted land uses or agricultural practices among soils 523 (Wiesmeier et al., 2014; Chen et al., 2018). The carbon saturation deficit, calculated as the difference 524 between the intrinsic soil potential to stabilize OC and the actual stocks of OC in the fine soil fraction, 525 should better reflect the legacy of land-uses and agricultural practices (Chen et al., 2018). 526 Information about current OC stocks in the fine soil fractions is unfortunately poorly available at this 527 stage (Chen et al., 2018). 528

To conclude this section, only the contribution of soils to biomass provision and its variability among soils can be quantified absolutely using empirical modelling with a relatively reasonable level of confidence. The quantification of the provision of water and of the regulation of global climate is indeed only relative, which may nevertheless be sufficient to rank various soils according to potential service levels, as postulated by Greiner *et al.* (2017) for empirical modelling. Finally, the assessment of the contribution of soils to the regulation of the water quality is limited to the identification of soils with an "insufficient" level of service under cropping with relatively high levels of N inputs.

536

#### 537 IV.2. Performance of the process-based model

The process-based model was able to quantify with a very good accuracy the provision of biomass 538 539 and water, as well as the regulation of water quality (Figures 2, 3 and 4) in the cultivated, deep, freely drained, and silty Luvisol on loess, i.e., a soil similar to those for which CERES-EGC was developed and 540 calibrated (Gabrielle et al., 1995). The OC storage (Figure 5) cannot be compared to experimental 541 data as OC content was not measured in the field twenty years ago. The OC storage in intensely 542 cultivated soils may be surprising considering the very low OC contents currently observed in the 543 surface soil horizons of the two cultivated Luvisols (Table 2). It is however consistent with OC budgets 544 driven by i) relatively high yields leading to high inputs of crop residues and notably of rapeseed 545 residues that are not exported (Table 3) and by ii) low carbon emission as mineralization is 546 proportional to the very low OC content observed in the Luvisol on loess. Although potentially far 547 from the field truth, associated with a more complex and diverse crop rotation, it is likely that 548 modelled OC storage is consistent with our oversimplified crop rotation (Noirot-Cosson et al., 2016). 549

The efficiency of CERES-EGC to quantify soil services in the Luvisol on loess is likely shared by the Luvisol on clay. The two Luvisols (SMU 29 and 30) are indeed morphologically and physico-chemically very similar (Tables 1 and 2), and show very closed contributions for the different soil services (Figures 2, 3, 4, 5).

Yields in the Planosol on clay, in the Planosol, and in the Gleysol are mainly limited by 554 555 waterlogging (Table 1). If process-based modelled yields are lower in the Planosol on clay and in the Gleysol than in the Luvisol on loess, the Planosol contrastingly shows similarly high yields (Figure 2). 556 The Planosol on clay and the Gleysol indeed suffer from a poor water available capacity due to both 557 shallow rooting depth and to clayey subsoil horizons (Table 1). This is however not the case in the 558 Planosol (SMU 33). CERES-EGC yields seem thus limited by insufficient water availability rather than 559 by direct retroactions between soil waterlogging and the growth or functioning of crop roots. The 560 decreasing yields with increasing waterlogging observed in the Planosol on clay and in the Gleysol are 561 hence mostly incidental but it does not have to be that way as shown by the Planosol. 562

The clay bed observed in the Planosol on clay does not result in a decrease in the amount of water 563 infiltrated at one meter-depth (Figure 3) as expected from soil morphology. CERES-EGC does indeed 564 not model lateral subsurface water flow (Gabrielle et al., 1995). The hydraulic conductivity is 565 moreover averaged from 30 to 100 cm-depth mixing artificially clayey horizon with low hydraulic 566 conductivity with silty horizon of high hydraulic conductivity and overestimating the subsoil hydraulic 567 conductivity (Table 2, supplementary material S2). As a result, clayey subsoils appear able to merely 568 slow down but not to stop infiltration and redistribute water laterally. Therefore, the amount of 569 water infiltrated in the Planosol on clay, and more generally in strongly texture-differentiated soils 570 are overestimated with CERES-EGC. Contrastingly, as water does not accumulate in lowland soils as 571 the Gleysol (SMU 102), or the Planosol (SMU 33) to a lesser extent, the amount of infiltrated water in 572 such soils is conversely underestimated. 573

574 In comparison to Luvisols (SMU 29 and 30), the Planosol stores less carbon (Figure 4) for similar yields (Figure 2) likely as a result of higher CO<sub>2</sub> emissions due to higher OC contents. The Gleysol 575 contrastingly stores more carbon despite lower yields as a result of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions highly limited by its 576 clayey texture. The variability in OC storage (Figure 5) seems, at first sight, consistent with the spatial 577 heterogeneity of soil properties. It is however very unlikely that the Planosol and the Gleysol, 578 currently forested, continue to store carbon when cultivated, as cultivation is known to induce 579 decreases in carbon stocks (Balesdent et al., 1998). OC budgets are moreover strongly dependent on 580 OC inputs and consequently on yields estimates that were unfortunately found to be highly 581 questionable at least in the Planosol and Gleysol. 582

Estimates of N cycling and leaching are unlikely to be very reliable given the difficulties encountered
 in the assessment of yields, infiltration, as well as soil organic matter mineralization in the Planosol
 on clay, in the Planosol and in the Gleysol.

To conclude this section, the process-based model is particularly effective to quantify services in deep, homogeneous, and well-drained soils for which crop models have been developed and calibrated. Crop models are unsurprisingly inadequate to quantify soil-supported services in marginal soils as frequently observed under forest. For various reasons including intense waterlogging, extreme acidity, or strong texture differentiation, such soils are indeed clearly out of the range of validity of most crop models.

592

593 IV.3. Guidance in the assessment of soil-supported ES and potential uses

No single empirical or process-based model integrating a realistic representation of soils, for example 594 in terms of the depth-discretization of main inherent and manageable soil properties, could be 595 identified to quantify soil-supported ES for land uses ranging from forest to crop cultivation. 596 Integration of a realistic representation of soils in soil-supported ES assessment and mapping is thus 597 only possible with reference to a cultivated use and for a limited set of crops and cropping practices. 598 Such an assessment, which is basically a quantitative land suitability exercise, goes however largely 599 beyond classical land evaluation (Dominati et al., 2016). Indeed, it provides quantitative rather than 600 qualitative estimates of soil performance under cultivation and it addresses not only food 601 provisioning, as is classically the case, but multiple soil-supported ES. It is thus an interesting way to 602 balance biomass provisioning with other soil-supported ES under a particular use, chosen for its 603 representativeness or its interest for stakeholders. 604

With reference to the common agricultural practices considered in this research, the levels of 605 the soil-supported ES vary significantly according to soil types and properties (Figures 2 to 5). Part of 606 607 this variability in ES levels is coherent with the present variability in land uses and it may then be captured by a land use/land cover assessment approach. This is for example the case of the 608 cultivated Luvisols that unsurprisingly show a higher level of biomass production than the forested 609 Planosol and Gleysol (Figure 2). A significant variability is however observed between soils with a 610 similar land use (Figure 6). For instance, OC saturation ranges from less than 10 g kg<sup>-1</sup> in the forested 611 Planosol to about 30 g kg<sup>-1</sup> in the forested Gleysol. The biomass provision in presently- or recently-612 cultivated soils similarly ranges from good levels (M-SQR scores between 60 and 80) to poor levels 613 (M-SQR scores between 20 and 40). This clearly demonstrates that the explicit integration of soil 614 processes and properties within the ES assessment and the translation of the spatial variability of soil 615 properties into levels of soil-supported ES, will increase our knowledge on the spatial delivery of soil-616

supported ES inside patches with similar land cover and land use, and decrease the uncertainty
 associated with purely land use/land cover assessment methods (Roche and Campagne, 2019).

For the four-soil supported ES considered in this study, process-based models seem to be the best 619 solution for arable soils. Such an approach, limited to cultivated soils for which process-based models 620 have been historically developed, has been implemented for example by Therond et al. (2017) at the 621 622 French national scale, or by Ellili-Bargaoui et al. (2021) for 64 cultivated soils across the Brittany region of France. It is particularly helpful to reveal the contribution of various combinations of land 623 management and soil types to multiple ES (Therond et al., 2017; Ellili-Bargaoui et al., 2021), to 624 quantify the interactions among soil-supported services (Ellili-Bargaoui et al., 2021) or finally to 625 optimize land management for specific or multiple outcomes identified by stakeholders (Dominati et 626 al., 2016; Demestihas et al., 2018). However, approaches limited to cultivated soils that consider 627 forested and other marginal lands as "blank" areas, will miss the provision of ES by forested soils in 628 spite of the fact that such soils may be critical areas for the delivery of soil-supported ES, such as the 629 Gleysol in this study (Fig. 6), or may show high levels for a particular ES, like water provisioning in 630 SMU 33 (Fig.3). Moreover, further research is necessary to better characterize the range of cultivated 631 soils over which soil-supported services may be quantified by these models, and the associated 632 uncertainty, since all cultivated soils cannot be considered as deep, homogeneous, and well-drained. 633

By contrast, the empirical modelling approach appears at this stage to be the only one that may be 634 used for a wider variety of land uses and, hence, for the comparison of several land planning 635 scenarios. However, the availability of empirical models for different pedoclimatic conditions is very 636 uneven among the different ES: relatively high for the provision of biomass, low for water 637 provisioning, and finally almost nonexistent insofar as soil biological functioning is primarily 638 concerned as it is the case for C and N cycling. In such cases, the adaptation of empirical models not 639 specifically designed to quantify the targeted services, although informative, may be incompletely 640 641 satisfactory. The empirical model MERLIN, for example, is efficient at identifying situations with a potential impact on the environment (i.e., leached N) in accordance with its initial design, but turns 642 out to be unable to accurately assess the amount of non-leached N, which is crucial for quantifying 643 regulating services. 644

The simultaneous use of a wide portfolio of models or model types chosen to cover all soil type/land use combinations as well as the diversity of soil-supported ES should overcome the limitations attached to each of the empirical and process-based models and reduce the uncertainty arising from the use of one single type assessment. Such option, if feasible, would however inevitably increase i) the need for input data and consequently the complexity of the assessment, and ii) the risk of inconsistencies between the various models, as often observed in comparative studies (Bagstad *et al.*, 2013; Vorstius and Spray, 2015; Sharps *et al.*, 2017). This latter point is confirmed here by the

significantly method-dependent assessment of the soil-supported services, despite all the effortsmade to propose two approaches differing only by their increasing complexity (Figure 6).

Finally, steps such as i) the construction of input data sets, ii) the selection of documented and 654 adapted empirical models for a particular pedoclimatic context or the appropriation and running of 655 more complex process-based models, and iii) the interpretation of service assessments considering 656 657 the limits and uncertainties embedded in each of the empirical or process-based approaches requires significant technical, human and financial resources. Consequently, most local stakeholders are far 658 from managing an operational assessment of the contribution of soils to ES. Furthermore, every 659 assessment will ultimately remain strongly influenced by numerous methodological choices. If 660 sufficiently informed, such choices are helpful to increase the fit-for-purpose (Schroter et al., 2015) 661 but, if not, they may have unexpected implications on ES levels, ES bundles (not explicitly addressed 662 in this study) and finally ES-based decision-making (Bagstad et al., 2018). Besides testing the 663 potential outputs of ES assessment regardless of the methodology used, a similar attention at least 664 should be devoted to the continuous improvement of methodologies, for example by integrating a 665 more realistic representation of soil processes and properties and by comparing ES assessment with 666 field data at least in experimental stations. 667

#### 668

#### 669 V. Conclusion

The primary objective of the present article was to examine how a realistic representation of soil 670 properties and processes could be taken into account when assessing the levels of ES these soils 671 provide, and to appraise the degree of accuracy that can be achieved using only easily-available data 672 and existing models. One of the key results of the research described in this article is that we could 673 not find a single empirical or process-based model that could both integrate a realistic 674 representation of soils and account for land uses ranging from forest to cultivation in the 675 676 quantification of soil-supported ES. At this stage, integrating a complex representation of soils in the assessment of soil-supported ES may only be performed with reference to a cultivated use and for a 677 limited set of crops and cropping practices, which is basically a quantitative land suitability exercise. 678 Such an assessment goes however largely beyond classical land evaluation. It is indeed an interesting 679 way to balance biomass provisioning with other soil-supported services under a particular use, 680 chosen for its representativeness or its interest for stakeholders. 681

To integrate a complex representation of soils and ultimately increase the accuracy in ES assessment and mapping , we urge the research community to pursue its efforts towards i) acquiring environmental data, from basic soil properties to field measurements of the soil-supported ES, ii) developing empirical models specifically designed to assess soil functioning in various pedological contexts, and more specifically the geopedological controls on C and N cycling, and iii) integrating in

crop or land surface models a more precise soil discretization in depth, a greater diversity of soil

688 processes including lateral (subsurface) water flows, waterlogging and more complex interactions

between soil properties and soil processes like mineralization or root growth. The ability of both the

empirical and process-based models to assess the biomass provision from basic soil properties clearly

- suggests that such a path is feasible, efficient, and probably the only way to operationalize the ES
- 692 concept.
- 693
- 694

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# Legend

Ile-de-France region
The Saclay plateau
Typical soils of Saclay
Field site
Agricultural areas
Artificial surfaces
Forest and semi natural areas
Water bodies
Wetlands

## Soil Map Units

- - Urbanized areas

Planosol (SMU 33)

Gleysol (SMU 102)

Pit representative of the Soil Map Unit

Stagnic Luvisol on loess (SMU 29)

Stagnic Luvisol on clay (SMU 30)

Planosol on clay (SMU 31)



Lambert 93







empirical modelling process-based modelling (2000-2018) process-based modelling (2018) measure







Table 1: Main soil descriptive properties<sup>a</sup>

Table 2: Main soil analytical properties

Table 3: Crops and crops management

Table 4: Soil supported ecosystem services associated to indicators and tools

Table 5: Absolute minimum and maximum values per service used for results rescaling (national French scale)

Table 6: Assessment of the soil contribution to ecosystem services from empirical and process-based modelling

Soil ide	entificati	ion <sup>b</sup>	General	Information	l	Soil descr	iption							-
SMU	STU	Name	Slope (%)	Land Use	Parent Material	Horizon	Depth (cm)	Texture <sup>c</sup>	Coarse fragments (%)	Colour (moist)	Mottling (%)	Structure	Clay Coatings (%)	Roots (<2mm)
29	85	Stagnic Luvisol	0.5-1.0	Crop	Loess	Ар	0 - 42	SiL	0 - 2	10 YR 44	0	Crumbly	0	20 - 50
		on loess			Loess	Bt	42 - 60	SiCL	0 - 2	10 YR 56	0	Angular blocky	> 80	1 - 20
					Loess	Btg1	60 - 90	SiCL	0 - 2	10 YR 56	5 - 15	Prismatic	40 - 80	1 - 20
					Loess	Btg2	90 - 100	SiCL	0 - 2	10 YR 54	15 - 40	Prismatic	15 - 40	1 - 20
					Loess	BtgC	100 - 115	SiL	0 - 2	10 YR 54	15 - 40	Massive	2 - 5	1 - 20
					Loess	Ckg	115 - 135	SiL	0 - 2	10 YR 56	15 - 40	Massive	2 - 5	0
30	86	Stagnic Luvisol	1.0-2.0	Crop	Loess	Ap	0 - 35	SiL	0 - 2	10 YR 34	0	Subangular blocky	0	1 - 20
		on clay			Loess	Bt	35 - 50	SiCL	0 - 2	10 YR 44	2 - 5	Angular blocky	15 - 40	1 - 20
					Loess	Btg	50 - 80	SiCL	0 - 2	10 YR 44	5 - 15	Angular blocky	40 - 80	1 - 20
					Slope deposits	2Bt	80 - 120	SiC	15 - 40	10 YR 46	2 - 5	Massive	40 - 80	1 - 20
31	90	Planosol on clay	1.0-2.0	Fallow	Slope deposits	ApEg	0 - 40	SiL	15 - 40	10 YR 53	5 - 15	Massive	0	20 - 50
					Slope deposits	Eg	40 - 60	L	5 - 15	10 YR 64	40 - 80	Massive	0	20 - 50
					Clay	2Cg1	60 - 90	С	5 - 15	7,5 YR 56	15 - 40	Prismatic	0	1 - 20
					Clay	2Cg2	90 - 120	CL	15 - 40	10 YR 58	15 - 40	Prismatic	0	0
33	47	Planosol	5-10	Forest	Slope deposits	A1	0 - 5	SL	2 - 5	10 YR 22	0	Single grain	0	20 - 50
					Slope deposits	A2	5 - 15	SL	2 - 5	10 YR 43	0	Single grain	0	1 - 20
					Slope deposits	Bw	15 - 35	SL	2 - 5	10 YR44	0	Single grain	0	1-20
					Slope deposits	С	35 - 45	SL	2 - 5	10 YR 44	0	Single grain	0	1 - 20
					Slope deposits	2Cg1	45 - 70	SiL	2 - 5	10 YR 46	5 - 15	Massive	0	1 - 20
					Slope deposits	2Cg2	70 - 120	SiL	0 - 2	10 YR 56	> 40	Massive	0	1 - 20
102	56	Gleysol	0.5-1.0	Forest	Alluvial deposits	А	0 - 7	CL	0 - 2	10 YR 21	0	Subangular blocky	0	1 - 20
					Alluvial deposits	Bg1	7 - 20	CL	0 - 2	10 YR 41	5 - 15	Prismatic	0	1 - 20
					Alluvial deposits	Bg2	20 - 35	SiC	0 - 2	10 YR 51	5 - 15	Prismatic	0	1 - 20
					Alluvial deposits	Bg3	35 - 55	SiCL	0 - 2	10 YR 51	15 - 40	Prismatic	0	1 - 20
					Alluvial deposits	Bg4	55 - 80	SiL	0 - 2	10 YR 51	> 40	Massive	0	1 - 20
					Alluvial deposits	Cr	80 - 110	SL	0 - 2	10 YR 61	2 - 5	Massive	0	1 - 20

<sup>a</sup> Soil description according to the terminology of the fourth edition of the guidelines for soil description (Jahn et al., 2006).

<sup>b</sup> According to the regional geographic soil database at 1 : 250 000 of Ile-de-France (Roque, 2004). SMU and STU are respectively referring to Soil Map Units and Soil Typological Units.

<sup>c</sup> Abbreviations: S, Sand; LS, Loamy Sand; SL, Sandy Loam; SiL, Silt Loam; SiCL, Silty Clay Loam; CL, Clay Loam; L, Loam; SiC, Silty Clay; C, Clay.

Soil ide	entificati	on and horizonatio	na		Particle	Size distribu	ution (g.kg <sup>-1</sup> )	b		Bulk	рН	CaCO <sub>3</sub>	OCc	Total N	CEC
SMU	STU	Name	Horizon	Depth (cm)	cl	fsi	csi	fs	CS	density (g.cm <sup>-3)</sup>	(H₂O)	(g.kg <sup>-1</sup> )	(g.kg <sup>-1</sup> )	(g.kg <sup>-1</sup> )	(cmol⁺.kg <sup>-1</sup> )
29	85	Stagnic Luvisol	Ар	0 - 42	187	299	451	46	17	1.41	7.6	< 1	8.91	0.94	11.20
		on loess	Bt	42 - 60	280	289	383	35	13	1.51	7.7	< 1	4.41	0.57	14.60
			Btg1	60 - 90	298	283	377	33	9	1.54	7.9	< 1	2.89	0.39	16.00
			Btg2	90 - 100	282	246	442	24	6	1.56	8.0	< 1	2.02	0.28	16.20
			BtgC	100 - 115	243	278	451	25	3	1.59	8.1	< 1	1.64	0.23	15.10
			Ckg	115 - 135	204	293	462	19	22	1.58	8.6	106	1.59	0.20	12.80
30	86	Stagnic Luvisol	Ар	0 - 35	191	265	446	65	33	1.51	6.8	< 1	8.64	0.90	10.70
		on clay	Bt	35 - 50	284	256	406	41	13	1.54	7.0	< 1	3.25	0.44	14.20
			Btg	50 - 80	290	264	384	47	15	1.59	7.4	< 1	2.39	0.34	16.30
			2Bt	80 - 120	386	222	264	71	57	1.70	7.3	< 1	1.73	0.28	22.00
31	90	Planosol on clay	ApEg	0 - 40	198	255	283	133	131	1.54	6.1	< 1	9.94	0.63	7.71
			Eg	40 - 60	257	7 261	257	137	88	1.58	7.1	< 1	4.56	0.30	9.24
			2Cg1	60 - 90	527	139	116	101	117	1.57	7.1	< 1	3.03	0.18	23.90
			2Cg2	90 - 120	378	114	125	181	202	1.57	5.1	< 1	1.77		14.50
33	47	Planosol	A1	0 - 5	73	71	107	389	360	0.98	5.5	< 1	51.40	2.89	9.42
			A2	5 - 15	59	78	126	384	353	1.43	4.9	< 1	11.10	0.82	2.22
			Bw	15 - 35	66	87	128	372	347	1.39	4.9	< 1	5.82	0.47	1.57
			С	35 - 45	78	108	164	345	305	1.39	5.1	< 1	3.11	0.28	2.16
			2Cg1	45 - 70	151	220	361	180	88	1.58	5.2	< 1	2.29	0.29	4.75
			2Cg2	70 - 120	143	193	356	195	130	1.58	5.3	< 1	1.68	0.19	4.60
102	56	Gleysol	А	0 - 7	393	242	150	171	44	1.32	6.0	< 1	19.38	1.04	29.60
			Bg1	7 - 20	393	242	150	171	44	1.32	6.0	< 1	19.38	1.04	29.60
			Bg2	20 - 35	527	286	123	41	23	1.57	6.0	< 1	11.01	1.07	28.90
			Bg3	35 - 55	421	340	153	73	13	1.57	6.6	< 1	6.44	0.53	22.30
			Bg4	55 - 80	247	177	194	327	55	1.59	6.8	< 1	5.50	0.39	14.60
			Cr	80 - 110	151	94	110	462	183	1.58	6.4	< 1	3.36	0.18	8.27

<sup>a</sup> According to the regional geographic soil database at 1 : 250 000 of Ile-de-France (Roque, 2004). SMU and STU are respectively referring to Soil Map Units and Soil Typological Units.

<sup>b</sup> Abbreviations: cl, clay ( < 2 μm); fsi, fine silt (2 – 20 μm); csi, coarse silt (20-50 μm); fs, fine sand (50 – 200 μm); cs, coarse sand (200 – 2000 μm).

<sup>c</sup> Organic Carbon (OC).

			Winter Rapeseed	Source	Winter wheat	Source
Sowing	Cultivar		Magelan	CERES-EGC database	Roche	CERES-EGC database
	Day of year		246	Terres Inovia, 2019	290	Chambre d'agriculture IdF, 2016
	Density (grain.m <sup>-2</sup> )		115	Carpentier, 2012	262.3	Chambre d'agriculture IdF, 2016
	Depth (cm)		2.5	Terres Inovia, 2019	2.5	Arvalis – Institut du végétal, 2014a
N inputs	1 <sup>st</sup> Input	Day of year	62	Terres Inovia, 2019	82	Arvalis – Institut du végétal, 2014b; Interviews
		Amount (kgN.ha <sup>-1</sup> )	79	Agreste, 2006	80	Agreste, 2006; Interviews
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Input	Day of year	84	Terres Inovia, 2019	109	Arvalis – Institut du végétal, 2014b; Interviews
		Amount (kgN.ha <sup>-1</sup> )	89	Agreste, 2006	80	Agreste, 2006; Interviews
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Input	Day of year			137	Arvalis – Institut du végétal, 2014b; Interviews
		Amount (kgN.ha <sup>-1</sup> )			40	Agreste, 2006; Interviews
Residues			Incorporation	Terres Inovia, 2019	Exportation	Vaisman et al., 2018; Interviews
Tillage			Yes (30 cm)	Terres Inovia, 2019	Yes (30 cm)	FranceAgriMer, 2012

ES Families	Soil-Based ES	Indicators	Modellings								
			Empirical	Units	Reference	Process-based	Units	Reference			
Provisioning	Plant biomass	Yield	Expert-based scoring M-SQR	Х	Mueller et al., 2007	CERES-EGC model	t ha-1 yr-1	Jones et al., 1986			
	Water	Infiltrated water (1m depth)	Expert-based scoring SENSIB	Х	Cam et al., 1996	CERES-EGC model	mm yr⁻¹	Jones et al., 1986			
Regulating	Water quality	Non-leached nitrogen	Expert-based scoring MERLIN v2.	Х	Aimon-Marie et al., 2001	CERES-EGC model	kgN ha <sup>-1</sup> yr <sup>-1</sup>	Jones et al., 1986			
	Climate	Carbon (C) storage	Pedotransfer function C saturation	gC kg <sup>-1</sup>	Hassink, 1997	CERES-EGC model	tC ha <sup>-1</sup> yr <sup>-1</sup>	Jones et al., 1986			

<b>ES Families</b>	Soil-Based ES	Modellings					
		Empirical	Units	Source	Process-based	Units	Source
Provisioning	Plant biomass	[0;100]	Х	Mueller et al., 2007	[4 ; 12]	t ha-1 yr-1	Arvalis – Institut du végétal, 2019
	Water	[0;100]	Х	Cam et al., 1996	[55 ; 1119]	mm yr <sup>-1</sup>	Therond et al., 2017
Regulating	Water quality	[1;3]	Х	Aimon-Marie et al., 2001	[55 ; 100]	%	Therond et al., 2017
	Climate	[4 ; 40]	gC kg <sup>-1</sup>	Angers et al., 2011	[-0.4 ; 0.4]	tC ha <sup>-1</sup> yr <sup>-1</sup>	Therond et al., 2017

Soil-supported ES	Model	Stagnic Luvisol on loess	Stagnic Luvisol on clay	Planosol on clay	Planosol	Gleysol
Plant biomass	M-SQR	69	57	35	49	40
	CERES-EGC 2000-2018 (t ha <sup>-1</sup> yr <sup>-1</sup> )	7.9 (±2.3)	6.9 (±2.3)	6.6 (±2.1)	8.3 (±2.2)	5.3 (±1.5)
	CERES-EGC 2018 (t ha <sup>-1</sup> yr <sup>-1</sup> )	8.6				
	Measure (t ha <sup>-1</sup> yr <sup>-1</sup> )	8.5				
Water	SENSIB	47	29	30	53	85
	CERES-EGC 2000-2018 (mm yr-1)	236 (±120)	233 (±121)	280 (±120)	230 (±113)	274 (±120
	CERES-EGC 2018 (mm yr <sup>-1</sup> )	322				
	Measure (mm yr <sup>-1</sup> )	334				
Water quality	MERLIN v2.	1	1	1	1	1
	CERES-EGC 2000-2018 (%)	92 (±4)	97 (±2)	95 (±2)	83 (±8)	94 (±3)
	CERES-EGC 2018 (%)	87				
	Measure (%)	87				
Climate	C <sub>sat</sub> (gC kg <sup>-1</sup> )	22.1	21.0	20.9	9.5	29.8
	CERES-EGC 2000-2018 (tC ha-1 yr-1)	0.297	0.314	0.302	0.082	0.247