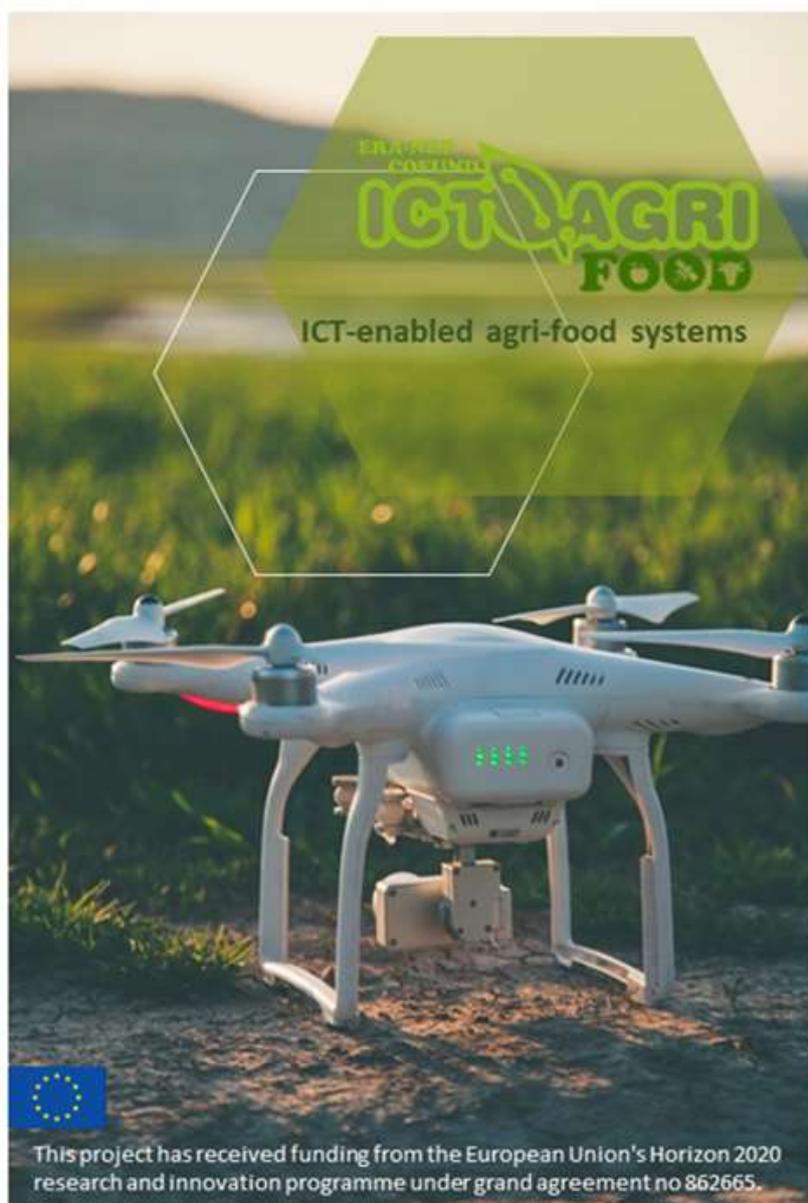


NEWSLETTER, SEPTEMBER 2020

ICT-AGRI-FOOD



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Welcome to ICT-AGRI-FOOD

Dear ICT-AGRI-FOOD community,

The first year of our ERA-NET Cofund project has almost passed. Fortunately, the terrible Corona Crisis did not strike us severely so far. To our knowledge, all colleagues are in good health! Our community has switched smoothly to the pandemic mode of operation. We carried on and will do so in future to construct the high-tech food system of tomorrow together with you.

We can proudly inform you that in October, the projects selected for funding in the first cofunded call will be announced to the public. Simultaneously, several further calls for funding RDI are currently under preparation and some of them will likely be published by the end of 2020 or early 2021. This means: please keep your eyes open if you are looking for funding opportunities. Please find details on these additional calls in this newsletter.

In November 2020 a first workshop will be held, aspiring to build a "Fast track to innovation". The event aims to let our project researchers already think of what they will do with the research results". We intend to help our funded research projects to find a way for the transition from research (early or advanced stage) to impactful innovation. The workshop is linked to ICT-AGRI-FOOD's Knowledge Incubator programme, which will be created in the form of a series of events during the lifetime of the Cofund and will provide a pivotal point of knowledge connecting researchers with the private sector and stakeholders.

Our last newsletter was quite a while ago, and in retrospect, it seems like a prophecy. We wrote here "Our day-to-day life will change substantially in the coming decade due to multifold challenges and promising opportunities alike, and so will our activities as consumers in food systems. Digital technologies will find their way in many areas of our life, not only into interactions with the agri-food systems as consumers of goods and services but of course also in each step along the value chain of goods, such as foodstuffs." It is curious, because of the crisis, the food systems took a huge step forward in making the vision a reality. Direct marketing and online shopping are booming, people understand how important intact wildlife is for preventing virus outbreaks from wild fauna to humans, virtually everyone will admit that preventing a further rise of global temperature must be achieved by a comprehensive reorganisation of our way of life including production, merchandising and food systems. We do see chances here, and we are trying to recognise the opportunities. We are happy to involve you in our big steps towards a more sustainable future.

Kind regards,
Elke Saggau, Niels Gøtke, Johannes Pfeifer



First Call

Transnational, collaborative, inter-/transdisciplinary research projects on ICT-enabled AGRI-FOOD systems

Almost one year ago we launched our first [co-funded call](#) between 28 Funding parties from 22 countries with a global budget of around 17.5 million euro.

Research projects should investigate, develop and test digital solutions for the rising demand for food, competition for land and other natural resources from other biomass uses globalisation, and threats from animal or plant diseases, environmental and climatic changes, public health considerations and economic constraints. Tackling these challenges will require a coordinated transnational approach, which uses the available financial, intellectual and structural resources to maximum effect.

The call had two Thematic areas:

- 1) Data-driven ICT platforms and solutions to improve the sustainability of agri-food Systems
- 2) How to identify and address barriers for adoption of ICT technologies in the agri-food systems

We received **112 pre-proposals**. After the eligibility check, 96 pre-proposals were selected for expert reviewing. 32 consortia were invited to submit a full proposal. These full proposals are currently under evaluation by an International Evaluation Committee.

Evaluation outcomes and funding recommendations will be communicated to the consortia coordinators by the beginning of October.

Joint Call

Next Joint call on "Circularity"



Building on the successful 2018 Joint Call; SusAn, ERA-GAS and ICT-AGRI(-FOOD) „did it again“: Together with the ERA-NETs FACCE ERA GAS, SusAn and this time also SusCrop, we will launch a call on circularity and mixed crop/livestock farming systems at the end of 2020 or early 2021.

The goal of the call for research is to investigate prospects of land use optimisation through circularity concepts of combined crop and livestock farming, i.e. to try to use synergies between crop and livestock production while recognising the limitations.

Future agricultural systems are expected to be more efficient at using natural resources, minimise GHG emissions, be resilient against climate change and volatile prices and, ideally, less dependent on pesticides and mineral fertiliser.

Circularity integrates crops, animals and soil as cornerstones of agricultural production. While livestock obviously is mandatory for some biotopes and landscapes to exist (grassland), the soil plays a more hidden, yet central role in the cycles of nutrients and water, but also in reducing pathogens and pollutants. More recently, the role of the soil to store carbon is being examined. C-sequestration also contributes to soil organic matter which has the potential to increase the resilience of soil and plants against extreme weather events. We regard soil as the key element in a circular farming system.

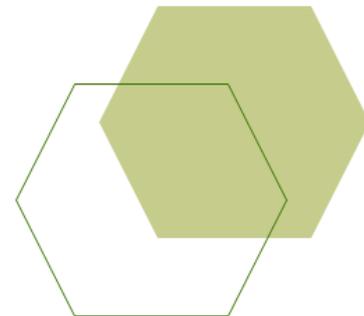
Currently, a writing team is taking care of the call text involving partners of all four ERA-NET initiatives active in this process. In parallel to preparing the call, partners have been asked for their interest and for commitment to supporting this common call. The European Commission is also in favour of this call, which covers a broad theme on “circularity” while marshalling resources, capacities and funds.

Contact: Arnd Bassler, BLE arnd.bassler@ble.de

Further calls and other activities

I foresee further calls and other activities in the coming years. These calls/activities will be developed among the partners by following the project plan and with input from stakeholders.

To strengthen the partnership, we have planned to form an Expert Advisory Group with experts from both academia and industry and to seek synergies with relevant projects and initiatives like [EIP-AGRI](#), [ESA](#), [the Smart Specialisation Platform on Agri-food](#) (S3P Agri-Food), [IoF2020](#), [FACCE-JPI](#), [EIT-Food](#) and others.



On the international plan, ICT-AGRI-FOOD will pursue its collaboration with the International Bioeconomy Forum (IBF), seeking to develop the international agenda concerning precision food systems.

To keep the ERA-NET relevant, outreach and communication will be crucial. Besides the webpage, twitter and regular newsletters, ICT-AGRI-FOOD plans to host workshops and seminars and to be present at relevant conferences and fairs.



ESA (European Space Agency) has for some years been working with agri-food and on 12 October this year, a new ESA Kick-Start call will open with a focus on space-enabled solutions to tackle a responsible manner the agricultural challenges of 21st century. The call is developed together with ICT-AGRI-FOOD. We are looking forward to this call and our future collaboration with ESA.

This call aims to stimulate the development of space-enabled agritech value chain applications in order to tackle in a responsible manner the agricultural challenges of the 21st century. Three key objectives are defined in line with the new Common Agricultural Policy:

- Sustainability: agritech applications mitigating impacts on the climate and the environment, landscapes, biodiversity and producing safe and healthy food.
- Fairness: Ensuring decent revenues for farmers (especially those with more difficulties), rebalancing power in food chain, promoting rural areas and attracting young farmers.
- Competitiveness: develop the agritech sector through innovation, digitalization, new technologies, rural development and infrastructure, efficient advisory systems and continuous training.

ESA Space Solutions can provide funding to perform Kick-Start activities to any company (economic operator) residing in the following Member States: Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Sweden.

Currently, Germany, Luxembourg, Norway and Ireland have pre-approved funding for this Kick-Start activity. Applications from any other Member State will require a letter of approval from their National Delegation (contact available on ESA Space Solutions website).

Kick-Start activities are funded at:

- 80% by the European Space Agency for a maximum of €64K per contract for SMEs*
 - 75% by the European Space Agency for a maximum of €60K per contract for non-SMEs
- *SMEs, or 'Small and Medium Enterprises', are defined here: EU recommendation 2003/361.

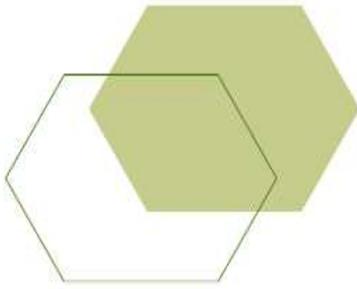
The duration of each Kick-Start activity is expected to be 6 months.

Standard ESA regulations that govern the Kick Start Activities calls are foreseen to apply to this particular call as well.

Webinars are scheduled for the following dates and a speaker from the ICT-AGRI-FOOD project will be invited.

- 29 September 2020, 15:00 CEST
- 5 October 2020, 15:00 CEST

For more information and to Register to the webinars, please follow the link: <https://business.esa.int/funding/intended-tender/responsible-agritech>



Fast track to innovation workshop

November 2020

The aim is to let our project researcher already think of what they will do with the research results. When research projects start, there is still too little attention being paid to what we do with the results after the project is finished.

We intend to help our funded research projects to find a way for the transition from (early or advanced stage) research to impactful innovation. For this purpose, we aim to provide tools, connections and mentoring to increase the projects' visibility, fast-track growth and finally maximise the chances of success and impact.

In the end, the researchers should answer some questions for themselves, such as "What is needed to make the step from research results to innovation", "In which way the step towards a real innovation can be implemented, e.g. should a start-up be founded, or can the results be used for innovation by another model?" etc.

The goal of this workshop is to match interesting technologies to end-users, this by connecting people and collecting ideas.

The initiative promotes opportunities for the agri-food industry to engage with our ERA-NET more easily, to exploit opportunities arising from our research outputs and to access our know-how, expertise and infrastructure in a more efficient manner. Research is recognised as the path to innovation and commercialisation.

Invitations and more information about the agenda will be sent in the upcoming weeks.

Meet the ICT-AGRI-FOOD partners



Ministry of Agriculture Food and Forestry policies

Who are they?

The Italian Ministry of Agriculture Food and Forestry policies support the agro-food and forestry sector through the governmental Programme in Agriculture, on a yearly basis. The main aim of the Programme is the development and sustainability of a competitive agricultural, agri-food and agroindustry sector. In particular, the activities include the promotion of research and innovation, the development of agri-food chains, the protection and exploitation of typical and quality products, the internationalization of enterprises and the implementation at a national level of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the agricultural European Innovation Partnership (EIP-AGRI). The Research Office, DISR IV, under general Directorate of Rural Development, is responsible for Research and Innovation programming, research promotion and funding within the agricultural, agri-food and rural sector. Research and innovation activities are planned in coherence with the National Strategic Plan for innovation and research contributing to align the research and rural development policies for the best agriculture development in the wide context of sustainable agriculture and bioeconomy.

How are they involved in ICT-AGRI-FOOD?

Mipaaf contributes to the European Research Area (ERA) as a partner in many actions (ERANETs, JPIs, EJPs and CSAs) aimed at the coordination in research and innovation and in the definition of a common research agenda and a member of SCAR (Standing Committee on Agricultural Research). Mipaaf also supports and acts as supervisor of CREA (Council for Research in Agriculture and analysis of agriculture economics), one of the major Italian research centers for agriculture, food systems and nutrition, forestry.

Who is involved: Livia Ortolani, Serenella Puliga and Alice Albertini



Who are they?

PtJ is a German project management agency within the Research Centre Juelich which undertakes the management of R&D and innovation programmes of various contractors representing the national government; mainly the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi), the Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU). As one of Germany's leading sponsors of development projects, we are the public sector's partner for scientific, economic and political issues. We are using our expertise in research and innovation management to help our clients in Germany's national and state-level governments and in the European Commission meet their development policy goals. We implement research and innovation projects for our customers that are specifically tailored to their requirements and the needs of society at large. Our approach combines support at both national and European level to help secure Germany's position as a competitive hub for research and innovation as part of an overarching European research space. We are based in Jülich, west of Cologne, and also have offices in Berlin, Rostock and Bonn.

How are they involved in ICT-AGRI-FOOD?

PtJ's Division for Biological Innovation and Economic (BIO) is responsible for the administration of all funding in the context of the National Research Strategy BioEconomy2030. For that purpose, JUELICH is formally authorised by the ministry to conduct all tasks related to the programme management, i.e. launch of calls, evaluation as well as contractual and financial administration. In the context of ICT-AGRI-FOOD, we lead WP4 Follow-up and monitoring of the projects resulting from the cofunded call and support WP3 Selection process as well as WP5 communication and dissemination. Furthermore, we host several national contact points (NCP) for the 7th Research Framework Programme and Horizon2020 of the EU, among others for the thematic priority Life Sciences, Genomics, and Biotechnology for Health.

Who is involved: Ulrike Pogoda de la Vega and Stefan Lampel



Agriculture and Food
Development Authority

Who are they?

Teagasc – the Agriculture and Food Development Authority – is the Irish national body providing integrated research, advisory and training services to the agriculture and food industry and rural communities. Its mission is to support science-based innovation in the agri-food sector and the broader bio-economy that will underpin profitability, competitiveness and sustainability.

How are they involved in ICT-AGRI-FOOD?

Teagasc has been a member of the first two ERA-NETs (ICT-AGRI and ICT-AGRI 2). In ICT-AGRI-FOOD, Teagasc leads work-package 8 on international network development and will contribute to work-package 4 on evaluation of the funded projects and work-package 7 on the future of the network after the end of the ERA-NET.

Who is involved: Raymond Kelly

ICT-AGRI-FOOD network activities

Agrifood20, a leading event for the digital transformation of the agri-food sector

Reinventing ourselves in the face of the new global challenges

The next the Smart Agri-food Summit event will take place on **24th and 25th of September 2020** in Málaga (Spain), an European event for the digital transformation of the agri-food sector.

The event has been developed under a **hybrid model** that has a digital dimension as a complement to the face-to-face part, with the aim of facilitating the participation for professionals and companies that do not have the possibility to travel due to restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Program and activities include forum, elevator pitches, agritalks, technology transfer conferences, investor forum, Smart Agrifood Summit Technological Innovation Awards.

More information can be obtained at <https://smartagrifoodsummit.com>

The banner features the Smart Agrifood Summit logo at the top center. Below it, the text reads: '#Agrifood20, a leading event for the digital transformation of the agri-food sector' and 'RE-INVENTING US IN THE FACE OF NEW GLOBAL CHALLENGES'. The dates 'Málaga, September 24th – 25th, 2020' are listed. On the left, there is a cartoon illustration of a woman in a white lab coat and blue skirt. To her right, under the heading 'FYCMA, safe place', there are three bullet points with checkmarks: 'Because Smart Agrifood Summit is an international event, we have developed a hybrid model that has a digital dimension as a complement to the face-to-face part, with the aim of facilitating the participation for professionals and companies that do not have the possibility to travel due to restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.', 'Adapting to the current situation, we have implemented a digital protocol of specific health and safety measures to return with all the guarantees.', and 'Enforce safety protocol in events.'

Save the date for the Virtual project seminar of the ERA-NET SusAn

Join the Virtual project seminar of SusAn on the 17th and 18th November 2020. Discover the latest results of SusAn Cofunded projects and gain insights from the projects of the joint call of the three ERA-NETs FACCE ERA-GAS, ERA-NET SusAn and ICT-AGRI 2.

From mid-2017 onwards, research teams started their work for two and a half or three years to achieve new insights for the field of sustainable animal production taking into account a system and interdisciplinary approach addressing multiple objectives under the following three Research Areas:

- Improve the productivity, resilience and competitiveness of European Animal Production
- Improve and manage resource use to reduce waste and enhance the environmental sustainability of European Animal Production
- Improve on-farm practices to enhance consumer acceptability and address societal challenges associated with animal welfare, product quality and safety, biodiversity and provision of ecosystem services

The SusAn virtual project seminar will give a unique opportunity for stakeholders to discuss the projects' main fields of work: Improve the productivity, resilience and competitiveness of European Animal Production, Improve and manage resource use to reduce waste and enhance the environmental sustainability of European Animal Production and Improve on-farm practices to enhance consumer acceptability and address societal challenges associated with animal welfare, product quality and safety, biodiversity and provision of ecosystem services. Therefore, this event is particularly relevant to EU policymakers, academics, companies and various experts from private and public institutions.

Invitations and more information about the agenda will be sent in the upcoming weeks.

More information can be obtained at <https://era-susan.eu/>

TRACK project final event

TRACK is a European Project about "**Tracking opportunities to develop and strengthen data collection and big data in agri-food chain to increase competitiveness of SMEs**".

TRACK will join the effort with 2 other European projects, DIGICLUSTERS and CONSENSYS with this agenda:

- Cross-Presentation of each project: Consortium, Scope, Main activities and Main results
- Clusters recommendations toward the Digitalization in Agrifood and Food Industry: Key-messages, Lessons learnt.
- Next steps and long-term cooperation opportunities
- Conclusions



The poster features a white background on the left with a green diagonal stripe. At the top, logos for CONSENSYS, TRACK, and DIGI CLUSTERS are displayed. The main text reads: 'SAVE THE DATE', '26-10-2020 | 14.00-17.00 CET', 'Location: Online', 'Boosting digitalization in European Agrifood sector', and 'Clusters recommendations toward the policy makers'. At the bottom left, there are logos for the European Union and ESCPS. On the right, a 3D rendering of a robotic hand holding a red apple is shown against a blue background.

Continuous news updates

To find out more about ICT-AGRI-FOOD activities follow the @ictagrifood on twitter or check our [website](#)

Send us input for the ICT-AGRI-FOOD newsletter

If you have relevant information for the ICT-AGRI-FOOD network based on innovation in ICT-AGRI-FOOD, a video, a funding opportunity, an inspirational idea, a call for contributions, a survey, a report, then please send it to us info@ictagrifood.eu.

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