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Welcome to ICT-AGRI-FOOD

Dear ICT-AGRI-FOOD community,

Soon we will have spring. The days are getting brighter, longer and warmer and with the hopefully upcoming relaxation of the COVID-19 crisis due to the arriving vaccines, we all have good reason for an optimistic view in the future.

Our project came very well through the crisis, it is growing and developing satisfyingly. In February, we have met for the first time with the members of our Expert Advisory Group to get to know each other and discuss future missions. Moreover, ICT-AGRI-FOOD's next Joint Call has been launched on 09.03.2021, a call organised together with the ERA-NET Cofunds SusAn, ERA-GAS and SusCrop on enhancing circularity in agriculture by reintegration of the currently largely decoupled crop and livestock sectors.

In March 2021 two exciting events are approaching, the Kick-off event of our 19 funded projects of the EC-cofunded call on the 17th and 18th of March and the Kick-off event of our Knowledge Incubator Programme on the 24th of March. In the Knowledge Incubator Programme, which aims at bringing researchers, industry, funders and further stakeholders together in order to exchange on innovative ideas in our area of activity, everybody is welcome to participate, to meet peers and to discuss in a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere on future innovations to make the transformation of our food systems towards sustainability, fairness, resilience and transparency a reality. There is only a limited number of seats available, as it is an online event. If you are interested to join it, please contact us (johannes.pfeifer@ble.de). We would be happy if you come along at the Knowledge Incubator Kick-off event and on our webpage, make an account (if you do not have one) and help our network to develop innovative ideas for a sustainable future and to make impact!

We wish you a successful, happy and healthy 2021!

Sincerely yours,

The Coordination Team

Elke Saggau, Niels Götke, Katerina Kotzia and Johannes Pfeifer



First Call

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

The first transnational joint call for research projects within the framework of ICT-AGRI-FOOD aimed at the selection of projects that will significantly contribute to enable digital technology solutions for a transition towards more sustainable and resilient agri-food systems.

Research projects will 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.

This call is funded by 28 institutions from 22 countries, 3 European regions and the European Commission.

In a two-phase submission process **112** eligible pre-proposals were peer reviewed and ranked by a panel of international experts. Based on the ranking and the available national/regional funding, **32** research consortia were invited to submit a full proposal. After peer review and ranking of the full proposals by the same evaluation panel, the **Call Steering Committee** [selected 19 consortia for funding](#) within the limits of available national/regional and EC funding.

Joint Call

Next Joint call on "Circularity"



Announcement of the 2021 Joint Call on “Circularity in mixed crop and livestock farming systems, with emphasis on greenhouse gas mitigation”

The Joint Call of the four ERA-NET Cofunds **SusAn** (Sustainable Animal Production Systems), **FACCE-ERA-GAS** (Monitoring and Mitigation of Greenhouse Gases from Agriculture and Silviculture), **ICT-AGRI-FOOD** (ICT-enabled agri-food systems) and **SusCrop** (Sustainable Crop Production) has been launched.

The four ERA-NETs have coordinated and aligned efforts in areas of mutual interest to elaborate on a joint transnational call in the field of agricultural greenhouse gas (GHG) research, focusing on circularity in mixed crops and livestock farming systems with emphasis on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

25 funders of the four ERA-Nets committed themselves to participate. Furthermore several funders from overseas joined the call. The total budget of the 2021 Joint Call of approx 16M€. This shows that the topic and the collaboration of the four ERA-Nets is of great interest to the community.

The deadline for the one stage proposal submission is the 26th May 2021 at 15:00 (CET). Online submission is required via the submission tool available at <https://www.suscrop.eu/2021-joint-call>. Further information on the Scope of the 2021 Joint Call and the specific regulations/requirements are provided via the following link: <https://ictagrifood.eu/node/44596>

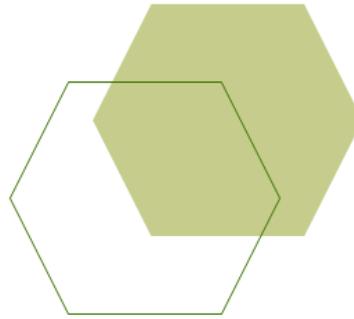
Contact: Katerina Kotzia, BLE Katerina.kotzia@ble.de and Livia Ortolani, MIPAAF livia.ortolani.ext@politicheagricole.it

Further calls and other activities

We 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 formed an **Expert Advisory Group (EAG)** with experts from both academia and industry. The EAG's scientific advice will be taken into consideration for the strategic direction of the ICT-AGRI-FOOD Cofund Action with regard to relevance of activities and quality improvement, its effectiveness and visibility. The EAG will assist the Governing Board with their expert knowledge upon conjointly detected knowledge gaps and objectives when needed (e.g. for the new Scientific Research and Innovation Agenda, for preparation of call topics, conceptualisation of additional activities, such as workshops and seminars). One of the first important tasks for the EAG is providing input and ideas for the planned "Knowledge Incubator".

More information on the Expert Advisory group and a list of its members can be found soon on the webpage.



ICT-AGRI-FOOD seeks synergies with relevant projects and initiatives like [the Smart Specialisation Platform on Agri-food \(S3P Agri-Food\)](#), to reach out to end users and contributing to the adaptation of new digital solutions throughout the food chain.





European Regions supporting agritech: S3 High Tech Farming

Established in 2016, the S3 HTF Partnership is a collaboration among European Regions which set agritech as a priority in their Smart Specialization Strategies. By connecting their regional innovation ecosystems and focusing on common challenges, the partners promote the development of interregional innovation investments in agritech solutions.

Who we are

The S3 High Tech Farming partnership (S3HTFP) aims to modernise the agricultural sector through improving the uptake and implementation of high tech solutions across various agricultural sectors and jointly through EU regions, with the objective of keeping Europe at the forefront of progress in smart farming. To achieve the modernisation of the agricultural sector, the High Tech Farming partnership will create an ecosystem for testing, disseminating and commercialising European technological solutions through a regional platform consisting of regional authorities, research and technology offices, demonstration farms, and technology providers. Within the High-tech partnership, several use cases are in development including the FreshFruit and PODUR pilot.

The S3HTFP has been set up to overcome several challenges.

- *First, it aims to contribute to the design and implementation of approaches that can help farmers and agronomists to develop the skills they need in the face of the digital transition in agriculture.*
- *Second, it plans to address the lack of skills that avoids the widespread use of digital technologies on farms.*
- *Third, it intends to support policy makers in the drafting of future Common agricultural policy (CAP) Strategic Plans to support the modernisation of the agricultural sector, including the use of digital technologies.*
- *Fourth, it wants to connect European actors in the farming, advisory, educational, and business sector to develop a strong ecosystem for agricultural knowledge exchange and innovation.*

The S3HTFP will facilitate the cross-regional pooling and sharing of agricultural data between farmers and throughout the value chain by promoting knowledge exchange, demonstration farms, code of conduct, operational details, and regional funding opportunities.

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Els Van de Velde, IDEA Consult, Els.VandeVelde@ideaconsult.be
website: <https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/high-tech-farming>



The 'Smart Sensors 4 Agri-Food' Partnership, a consolidated network for European collaboration in support of SMEs

Vision of 'Smart Sensors 4 Agri-food'

Support all the agri-food companies to ensure they make the leap towards Industry 4.0 and that the agri-food sector evolves into an interconnected, resilient and smart agri-food system in Europe.

Who we are

The Thematic Smart Specialisation Partnership 'Smart Sensors 4 Agri-food' (SS4AF) was initiated by Flanders' FOOD, imec and DSP valley from Flanders (Belgium) and Wagralim from Wallonia (Belgium). Today, 38 clusters and research partners from 12 European regions set themselves the goals of boosting the digital transformation of the agri-food sector and facilitating access to applicable solutions for this industry. By connecting competences across Europe the partners as well as their members and stakeholders will gain a better understanding of agri-food's opportunities, challenges and requirements for digital technologies.

The agri-food industry is taking its first steps towards Industry 4.0. Larger enterprises with a broad network, connections with Research & Technology Organisations (RTOs) and international affiliations are up-to-date and aware of the most recent technological developments and its opportunities. However, all over Europe the agri-food industry is typically a small and medium-sized enterprises driven sector. For the agri-food industry the creation of an IoT environment and introducing big data management is a huge challenge. As 'Smart Sensors 4 Agri-food' (SS4AF) Partnership we believe that a down to earth, stepwise approach, starting from the challenges and needs of the agri-food companies is needed.

The aim of our SS4AF Partnership is to contribute to the development and roll-out of the Smart Specialisation Strategies of the involved regions.

Our objectives are:

- *the set-up of a platform between agri-food clusters and cluster organisations representing the technology- or digital solution providers, relevant RTOs and other related stakeholders, lowering the barriers for agri-food companies to access and implement the newest technologies linked to digitalization;*
- *the establishment of a network of living labs, where these newest technologies can be demonstrated and tested;*
- *the collaboration between clusters and RTOs to create a trust zone between the involved sectors, facilitating the exchange of know-how and accelerating the introduction of technologies.*

As physical backbone of our Partnership we are setting-up a network of shared, open access Living Labs, where new Industry 4.0 related technologies can be demonstrated and tested. Competition and duplication within EU regions limits the development of critical scale. It is clear that collaboration between complementary EU regions is more effective and sustainable than competition.

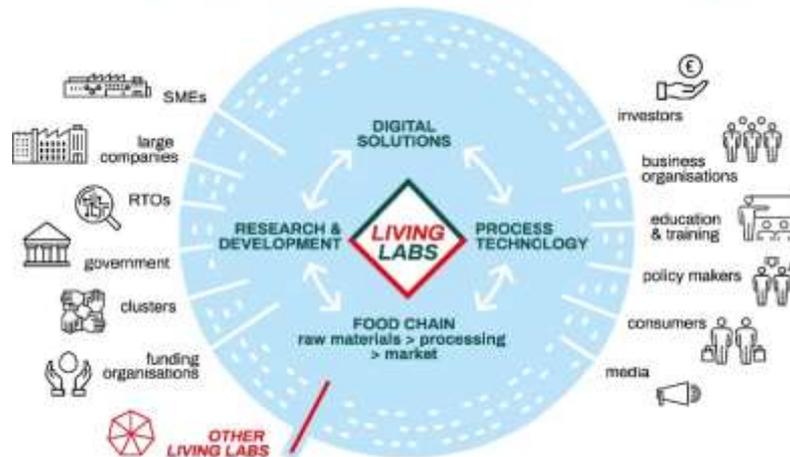
Business Development & Internationalization Manager at Flanders' FOOD
Coordinator of the Established Office of SS4AF

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www.ss4af.com and <https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/smart-electronic-systems>

LIVING LAB IN THE INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

the innovation system linked to the digitalization
of the agri-food industry and central position of the living labs



Traceability & Big data: working on
agrifood digitisation

Who we are

S3P Partnership on Traceability and Big Data is a strategic alliance of 22 regions and 12 associated members that works together with the aim of contributing to the digitisation of the agrifood value chain through the adoption of digital technologies and the value creation from data.

Currently, our focus is to promote cross collaboration by encouraging interregional projects. We are also producing a report on our alignment with the SDG.

Discover more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=US52GzDoYQ&t=1s>

A charter between T&BD S3 platform and ICT-AGRI-FOOD has signed, and serves to agree on a common understanding for our future collaboration.

Our website: <https://www.traceabilityandbigdata.eu/>

Last newsletter: <https://us4.campaign-archive.com/u=2ebb55ad5319a6b2bd43964dd&id=050c2b54e0>

Twitter: @dataagriS3

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLQJAmPyNG5u1jnOLs8bp4A>



Kick-off meeting

17 & 18 March 2021

We are pleased to announce that we organise the Kick-off meeting of the research projects of the first transnational co-funded call on 17 March, starting at 13:30 pm to 16:40 pm CET and the following day, 18 March from 9:30 am to 12:20 pm CET. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting will be held digitally. The main purpose of the meeting is for the project consortia to learn about the selected projects, network and discuss the state-of-the-art in the field of ICT-enabled agri-food systems.

This public kick-off seminar of the 1st transnational ICT-AGRI-FOOD Joint cofunded Call (19 projects selected) will bring together project leaders and involved researchers, ICT-AGRI-FOOD consortium members, funders and other stakeholders from industry, academia and policy-making organisations in the agri-food sector. The call was launched in 2019 with support from the European Commission through the H2020 Framework Programme. [Read more](#)

Kick-off Knowledge Incubator

24 March 2021



On the [24th of March 2021](#) from 13:00 to 17:00 CET the ICT-AGRI-FOOD Knowledge Incubator will be officially launched with the kick off meeting that will have a multiple aim:

- 1) to create the community of researchers working on ICT in AGRI FOOD, starting from the ones involved in the projects funded by ICT-AGRI-FOOD;
- 2) to understand and reflect on what are the needs of end users and the innovation ecosystem of the agricultural sector in Europe;
- 3) to present the online platform and directly involve the participants in a platform co-design exercise.

The aim of the ERA-NET Cofund ICT-AGRI-FOOD is to foster, verifiably and perceptibly, the use of smart digital technology and to remove the barriers to their adoption to drive the transition of European food systems making them more sustainable, resilient, fair, responsible, responsive, adaptive, circular, transparent, safe and secure.

The vision for ICT-AGRI-FOOD is to bring together actors from across the entire agri-food system including primary producers (comprising both conventional and organic), SMEs, food processors, food retailers, consumers and the public sector (e.g. Ministries, funding agencies

and regulatory bodies) in a multi-actor approach, to enable digital technology solutions for a transition towards sustainable and resilient agri-food systems.

Collaborative research projects and networking structures, will trigger dialogue between participating countries and create a common vision to improve coordination between national and EU funding and ensure better use of resources.

Consistency between national and EU policies to reduce the environmental footprint of the sector will also be improved.

In the consequence, ICT-AGRI-FOOD has the ambition to be a pivotal point where Member States can have an overview of relevant projects and initiatives all over Europe, and to connect the many projects and initiatives on a durable platform to ensure RDI funding policy for the future of food systems. With ICT-AGRI-FOOD's anticipated structuring effect, it is aimed to spread the uptake of digital innovations in MSs and the entire agri-food sector to make the transformation a reality.

The main aim of the ICT-AGRI-FOOD Knowledge Incubator is to **facilitate the exchange of knowledge in order to inspire people and develop innovative ideas!** The online platform will have different sections, one focusing on list of innovations, one focusing on list of projects from different ICT-AGRI and ICT-AGRI-FOOD calls and one with the possibility to create a forum and to interact with other researchers and developers. Together with the platform, different events will be organized by ICT-AGRI-FOOD in order to build a community of researchers and stakeholders and learn together how to organize the information on project results in order to make it accessible to actors within and outside the research community.



Fast track to innovation workshop

November - December 2020

The main objective of the workshop events was to introduce participants from the 19 selected research projects to experienced actors and to inform each other about existing insights, networks, tools, methodologies, standards, platforms, etc. in order to prevent replication and ineffective use of resources.

The event series was very successful, attracting in total, more than 270 attendees and 380 registrations. The attendees were very interested in participating in this network and building a relationship with ICT-AGRI-FOOD and our funded researchers. The research project partners were successfully introduced to agri-food innovation actors and projects like Joint Research Centres Smart Specialization Platform with its DIHs and the Thematic Areas of Agri-food, EIP-AGRI Service point, EIT Food, AEF, IoF2020, SmartAgriHubs, DEMETER and ATLAS. In addition, the research projects got to know the agri-food system and the following tools and platforms:

- IoT Catalogue | www.iot-catalogue.com
- SmartAgriHubs Innovation Portal | www.smartagrihubs.eu/login
- IoF2020 Ecosystem Mapping | iof2020.datascouts.eu
- Harvest 2030 – Farm-to-fork Fitness Programme | www.ec.europa.eu/food/farm2fork_en
- European Digital Test Farm Network | www.edtfn.eu

The event series created ideas among all actors for a better contextual meta-data discovery by optimising websites and social media communication in the future to enable an improved ecosystem search for relevant research results, partners, relations and regional communication nodes.

It also created the opportunity for ICT-AGRI-FOOD to link the projects to some IoF2020 partners and share some outcomes.

Topics that have been identified relevant in 2021 are:

- Ecosystem mapping to identify valuable partners to develop, validate and scale the research results
- Synergetic topical knowledge exchange and partnership events between different projects and actors at ICT-AGRI-FOOD, EIT Food, EIP, S3P and new H2020/Horizon Europe Projects in 2021

The goal of our workshop series was to match interesting technologies to end-users, by connecting people and collecting ideas. The initiative promoted opportunities for the agri-food industry to engage with the ERA-NET more easily, to exploit opportunities arising from our research outputs and to access our know-how, expertise and infrastructure more efficiently. Research was recognised as the path to innovation and commercialisation.

Our approach was impact-driven and we were dedicated to delivering all necessary knowledge in form of methodologies and tools as well as practical work with the 19 selected research projects on their specific needs.

[Workshop report](#)

Meet the ICT-AGRI-FOOD partners

 Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Agriculture, Regions
and Tourism

Federal Ministry of Agriculture, regions
and tourism

Who are they?

Federal Ministry of agriculture, regions and tourism ([BMLRT](#)) is responsible for the management of many resources that built the basis of life – water, forest, arable land and natural ecosystems – managing economic activities in these areas whilst ensuring high quality nature, food and living spaces.

The BMLRT conducts research to support politics and to deal with specific questions from practice in the area of food security, resource management and circular economy, digitalization etc. The research activities of the BMLRT are carried out at the department's own federal agencies and federal offices or by external research institutions (mainly universities). Of particular interest is the joint cooperation of research institutes and vocational schools for agriculture and forestry. BMLRT participates in a number of national and European research committees. Since 2004 BMLRT has been involved in many ERA-NETs, JPIs and other partnering initiatives. Currently BMLRT is a partner in 7 ERA-NETs and in JPI FACCE (Food Security, Agriculture and Climate Change in Europe). BMLRT is also a member of the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR).

How are they involved in ICT-AGRI-FOOD?

BMLRT is jointly responsible with BLE (DE) for WP 3 - Evaluation and proposal selection for the co-funded call. This work package includes the selection of eligible pre-proposals and invitation of successful projects to submit a full-proposal. Furthermore, a ranking list of projects will be created by the outcome of the peer review evaluation and the selection meeting of the full proposals. Finally, an independent observer report on the selection and evaluation process will be presented.

Who is involved: Stefan Vetter and Nina Radl



Who are they?

[GRNET](#) – National Infrastructures for Research and Technology, provides networking and cloud computing services to academic and research institutions, to educational bodies at all levels, and to agencies of the public, broader public and private sector. It is responsible for promoting and disseminating network and computing technologies and applications, as well as for promoting and implementing Greece’s Digital Transformation goals. Thus, GRNET leverages the educational and research activity in the country, towards the development of applied and technological research in the fields of telecommunication networks and computing services.

GRNET holds a key role as the coordinator of all e-infrastructures in Education and Research. With twenty-plus years’ experience in the fields of advanced network, cloud computing and IT infrastructures and services, and significant international presence, GRNET shall advise the Ministry of Digital Governance on issues relating to the design of advanced information systems and infrastructures.

How are they involved in ICT-AGRI-FOOD?

GRNET is involved in **WP 6: Additional joint calls without EC co-funding/Collaboration with ESA** and it mainly coordinates collaboration between The European Space Agency (ESA) and ICT-AGRI-FOOD with the aim of promoting the emergence of innovative and commercially sustainable service in the Agritech sector making use of space. ESA in fact encourages the use of digital technologies and user driven space-based services in the field of Food and Agriculture. This partnership will support European companies in making the best use of space data, together with other technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, for developing applications and knowledge to the benefits of the agriculture and food research communities and stakeholders networks.

Who is involved: Xenofon Tsillimparis



Agence Nationale de la Recherche

Who are they?

[ANR](#) is a public body under the authority of the French Ministry of Research. Serving scientific communities and research stakeholders, it aims at funding and promoting basic and applied research, technical innovation and technology transfer and partnerships between research teams in the public and private sectors, on national, European and international levels, mobilising its expertise to implement and monitor projects covering Initiatives of Excellence, research infrastructures, support for higher education and research exploitation. European and international actions are an integral part of the ANR’s programming and tied in with the programmes of national and international stakeholders. These actions aim to contribute to the implementation of the European Research Area and to develop partnerships with several countries to promote cooperation between French and international teams.

How are they involved in ICT-AGRI-FOOD?

We are actively implicated in the ICT-AGRI-FOOD ERA-NET and we are particularly co-leader in the Work Package 6 "Other activities".

Who is involved: Eugenio Echagüe and Isabelle Hippolyte

ICT-AGRI-FOOD network activities

Technological offer and demand matchmaking

The connecta platform aims to help innovative entities find their best technology partners. It will promote the transfer of technology, since it will facilitate that the R&D and innovation capacities result in beneficial and profitable collaboration opportunities for all the stakeholders.

The platform will carry out a matchmaking service, i.e., it will suggest offers and requests that fit the participant's needs. It will offer updated information on current R&D and innovation funding programmes so that they can start their innovative projects.

The website has a section for Technological Challenges, Offers, Demands and Financing, as well as a news section on the latest developments in the field of open innovation.

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



International innovation award for sustainable food and agriculture

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has the pleasure to inform its Members that the **call for applications for the second edition of the International Innovation Award for Sustainable Agriculture** on the theme "**Innovation to transform food systems**" is now open. Individuals, private companies and institutions worldwide are being called to submit agricultural innovations that demonstrate concrete results and contribute to the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development:

[http://www.fao.org/innovation/awards/en/.](http://www.fao.org/innovation/awards/en/)

FAO and the Federal Government of Switzerland first launched the award in November 2018 in recognition of the key role of agricultural innovation in achieving a world free from hunger and malnutrition. The award does not only acknowledge digital innovation, but also new or existing products or practices that are used in a specific context, to increase effectiveness, competitiveness and resilience.

The award is divided in two categories:

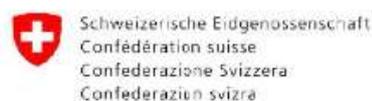
- **Category A:** USD 30,000 is awarded for excellence in digitization and innovation for sustainable food systems.
- **Category B:** USD 30,000 recognizes an innovation that specifically empowers youth (under 35) in sustainable food systems.

*In line with the requirements and technical competencies of the Federal Office of Agriculture of Switzerland, all innovations must apply to agriculture and pastoral systems only

More information is included in the [terms and conditions](#) and the **application form** can be downloaded from the [website](#).

We would be grateful for your support to promote the award as much as possible before the call closes on **19 March 2021**.

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



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.

This newsletter will be sent regularly (at least twice per year). It is sent automatically to everyone who has registered for the newsletter under <http://www.ict-agri.eu/> or on www.ictagrifood.eu.

If you no longer wish to receive the ICT-AGR-FOOD newsletter please [unsubscribe](#) via the ICT-AGRI-FOOD website.

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