



# IMPACT REPORT 2020

EIT FOOD IN THE  
COMMUNITY



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# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

**In 2020 the global food system was disrupted on an unprecedented scale, much like all other aspects of our lives. How we live, work, shop and eat changed – almost overnight – creating new challenges for every part of the agrifood value chain. But some positive aspects also emerged.**

For EIT Food, it became more important than ever to bring our community together and support our network. We invested over €11 million to initiate agrifood projects and help startups combat the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and embed resilience in the food sector, of which €10.25 million was awarded from the [EIT's Crisis Response Initiative](#). In doing so, we contributed to the European Union's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout this report you will see examples of the impactful projects our local teams and partners delivered in 2020 to alleviate the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Collaboration is central to all our work and is vital to meet the big challenges we face. In a year like no other, EIT Food's mission became more relevant than ever: to accelerate innovation to create a future-fit food system that produces healthy and sustainable food for all. The focus of our projects, delivered with a wide range of expert partners, is on developing solutions in six critical areas that

represent the most pressing food challenges where our network can make a difference and drive long-term positive impact on the health of people and our planet. Every region and market EIT Food operates in delivered innovative solutions in each of these six critical areas. You can read about some of their biggest achievements on pages 8-18.

Our network grew significantly over the last year. Nearly 50 new partners joined EIT Food in 2020, driving innovation projects forward within our local communities. We were able to create and scale agrifood startups to deliver new technologies and products, with 164 new startups and scaleups joining our EIT Food Community. In total, 23 new products and services were co-created with the public and launched to the market in 2020. We also continued to equip entrepreneurs and professionals with new skills to make change happen and educate and inspire the next generation, with nearly 60,000 enrolled in our education programmes in 2020.

Looking ahead, 2021 brings us lots of opportunities to take bold action as we recover from the pandemic and transform our food system for good. May 2021 marked one year since the introduction of the European Union's 'Farm to Fork Strategy'. This was a hugely positive step forward for the sector, and will require additional political momentum to become a reality. It is also a pivotal year for environmental and climate action, with the first ever UN Food Systems Summit, the UN Biodiversity Conference and COP26 all happening in 2021.

The UN Food Systems Summit will be a key moment to collaborate and define the pathway to progress on all 17 SDGs, each of which relies to some degree on healthier, more sustainable and equitable food systems. We are excited to work together with the UN at this Summit, and invite the EIT Food Community and our partners across the value chain to join us to transform the food system to produce healthy and sustainable food for all. ●

**“Our network grew significantly over the last year. Nearly 50 new partners joined EIT Food in 2020, driving innovation projects forward within our local communities.”**

Dr Andy Zynga



# TRANSFORMING THE FOOD SYSTEM

HARNESSING THE POWER OF OUR COMMUNITY

Our food system is facing major challenges, from reducing climate change, pollution and waste, to tackling malnutrition, disease and obesity. Addressing these societal, environmental and economic challenges will require radical solutions, which we can deliver through our innovative community.

## SOCIAL



Over **2 billion** people are currently overweight (WHO, 2018) while **800 million** are undernourished (FAO, 2019)



We need to feed **10 billion** people by 2050 (UN, 2017)



Up to **35%** of children under 5 globally are stunted, wasted or overweight (UNICEF, 2019)

## ENVIRONMENTAL



**70%** of global freshwater withdrawals come from the food industry (FAO, 2016)



**1/3** of our food is wasted globally (FAO, 2019)



Food production accounts for **26%** of greenhouse gas emissions (Science, 2018)

## ENTREPRENEURIAL



**9 out of 10** startups fail due to lack of a market need for their products (Munich Business School, 2016)



Only **3.4%** of all EU startups are in the food industry (ESM, 2016)



Meeting the UN SDGs could create innovation opportunities worth **US\$200 billion** for the European business sector in agrifood by 2030 (BSDC, 2016)

## A challenging year for a fragile agrifood system

The COVID-19 pandemic amplified many of these issues and created new demands for every part of the agrifood value chain. Our food system was put to the test as national lockdowns, introduced at scale across Europe, caused fears of supply chain disruptions, increased food insecurity and surges in food waste.

Reduced labour and fractured logistics networks made it hard to meet the increased demand from panic-buying and stockpiling, while also leading to food-price surges. At the same time, rapid closures across the continent meant large volumes of fresh produce were wasted.

## Revitalising the concept of community

However, the rollercoaster that was 2020 also awakened a sense of community in the sector as different players came together to solve these new challenges. People found a new sense of appreciation for our food system, responsible for providing uninterrupted food supplies and access during the pandemic.

The pandemic led to positive changes in consumer behaviour too. In our consumer study on the impact of the pandemic on food behaviours, almost half (49%) said being in good health was more important to them as a result of COVID-19 while over a third (35%) said buying locally produced food had become more important to them. Trust in the food sector also increased by 3-8% over the course of the pandemic, as seen in our first Trust Report.

## A catalyst for faster change

Significantly, COVID-19 was a catalyst for innovation in the food system. It drove cross-sector collaboration like never before, with stakeholders across the entire industry coming together to find solutions to these global challenges.

As well as cooperation, the pandemic added to the urgency of building a future-fit food system that produces healthy and sustainable food for all. We are confident that we now have a real opportunity to make even more radical progress with the support of our innovative community.





# OUR ROLE

Our vision is to help build a world where everyone can access and enjoy safe, healthy and sustainable food. We see our role as guiding and accelerating the radical changes that are needed to achieve this – through education, innovation, fostering entrepreneurship, and targeted engagement with consumers. Above all, we build relationships and foster connections, creating a powerful community with the vision and skills to transform the future of our food.

## Transforming our food system

As Europe's largest agrifood innovation community, we're working hard to futureproof our food system and overcome the huge challenges it faces. But we can't do this alone. We believe that we are all responsible for, and connected to, the food that we eat, so we all need to work together to improve it.

## Building an inclusive, innovative community

We create novel connections that enable invention and collective learning to drive change, bringing together key players from across the food value chain that represent over 85 of Europe's leading agrifood companies, research institutes and universities. Our network includes the RisingFoodStars Association, bringing together Europe's best agrifood startups and scaleups.

This vibrant and diverse community is the source of our strength, and it's a community that's working right across Europe, maximising our ability to co-create a food system fit for the future.





## Clear focus, big impact

All work led by EIT Food aims to improve environmental and health outcomes by developing applied solutions in six areas. These represent the most promising areas where we believe we, together with the members in our innovative community, can drive long-term positive change. These six focus areas are aligned with and contribute to the [United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs).



Protein is a key issue for the future of our food. If we're going to feed our fast-growing global population, then we need to find sustainable ways of producing new, high quality, safe and healthy proteins.



The latest advances in areas like nutrigenetics, gut microbiota and metabolomics mean we can now adapt what we eat to take account of both overall population traits and our own lifestyles, allergies, and intolerances. This can significantly improve our health.



New technologies including blockchain, the internet of things, and food sensing technologies, are making it easier to digitalise traceability. This can improve the safety, efficiency and sustainability of food, so increase consumer trust.



Crop and livestock productivity will both have to increase in order to meet our future food needs. They'll need to do so sustainably because food production has a significant impact on the global environment, producing approximately 26% of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide (Science, 2018).



Aquaculture could meet up to two-thirds of global seafood consumption by 2030, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO, 2014). However, globally, aquaculture practices are often inefficient and can have a significant impact on the environment.



We need to move away from our current linear model of 'make, use, and dispose', to a circular food system where we use resources more efficiently and re-use side and waste streams.

## Driving local action

We want to make the biggest possible difference to people, the environment and Europe's economy. We believe this is best achieved with teams on the ground, leading projects that create impact in Europe's communities. To achieve this, it's also important we measure this impact.

Our impact pathways enable us to do this.

INPUTS

FOCUS AREAS

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

OUTCOMES

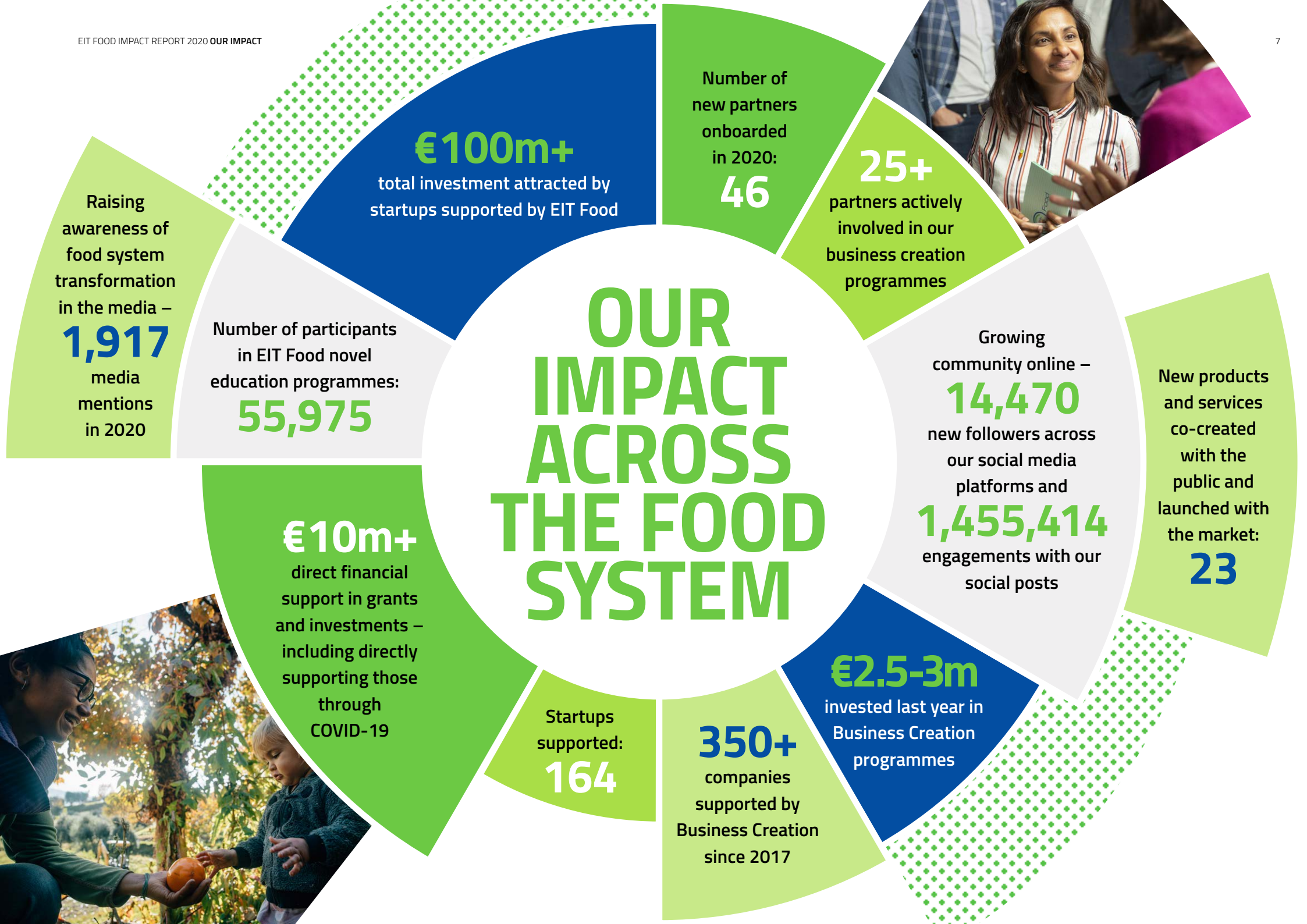
### ECONOMIC IMPACT

- New high-quality jobs in businesses and startups
- Increased competitiveness of EU businesses leading to more growth
- Improved knowledge and skills in food and agri sector leading to better jobs
- More entrepreneurial universities in the agrifood domain

### SOCIAL IMPACT

- Prevalence of metabolic diseases
- Healthy and improved diets
- Food waste reduction
- Environmental performance of the food system
- Trust in food
- Trust in food system actors
- Citizens engaged
- Food & nutrition literacy of consumers
- Transparency and reliability







# EIT FOOD IN YOUR COMMUNITY

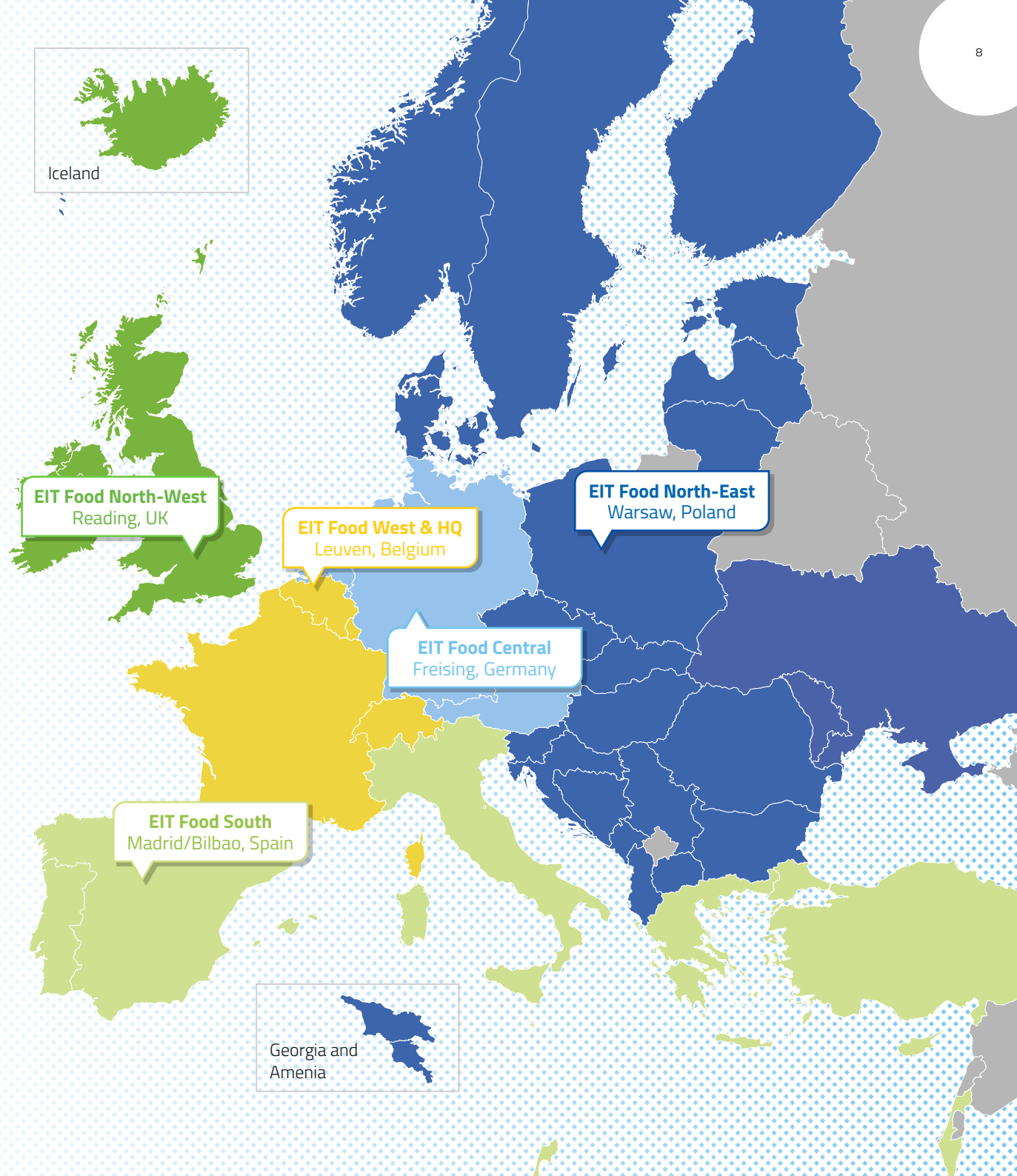
## SUPPORTING THE AGRIFOOD SECTOR ON THE GROUND ACROSS EUROPE

The following pages celebrate the hard work and achievements of our network in a year of unprecedented challenge. We also highlight some of the many innovative ways in which our partners responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.

EIT Food is structured around five Innovation Hubs, located in five European regions: Central, North-East, North-West, West and South.

For the complete list of all projects run in 2020 visit our [Projects page](#).

When you see this icon, please refer to our special COVID-19 section on pages 16 to 18 for more details.





# CENTRAL

## Our first national project

**An exciting new partnership has been formed between EIT Food and Germany's Federal Ministry of Education and Research.**

Launched in summer 2020, ACTinEITFood aims to support the creation and expansion of innovative startups that will help futureproof Germany's food system as well as the topic of building a new innovation landscape in the food sector. The three-year project is backed by €1.2 million from state funding. ●

### CASE STUDY

#### Talk on digital efficiency in agriculture

Smart food systems, challenges in modelling and data, and animal welfare assessment – these were just some of the wide-ranging topics discussed at the [LCA Food Conference 2020](#). This conference series is the leading forum worldwide on lifecycle assessment of agrifood systems. It brings together more than 400 scholars and practitioners from over 40 countries.

EIT Food contributed to this event with a workshop on digital efficiency in agriculture.

### CASE STUDY

#### Smart, sustainable weeding

Dutch company [Odd.Bot](#) won €100,000 from EIT Food prize money for its intelligent robot, the Weed Whacker. This alternative solution to manual and chemical weeding can tell the difference between weeds and crops and autonomously remove the weeds.

Odd.Bot was one of three winners of the EIT Food Accelerator Network 2020. It plans to use the prize money to recruit more farmers to pilot the Weed Whacker robot in Europe.

Founder and CEO Martijn Lukaart said: "This really strengthens our belief that we're on the right track."

The EIT Food Accelerator Network connects impactful agrifood startups with industry-leading corporate and research partners to pilot their technology and help achieve successful market adoption.

**“We are honoured to be the winner of the Food Accelerator Network, and it really strengthens our belief that we are on the right track. This recognition from the European Institute of Innovation and Technology will surely help boost the number of sign-ups even further for our recently launched 'Trailblazer Program', for which we will utilise most of the prize money – money that we will now double by re-investing in our current funding round, as our lead investor will match the funding being raised. Thank you EIT Food!”**

**MARTIJN LUKAART – FOUNDER & CEO OF ODD.BOT**

Weed Whacker



**EIT Food Foresight. What will the future of food sector in Europe look like after COVID-19? See page 18 for EIT Food Foresight.**





# SOUTH

## Cross-sector action on water scarcity

**Experts from a wide range of disciplines came together to discuss the issue of water scarcity in Southern Europe.**

More than 50 representatives from the water industry, and 16 experts from related industry sectors, worked together to define the six main challenges that needed to be addressed to improve the region's water resources.

Water scarcity is one of the major challenges threatening the sustainability of Europe's food system, a problem that is particularly acute in Southern European countries where water shortages are expected to increase in the near future.

Startups and entrepreneurs are also working on water-related solutions in regions with modest to moderate agrifood innovation rates, notably Italy, Greece and Spain.

Twenty-six startups participated in three international challenge labs designed to stimulate innovative solutions to water scarcity. The winners, which included a solution to monitor water pollution, a smart irrigation platform and a technology to remove heavy metals and other substances from water, soil and air, each received an award of €10,000. Startups also participated in training events to foster a water-saving culture.

The cross-sector action on water scarcity is led by EIT Food in collaboration with other EIT-supported Knowledge Communities. Other partners are Athena and BioAzul. ●

**Partners in Spain stepped up to meet the needs of families struggling to feed their children due to the COVID-19 pandemic.** See page 18 for details on Los Salvacomidas.



### CASE STUDY

#### Edible food coatings

Spanish startup Bio2Coat secured a place in the 2020 Seedbed Incubator Programme Bilbao thanks to its edible food coating products. Made entirely from natural sources, the coatings can be applied to food products to preserve and extend their shelf life. They are colourless, flavourless and fragrance-free, and can be consumed together with the food product without changing its sensory characteristics.

This is the second year that EIT Food has organised the Seedbed Incubator Programme in Spain. The Programme aims to turn innovative ideas into market-validated business propositions.

### CASE STUDY

#### Alacarte

Spanish company Alacarte is being supported by the EIT Food Accelerator Network to launch its innovative alcohol-reducing machine to market. This à la carte solution allows consumers to choose the percentage of alcohol that they want in a glass of wine, beer or other alcoholic beverage. The machine reduces alcohol – and the calories it contains – in minutes, while preserving the taste of the original drink.

Alcohol-free and low-alcohol drinks are among the products seeing the fastest growth in consumer demand within the food and beverage industry. Producers are trying to meet this demand but, as yet, don't have an ideal solution. Alacarte hopes it has the answer!





# NORTH-EAST


## Bioproducts that both protect and stimulate plants

**Polish biotechnology startup Microbe+ received the recognition and funding it needed to accelerate its business growth.**

It won first prize (€5,000) in the Polish final and second prize (€15,000) in the Grand Final of the Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS) Innovation Prizes competition 2020.

Now it is using the prize money to finance the next stage of its product development: field tests for registration authorities.

These awards recognise Microbe+'s successful development of innovative bioproducts that both protect plants from pathogens and stimulate their growth. This helps farmers and growers be cost effective producers and provide consumers with healthy, affordable food.

The RIS Business Creation team organised the competition and offered the startup a ten-day training programme that included high-quality training and mentoring. 

### CASE STUDY

#### Smarter weeding

Czech Republic startup Ullmanna could have just the answer for organic farmers looking to increase production of root crops without taking on more staff to do the weeding.

Its smart, non-chemical, in-row weeding machine uses artificial intelligence to replace costly manual labour. This lowers production costs for organic farms, enabling them to make fresh organic produce more affordable for everyone.

Ullmanna participated in Test Farms 2020 and is now testing its innovative solution with beetroot farmers from the Polish Association of Beetroot Producers.

EIT Food RIS Business Creation team matched Ullmanna and other participating startups with farmers and provided financial support and expert guidance during the testing process.

Jindřich Ullmann  
& Martin Ullmann,  
Ullmanna



**How did consumers change their food related habits in the COVID-19 pandemic? Our 10-country study shines a light.** See page 18 for details.






# NORTH-WEST

## A day of inspiring talks

**Leading scientists took to an online stage to discuss how we can feed a growing global population without harming the planet.**

The New Scientist Live Future of Food and Agriculture event attracted more than 5,500 registrations from consumers keen to hear about the dramatic changes in what we eat and how we grow our food.

The event's 'Fork' stage was delivered in partnership with EIT Food, and featured keynote sessions on lab-grown meat, edible insects, and gene-editing in crop and livestock farming. We also launched our 'Day in the Life'

video series promoting STEM careers in agrifood industries, shining a light on three different jobs – a farmer, a nutritionist and a mechanical engineer. The 'Day in the life of a Mechanical Engineer' video has attracted a large viewership on [YouTube](#) and features Naomi Gold, a mechanical engineer from our RisingFoodStar SafetyNet Technologies. Three articles produced alongside the videos were published on the [New Scientist's jobs site](#) and we also recorded a podcast for the event, to encourage younger generations to consider a career in agrifood. Watch the podcast [here](#). 



Naomi Gold,  
Mechanical Engineer



### CASE STUDY

#### The seaweed solution

A team of researchers involved in the [SeaCH4NGE](#) project investigated the potential of seaweed feed supplements to reduce methane production in cattle. There are 1.5 billion cattle across the world, each releasing 100kg of methane a year.

An early adopter scheme was launched in December 2020, ahead of launching a marketable seaweed product to farmers and seaweed producers. Participants in the programme were able to purchase the SeaCH4NGE feed supplement at a discounted rate in exchange for sharing their feedback following the trial period.

Partners involved in this innovative project are ABP Food Group, Matís, the University of Reading and the University of Hohenheim.

### CASE STUDY

#### Prize-winning biodegradable packaging

Entrepreneurs Ayca Dundar Field and Francis Field walked off with €25,000 after winning first prize in the EIT Food Innovation Prize Competition 2020. The pair, who are being supported by the [EIT Food Seedbed Incubator Programme](#), won the prize for their patented seaweed-based packaging material [SoluBlue](#). This can form transparent containers that look and feel like plastic but biodegrade as quickly as the food they contain. SoluBlue also extends product shelf-life and reduces food waste.

More than 120+ startups from 17 countries entered this year's competition.



**New temperature-sensitive food labels and caps could significantly reduce food waste.** See page 16 for details of Mimica, a member of EIT Food RisingFoodStars, who received €400K+ from EIT Food's Bridge Fund to help them adapt to COVID-19.





Clockwise from top left:  
The Messy Chef, Manon  
Macaron, As Cooked by Ginger,  
Roeckiesworld and Chloe Kookt

## WEST

### Influencer campaign

**EIT Food found a new way to reach audiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, who were spending more time online than previously, by sending a test box to selected food influencers.**

These included [Roeckiesworld](#), [As Cooked by Ginger](#), [The Messy Chef](#), [Chloe Kookt](#) and [Manon Macaron](#). Together, these influencers have 34,000 followers.

The box contained innovative food-related products which the influencers then wrote about on social media channels such as Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. In this way, they raised

public awareness of some of the new healthy, sustainable and zero waste products being produced by Europe's agrifood startups.

The products were mainly received with a lot of excitement. This activity was a good way of introducing new or uncommon sustainable food products (e.g. insects) to new audiences.

#### CASE STUDY

##### Zero Plastic Hero

Online followers of EIT Food pledged to reduce their use of single-use plastics during the Facebook Plastic-Free Campaign [Zero Plastic Hero](#). This 33-day challenge kicked off on 1 June and ended on 3 July – International Plastic Free Day.

EIT Food and its ambassadors (including vegGO from France and Le Castel de Bois Genoud from Switzerland) joined in the campaign by posting tips on reducing single-use plastics on EIT Food West's Facebook page [@EITFoodWest](#).

The campaign persona was EIT Food goat [Matilda](#), who dreams of fresh juicy grass but wherever she goes, she only finds plastic to nibble on.



#### CASE STUDY

##### More beans, less meat

We helped Brussels startup CoolBeans find sustainable packaging that optimises the shelf life for its ready-to-eat bean products. EIT Food West identified the best packaging solution with the help of the University of Antwerp.

Now CoolBeans is ready to hit the fresh aisles in our supermarkets and help persuade consumers to eat less meat. All the beans used in CoolBeans' products are grown in Flanders and then stewed with spices to provide nutritious, protein-rich foods that can be eaten on their own or incorporated into other dishes.

CoolBeans is part of the project '[Vlaanderen Circulair](#)'. Its founder, Diane Noyes, is a member of [WE Lead](#), the EIT Food initiative building a network of women leaders seeking to drive change, innovation and sustainability within the agrifood sector.



**The Robin Food project offered new life to leftover fresh vegetables, focusing on turning them into soup for socially vulnerable groups impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. See page 17 for details.**

**An innovative plasma assisted sanitation system to decontaminate food packaging has been developed in response to COVID-19. See page 17 for details of our work with PASS.**

# ACCELERATING EUROPE'S CAPACITY TO INNOVATE

## Supporting female entrepreneurs

Fifty female-led startups in Spain, Romania, Czech Republic, Portugal and Turkey received a total of €75,000 through the RIS scheme to take their agrifood business ideas forward.

They received the funding under the [Empowering Women in Agrifood project \(EWA\)](#). This aims to equip early-stage female entrepreneurs with the knowledge, confidence and networks to successfully start and

develop sustainable agrifood businesses. The project particularly targets women in rural areas who may experience difficulties accessing other business incubation programmes or training.

Participants received support, training and personalised mentoring over a six-month period. Ten women also received cash prizes of up to €10,000 to continue their work as 'agrifood Shepreneurs'. Watch this [video](#) to hear participants talk about the programme's impact on their lives and this [video](#) to learn benefits from the EWA programme.

## Giving students paid internships

Fifty-four students from Central, Eastern and Southern Europe enjoyed paid internships of between three and six months under a programme to open up job opportunities in the agrifood industry. The [RIS Fellowships](#) programme gives students the chance to apply their academic knowledge to practical, real-life business challenges in EIT Food partner companies. The RIS Talents programme enables doctoral students and young post-doctorates to participate in research projects being carried out by our partners.

In 2020, more than 1,500 students applied for these internships, with the 54 winning candidates then hosted by over 40 EIT Food partners.

The project was led by the University of Warsaw in collaboration with AZTI, Agricolus, NapiFeryn BioTech, Maspex, PepsiCo and Puratos.

## Accelerating the agriculture revolution

The holistic approach of regenerative agriculture has the potential to tackle problems caused by climate change and conventional farming, including drought, erosion and loss of soil fertility. We worked with 90 farmers to provide training and advice from experts in Spain and Italy on how to successfully transition from conventional to regenerative agriculture. Of these, 32 also received a grant of €2,000 to help accelerate their transition to regenerative agriculture, covering a combined production of more than 15 crops and 4,000 hectares. In 2020 we organised a training session on regenerative agricultural practices in Poland, which attracted the attention of over 100 farmers and agricultural advisors. The programme continues in 2021, and we plan to train at least 30 farmers following the success of the project blueprint established in Southern Europe and the interest in the programme validated in Poland in 2020.

The four training sessions were organised by the [Regenerative Agriculture Revolution](#) project. Other activities carried out by the team in 2020 include:

- Commissioning a study to compare the nutrient density of regeneratively produced beef and chicken to their conventional counterparts;
- Raising consumer awareness of regenerative agriculture – what it is, and how it can improve the environment and consumer health;
- Providing consulting services to agrifood businesses including Danone, General Mills and Grupo G on how their farmers can transition to more sustainable farming practices.







## Training public sector representatives

Public sector representatives from 13 RIS countries joined the 2020 [Government Executive Academy](#) to deepen their understanding of innovation and regulation in our food system. The Academy is an executive-level training programme for public sector employees from Southern and Central Eastern European countries.

It aims to give participants insights into the challenges facing Europe's food system, and provide a forum to exchange best practices.

The project was led by the University of Warsaw with the support of industrial partners Danone, VTT and PepsiCo. The 31 participants came from Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia and Spain.

## Engaging consumers

EIT Food [RIS Consumer Engagement Labs](#) are creative and interactive co-creation events that bring together distinct groups of consumers to ideate and develop new product concepts. They use design thinking and gamification to engage consumers, stimulate creativity and foster the acceptance of new products. Each lab is led by a local higher education institute or a research institute in collaboration with food producers and startups.

In 2020, 160 participants took part in co-creation sessions. The RIS Consumer Engagement Labs were held in Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. They used methodology developed by the University of Warsaw with the support of the following EIT Food partners: University of Aarhus, Maspex, Sodexo and PepsiCo.

## Learning how to develop new products in the agrifood sector

An international summer school brought together 40 students and professionals to learn about the tools and methodologies used to develop new food products. Participation gave an opportunity to gain unique qualifications related to innovative solutions development. Participants from Central Eastern and Southern Europe learnt how to initiate, plan, execute, monitor and control the projects aimed at the development and marketing of new products and services. The project was led by the University of Warsaw with the help of the Technical University of Lausanne (EPFL), Israeli Technical University Technion, EIT Food RisingFoodStars, PepsiCo, Elea and BeYou.

Find out more about the [Summer School on New Product Development for the food industry](#).

## Recovering traditional crops

Farmers and students in rural areas of Italy, Poland and Spain have learnt about the challenges and opportunities of growing traditional crops that have now almost vanished. They attended a range of events including summer schools, workshops and community meetings designed to foster the skills and know-how needed to cultivate ancient varieties of cereals, medicinal plants, and aromatic herbs.

A total of 70 participants received training on how to start their agrifood business as part of a project to revitalise agrifood value chains in rural areas of southern and eastern Europe. Partners involved in the project include Grupo AN, Agricolus, Maspex, University of Turin and IARFR PAS.





# SPOTLIGHT ON COVID-19

## HOW WE RESPONDED

The pandemic brought our agrifood system into sharp focus, as mounting pressure and challenging supply chains created huge difficulties for all players in the food system. As part of EIT's response, EIT Food reacted quickly and efficiently with two targeted funds specifically designed to support the sector through the pandemic: the COVID-19 Rapid Response Call for Innovation Projects, and the Bridge Fund.

In total, we invested over €11 million to support the agrifood sector in its time of need, of which over €4 million was awarded from the [EIT's Crisis Response Initiative](#). This activity directly contributed to the European Union's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

EIT Food responded in other ways too – supporting projects feeding vulnerable families, stimulating debate and ideas about the role of the agrifood sector in rebuilding the European economy, and creating opportunities for people to learn how food supply chains operate in a time of crisis.

### A helping hand for startups

#### The Bridge Fund

COVID-19 hit many businesses hard, but it was particularly tough for startups – delaying market launches, slowing customer adoption, and making it harder to raise investment capital.

Our Bridge Fund helped selected startups overcome these challenges, investing €5.4 million in 13 agrifood startups with big potential to address issues in each of our focus areas.

The fund aimed to help the startups adapt to the new normal of COVID-19, continue their work in critical innovation, and bridge the gap towards their next investment round. All the startups receiving funding have the high-impact and growth potential to make a significant positive difference to our future food system.

#### CASE STUDY

##### Next gen food expiry labelling

UK-based company Mimica received €404.5K from the Bridge Fund to help take forward its work creating the next generation of food expiry labelling. It produces Mimica Touch, temperature-sensitive caps and labels that indicate food freshness.

The cap and labels decay at the same rate as the food they're labelling, giving an accurate, real-time indication of the product's freshness. By taking the guesswork out of food expiry labels, they reduce food waste. Currently 60% of wasted food is still perfectly edible due to the confusing and inaccurate date systems we use on food packaging.







## Stimulating innovation

### The Rapid Response Call for Innovation Projects Fund

In a time of crisis, innovation is more important than ever. Our COVID-19 Rapid Response Innovation fund aimed to fast-track innovations that could have a significant impact on the challenges brought about by the pandemic.

The fund awarded €6.17 million to 13 projects working to support the innovations that are

urgently needed to help the agritech sector respond to COVID-19 and rebuild a healthy and sustainable European economy and society.

Winning innovations included a project turning surplus food into soup for vulnerable groups, a test for the effect of micronutrient deficiencies on disease strength, and dynamic pricing technology which can decrease supermarket food waste by over 40%. Leading organisations included INL from Portugal, UNIBO from Italy and Matis from Iceland.

### CASE STUDY

#### Decontaminating food packaging from the COVID-19 virus

COVID-19 not only comes with the challenge of the transmission of the virus from human to human, but it also survives on packaging and all kinds of other surfaces.

Together, the University of Bologna, Lund University and Alma Plasma (an SME) launched the innovation PASS in response to the global pandemic – an innovative plasma assisted sanitation system for the decontamination of packaging materials, equipment and tools used in the processing and handling of food products. The team, which received €667K from the COVID-19 Rapid Response Call for Innovation Projects, has already commercialised their prototype and applied for a patent in Italy, with plans to expand their customer base in 2021.

The innovative system also contributes to economic and environmental sustainability by avoiding the use of chemicals for decontamination.

The EIT has highlighted PASS as a success on the European Commission YouTube channel.

### CASE STUDY

#### New life for leftovers

The closure of restaurants, hotels, bars and other hospitality venues across Europe led to huge quantities of surplus vegetables and fruits going to waste. This caused difficulties for farmers and auctions. At the same time, the school closures and rising unemployment created by the pandemic meant more people struggled to feed their families.

Robin Food, which received €553.7K from the COVID-19 Rapid Response Call for Innovation Projects, addressed both these challenges, transforming leftover fresh produce into nutritious soup. A total of 12 new food products, providing forty-thousand litres of soup, were launched to the market in 2020 based on these surpluses, which were distributed to families in need in Belgium, The Netherlands and Spain. Partners included Rikolto, Okay, Colruyt Group, KU Leuven, RISO Vlaams-Brabant, enVie (all from BE), Eroski and Robin Food (all from ES) and Verspillingsfabriek (NL).



## Families receive healthy meals

More than 1,000 Spanish families struggling due to the pandemic received daily healthy meals for their children thanks to the efforts of more than 100 volunteers and over 50 NGOs.

The 'Los Salvacomidas' initiative distributed 60,000 meals over a six-week period to families in Madrid, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa. This prevented the waste of three tonnes of food. The families also received educational supplies and games and information about healthy eating habits.

The food was donated by Angulas Aguinaga, Danone, Grupo AN, Bacalao Alkorta, Okin, and Plátano de Canarias. Other key contributors included catering company Ausolan which prepared the meals, Spanish food banks which delivered them and the IMDEA Food Institute which helped ensure the meals were nutritionally balanced.

**“Our aim was to help vulnerable families with children affected by COVID-19, preventing the risk of obesity and malnutrition. We also avoided more than 3000 kilograms of food waste, and delivered teaching materials to over 3000 families, with games and information for the children to learn healthy eating habits.”**

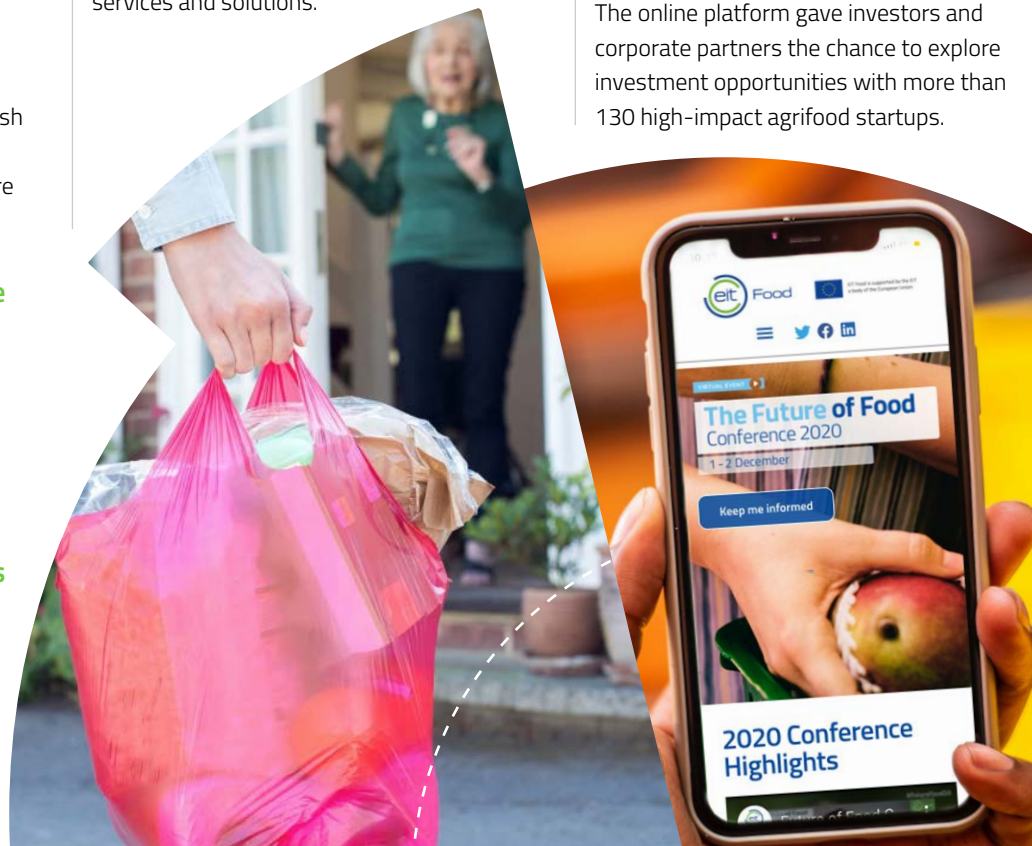
**BEGOÑA PÉREZ-VILLARREAL, EIT FOOD DIRECTOR, SOUTH EUROPE**

## Food in times of crisis

Food supply chains came up against intense pressure during the COVID-19 pandemic, with widespread concerns they would not keep up with demand.

Our online course [Understanding Food Supply Chains in a Time of Crisis](#) explores the steps taken by the industry to ensure food security and integrity in times of crisis.

Participants learn about the complexity of agrifood supply chains and discover their co-dependency with other sectors such as transportation and packaging – as well as hearing from companies making a difference with innovative digital food services and solutions.



## Events offer food for thought

Our two-day Future of Food summit provided a high-level platform for key agrifood players to evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on the sector and discuss future trends and priorities in Europe.

The virtual event brought together EIT Food partners, EU policymakers and other key stakeholders to explore a wide range of opportunities and challenges including the role of the agrifood sector in rebuilding the European economy.

In light of the pandemic, our annual Venture Summit also went digital in 2020. The online platform gave investors and corporate partners the chance to explore investment opportunities with more than 130 high-impact agrifood startups.

## Understanding the impact of COVID-19

National lockdowns, the forced closure of non-essential businesses, and restrictions on movement all led to huge changes in the agrifood sector. Farmers, retailers and other stakeholders were forced to adapt, and consumer behaviour and priorities changed as well. To understand the impact of COVID-19 and how to best involve consumers in building the way forward, we gathered vital evidence and insights through the following reports:

- [COVID-19 Study on European Consumer Food Behaviours](#) – this survey of 5,000 consumers in 10 European countries shows the profound impact of lockdown on food purchasing and consumption. Coordinated by Aarhus University, it included project partners Queen's University Belfast, University of Helsinki and the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC).
- [Foresight on the impact of COVID-19](#) – based on macroeconomic analysis, interviews with academic, business and research partners, and brainstorming sessions with experts, this far-reaching report outlines the impact of COVID-19 on Europe's agrifood system, possible future scenarios and how we can maximise opportunities created by the pandemic.
- [EIT Food Trust Report 2020](#) – this study of 20,000 consumers across 18 European countries shows how trust in the food sector increased over the course of the pandemic. The report also highlighted what different parts of the sector could do to improve trust levels. Coordinated by the University of Reading, the European Food Information Council (EUFIC), Aarhus University, KU Leuven, and the University of Warsaw.



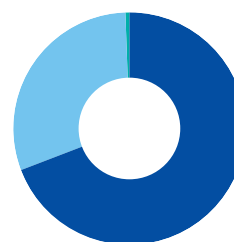
# 2020 IN NUMBERS

In 2020, EIT Food invested a total of **€79,327,895** in 8 different activities. In deciding where to invest, we aimed to maximise our impact across our own strategic objectives in the areas of education, innovation, business creation, public engagement, and the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS).

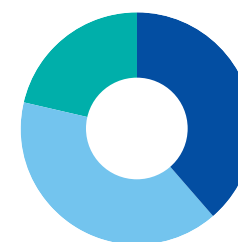
Total	€79,327,895
Education	€6,778,717
Innovation	€32,815,801
Business Creation	€12,504,684
Public Engagement (Communication)	€9,466,198
Governance and Outreach	€8,250,417
EIT Regional Innovation Scheme	€4,580,639
Cross-KIC Scheme	€1,851,353
Area leadership and Monitoring	€3,080,086



Governance and Outreach	€8,250,417
Central KIC Management	€5,720,028
CLCs and Regional Centres	€2,490,156
Other	€40,233



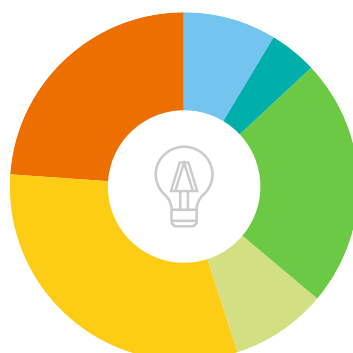
EIT Regional Innovation Scheme	€4,580,639
EIT RIS Action Line 1	€1,770,266
EIT RIS Action Line 2	€1,838,598
EIT RIS Challenge	€971,775



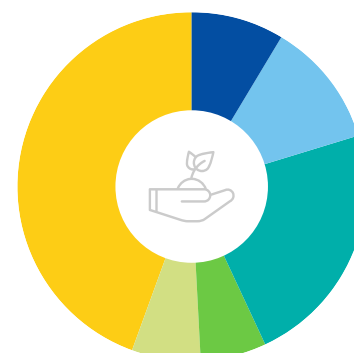
Cross-KIC Scheme	€1,851,353
Cross-KIC EIT RIS	€144,476
Cross-KIC Human Capital	€263,054
Cross-KIC Sustainable Cities - TI	€157,819
Cross-KIC Food for Health	€796,827
Cross-KIC Skills 4 Future	€27,348
Cross-KIC Water Scarcity - TI	€238,874
Cross-KIC Digitised Production - TI	€150,374
Cross-KIC Resource Efficient Society	€72,582



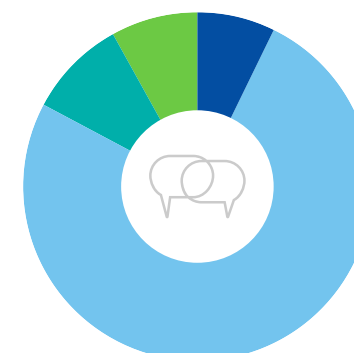
Education	€6,778,717
Master Programmes	€1,614,304
PhD Programmes	€508,168
Professional Education	€1,141,129
Grand Challenges	€960,431
Studio programmes	€1,673,899
Grow workshops	€169,499
Engage programmes	€711,287



Innovation	€32,815,801
Operational Support	€46,697
Grand Challenges	€2,801,513
Overcome low Consumer Trust (SO1)	€1,444,840
Food for healthier nutrition (SO2)	€7,637,849
Connected and Transparent Systems (SO3)	€2,890,528
Sustainability and resource stewardship (SO4)	€10,205,646
COVID-19 pandemic addressed by Innovation	€7,788,727



Business Creation	€12,504,684
Grand Challenges	€1,080,604
Explore	€1,468,718
Nurture	€2,854,082
SCALE	€749,908
Business Services and Financial support	€820,068
COVID-19 Rapid Response Call – Venture Support	€5,531,304



Public Engagement (Communication)	€9,466,198
Network	€697,754
Explore	€7,164,074
Grand Challenges	€857,576
FoodUnfolded™ (infrastructure)	€746,794

# HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Together, we can make the radical changes needed to futureproof our food system. Whether you're a university, industry leader, student, member of the public or entrepreneur, you have an important role to play. So, join in the conversation and collaborate with others to redesign our food system.



## Help shape our food system

There are many different ways in which you can help shape the solutions to improve our food system.

Become a partner in our innovative community



Attend our events



Share your ideas



Leverage startup funding and support



Join the debate and hear from experts



Check out our current course catalogue on our website, and our latest MOOCs on FutureLearn



Discover what EIT Food is doing in your country



If you're passionate about changing the food system, you can make your voice heard. **To find out more on how you can get involved visit our [Get Involved page](#).**

## The benefits of joining EIT Food

When you join our community, you'll enjoy powerful benefits:

- ✓ **As a partner** you'll gain unparalleled access to a network of Europe's leading agrifood businesses, startups, universities and research organisations.
- ✓ **As an entrepreneur** you'll receive expert mentoring, tailor-made entrepreneurship programmes and easy-to-access funding to enable you to launch, accelerate and scale your business.
- ✓ **As a member of the public** you'll have the opportunity to engage with the food industry and co-create the future food system through access to our innovative events, digital platforms and public engagement activities.



# A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

We would like to thank each and every one of our partners for their continued efforts together to transform our food system to become more sustainable, healthy and trusted.

## Central:

**Austria:** Austrian Institute of Technology, FFoQSI

**Germany:** Agilent Technologies, Bavarian State Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Forestry, Deutsches Institut für Lebensmitteltechnik, Döhler, FOCOS, Fraunhofer, Herbstreith & Fox, John Deere, Nutrition Hub, NX-Food, Phage Technology Center, ProVeg International – Office Germany, Sartorius Stedim Biotech, Siemens, Syntegon Technology, Technische Universität München, Universität Hohenheim

**Netherlands:** Cefetra Group, De Verspillingsfabriek, DSM, Imec, Koppert, PlantLab Groep, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, StartLife

## North-East:

**Denmark:** Aarhus University, Business Region Aarhus, Food & Bio Cluster Denmark

**Estonia:** Studio Kapp

**Finland:** Into Seinäjoki, University of Helsinki, Valio, VTT Technical Research Centre

**Hungary:** Campden CBHU

**Lithuania:** ART21

**Norway:** EAT Foundation

**Poland:** Food Banks in Olsztyn, Institute of Animal Reproduction and Food Research, Polish Academy of Sciences, Maspex, University of Warsaw

**Slovenia:** NUTRIS – Nutrition Institute, Ljubljana

**Sweden:** Lund University, Packbridge

## North-West:

**Iceland:** Iceland Protein, LAXA, Matis

**Ireland:** ABP Food Group, Helix, Kerry Group, Safefood, Technological University Dublin, Yield Lab, Zoetis

**United Kingdom:** Agri-EPI Centre, Agrimetrix, British Nutrition Foundation, Cardiff Metropolitan, Foundation Earth, HainDaniels, Linwoods, PepsiCo, Quadram Institute Bioscience, Queen's University Belfast, University of Cambridge, University of Reading, Waitrose, ZELP

## South:

**Cyprus:** Cyprus University of Technology (CUT)

**Greece:** Sustainable Food Movement Greece (SFMinGR)

**Israel:** Strauss Group, Technion, Volcani Institute of Agricultural Research

**Italy:** AIA – ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIANA ALLEVATORI, AlmaPlasma SRL, ARIA Analisi dei Rischi Industriali e Ambientali, Caviro, CLAN (Cluster Agrifood Nazionale), Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR), Granarolo, Hub Innovazione Trentino – Fondazione, Inalca, Milcoop, Molino Naldoni, Ora Agricola, Targeting Gut Disease TGD, University of Bologna – Unibo, University of Bolzano – Unibz, University of Turin – UniTo

**Malta:** PeakBridge Consulting

**Portugal:** 2BNanoFood, INL, SGS Portugal

**Spain:** Acesur, Angulas Aguinaga, AZTI, Bioazul, Cluster FOOD+i, CSIC, Genesis Biomed, Grupo AN, Mondragon, Neiker, Robin Good, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Vitartis

**Turkey:** Sabri Ulker Foundation (SUF)

## West:

**Belgium:** Celabor srl, Colruyt, EUFIC, EuroFIR, EY Law, Flanders' FOOD, Growzer NV, Innovatiesteunpunt, KU Leuven, Puratos, Rikolto, RISO Vlaams-Brabant, Wagralim

**France:** CEA – Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique et aux Energies Alternatives, Danone Research, E-Seniors, Institut Paul Bocuse Research Center, Roquette, Shakeupfactory, Sodexo, Vitagora, XEDA International

**Switzerland:** Agropôle, Bühler, EPFL, ETH Zürich, Givaudan International SA, Nestlé Research, Swiss Food Research

## 2020 RisingFoodStars

 **Belgium:** Alberts NV, FoodPairing, Peace of Meat, Urban Crop Solution

 **Estonia:** Natufia Labs


 **Finland:** GrainSense

 **France:** Alkion BioInnovations Comerso Connecting Food Lactics, Novolyze, Protera, The Green Data

 **Germany:** Boreal Light, clevabit, Elea, LOEWI, OSPIN GmbH, PIELERS GmbH, ProLupin

 **Iceland:** Thor Ice


 **Ireland:** Durrow Mills

 **Israel:** Aleph Farms, Amai proteins, DouxMatok, Innovopro, Redefine Meat, Tastewise, Tipa, Trellis, Vaxa Technologies Ltd


 **Italy:** Agricolus, Fruitsapp, Microbion

 **Lithuania:** Agroplatforma


 **Netherlands:** 30MHz, Mosa Meat, Nutrileads, Orbisk, SuSea, Wasteless

 **Poland:** Biotrem, NapiFeryn BioTech Ltd, SatAgro

 **Portugal:** Agri Marketplace, Energy Pulse Systems

 **Spain:** AITalentum, BeYou, Faromatics, NaturalMachines, Ypsicon Advanced technologies

 **Sweden:** Glucanova, Marine Feed

 **Switzerland:** Ambrosus Technologies, Essento, RethinkResource, Scantrust, SwissDeCode

 **Turkey:** Whole Surplus

 **United Kingdom:** 3F BIO Ltd, Analytics Engines, Better Origin, Deep Planet, DryGro, Eagle Genomics, FoodMaestro, Mimica, RootWave, SNTech, Stem – Cambridge Glycoscience

# GOVERNANCE

## Management Team

**Dr. Andy Zynga**  
CEO

**Charlotte Knowles**  
COO

**Dr Paola Giavedoni**  
Director of Innovation

**Benoit Buntinx**  
Director of Business Creation

**Dr. Maarten van der Kamp**  
Director of Education

**Saskia Nuijten**  
Director of Communication

**Andrew Carlin**  
Director of Strategic  
Programmes

**Dr. Georg Schirrmacher**  
Director CLC Central

**Marja-Liisa Meurice**  
Director CLC North-East

**Dr. Jayne Brookman**  
Acting Director CLC  
North-West

**Begoña Pérez-Villarreal**  
Director CLC South

**Dr. Martine van Veelen**  
Director CLC West

## Supervisory Board

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Chairman

**Prof. Dr. H.C. Margaret Bath**

**Dr. Jan Delcour**

**Bogdan Tyrybon**

**Dr. Martin Jager**

**David Shem Tov**

**Andrew Thomas**

**Dr. Catriona Giffard**

**Dr. Michelle Williams**

