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EIT Food ivzw
Ubicenter A, Philipssite 5
3001 Leuven (Heverlee) Belgium

PRESS RELEASE

EIT Food launches funding opportunity to support agrifood startups and high impact innovations during the COVID-19 crisis

Leuven, 14 May 2020 – EIT Food has launched two funding opportunities to support the European agrifood sector through the COVID-19 crisis. One call will support startups and scaleups with high-impact and growth potential that have been adversely affected by the coronavirus pandemic, and the other will help accelerate impactful projects that address business and consumer needs throughout the food system in Europe. As part of the [EIT's Crisis Response Initiative](#) this activity directly contributes to the European Union's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Europe's food system has come under unprecedented pressure during the COVID-pandemic that requires an urgent and coordinated response. Supply chains have been disrupted, agrifood businesses large and small are struggling financially, and consumers have had to radically adapt the way that they source their daily foods.

As Europe's leading food innovation initiative, EIT Food is committed to supporting the agrifood sector in its time of need. The [COVID-19 Bridge Fund](#) will help ventures adapt to the crisis, to continue critical innovation activities, and to bridge the gap to securing follow-on funding. It is a unique funding mechanism that will provide timely financial support of between €200,000 and €500,000 to a select number of agri & food ventures addressing one of EIT Food's key focus areas. Additionally, the [COVID-19 Rapid Response Call for Innovation projects](#) is designed to fast-track product or service solutions that have a significant and immediate impact to the challenges brought about by COVID-19 on the agrifood sector.

Commenting on the launch of the COVID-19 Bridge Fund, Benoit Buntinx, Director of EIT Food Business Creation, said: *"We're delighted to launch the COVID-19 Bridge Fund to support a select number of ventures during these difficult times. At EIT Food, we believe that innovation is key to ensuring enough healthy and sustainable food for all, and this just a small part of our efforts to build a vibrant and high-impact entrepreneurial ecosystem that is fit for the future."*

Dr. Andy Zynga, CEO of EIT Food said: *"The COVID-19 crisis motivates many organisations to step up and lead by example, and the launch of both of these funding opportunities demonstrates our commitment to extending help over and above our ongoing and dedicated support of the European Food System. The investment that we are making available right now will help those high potential startups to adapt and*



prosper in the post-COVID world and boost the creation and implementation of much-needed innovation to help the agrifood sector respond to the crisis.”

The funding announcement comes on top of already launched initiatives from across the whole EIT Food partner community to support the European food system through the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. This has included the launch of a new 'Robin Food' soup brand in Belgium with EIT Food partners that is using fresh surplus vegetables from farmers, and aims to distribute 20,000 litres to vulnerable families through food banks and social grocers. In Spain EIT Food has announced the 'Los Salvacomidas' (*The Food Savers*) initiative to provide over 60,000 healthy lunch boxes to children in need affected by the COVID crisis. EIT Food is also helping to improve the knowledge of the public by launching a free online course that is exploring how agrifood supply chains are coping during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Further information on both the COVID-19 Bridge Fund and the Rapid Response Call for Innovation projects, as well as details on how to apply, can be found on the EIT Food website.

If you'd like to join the EIT Food Community and help make the food system more sustainable, healthy and trusted then please see our Get Involved web pages.

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For more information, please contact:

Matt Eastland
Head of Brand & Content
M: 0044 (0) 7741 855 240
E: matt.eastland@eitfood.eu

About EIT Food

EIT Food is Europe's leading food innovation initiative, with the aim to create a sustainable and future-proof food sector.

The initiative is made up of a consortium of key industry players, start-ups, research centres and universities from across Europe. It is one of eight Innovation Communities established by the European Institute for Innovation & Technology (EIT), an independent EU body set up in 2008 to drive innovation and entrepreneurship across Europe.

EIT Food aims to collaborate closely with consumers to develop new knowledge and technology-based products and services that will ultimately deliver a healthier and more sustainable lifestyle for all European citizens.

EIT Food has created the RisingFoodStars Association, which serves as an umbrella for high potential agrifood startups and scaleups, to support and nurture a select group of young companies. The Association





is a partner of EIT Food and as such allows its members to participate in all EIT Food activities, thus contributing to the delivery of EIT Food's strategic objectives.

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