

Innovation, Knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI

Turning ideas into reality: EU innovation funding opportunities for farmers and foresters

The European Union (EU) offers financial support to turn innovative ideas into reality, helping farmers, foresters, advisors, and rural entrepreneurs drive growth and innovation. This factsheet highlights key funding opportunities, with a focus on programmes that support innovation in agriculture and forestry.

Research and innovation

➤ [Horizon Europe \(HE\)](#) is the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation:

- [Horizon Europe - Cluster 6: Food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and environment](#)
- [European Partnerships in food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and environment](#) bring the European Commission and private and/or public partners together. For instance:
 - [European Partnership on accelerating farming systems' transition through agroecology Living Labs and Research Infrastructures](#)
 - [European Partnership on Animal Health and Welfare](#)
 - [European Partnership Agriculture of Data](#)
 - [European Partnership Water Security for the Planet \(Water4All\)](#)
- [EU Mission: A Soil Deal for Europe](#) aims to establish 100 living labs and lighthouses to lead the transition towards healthy soils by 2030.
- [EU Mission: Restore our Ocean and Waters](#) aims to protect and restore the health of our ocean and waters through research and innovation, citizen engagement and blue investments.

➤ The [LIFE Programme](#) is the EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action.

➤ The [European Innovation Council \(EIC\)](#) is Europe's flagship innovation programme to identify, develop and scale up breakthrough technologies and game-changing innovations.

➤ The [European Institute of Innovation and Technology \(EIT\)](#) is an EU initiative that strengthens Europe's ability to innovate by bringing together businesses, education, and research institutions. It supports innovation through Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) in key sectors such as climate, digital, food, etc.:

- [EIT-Food](#) supports innovative projects that help speed up the transition to sustainable agriculture and food systems.
- [EIT Digital](#) invests in strategic areas to accelerate the market uptake and scaling of research-based digital technologies (deep tech) focusing on Europe's key societal challenges.
- [EIT Climate KIC](#) is Europe's leading climate innovation agency, focused on creating climate-resilient societies and combating climate change.

"EU CAP Network brokerage events offer a unique opportunity to explore collaboration, engage in research initiatives, and exchange knowledge, all while connecting with experts and staying at the forefront of sustainable and resilient agricultural practices and agri-environmental innovation."

Juan Olivares Fernández,

Farmer and advisor, Spain; participant at the EU CAP Network brokerage event 'Partnering for innovation with impact in agriculture and rural areas'

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- > [The Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking \(CBE JU\)](#) funds projects that develop innovative solutions for a competitive and sustainable European circular bioeconomy.
- > [INTERREG](#) is an interregional cooperation programme, co-funded by the EU. The EU strives to reduce disparities in the levels of development, growth and quality of life in and across Europe's regions.

Networking and exchange

- > The [European Cooperation in Science and Technology \(COST\)](#) enables researchers to set up their interdisciplinary research networks in Europe and beyond. COST provides funds for organising conferences, meetings, training schools, short scientific exchanges or other networking activities in a wide range of scientific topics.

Education and skills

- > [ERASMUS for Young Entrepreneurs](#) helps provide aspiring European entrepreneurs with the skills necessary to start or successfully run a small business in Europe.
- > [ERASMUS+](#) supports farmers and foresters through vocational training, knowledge exchange, mobility programmes and innovation projects, enhancing skills, sustainability and rural development.

Investment and financing

- > The [InvestEU](#) Fund supports private and public investments in four policy areas which represent important priorities for the Union and bring high EU added value: sustainable infrastructure, research, innovation and digitisation.
- > The [European Investment Bank \(EIB\)](#) provides loans, guarantees, and financial instruments that support investments in agriculture, agribusiness, and rural development.

Key steps for a successful funding application

Understand the call – Identify relevant funding opportunities, check eligibility, engage stakeholders, attend EU info sessions and seek guidance from National Contact Points (NCPs).

Build a strong consortium – Form a diverse team with clear roles and expertise and use networks to find partners.

Develop a strong proposal – Ensure alignment with funding objectives and evaluation criteria. Clearly define the problem, objectives, impact, and implementation plan.

Secure co-funding (if required) – Explore national, regional, or private co-funding sources and engage with financial institutions such as [InvestEU](#) or the [EIB](#).

Submit your application – Follow the official submission process (e.g. [EU funding & tenders portal](#)).

More information

- > [Horizon Europe National Contact Points \(NCP\) – Cluster 6](#)
- > [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#)
- > [Q&A Participant Portal](#)
- > [EU CAP Network factsheet: Tips and tricks to apply for Horizon Europe calls](#)
- > EU CAP Network brochure: Funding opportunities under Horizon Europe – Calls 2025
- > [Research needs from practice 2023](#)

Feedback and questions:

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Find out more about the EU CAP Network

Visit the [EU CAP Network website](#) to discover projects, ideas and resources to catalyse innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas.



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