

# Call for Innovations 2017

### **Rationale**

Over the last three decades, organic food and farming has continued to grow yearly across Europe. Since the mid-1980s, in the European Union (EU) alone the total area of farmland under organic production has increased steadily to 11.2 million hectares¹ (as of 2015). This has been accompanied by buoyant market growth over the last ten years, with the total value of the EU organic retail market doubling from €11.1 billion in 2005 to €27.1 billion in 2015. Such advances reflect the vibrant and innovative nature of organic food and farming in response to the demands of consumers for high-quality food production that supports the environment, animal welfare and the development of rural areas.

Yet, despite unprecedented growth, a significant imbalance continues to exist between the current supply of organic produce and the growing demand for organic food. The growing demand puts pressure on organic operators to intensify and specialise production, thereby undermining organic principles. Scientific evidence and practical experience across Europe however shows that achieving high levels of yield with full respect of organic principles and limited use of inputs is possible in diversified farming systems when combining natural and technological solutions and different sources of knowledge in a smart way.

Despite the growing consumer demand for organic food and a general trend towards more sustainable diets, organic is still a difficult choice to make for large parts of society. Yet, evidence shows that increased cooperation among producers, consumers, retailers and (local) authorities can help people adopt sustainable diets and improve consumption of organic food.

With this Call for Innovations, TP Organics wants to collect and showcase existing solutions addressing these challenges. We are specifically interested in solutions that have proven their effectiveness and have a high potential to be scaled up or implemented at a larger scale.

Innovations can be submitted in of the following themes:

- Improving soil quality in organic arable farming
- Appropriate and robust livestock systems
- Innovation for sustainable diets

Descriptions of the three themes are given below. Within each theme, one innovation will be selected to be presented at the <u>Organic Innovation Days</u> on 15-17 November, Brussels. All eligible submissions will be showcased at the <u>Innovation Arena</u> of TP Organics website.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The latest market data is available as interactive map here: <a href="http://www.ifoam-eu.org/en/organic-europe">http://www.ifoam-eu.org/en/organic-europe</a>



### Call themes 2017

### 1. Improving soil quality in organic arable farming

#### **Rationale**

Sustainable crop production is dependent on maintaining and improving soil quality and fertility, which are in turn dependent on organic matter in the soil and its impact on the soil's chemical, biological and physical properties. Good soil management is key to successful organic farming, but knowledge about it and best practices are not well spread nor implemented. Poor soil management heavily affects the economic and environmental performance of organic farming. We call for innovations that show how organic arable systems can be managed for maximum soil quality.

#### **Possible innovations**

- Crop diversification, crop rotations with legumes, intercropping, cover cropping, lining mulches
- Adapted tillage regimes, especially with low or no-tillage
- Use of composts and bio-effectors (plant growth promoting rhizobateria, mycorrhizal fungi and endophytes)

### 2. Appropriate and robust livestock systems

#### **Rationale**

Many organic livestock systems have become increasingly specialised. They have a narrow ecological base, which threatens their resilience. From the initial economic advantage of specialisation, they have become high-risk, low-profit systems. We call for innovations that can convert these high-risk livestock systems into sustainable farming systems that rely on smart ecological intensification.

#### Possible innovations

- Mixed livestock systems
- Integration of agroforestry in livestock systems
- Forage-based cattle systems
- Innovative husbandry systems and adapted breeds for organic poultry systems
- Innovative management of outdoor areas for pigs

### 3. Innovation for sustainable diets

#### **Rationale**

Diets and eating habits are an essential part of sustainable food systems. The consumption of, and access to fresh, regional, seasonal and organic food needs to be improved. But, values and knowledge that consumers have about sustainable food do not correlate with their behaviour. This value-action gap prevents progress towards sustainable food systems. We call for innovations that can close this gap. Special attention needs to be paid to vulnerable groups like children, people living in poverty and social exclusion, rural communities or minorities



#### Possible innovations

- Innovations in green public procurement and regional food policies connecting farmers, retail, consumers and policy makers
- Re-establishing close contacts between consumers and food producers towards sustainable food systems
- Exploring and developing ICT, Internet of Things, blockchain technologies and big data tools
  that provide consumers with transparent, reliable and relevant information about
  sustainability impact of food

## Submission requirements & guidelines

The call is open for any organization, company or individual researcher/practitioner who can propose an innovative solution to the issues described in one of the themes. You're welcome to submit more than one solution as long as it is in English, falls within the scope of the themes for this year and is relevant for the organic sector. The innovation/practice should be recent, i.e. developed within the last 3-5 years.

- Download the submission form here.
- Describe your innovation in a simple language (English), easily understandable for a nonspecialist.
- Check the spelling/grammar carefully before sending it.
- Send your submission(s) in Microsoft Word format to <a href="mailto:info@tporganics.eu">info@tporganics.eu</a> by 31 July 2017 at the latest.
- In the subject of the email please indicate the following: OID\_2017\_Theme No. you apply for (1, 2 or 3) Title of your innovation
- If you have multiple solutions, submit each one separately as described above.

### **Call Timeline 2017**





# **Submission form**

Categories		Description
1.	Which theme does the innovation address (choose only one)?	☐ Improving soil quality in organic arable farming ☐ Appropriate and robust livestock systems ☐ Innovation for sustainable diets
2.	Short title of your innovation (max. 150 characters)	
3.	Contact person (name, address, e-mail, telephone)	
4.	Project partners / partners who contributed to the development of the innovation (names)	
5.	Short summary of the innovation, addressing the following: What is the innovation	
	about, what are the main objectives, benefits & relevance? What are possible	
	drawbacks of the innovation? (max. 500 words)	
6.	Context of the innovation. Who were the main actors developing the innovation	
	(private sector, advisory services, farmers' organization, research, etc)? What made	
	them to develop the innovation? What was the concrete driver? (max. 300 words)	
7.	Potential for scaling-up: How widely is the innovation already used and what is the	
	potential use?	
	In terms of geographical scale	
	In terms of numbers of adopters	
Under what conditions can the innovation be used or adopted by others?		



8.	Funding source. How was your innovation financed?	
9.	Links to website, leaflets, audiovisual material	