

ERA-NET Cofund on Sustainable Crop Production

- SusCrop -



**SusCrop
ERA-NET**

Short summary of the research projects' kick-off meeting of the co-funded call

Organized by Flanders Research Institute for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (ILVO)



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1. Introduction

SusCrop is an ERA-Net Cofund Action under H2020, which aims to strengthen the European Research Area (ERA) in the field of Sustainable Crop Production through enhanced cooperation and coordination of different national and regional research programmes. The overall objective of SusCrop is to support the advancement of sustainable and resilient crop production.


To meet the SusCrop objectives, among others, a first joint transnational call (co-funded by the EC) was implemented. The aim of this call is to support scientifically excellent transnational research, development and innovation projects that contribute to the improvement of sustainability and resilience of crop production. After peer-reviewing, 13 consortia were recommended for funding within the limits of available national/regional and EC funding. These 13 research proposals consist of multidisciplinary approach and address at least one of the following topics: I. Enhancement of predictive breeding technologies and development of new genotypes leading to new phenotypes and crop varieties for improvement of plant health, protection, production and resilience II. Development and exploitation of novel integrated pest and crop management methods and practices III. Improvement of resource-use efficiency of crops and cropping systems IV. Systemic research on agricultural crops as part of an ecosystem including interactions between plants and other organisms (“the plant as a meta-organism”).

Following the selection and start of the research projects within the first co-funded call, a joint projects’ kick-off meeting was organised on September 9-10, 2019 in Belgium. The about 65 participants were project leaders and involved researchers, SusCrop consortium members, funders and other stakeholders that came together to learn about the selected projects, network and discuss the state of the art in the field of sustainable crop production.

2. Programme kick-off meeting of the research projects’ of the co-funded call

Day 1: September 9 (12:00 – 18:15)

Meeting venue: VAC Gent (meeting room 21.04 – Jacob van Artevelde), Koningin Maria Hendrikaplein 70, 9000 Gent

	Time slot	Activity	Speaker
	12:00 – 13:00	 LUNCH + REGISTRATION	
KICK - OFF MEETING			
1.	13:00 – 13:30	Welcome session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adoption of the agenda ▪ Information on ERA-Net SusCrop administrative selection of projects within the scope of the 1st cofunded call ▪ Introduction FACCE-JPI 	Christian Breuer (JUELICH)

2.	13:30 – 13:45	Inspirational video speech Challenges and collaboration in crop science	Louise O. Fresco (WUR)
3.	13:45 – 14:15	Keynote speech The sustainability conundrum - through a glass darkly	Peter Gregory (Consulting Ltd)
4.	14:15 – 16:00	Presentations of SusCrop research projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SOLNUE ▪ LegumeGap ▪ NETFIB ▪ AC/DC-weeds ▪ WheatSustain ▪ BARISTA ▪ RYE-SUS 	Moderators: Claus Bo Andreasen (Aarhus University) and Greet Riebbels (ILVO) 10 min project presentation + 5 min discussion with the audience
☪ HEALTH BREAK			
5.	16:30 – 18:00	Presentations of SusCrop research projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ProFaba ▪ potatoMETAbiome ▪ DIFFUGAT ▪ PROSTRIG ▪ ROOT ▪ SUSCAP 	Moderators: Claus Bo Andreasen (Aarhus University) and Greet Riebbels (ILVO) 10 min project presentation + 5 min discussion with the audience
6.	18:00 – 18:15	Closing session Logistics social event (for SusCrop consortium and project partners)	Christian Breuer (JUELICH) Nikki De Clercq (ILVO)
	19.00 – 22.00	Social event: Guided walk and dinner	

Day 2: September 10 (09:00 – 11:30)

Meeting venue: ILVO – Plant Unit, Caritasstraat 39, 9090 Melle

	Time slot	Activity	Speaker
	08:30	Departure shuttle bus Gent-Sint-Pieters train station to ILVO – Plant	
R E G I S T R A T I O N			
1.	09:00 – 09:15	Welcome @ ILVO	Joris Relaes (ILVO)
2.	09:15 – 09:30	Follow-up and monitoring of research projects	Stefanie Margraf (JUELICH)



		General reporting duties, reporting at mid-term and end-term (process and templates), evaluation criteria	
3.	09:30 – 11:30	Communication workshop Present with IMPACT	The Floor is Yours

2.1 Welcome session

SusCrop ERA-Net coordinator, Christian Breuer (Juelich, DE) kicked off the meeting with a warm welcome to the about 65 participants (project researchers, consortium members and other stakeholders). He started with an adoption of the agenda, informed about the administrative call procedure and final selection of research proposals, and shortly introduced [FACCE-JPI](#).

2.2 Keynote speeches

Professor **Louise Fresco (WUR)** is president of Wageningen University & Research since 2014, the university where she obtained her PhD in Tropical Plant Breeding and Production Systems in 1986. She combines a long academic career as Professor in Wageningen and Amsterdam, with various visiting professorships and an extensive involvement in policy and development. She was Director of Research in the Agriculture Department of the FAO (1997-1999) and Assistant Director-General of FAO (2000-2006). She has twelve non-scientific books published, including three novels (Hamburgers in Paradise, 2012; The Utopians, 2008). For her unique dedication to bringing sustainable food production to the public attention in a scientifically founded way, she was awarded doctors honoris causa at KULeuven and ULiège.

For this specific kick-off meeting, Professor Fresco send us an inspirational video speech on the current challenges and collaboration in crop science.

Following the inspirational video speech by Louise Fresco, **Peter Gregory (Consulting Ltd)** gave a keynote speech entitled “The sustainability conundrum - through a glass darkly”.

Peter Gregory was chief executive at the Scottish Crop Research Institute and at East Malling Research, before teaching Global Food Security at the University of Reading. His academic focus is on plant roots, soil science and global issues of food security. Currently, he acts as a consultant to develop specific research strategies and implementation plans for a variety of research organisations at [Peter Gregory Consulting](#). Peter Gregory was the expert scientist who advised on the development of the scope of the SusCrop ERA-Net, on the scientific scope of the first call and he was the Chair of the International Expert Panel that evaluated the SusCrop Call1 research proposals.

2.3 Presentations of the SusCrop research projects

Well beforehand, the project coordinators received a powerpoint template to start from and the following guidelines:

- The project presentation should include:

- Project title
- The ambitions (objectives and perspectives) of the project
- A short overview of the project structure and partners
- The benefits of the transnational structure of the project
- An overview of stakeholders and end-users - how will they gain from your results, and how will you reach them

- Duration of the powerpoint presentation: **max 10 minutes** (max 10 slides).

- When preparing the project presentation, please take into account, that the kick-off meeting is open to the public and that the audience will be a mix of funders, stakeholders and researchers from different research areas.

During the actual kick-off, the speakers were first introduced by Claus Bo Andreasen (Aarhus University) or Greet Riebbels (ILVO). Each presentation was then followed by an interactive moment in which the audience could ask their questions by making use of Mentimeter (<https://www.menti.com/>).

The project titles and presenters are listed below.

1. **“Tomato and eggplant nitrogen utilization efficiency in Mediterranean environments (SOLNUE)”** - Presented by *Maria Rosa Abenavoli*
2. **“Increasing productivity and sustainability of European plant protein production by closing the grain legume yield gap (LegumeGap)”** - Presented by *Frederick Stoddard*
3. **“Valorization of fibres from nettle grown on marginal lands in an agro-forestry cropping system (NETFIB)”** - Presented by *Vincent Placet*
4. **“Applying and Combining Disturbance and Competition for an agro-ecological management of creeping perennial weeds (AC/DC-weeds)”** – Presented by *Bärbel Gerowitt*
5. **“Knowledge-driven genomic predictions for sustainable disease resistance in wheat (WheatSustain)”** – Presented by *Morten Lillemo*
6. **“Advanced tools for breeding BARley for Intensive and SusTainable Agriculture under climate change scenarios (BARISTA)”** – Presented by *Luigi Cattivelli*
7. **“Development of lodging-resistant and climate-smart rye – a contribution to a sustainable cereal production in marginal environments (RYE-SUS)”** – Presented by *Bernd Hackauf*
8. **“Developing improved Vicia faba breeding practices and varieties to drive domestic protein production in the European Union (ProFaba)”** – Presented by *Stig Uggerhøj Andersen*

9. “Harnessing the potato-microbiome interactions for the development of sustainable breeding and production strategies (potatoMETAbiome)” – Presented by Joana Falcao Salles

10. “Diploid Inbreds For Fixation, and Unreduced GAMetes for Tetraploidy – A novel Fixation-Restitution Breeding method for potato (DIFFUGAT)” – Presented by Dan Milbourne

11. “Delivering novel maize genotypes with improved resilience and PROductivity through the application of predictive breeding technologies to modulate STRIGolactone levels (PROSTRIG)” – Presented by Paul Christou

12. “Resilience to salinity in tomato (ROOT)” – Presented by Romyana Karlova

13. “Developing resilience and tolerance of crop resource use efficiency to climate change and air pollution (SUSCAP)” – Presented by Lisa Emberson

Further details about and the latest news around the 13 projects can be found on the [SusCrop Homepage](#).

2.4 Follow-up and monitoring of research projects

On the 2nd day, Stefanie Margraf (Juelich, DE) presented the rules and **guidelines** regarding the **reporting process** and **general communication practices** of research projects funded by the ERA-Net SusCrop. The (mid-term and end-term) reporting templates and communication guidelines will be forwarded to the project coordinators in due time. The reporting procedure for ERA-SusCrop is completely online.

2.5 Communication workshop – Presenting with IMPACT

After the presentation on the general communication practices that are expected of the research projects, a communication workshop was organised by ‘[The Floor is Yours](#)’ trainer Hans Van de Water. The aim of the workshop was for the project coordinators and partners to get some new insights and tips and tricks on how to present their research or project in a clear and convincing manner, tailored to the needs of their target group. The trainer incorporated project examples from the SusCrop ERA-Net participants themselves in the workshop.

The communication workshop covered the following topics:

1) STORY

- Structure: how should I build up my presentation?
- Attention: how can I make my presentation interesting for my audience?
- Simple: how can I simplify a complex story for my audience to understand?
- Impact: how do I reach the results I want with my presentation?

2) SHOW

- Stress: how can I make a friend of my foe?
- Interaction: how can I get my audience involved during a presentation?

- Body language and voice: how can I best use these to make my message come across?

3) SLIDES

- Text: how do I create clear slides that will support my message?
 - Images and figures: where can I find them and how should I use them?
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Group picture taken on Sept 10, 2019 by Louise Pauwels – ILVO (Belgium)