

## PRESS RELEASE

### **New Horizon 2020 Work Programme: a first step but more ambition needed**

**Brussels, 14 October 2015** – The new Work Programme of the EU funding scheme for research and innovation (Horizon 2020) was adopted last night. Covering 2016 & 2017, it directly provides 33 million euro for organic farming. In addition, many calls address challenges relevant for organic farming (174 million euro) and specifically mention its important role. Whilst this is a first step towards a successful implementation of the Commission's [European Organic Action Plan](#), more ambition is needed to significantly support growth for an innovative organic sector.

"The European Organic Action Plan provides a good assessment of the research needs of the organic sector and promised to strengthen organic research through Horizon 2020," says Christopher Stopes, IFOAM EU President, "We welcome the fact that the Commission has started to turn the plan into action. However, it is clear that this is only the start. There are a number of priority issues that still need to be addressed, including many identified at the Commission's organic research conference in May this year."

"In order to ensure an innovative organic sector and to capitalise on its potential for future growth we need strong implementation of the European Organic Action Plan. Based on its contribution to innovation and its potential market share, 10% of the 380 million euro available in Horizon 2020 for food and farming<sup>i</sup> must be dedicated to organic. The new Work Programme provides a considerable amount, but is far away from the target," continues Marco Schlüter, IFOAM EU Director. "Unfortunately as well, the Commission is continuing with its policy of supporting the big industrial players in the food sector instead of enhancing the competitiveness of European SMEs. Organic processing is for example completely left out of the new work programme – a weakness that was already known during evaluation of the former organic action plan."

#### *Background information*

#### **Organic opportunities in the Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2016/2017**

Two calls specifically developed for the organic sector are contained in the Work Programme, one on organic plant breeding and one on contentious inputs used in organic farming. They have a total value of 28 million euro. In addition, ERA-Net CORE Organic<sup>ii</sup> will receive 5 million euro to continue its activities. Finally, there are 16 calls (total value of 174 million euro) that explicitly mention that organic farming should be involved, among which a call worth 30 million euro for a large-scale pilot project on precision farming and Internet-of-Things solutions in agriculture<sup>iii</sup>.

#### **Research and Innovation in the European Organic Action Plan**

The European Organic Action Plan, published by the European Commission in March 2014, contains two actions related to research and innovation: organising a conference to identify research priorities for organic producers, and funding organic research through Horizon 2020. The conference took place in May 2015. The new Horizon 2020 Work Programme will fund two concrete research priorities, but many more were identified at the conference in May, such as the need to improve organic animal production and the development of techniques compatible with organic food processing.

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IFOAM EU represents more than 160 member organizations in the EU-28, the EU accession countries and EFTA. Member organizations span the entire organic food chain and beyond: from farmers and processors organisations, retailers, certifiers, consultants, traders and researchers to environmental and consumer advocacy bodies.

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<sup>i</sup> In Societal Challenge 2 of Horizon 2020 “Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine and maritime research and inland water research, and the bio-economy”

<sup>ii</sup> [CORE Organic](#) is a network of European countries funding transnational research projects for organic food and farming

<sup>iii</sup> See [Part 9 of the Work Programme](#) (Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine and maritime and inland water research and the bioeconomy) for most of the calls and [Part 17](#) (cross-cutting activities) for the call on the large-scale pilot