

## 1 June 2023

# Detailed programme of the Thematic Breakout Sessions

An opportunity to discuss and co-create R&I priorities

**09:15 – 11:45**

**R&I delivering for sustainable, climate-smart  
agricultural and forestry systems**

**1** Sustainably managed natural resources for agricultural production and the EU Mission "A Soil Deal for Europe"

**2** Agrobiodiversity for healthy cropping systems

**3** Challenges and opportunities for healthy and sustainable livestock systems

**4** Sustainable management for multifunctional forests

## 1. Sustainably managed natural resources for agricultural production and the EU Mission "A Soil Deal for Europe"

**Keynote speech:** *Ing. Martin Kováč, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic*

**Overview of EU R&I and moderating:** *Ms. Annette Schneegans, EC-AGRI.F.2 Research and Innovation  
Mr. Luis Sánchez Alvarez, EC-AGRI.F.2 Research and Innovation*

**Panel discussion:** *Dr. Liisa Pietola, The Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra; Member of the Mission Board for the Soil Deal for Europe Mission  
Dr. Anna Osann, AgriSat Iberia S.L and Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, Horizon 2020 Project FATIMA, FaST Navigator  
Dr. Shamie Zingore, African Plant Nutrition Institute (APNI)  
Dr. Panos Panagos, JRC DDG2.D3 Land Resources and Supply Chain Assessments*

## Outline

Farmland accounts for roughly 50% of the EU's surface area. Crop production relies heavily on natural resources, in particular soil and water. Despite remarkable improvements in efficiency and reduction of some negative impacts over the last decades, pressure on natural resources for crop production remains at unsustainable levels and Europe needs to further reduce the environmental impact of the agricultural sector. Agriculture itself is also increasingly affected by reduced availability of healthy soils and abundant, clean water, as a consequence of unsustainable use and climate change.

The EU Mission 'A Soil Deal for Europe' aims to lead the transition towards healthy soils by 2030. The Mission supports R&I and promotes soil-friendly practices as the basis for sustainable production in agriculture.

Through presentations, a panel discussion and a participatory co-creation exercise, the breakout session will explore the present and future research and innovation challenges for soil and water to undertake sustainable agriculture in Europe and discuss the opportunities for international cooperation.

## 2. Agrobiodiversity for healthy cropping systems

**Keynote speech:** *Dr. Guy Richard, INRAE*

**Overview of EU R&I and moderating:** *Ms. Gisela Quaglia, EC-AGRI.F.2 Research and Innovation*  
*Ms. Susana Gaona Saez, EC-AGRI.F.2 Research and Innovation*

**Panel discussion:** *Dr. Benjamin Sanchez Gimeno, Spanish Funding Agency for Innovation*  
*Prof. Dr. Marta Vasconcelos, Universidade Católica Portuguesa*  
*Ms. Claudia Fusco, EC-ENV.A.3 Green Knowledge & Research Hub, LIFE*

## Outline

Agrobiodiversity entails the interaction between the environment, genetic resources, management and agricultural practices. It brings many benefits to farming systems, being an essential component of integrated crop management and low-input strategies supporting the development of healthy cropping systems. Agrobiodiversity can help achieve the objectives of the Farm to fork and the EU Biodiversity Strategies of reducing the use of chemical pesticides and fertilisers and bolster more sustainable approaches such as agroecology and organic farming.

Promoting agrobiodiversity for plant health needs to be part of holistic strategies that look at the sustainability and resilience of the entire farming system. Possible benefits and trade-offs on key aspects, such as yields, soil health and fertility, biodiversity (above and below ground), and GHG emissions, need to be considered in designing sustainable strategies. Research has demonstrated the potential of farming practices, such as crop diversification and crop genetic diversity, for healthier, resilient and sustainable farming systems. The experience of approaches like organic farming can inspire future research.

Through presentations, a panel discussion and a participatory co-creation exercise, the breakout session will explore how to maximise the potential of agrobiodiversity for healthy cropping systems and will look at future research needs in this area.



### 3. Challenges and opportunities for healthy and sustainable livestock systems

**Keynote speech:** *Prof. Dr. ir. Frédéric Leroy, Vrije Universiteit Brussel*

**Overview of EU R&I and moderating:** *Mr. Jean-Charles Cavitte, EC-AGRI.F.2 Research and Innovation*  
*Mr. Valerio Abbadessa, EC-AGRI.F.2 Research and Innovation*

**Panel discussion:** *Prof. Dr. Wim H. M. van der Poel, Wageningen Bioveterinary Research*  
*Dr. Elke Saggau, Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (BLE)*  
*Prof. Dr. Carlos Gonçalo Das Neves, European Food Safety Authority*  
*Ms. Sophie Helaine, EC-AGRI A.3 Policy performance*

#### Outline

Sustainability and resilience of livestock systems is questioned on many aspects: direct or indirect impact on natural resources (feed production), on environment/climate (greenhouse gases, pollution, biodiversity), on health (diet, antimicrobial resistance), on animal welfare (ethical issues). Socio-economic conditions are hardly attractive to ensure generation renewal (working conditions, low economic return). But livestock production is a major contributor to agricultural and food outputs; it also contributes to rural livelihood and to shape landscapes.

Through presentations, a panel discussion and a participatory co-creation exercise, this breakout session will explore what research and innovation is needed to address classic and new challenges and current societal concerns (such as exposure to weather events, climate change, emission targets, ethical issues, biotechnologies) and to move towards sustainable European livestock systems.

### 4. Sustainable management for multifunctional forests

**Keynote speech:** *Dr. Robert Mavsar, European Forest Institute*

**Overview of EU R&I and moderating:** *Mr. Michael Wolf, EC-AGRI.F.2 Research and Innovation*

**Panel discussion:** *Dr. Florence Pendrill, Swedish Research Council for Sustainable Development*  
*Prof. Davide Pettenella, Padua University*  
*Dr. Nike Krajnc, Slovenian Forestry Institute*  
*Dipl. Ing. Dr. Gerhard Weiß, BOKU University Institute of Forest, Environmental and Natural resource Policy*

#### Outline

Forests have a multifunctional role, offering a wide range of environmental, economic and social services and goods. The sustainable management of European forests and the use of timber as sustainable raw material have a crucial role to play in the achievement of the EU's climate policies. It is also key for the transition to a circular and sustainable bioeconomy as well as the preservation of biodiversity and the



provision of ecosystem services such as recreation, clean air and erosion control among many others. Furthermore, forestry and the forest-based sector offer important opportunities for wealth and job creation in rural, peripheral, and urban areas.

EU forests absorb the equivalent of nearly 10% of total EU greenhouse gas emissions each year. However, Europe's forests are under pressure by climate change and natural disturbances like forest fires, storms, or new pests and diseases. Therefore, carbon stocks and carbon sinks must be preserved while supporting biodiversity and providing renewable resources for a circular and sustainable bioeconomy in a holistic approach.

Through presentations, a panel discussion and a participatory co-creation exercise, the breakout session will explore what research and innovation is needed to foster the sustainable management of forests so that they can deliver on their different functions.

<b>12:00 – 13:00</b>	<b>Networking lunch</b>		
<b>13:00 – 15:30</b>	<b>R&amp;I enabling a people-centred green and digital transition</b>		
<b>5</b> Digital and data technologies in agriculture: R&I for sectoral transformation	<b>6</b> Rural opportunities	<b>7</b> Bridging the gap between R&I and practice: tools and skills for today's and future generations	<b>8</b> Social Sciences and Humanities for resilient and sustainable agriculture and forestry

## 5. Digital and Data technologies in agriculture: R&I for sectoral transformation

**Keynote speech:** *Dr. Bertin Martens, Bruegel*

**Overview of EU R&I and moderating:** *Ms. Doris Marquardt, EC-AGRI F.2 Research and Innovation*  
*Mr. Valerio Abbadessa, EC-AGRI F.2 Research and Innovation*  
*Mr. Joel Bacquet, EC-CNECT E.4 Internet of Things*

**Panel discussion:** *Mr. Kevin Doolin, Walton Institute's Applied and Commercial Research Activities, Ireland*  
*Mr. Patrick Majcen, Legal and Environmental Policy at Austrian Chamber of Agriculture, Austria Chamber of Agriculture*  
*Ms. Maria Coduti, EC-CNECT G.1 Data policy & innovation*  
*Dr. Ovidiu Vermesan, Foundation for Industrial and Technical Research (SINTEF), Norway*



## Outline

Digital and data technologies are key enablers for increasing the social, environmental and economic sustainability and competitiveness of the agricultural sector. The importance of data-based solutions in agricultural technologies is steadily increasing and the portfolio of innovative digital applications changes with a great pace. Moreover, numerous business and governance models are developing in the agricultural innovation ecosystem. This ecosystem is not only driven by Green Deal ambitions, but also framed by the evolving legislation under the Headline ambition of a Digital Age and in particular under the European Strategy for Data.

Through presentations, a panel discussion and a participatory co-creation exercise, the breakout session will explore how to foster the potential of R&I in the field of digital and data technologies in agriculture. It will also identify the priorities in the field of technological and social innovation to enable the agricultural sector and the wider innovation ecosystem to respond to challenges and needs.

## 6. Rural opportunities

**Keynote speech:** *Dr. Emilia Schmitt, University of Cordoba, Horizon 2020 Project MOVING*

**Overview of EU R&I and moderating:** *Ms. Kerstin Rosenow, Head of Unit EC-AGRI.F.2. Research and Innovation*  
*Ms. Arianna Pasa, EC-AGRI.F.2 Research and Innovation*

**Panel discussion:** *Prof. Spyros Fountas, Agricultural University of Athens*  
*Dr. Petri Kahila, University of Eastern Finland, Horizon Europe Project RUSTIK*  
*Ms. Wallis Vandebroek- Goelen, EC-REGIO DDG*  
*Dr. Marta Guadalupe Rivera Ferre, Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), Horizon Europe Project SWIFT*

## Outline

Rural areas are diverse and rural communities can vary widely in terms of their economic, social, and cultural characteristics across the EU. Some rural areas are thriving and prosperous, with strong agricultural, tourism, cultural or natural resource-based economies. Others may face challenges such as aging, depopulation, poverty, lack of job opportunities, and limited access to basic services (e.g. education, healthcare), infrastructures and amenities.

Despite these challenges, rural areas are home of around 30% of the EU population and cover approximately 80% of the EU territory. Rural areas play an important role in the European economy and society and are key to achieve the green and digital transitions.

These territories offer unique opportunities for people who are looking for a lifestyle that is in close connection to nature. They can be places of innovation that retain and attract talents, especially in a context where remote working is now accessible to many workers. Multi-actor research and innovation projects funded under Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe are supporting community-led innovations that empower rural communities to become stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous in line with the Long-term Vision for the EU's rural areas.



Through presentations, a panel discussion and a participatory co-creation exercise, this breakout session will explore how research and innovation can support rural areas and communities to develop or regenerate in a sustainable, balanced and equitable manner.

## 7. Bridging the gap between R&I and practice: tools and skills for today's and future generations

**Keynote speech:** *Ms. Aniko Juhasz, Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary*

**Update on EU R&I** *Ms. Natalia Brzezina, EC-AGRI.F.2 Research and Innovation*

**and moderating:** *Ms. Patricia Ana Lopez, EC-AGRI.F.2 Research and Innovation*

**Panel discussion:** *Dr. Susanne von Münchhausen, HNE Eberswalde; Horizon Europe Project PREMIERE*

*Ms. Inge Van Oost, EC-AGRI.D.1 Rural areas and network*

*Dr. Daniel Rossi, Copa-Cogeca*

*Mr. Jacek Podlewski, CEO of CGFP Sp. z.o.o.*

### Outline

Agriculture, forestry and rural areas need to speed-up their green and digital transition through knowledge, innovation and skills. It is essential to deploy knowledge and innovation wider and at a faster pace to achieve the progress required by the European Green Deal and the Common Agricultural Policy. Research and innovation need also to become more responsive to the actual needs and context in real life.

More effective Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) are key to close the gap between science and practice, and to develop the right skill set. AKIS today uses diverse tools that rely on participatory place-based innovation and encourage knowledge exchange yielded from R&I activities. These include the well-tested and successfully applied multi-actor approach, EIP-AGRI operational groups, thematic and advisory networks, and new tools such as living labs and lighthouses.

Through presentations, a panel discussion and a participatory co-creation exercise, this breakout session will explore the opportunities to improve the landscape of tools and reflect on novel tools to bridge the gap between research, innovation and practice, and match skills to the sustainability challenges of today and tomorrow.

## 8. Social Sciences and Humanities for resilient and sustainable agriculture and forestry

**Keynote speech:** *Prof. Kristina Blennow, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences*

**Update on EU R&I** *Mr. Marc Duponcel, EEAS-Ouagadougou*

**and moderating:** *Ms. Marialuisa Dal Poz, EC-AGRI.F.2 Research and Innovation*

**Panel discussion:** *Dr. Erwin Wauters, Senior researcher, ILVO - Social Sciences Unit, Horizon Europe Project ENFASYS*

*Dr. Mark Redman, Highclere Consulting SRL, Horizon 2020 Project FARMWELL*



### Outline

Farmers and foresters work in a changing environment, under the pressure of climate change, food security, new sustainability objectives, new legal requirements, consumers' behaviour change, technological developments, new working patterns. It is important to understand how farmers and foresters behave in this changing context, which are the strategies and tools they use to manage risks, how working conditions evolve in their farms and forests, how they tackle the difficulties to attract newcomers, the lack of workforce, the gender issues and others. While the innovative agricultural methods provide a large number of solutions, boosting social and behavioural sciences in research & innovation is essential to enhance the resilience and attractiveness of the sector and to identify barriers and opportunities for the uptake of knowledge and innovation.

Through presentations, a panel discussion and a participatory co-creation exercise, this breakout session will explore what are the opportunities offered by social sciences and humanities and behavioural sciences in a research and innovation context to deliver on the challenges of the agricultural and forestry sectors.

**15:30 – 15:45**

**Transition from parallel session rooms to plenary room Gold Hall'**

