



## **FoodDrinkEurope's views on the Next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation**

In the light of the ongoing discussions about the next EU Research and Innovation (R&I) Framework Programme (FP9), FoodDrinkEurope calls on the EU Institutions to develop an ambitious FP9 by:

1. Significantly increasing public spending in R&I, including increased support in areas relevant to the food and drink sector.
2. Keeping the right balance across the whole R&I chain, from the generation of new knowledge to the exploitation of the solutions available.
3. Considering a 'food-themed mission' to advance towards Food and Nutrition Security.
4. Designing new public-private collaborative models to attract and leverage investments and translate research more effectively into innovation and growth.
5. Engaging citizens in R&I processes, re-launching and tackling societal challenges.
6. Simplifying further the administrative requirements of the participants of the programme.
7. Ensuring a stable and coherent EU innovation policy.

Throughout the years, the EU has supported research and innovation (R&I) in the food and drink sector through the EU R&I Framework Programmes. The clear outcomes of this EU-funded research, together with national programmes and private investment, are the widening of our knowledge, innovative solutions that helped our sector to stay competitive, the establishment of research infrastructures and the foundation of networks that facilitate the sharing of information, collaborations and best practices throughout the EU and in particular for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). However, despite the efforts made, the EU is still lagging behind top global innovators such as South Korea, Japan, and the United States and needs to boost R&I investments to tackle the global challenges and find solutions to fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and COP21. The private sector continues to be the main sector in which research and development (R&D) expenditure was spent, accounting

for 64% of total R&D conducted in 2015<sup>1</sup>. In the food and drink sector, almost two thirds of Europe's food and drink companies reported at least one type of innovation during the period 2012-2014<sup>2</sup>. Hence, to support the private R&I investments in the food sector and meet the key objectives set in the EU's agenda for growth and jobs, it is extremely important **to significantly increase public spending in R&I**, including increased support for R&I in areas relevant to the food and drink sector. At a minimum, the EU budget for FP9 should maintain the average annual growth of Horizon 2020, which would lead to a seven-year budget of at least 120 billion through different programmes<sup>3</sup>. R&I budget of Member States should echo the increase in EU R&I funding while ensuring alignment and complementarity of investments at the EU and national levels.

The last of the EU R&I Framework Programmes, Horizon 2020, gave special emphasis on excellent science, industrial leadership and tackling societal challenges, from a distinct cross-cutting, multi-disciplinary, multi-actor and multi-sectorial perspective. The Horizon 2020 three-pillar structure reflects well the whole innovation process, and this concept should be maintained in FP9 in order to provide the biggest socio-economic impact. Thus, FP9 should **combine projects with low and high Technology Readiness Levels (TRL)**, ranging from novel ideas and breakthrough concepts to incremental solutions with rapid scale-up potential, spread in a balanced way across the programmes. There should be a balance between the support for the generation of new knowledge and breakthrough concepts and the transfer and exploitation of the knowledge and solutions already available.

The adoption of a mission-oriented, impact-focused approach was recommended by the High Level Group as a way to maximise the impact of future EU R&I programmes<sup>3</sup>. This expert group suggested that the EU should prioritise investing in areas where the EU added value is the greatest and translate global societal challenges into a limited number of large-scale R&I 'missions'. A **'food-themed mission'** represents a unique opportunity to mobilise all actors and investors, at different levels and from different disciplines, to make real progress and help consumers attain safe, affordable, healthy and sustainable diets. Food is strongly connected to European heritage and identity, and at least nine of SDGs are of direct relevance to Food and Nutrition Security. In addition, a mission in the area of food would indeed benefit from the

---

<sup>1</sup> Source: EUROSTAT, 2016

<sup>2</sup> Source: EUROSTAT, 2017

<sup>3</sup> [LAB – FAB – APP: Investing in the European future we want. Report of the independent High Level Group on maximising the impact of EU Research & Innovation Programmes \(2017\)](#)

momentum created with the announcement of FOOD 2030<sup>4</sup>, a new EU policy framework to better structure, connect and scale-up R&I for Food and Nutrition Security.

Making it easier for the public and private sectors to work together in delivering innovation is fundamental to accelerate the generation of results and impact. **New public-private collaborative models** can attract and leverage investments and translate research more effectively into innovation and growth. In the specific case of the food and drink sector, breakthrough concepts and products will require the contribution of various partners of the value chain and this is where the EU is uniquely positioned to help bring these partners together and support the research to be done, research with a very large EU impact. In joining forces we not only stand a better chance to tackle the current societal challenges, but also we further empower the position of the EU as a leading innovation engine in the sector. Thus, collective research in the pre-competitive phase of R&I processes would help involve SMEs into R&I activities and learn from each other, understand new concepts and methods, and prepare close-to-market projects. Shared-cost and shared risk collective R&I facilities reduce the economic burden for SMEs to conduct research, particularly relevant in the food sector. In addition, FP9 should build in the good progress made with H2020 and work towards the **simplification of administrative requirements** for participants like project controlling based on results or avoiding double book-keeping.

All societal actors (researchers, citizens, policy makers, businesses, third sector organisations, etc.) need to work together in R&I in order to better align their activities with the values, needs and expectations of society. **Citizen science and societal engagement in R&I** will help deliver more relevant and acceptable outcomes and spread awareness on the necessary changes, particularly those that affect lifestyles and behaviour.

The diverse composition of businesses should be acknowledged. Start-ups, SMEs and national and multinational companies populate the European business ecosystem, and their innovation behaviour differs greatly among and within these categories. This is especially striking in the food and drink sector, where 99.1% of the 289 000 companies operating in the EU are SMEs<sup>5</sup>, which often lack the capability and the resources to engage actively in R&I processes. Thus, **special actions tailored to SME needs** are therefore needed to exploit their

---

<sup>4</sup> [FOOD 2030 High-level Conference background document \(2016\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> [FoodDrinkEurope Data and Trends of the EU Food and Drink Industry \(2017\)](#)

innovation potential<sup>6</sup>. Mediator/facilitator organisations at national level can assist SMEs in finding the appropriate solutions by linking SMEs' needs and existing technology in an iterative manner. They can also support SMEs by providing them with advice about funding opportunities and issues that might arise from the collaboration between industry and academia.

Finally, removing barriers to innovation is also essential to boost the global competitiveness of European industries. A **stable and coherent EU innovation policy** that interacts with all other EU policy areas is essential to support evidence-based policy-making and will create the conditions for innovation to flourish.

An ambitious FP9 is paramount to position the EU as a global industrial leader and safeguard EU growth and jobs<sup>7</sup>. We truly believe that increasing EU budget in R&I, in particular in the cooperation area (pillar three), and maximising its impact will enable the generation of new breakthrough concepts and allow food and drink businesses to apply new knowledge, skills and techniques. It is probably the best option that Europe has to deliver food and health related solutions and hence ensure the future well-being for its citizens.

---

<sup>6</sup> [Making Research and Innovation work for SMEs in the Food and Drink Sector. Joint chapter of the European Technology Platform 'Food for Life', the European Collaboration of the National Food Technology Platforms and the European Federation of Food Science and Technology \(2017\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> [An Ambitious FP9 Strengthening Europe's Industrial Leadership – Joint Declaration by Industry and RTOs \(2017\)](#)