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PRESS RELEASE

**New programme increases European research collaboration**

**Welcome to the future! The new ERA-NET FACCE SURPLUS’ first milestone was reached on March 4th, when the window closed for pre-proposals. In total the programme received 67 pre-proposals from 21 countries, so the ground is now laid for research that can provide a sustainable intensification of agricultural production all over Europe.**

The ERA-NET FACCE SURPLUS is a product of the **J**oint **P**rogramming **I**nitiative on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change (FACCE-JPI) comprising 21 countries committed to building a European Research Area addressing challenges of sustainable agriculture, food security and impacts of climate change.

Niels Gøtke, chair of FACCE JPI, sees big potential in the new programme: “Food security and climate change are challenges that no single country can cope with alone. Working together in a JPI in the right way has huge potential for creating synergies and efficiency. It is important to constantly show added value to existing research activities and to reach the critical mass,” he says.

In Niels Gøtke’s opinion, FACCE SURPLUS can increase the quality of scientific research as well as research capacity and thus lead to synergy and complementarity. This view is shared by one of FACCE SURPLUS’ scientific coordinators Niels Halberg, director of DCA – Danish Centre for Food and Agriculture - and ICROFS – International Centre for Research in Organic Food Systems.

"On the one hand, we need to increase and intensify the agricultural production, on the other hand, agriculture needs to further reduce the negative environmental impact and with a larger respect for natural capital. It is a huge challenge that needs to be addressed at a transnational level across Europe," Niels Halberg says.

**European School of thought**

The programme with an indicative budget of 16 million euros is committed to improve collaboration across the European Research Area in the range of diverse, but integrated, food and non-food biomass production and transformation systems, including biorefining.

As of 4th of March, the closing date for pre-proposals, 67 pre-proposals from 21 countries were submitted.

A team of international evaluators will now review the pre-proposals, and according to the chair of the evaluators the expectations are high: "This ambition requires a systemic approach, combining field and laboratory research with modelling, scenario techniques and pilot application. Project consortia will have to operate in an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary mode and utilise principles of modern transformation management. Combined with the ongoing FACCE program, FACCE SURPLUS will succeed in creating a European school of thought and innovation on sustainable biomass production and utilisation that may serve as role model at national and international levels."

**It’s a Cofund**

The ERA-NET scheme was created in 2002 as part of the 6th Framework Programme (FP6) and has since become increasingly popular. Therefore, the ERA-NET instrument was continued in the 7th Framework Programme (FP7). Additionally under FP7 appeared the opportunity of forming an ERA-NET Plus, in which the Commission supports the research activities instead of the network itself.

Under Horizon 2020 the ERA-NET Cofund is implemented. The focus has shifted from funding networks to top-up funding of single joint calls for transnational research and innovation in selected areas with high European added value and relevance for Horizon 2020. Meaning, this type of action is funded through a grant which main focus is to supplement individual calls or programmes funded by Member States - other than Union funding bodies, managing research and innovation programmes.

**Facts about FACCE SURPLUS**

Duration: Five years - 1 March 2015 to 28 February 2020. Duration of funded research projects are three years

Total budget: 16 million euros

For more information on FACCE SURPLUS, please visit [www.faccesurplus.org](http://www.faccesurplus.org)

For more information on FACCE JPI, please visit [www.faccejpi.com](http://www.faccejpi.com)