

PRESS RELEASE

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Plants for the Future welcomes the European Commission’s Horizon Europe 2028–2034 proposal. We celebrate the programme’s attention to biotechnology, agriculture, and the bioeconomy, as well as its commitment to simplification, broader participation, and public-private partnerships. However, questions remain about how Horizon Europe 2028-2034 will be coordinated with the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF) in practice, and how this alignment will support plant breeding research and innovation across the value chain.

The awaited Framework Programme for Research and Innovation for the period 2028-2034¹, *Horizon Europe*, marks a significant step forward in placing research and innovation at the core of the EU’s strategy for competitiveness, sustainability, and resilience. Plants for the Future ETP welcomes the programme’s ambition and its clear commitment to promoting public-private partnerships, increasing investment in innovation, and simplifying access to funding. These priorities provide a strong foundation for establishing a dedicated plant breeding partnership—an essential step to ensure long-term impact and continuity in addressing the challenges and opportunities of Europe’s agri-food systems.

We particularly value the programme’s support for collaborative and cross-sectoral research efforts, including dedicated attention to biotechnology, agriculture, and the bioeconomy. The proposed simplification measures—such as lump sum funding, a single funding rate, and faster time-to-grant—seem important steps toward reducing administrative burden and broadening participation, especially for actors in the plant breeding and farming communities.

We also welcome the recognition of the key role of research and innovation in supporting the transition to more sustainable and resilient agri-food systems. However, as highlighted in our recent report on EU public investment in plant breeding R&I², funding for plant breeding has been declining despite the overall increase in previous Framework Programme’s budget. This trend must be addressed to fully leverage the potential of plant breeding in delivering high-quality, sustainable food, feed, and raw materials. Plant breeding lies the heart of our agri-food systems, and to ensure Horizon Europe delivers on its promise, a dedicated mechanism is needed to support R&I in plant breeding and ensure

¹ European Commission (2025) [Framework Programme for Research and Innovation for the period 2028-2034](#).

² Plants for the Future ETP (2025) [Trends in European Public Investment in Plant Breeding R&I](#).

the effective implementation of research outcomes through strong public-private partnerships.

The proposal's close alignment with the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF) offers an opportunity to create a more coherent and impactful investment landscape, from fundamental research to market uptake. While this integration is promising, further clarity is needed on how coordination between Horizon Europe and the ECF will be implemented in practice. Ensuring transparency, coherence, and accessibility will be key to making this alignment work for all stakeholders.

We call on European Institutions to:

- Support a strong and coherent research and innovation ecosystem that enables the effective flow of innovation from fundamental research to market deployment.
- Provide targeted support for plant breeding research and innovation across the programme.
- Promote a strategic public-private plant breeding partnership that span the full agri-food value chain.
- Ensure that the integration between Horizon Europe and the ECF is transparent, coherent, and accessible to all stakeholders.

Plants for the Future ETP looks forward to working closely with the European Commission and relevant EU bodies to ensure that the full potential of plant breeding is recognised and mobilised in support of a more competitive, resilient, and sustainable agri-food system.

Plants for the Future ETP (Plant ETP) is a multi-stakeholder European Technology Platform representing the plant sector, from the seed and breeding sector, the farming community and academia. Plant ETP brings stakeholders from the plant sector together to consider the challenges and opportunities of agricultural value chains in a holistic way, while developing a vision for future systems spanning food, feed, and biobased raw materials. In this way, Plant ETP provides strategic direction, recommendations of essential research and innovation, and science-based advice for the benefit of policymakers, research funding providers, practitioners, and innovators throughout agricultural value chains.