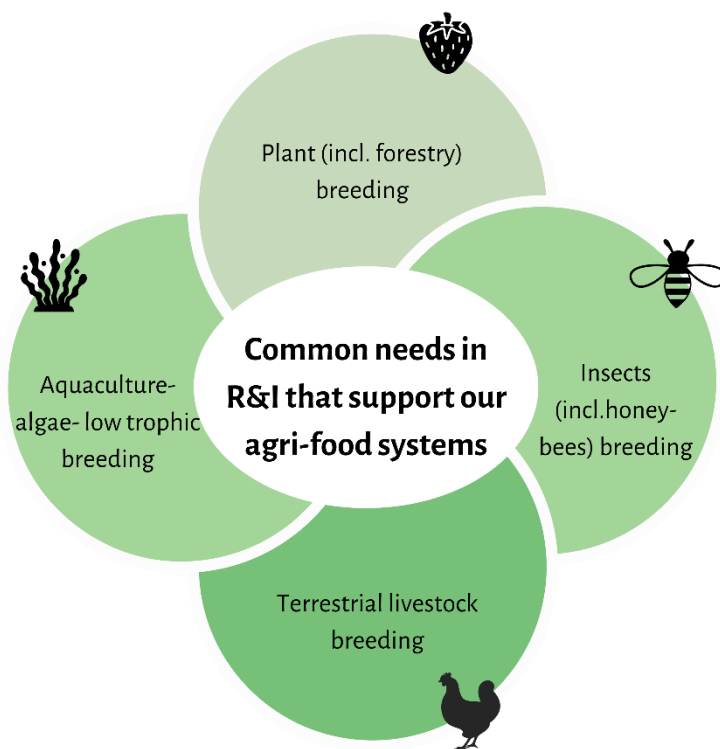


## Press Release

### Workshop on Strategic Investment in Breeding to Enable more Sustainable Agri-Food Systems

Brussels, 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2023 — Three European Technology Platforms (Plant ETP, FABRE TP, and EATIP), along with the Animal Task Force, have long promoted the importance of breeding for our agri-food systems. In a bid to leverage the benefits of cross-sectoral collaborations and public-private partnerships, these organisations joined forces to host a workshop tackling critical needs for breeding and its pivotal role in advancing a more sustainable and circular bioeconomy. By convening a diverse range of stakeholders, including researchers, farmers, breeders, policymakers and funders, with a broad spectrum of knowledge spanning aquaculture, plants, animals, and forestry, the event laid the groundwork for a vision of EU-wide critical-mass investment in breeding. The workshop was held in Brussels and hosted 25 in-person and 25 online participants, ensuring representation from various regions and addressing individual needs.

The organisers first shed light on the pivotal role of breeding as the pillar of our agri-food systems, emphasising significant unaddressed intersections among their respective sectors.



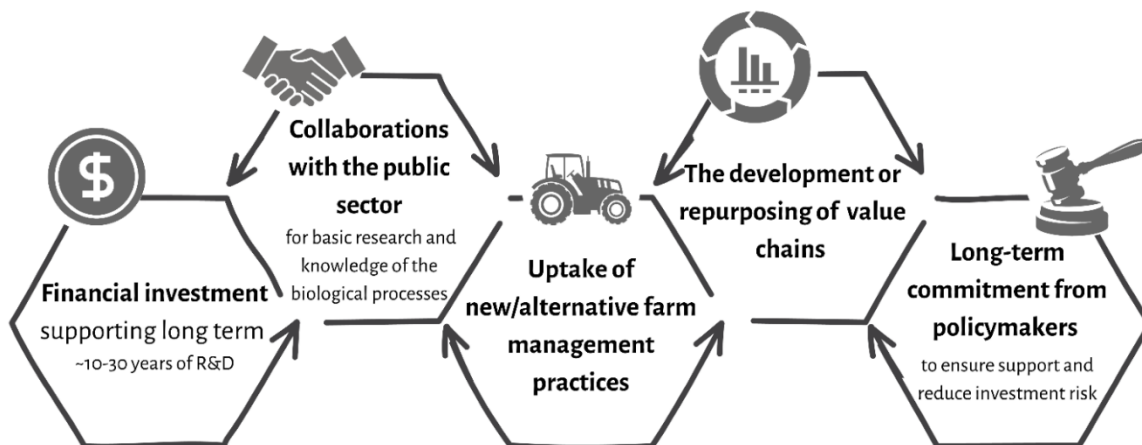
These intersections present valuable opportunities for enhanced collaborations and more efficient resource utilisation through a holistic breeding approach. The significance of knowledge and technology transfer between sectors and species/breeds to create more robust and diverse value chains was emphasised. Max Schulman, a Finnish farmer and advisor to the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners (MTK), delivered a keynote speech, stressing the importance of strategic planning backed by scientific evidence, ensuring that breeding can continue to support agricultural production.

The participants then discussed the status of plant and animal breeding (terrestrial and aquatic) and the financing mechanisms that could be implemented to support the transition. Key takeaways from the workshop underscore the urgent need for EU-wide strategic investments to enable breeding to contribute to the Farm to Fork, Biodiversity, and Circular Economy strategies and the EU's long-term objectives for 2050. While in some cases national funding is considered sufficient for specific sectors and/or species/breeds, participants

concluded that overall existing funding programmes, particularly at the European level, are not sufficient and the proportion of funding allocated to breeding has even steadily decreased over the years. Discussions also revolved around **bridging gaps in the current R&I landscape and strategies for fostering collaborations across sectors**. Connecting large EU-level projects, with smaller national projects, was considered essential to provide impact on the ground. Attendees concluded that a coordinated approach is vital to ensure that no country or sector is left behind. The need for **a long-term (10-20 years) EU-wide funding mechanism** for the development of resilient varieties of terrestrial and aquatic plants and animals was highlighted.

Commenting from an aquatic perspective, David Bassett, General Secretary of EATiP noted “across all our sectors, including finfish, shellfish & molluscs and algae, breeding has a clear role to play in improving production whilst delivering strategic objectives for the environment, climate and food systems.” Amrit Nanda, the Executive Manager of Plant ETP, summarised the workshop's significance, stating “While breeding alone is not sufficient to reach the Green Deal goals, we will definitely not get there without it.” Ana Granados, Secretary General of FABRE TP added that “collaboration across sectors on investigating and delivering knowledge and tools will allow us to make progress faster. We can already see this progress within sectors where “more advanced” terrestrial livestock breeding has paved the way for the relatively recent aqua breeding sector to achieve substantial progress in just a few decades.”

What does breeding a broad range of species and breeds require? Read below!



See the joint statement [here](#).