Plants for the Future ETP's Contribution to Call for Evidence for Evidence for an Impact Assessment European Biotech Act

Biotechnology plays an vital role in shaping the future of our agrifood systems, offering a wide range of transformative solutions to meet evolving societal and environmental needs and challenges. In the next decades, Europe's transition to more sustainable, resilient and competitive agrifood systems will be dependent on its ability to increase its food autonomy, while producing sufficient plant biomass to enable the phasing out of fossil fuels. To avoid competition between, food, feed and biomass for the wider bioeconomy, the integration of advanced biotechnological tools into agrifood systems is not only timely but essential.

Modern agrifood systems are increasingly reliant on innovations that enhance productivity while minimising costs and environmental impact. Biotechnology enables the development of crops that are more resilient to biotic and abiotic stresses, require fewer inputs, and are tailored for diverse end uses—ranging from food and feed to industrial applications in the bioeconomy. These innovations are critical to ensuring that agricultural production systems remain viable and competitive in the face of climate volatility and resource constraints.

The development of multipurpose crops — where different plant components serve distinct roles in food, feed and/or industrial sectors — highlights the potential of biotechnology to support a more circular and sustainable bioeconomy. However, breeding such crops is extremely complex, requiring the integration of multiple traits without compromising yield, disease resistance or quality. Biotechnological tools, including New Genomic Techniques (NGTs) and classical Genetic Modification (GM), offer unprecedented precision and efficiency in achieving these breeding goals, making previously unattainable targets feasible.

Despite these advances, Europe risks falling behind global competitors due to regulatory and investment gaps. An impact assessment should determine how a forward-looking Biotech Act could:

- **Increase investment in biotechnology R&I**, particularly in plant breeding, to strengthen the resilience and sustainability of agrifood systems.
- **Ensure a supportive regulatory framework** that reflects scientific progress and facilitates the responsible uptake of biotechnologies.
- **Foster public-private partnerships** to accelerate the translation of research from fundamental research to the market, for the benefit of society.

Biotechnology is not a silver bullet, but it is a powerful enabler. To meet the EU Green Deal ambitions and ensure strategic food autonomy, Europe must bridge the innovation gap and fully harness the potential of its scientific discoveries. A robust, innovation-friendly ecosystem will empower Europe to

lead the global transition towards more sustainable agrifood systems and a more circular bioeconomy, delivering benefits for the environment, the economy and, most importantly, society.

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.