



Brussels, 12th March 2012

Agri-Food Chain proposal on the EU programme on minor uses and speciality crops

1. The agri-food chain partners¹ have high expectations of the report to be published in the next few months by the European Commission (DG SANCO) on minor uses and speciality crops in Europe. There is an urgent need for an EU programme in order to find solutions to the increasing lack of availability of plant protection products for minor uses and speciality crops. Europe must not miss this opportunity.
2. We fully support the letter signed by 18 Member States, where a proposal is made for the establishment of a mechanism for coordination between the Member States and the relevant stakeholders. This mechanism needs to be supported by the EU with appropriate funding. This can however only be considered as part of the solution. We still need a mechanism for boosting cooperation and part-funding of projects. Although in the short term it might be considered only on a small scale due to budgetary constraints, a mechanism for financing cooperation and part funding of projects must be available from the very beginning. This is the only way to ensure a **long term vision** of the entire programme on minor uses and speciality crops and show where Europe wants to be in the next decade with this issue.
3. An ambitious and permanent framework is needed. Such a programme on minor uses and speciality crops, should enable both **coordination** and **cooperation** between the existing initiatives on the ground, including:
 - Technical Working Groups (TWGs) in the north and south of Europe, which have been actively involved in finding solutions for minor uses and speciality crops. The groups are composed of MS and industry representatives and have in the past been financed by the European Commission.
 - Expert groups within the Technical Working Groups have recently been set up on fresh vegetables, processed vegetables and ornamentals. Some EU stakeholders (e.g. Copa-Cogeca, PROFEL) are facilitating the running of such meetings – and the setting up of a number of other Working Groups is being discussed (e.g. cereals, seeds).
 - National bodies are working individually on specific groups of products and commodities.

¹ AREFLH, CELCAA, COCERAL, Copa-Cogeca, ECPA, ESA, FRESHFEL, IBMA, PROFEL and UNION FLEURS.

4. The agri-food chain partners propose a programme on minor uses and speciality crops to be developed within a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth policy in line with Europe 2020 objectives. Such programme should mainly be focused on 6 work packages (see Annex I):

- 1. European coordination network for minor uses and speciality crops;**
- 2. Coordination of national authorities;**
- 3. Coordination of national bodies for finding common solutions through the setting up of ad hoc working groups on specific commodities/products²;**
- 4. International coordination;**
- 5. Supporting the development of procedures (e.g. EU guidance);**
- 6. Supporting, through part-funding (e.g. 20% from EU) of projects with broad interest across EU Member States.**

5. The estimated budget for such a programme on minor uses and speciality crops is around 6 million Euros a year. It should be noted that a similar programme is already in place in the USA, and for each dollar spent on that programme, it has been calculated that there is an economic benefit of \$500! (Annual spending of \$14 million providing an annual economic benefit of \$7.7 billion).³
6. In looking at the development of such a programme and new funding initiatives, it is important to consider the role of the upcoming HORIZON 2020, in order to ensure that public funds are used to deliver real economic benefits for the entire European agri-food chain including consumers.
7. Overall, the increasing lack of availability of plant protection products for minor uses and speciality crops is really significant and action is needed soon to bring solutions on the ground in the short term and restore positive confidence in the agri-food chain.

² Minor uses apply to uses on very common agricultural crops such as fruit and vegetables, cereals including rice, hops, flowers, to specific uses on seed crops, and to plants that need tailor-made plant protection products, whether applied as specific treatment for growing, breeding, storage or transportation of such commodities/products.

³ Please see report at : <http://ir4.rutgers.edu/Other/IR4EconomicImpact.pdf>

ANNEX I

Work Programme	Objectives	Estimated Costs
WP-1 European co-ordination network for minor uses and speciality crops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To manage and co-ordinate European network on minor uses and speciality crops • To support other work packages • To manage information dissemination to all partners (including the setting up and maintenance of relevant databases) • To organise an annual workshop of all platform partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinating network • Office costs, travel etc • Database development and management • Annual workshop
WP-2 Co-ordination of national authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To organise regular co-ordination meetings between MS authorities (in two groups – North and South) • To provide financial and logistical support for the working groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel and other expenses for meetings – 6 meetings of 20 people
WP-3 Co-ordination of national bodies to find common solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide organizational support for numerous work groups developing relevant solutions for pest problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Work groups could include, processed F&V, fresh F&V, Hops, Cereals including rice, Berries, Seeds, Flowers and Bulbs • To identify common problems and support coordination work in finding common solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel and other expenses for meetings – 15 meetings of 15 people
WP-4 International co-ordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To set-up international cooperation to ensure the develop of solutions at international level where possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual international dialogue meeting
WP-5 Support the development of procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the development of relevant European guidance to facilitate minor use authorisations. • To organise on an as needed basis, relevant meetings bringing together experts in the field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad-hoc – 10-12 meetings of ~8 people
<i>TOTAL COST (WP-1 – WP-5) = €1 million</i>		
WP-6 To support the funding of projects with a broad interest across EU Member States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review priority crop protection needs and identify key areas where solutions are needed • To manage the call for tender of key projects • To provide financial support (20% co-financing) to priority cross border projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% financing for identified projects during the call for tender
<i>TOTAL COST (WP-6) = €5 million</i>		