



Horizon Europe Cluster 6: Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment

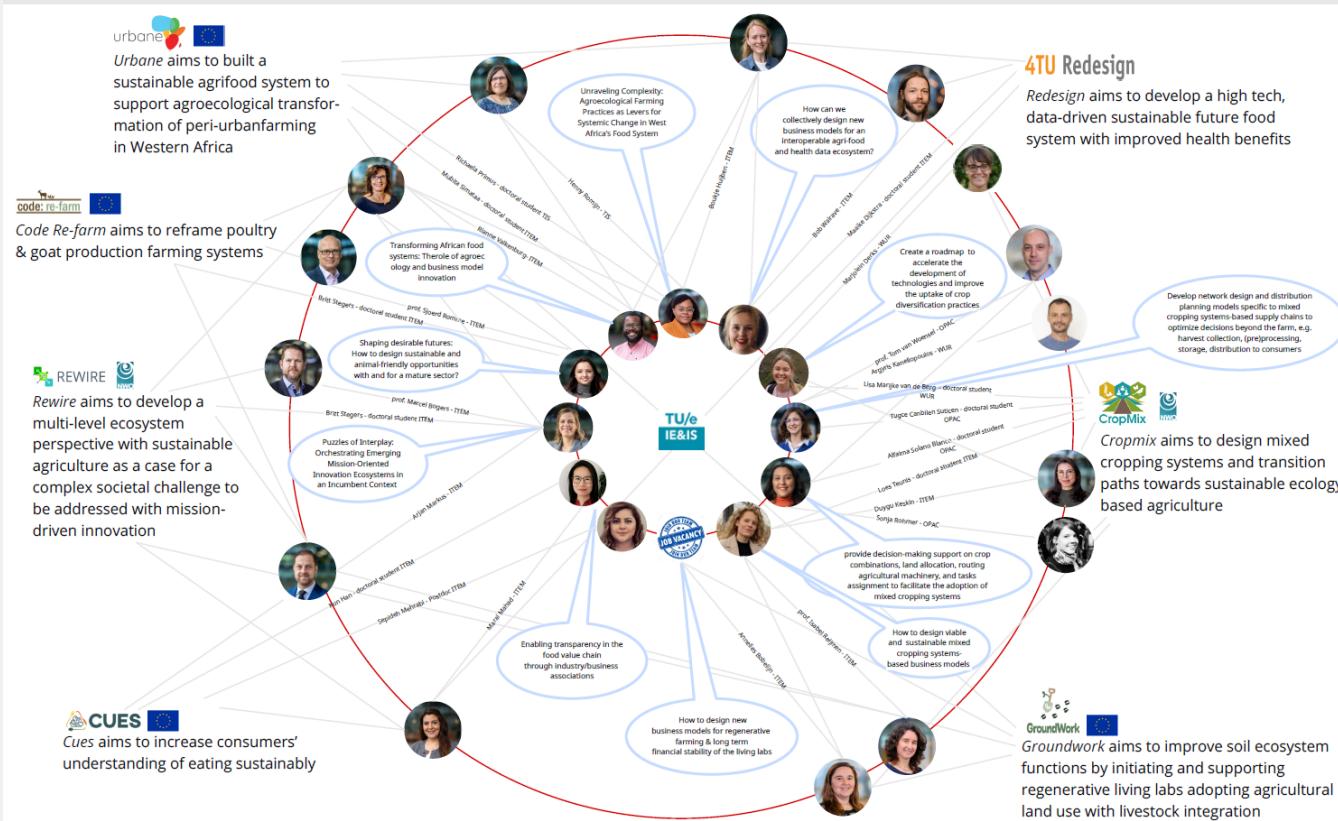
Potential calls of interest for researchers in ITEM group – 2026/27 work programme

Our expertise for Cluster 6



IE&IS Research supporting the agrifood transition

Designing new business models, farming practices, technology adoption, complex cooperation, and more ...



Any questions or do you want to cooperate? More information: **Rianne Valkenburg** (ITEM) - ecosystem orchestrator (a.c.valkenburg@tue.nl)

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Potential calls of interest in 2026/27 – HEU Cluster 6

Call Number & Title	Type of Action	TRL Level	Deadline	Type of Call	Budget (€M)	Expected Projects
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-COMMUNITIES-01: Boosting sustainable competitiveness in rural areas through innovation	RIA	N/A	14/04/2026	Single-stage, Lump Sum	11.8	~2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-01-two-stage: Open topic: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural sector by enhancing the efficient and sustainable use of agricultural production factors	IA	TRL 7-8	14/04/2026 (First Stage), 15/09/2026 (Second Stage)	Two-stage, Lump Sum, FSTP	13.5	~3
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-01-two-stage: Deploying circular systemic solutions through living labs in cities and regions (Circular Cities and Regions Initiative topic)	IA	TRL 6-8	16/04/2026 (First Stage), 23/09/2026 (Second Stage)	Two-stage, Lump Sum	10	~2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-09: Balancing food security, bioeconomy, climate and biodiversity objectives while unlocking sustainable value chains	RIA	N/A	17/09/2026	Single-stage, Lump Sum	12	~2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-04: Ensuring continuous effectiveness of protected areas in conserving habitats and species while facing intensifying drivers of biodiversity loss	RIA	N/A	17/09/2026	Single-stage, Lump Sum	13	~2
HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-06: Boosting agrobiodiversity for food security and sustainable competitiveness	RIA	TRL 4*	17/09/2026	Single-stage, Lump Sum	12	~2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-03-GOVERNANCE-01: Strengthening resilience of European farmers through improved capacity in coping with risks and crises	RIA	N/A	11/05/2027 (Opens 04/02/2027)	Single-stage, Lump sum	12	~2
HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-COMMUNITIES-02: Empowering local urban food systems entrepreneurship and innovation	IA	TRL 6-8	23/09/2027 (opens 20/04/2027)	Single stage, Lump sum	12	~2

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-COMMUNITIES-01: Boosting sustainable competitiveness in rural areas through innovation

- **Key Info:** Research & Innovation Action; TRL N/A; Lump Sum; FSTP.
- **Deadline:** 14/04/2026 (opens 14/01/2026)
- **Budget:** Euro 11.8M/ 2 projects funded;
- **Call Objective:** deliver better understanding of sustainable competitiveness in rural areas, support the establishment of better services and business opportunities in rural areas, promote entrepreneurship, innovation and skills development in rural communities and across the rural economy
- **Call scope**
 - Gain understanding of drivers and obstacles to sustainable competitiveness in rural areas;
 - Support start-ups and rural entrepreneurial initiatives to design, test and build digi/tech/social/nature-based solutions for service access and business support;
 - Create digital/ hybrid education and training in rural communities

HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-FARM2FORK-01-two-stage: Open topic: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural sector by enhancing the efficient and sustainable use of agricultural production factors

- **Key Info:** Innovation Action; TRL 7-8; Two-stage, Lump Sum; FSTP;
- **Deadline:** 14/04/2026 (First Stage), 15/09/2026 (Second Stage)
- **Budget:** Euro 13.5M/ 3 projects funded;
- **Call Objective:** Design exploitation pathways for innovations (market research, IP, regulatory steps); support farmers in transition pathways to crop diversification; develop creative dissemination materials.
- **Call scope**
 - Support definition of new innovations in efficient and sustainable agricultural production systems;
 - Support transition to green, sustainable farming systems;
 - Identify, develop and test new business models with farmers seeking innovations;
 - Assess environmental, economic and social impacts via stakeholder engagement;
 - Support the development of innovative dissemination strategies via multi-actor approaches.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-01-two-stage: Deploying circular systemic solutions through living labs in cities and regions (Circular Cities and Regions Initiative topic)

- **Key Info:** Innovation Action; TRL 6-8; Two-stage, Lump Sum;
- **Deadline:** 16/04/2026 (First Stage), 23/09/2026 (Second Stage)
- **Budget:** Euro 10M/ 2 projects funded;
- **Call Objective:** Implement living labs for circular systemic solutions, implement multi-actor co-creation activities with EU stakeholders and foster ecosystem engagement and open innovation approaches.

**at least five (5) distinct 'living labs' linked to regional or local authorities (and possibly together with their public and/or private ecosystem actors operating in their respective territories) must be part of the consortium as beneficiaries*

- **Call scope**

- Accelerate place-based innovation, boost skills and capacities and support the implementation of solutions for a circular systemic transition at city or region level;
- Ecosystem development and engagement across multiple EU cities plus support for local use cases in Eindhoven/ Brainport and other NL regions;
- Validation, testing and optimisation of circular systems, governance and business plans/models;
- Facilitate knowledge and experience transfer for further outreach and large-scale replication across Europe

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-09: Balancing food security, bioeconomy, climate and biodiversity objectives while unlocking sustainable value chains

- **Key Info:** Research & Innovation Action; Single-stage, Lump Sum;
- **Deadline:** 17/09/2026;
- **Budget:** Euro 12M/ 2 projects funded;
- **Call Objective:** Address trade-offs between food security and bioeconomy; unlock sustainable value chains; integrate circularity and biodiversity objectives.
- **Call scope**
 - Assessment of existing/ development of new business models and value chains use to generate new markets/ income streams for farmers;
 - Support transition to more circular/ bio-based economics;
 - Research into the convergence of social, economic, climate and biodiversity factors in designing and testing technological, data-driven analytical tools for assessing income; decision making, farm management, biomass, land use and food security;
 - Provide new policy and new sustainable business models/ value chains for adoption/ implementation by farmers and wider stakeholders.

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-04: Ensuring continuous effectiveness of protected areas in conserving habitats and species while facing intensifying drivers of biodiversity loss

- **Key Info:** Research & Innovation Action; Single-stage, Lump Sum;
- **Deadline:** 17/09/2026;
- **Budget:** Euro 13M/ 2 projects funded;
- **Call Objective:** Develop strategies to maintain and improve effectiveness of protected conservation areas undergoing changing conditions and biodiversity loss.
- **Call scope**
 - Assessment, definition and proposal of new, innovative management approaches/ techniques including measurement indicators, for managing protected areas;
 - stakeholder engagement with public authorities and alignment of policy with R&I outputs and societal expectations;

HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-06: Boosting agrobiodiversity for food security and sustainable competitiveness

- **Key Info:** Research & Innovation Action; TRL 4*; Single-stage, Lump Sum;
- **Deadline:** 17/09/2026;
- **Budget:** Euro 12M/ 2 projects funded;
- **Call Objective:** Demonstrate the value and contribution of agrobiodiversity to agricultural resilience and growing demand for food..
- **Call scope**
 - Develop solutions/ strategies for the introduction of new agrobiodiversity practices tailored to strengthening farmers' financial position;
 - Test new private finance initiatives including nature credits;
 - Support development of decision support / recommender tool that assesses risks arising from new biodiversification production systems;
 - Support farmers to valorise new products via e.g. tailored food processing;
 - Support improved engagement via multi-actor approaches with stakeholders along entire food production chain;
 - Due to the scope of this topic, international cooperation is strongly encouraged, including with China under the EU-China Food, Agriculture and Biosolutions (FAB) flagship initiative. *Development of specific technologies above TRL 4 is out of the scope of this topic.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-03-GOVERNANCE-01: Strengthening resilience of European farmers through improved capacity in coping with risks and crises

- **Key Info:** Research & Innovation Action, Lump Sum;
- **Deadline:** 11/05/2027 (Opens 04/02/2027)
- **Budget:** Euro 12M/ 2 projects funded;
- **Call Objective:** Develop governance models for resilience; Provide training and education for risk management; Focus on systemic solutions for competitiveness.
- **Call scope**
 - Support improved decision-making and behaviours regarding risk and crisis management, ensure wider impacts on stakeholders in supply chain/ ecosystem are captured and assessed;
 - guide farmers through transition from existing business models to new models that realise potential for improved capacity whilst mitigating for risks/ crises;
 - support risk management at farm level and/ or throughout supply chains;
 - support dissemination, training and education on risk/ crisis management.

HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-COMMUNITIES-02: Empowering local urban food systems entrepreneurship and innovation

- **Key Info:** Innovation Action; TRL 6-8; Lump Sum;
- **Deadline:** 23/09/2027 (opens 20/04/2027)
- **Budget:** Euro 12M/ 2 projects funded;
- **Call Objective:** Identify and develop opportunities to support the growth of urban food entrepreneurship and start-ups across EU ecosystems
- **Call scope**
 - Devise ways to drive transformation and innovation in local urban food systems, development and piloting of decentralised ecosystems e.g. incubators, accelerators and hubs supporting urban food solutions;
 - Support education and mentoring programmes to stimulate entrepreneurship using collaborative, sustainable business models;
 - Support piloting of emerging implementation models;
 - Support creation of inclusive ecosystems incorporating existing and emerging initiatives across EU

Potential calls of interest in 2026/27 – HEU Mission: Soil

Call Number & Title	Type of Action	TRL Level	Deadline	Type of Call	Budget (€M)	Expected Projects
HORIZON-MISS-2026-05-SOIL-02-two-stage: Living labs to enhance soil health in managed forests and in natural/semi-natural lands	RIA	N/A	14 Apr 2026 (St 1); 15 Sep 2026 (St 2)	Two Stage, FSTP possible	24M	2
HORIZON-MISS-2027-05-SOIL-01-two-stage: Living labs to enhance soil health in Continental, Black Sea, Pannonian and Steppic biogeographical regions	RIA	N/A	08 Apr 2027 (St 1); 14 Sep 2027 (St 2)	Two-Stage, FSTP	24M	2

HORIZON-MISS-2026-05-SOIL-02-two-stage: Living labs to enhance soil health in managed forests and in natural/semi-natural lands

- **Key Info:** Research & Innovation Action; TRL N/A; Two Stage, FSTP possible;
- **Deadline:** 14/04/2026 (Stage 1), 15/09/2026 (Stage 2);
- **Budget:** Euro 24M/ 2 projects funded;
- **Call Objective:** increased capacity for R&I activities that support creation of economically viable soil health solutions, improved soil health monitoring and availability of soil data; improved availability of practice-oriented knowledge for land managers/users generating better soil health solutions, improved policies and awareness regarding local needs for improved soil health.
- * proposals must focus on one of two designated land uses: (i) managed forests or (ii) natural/semi-natural
- **Call scope**
 - Implement 4-5 multidisciplinary, multi-actor stakeholder living labs across minimum of 3 EU Member States;
 - Address common soil health challenges in one of two settings (i) managed forests or (ii) (semi) natural land;
 - Establish an interdisciplinary, participatory and multi-actor approach in the living labs to co-design, co-develop, and co-implement locally adapted solutions;
 - Establish baselines for soil health in each LL location and enable continuous monitoring of soil health improvements and the effects of these improvements on overall soil health and associated ecosystems;
 - Demonstrate technical, social, economic, cultural and environmental viability of proposed solutions;
 - Identify high-performing sites that can be converted to lighthouse sites, connecting to the SOILL project to assess this;
 - Propose sustainability strategies for the long-term future operation of LL/ Lighthouse sites beyond project completion.

* To encourage and facilitate the involvement of different types of actors in the living labs, applicants are reminded of the different types of participation possible under Horizon Europe – beneficiaries, associated, third party in-kind, subcontracting, FSTP.

HORIZON-MISS-2027-05-SOIL-01-two-stage: Living labs to enhance soil health in Continental, Black Sea, Pannonian and Steppic biogeographical regions two-stage

- **Key Info:** Research & Innovation Action; TRL N/A; Two-Stage, FSTP; can last > 4 years;
- **Deadline:** 08/04/2027 (Stage 1), 14/09/2027 (Stage 2);
- **Budget:** Euro 24M/ 2 projects funded;
- **Call Objective:** increase capacity for participatory, multi-actor and interdisciplinary R&I in co-creation and implement economically viable soil health solutions, greater dissemination of relevant processes, knowledge, skills and tool to support adoption of soil health solutions, and increased policy shaping around engagement with economically sustainable soil health.
- **Call scope**
 - Implement 4-5 multidisciplinary, multi-actor stakeholder living labs either in the Continental biogeographical region or in one or more of the following three biogeographical regions: Black Sea, Pannonian and Steppic, at least 3 EU MS's or Assoc;
 - Address common soil health challenges in one of the following settings (i) agricultural, peri-urban, (post) industrial, forest or (semi) natural;
 - Establish an interdisciplinary, participatory and multi-actor approach in the living labs to co-design, co-develop, and co-implement locally adapted solutions;
 - Establish baselines for soil health in each LL location and enable continuous monitoring of soil health improvements and the effects of these improvements on overall soil health and associated ecosystems;
 - Demonstrate technical, social, economic, cultural and environmental viability of proposed solutions;
 - Identify high-performing sites that can be converted to lighthouse sites, connecting to the SOILL project to assess this;
 - Propose sustainability strategies for the long term future operation of LL/ Lighthouse sites beyond project completion;

* To encourage and facilitate the involvement of different types of actors in the living labs, applicants are reminded of the different types of participation possible under Horizon Europe – beneficiaries, associated, third party in-kind, subcontracting, FSTP.