LIFE Platform Meeting

Future-Proofing Europe's Agri-Food Sector: Innovation, Resilience, Sustainability, and Competitiveness brought forward by the LIFE Programme

3 - 4 December 2025

Hosted by the Coordinator of the project LIFE23-CCA-IT-IMAGE LIFE, ALMA MATER STUDIORUM - Università di Bologna (Italy).

Venue: Aula Magna, Dipartimento di Scienze e Tecnologie Agro-Alimentari, Università degli Studi di Bologna, Viale Fanin 44.

Agenda

3 December 2025

08:30 - 09:00	**Welcome coffee and registration**	
Opening Session: Setting the Context		
09:00 - 09:20	**Welcome speeches**	**Master of Ceremony:** Pavlos Doikos (ELMEN) • Giovanni Molari, Rector of the University of Bologna • Giovanni Dinelli, Head of Department of Agricultural and Food Sciences, University of Bologna • Antonio Frattarelli, Directorate-General for Rural Development, Italian Ministry of Agriculture • Hans Rhein, Head of the LIFE Energy and Climate Unit, CINEA
09:20 - 09:40	**Keynote presentation** A Vision for 2040: Building a Competitive, Sustainable, and Resilient Agri-Food Sector	• Barthélemy Lanos, Unit A1 Policy Perspectives, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission

09:40 - 10:00	**Keynote presentation** The LIFE Programme's contribution to sustainability of the agri-food sector	• Gianmarco Italia, Directorate-General for Climate Action, European Commission
10:00 - 10:30	**Coffee break**	
Session 1: Strengthening resilience in the agri-food sector		
10:30 - 10:45	**Keynote presentation** Building Climate-Resilient Agroecosystems in Mediterranean Areas: Lessons from LIFE DESERT-ADAPT	• Simona Castaldi, Università degli Studi della Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli", LIFE DESERT ADAPT
10:45 - 12:00	**Panel discussion** How to make agriculture more climate and water resilient in today's world. How sustainable agriculture can enhance EU's food security (e.g., water-efficient farming, biodiversity restoration, crop diversification, flood management, pest control, carbon sequestration).	**Moderator**: Carlo Ponzio (ELMEN) **Panellists**: • Farkas Tibor, LIFE Co-Clima • Joris De Nies, LIFE ACLIMA • Gottlieb Basch, European Conservation Agriculture Federation (ECAF) • Anna Marija Firere, Climate Pact Ambassador, University of Tartu • Patrizia Bianconi, Cabinet of the Presidency for the ecological transition and climate change integrated policies, Regione Emilia Romagna
12:00 - 12:15	**Q&A**	Pavlos Doikos and Carlo Ponzio
12:15 - 12:35	• Presentation of the projects IMAGE-LIFE, AGRITECH, and ONFOOD • Practical guidance for the field visits.	• Sara Bosi, Attilio Toscano & Matteo Vittuari, Department of Agricultural and Food Sciences
12:35 - 12:45	**Group photo**	Yael Meroz & Ivan Sgandurra
12:45 - 14:00	**Lunch**	
Field visits		
14:00 - 17:00	**Field visits** to the pilot sites of the project IMAGE-LIFE: 1. Bio Sant'Anna - Naturally Authentic, Organic dairy company, specialized in organic Parmigiano Reggiano and related products, based on a vertically integrated, high-traceability supply chain. 2. Ozzano Centre, managed by the Department of Veterinary Medical Science of the University of Bologna, has a teaching cow shed for dairy cattle, equipped for experimentation in all aspects related to the animal health and welfare, the feed and food safety and the farm animal management.	
17.00 - 19.00	**Tasting of Parmigiano Reggiano cheese,** to be followed by a **Networking cocktail**	

4 December 2025

08:30 - 09:00	**Welcome coffee**	
09:00 - 09:10	**Opening of Day 2 and recap of the main insights of Day 1**	• Bernd Decker, Head of Sector Climate Mitigation and Adaptation, CINEA
Session 2: Sustainability through Agri-Innovation – Positioning the Agri-Food Sector in the EU Competitiveness Compass		
09:10 - 09:30	**Keynote presentation** How green innovation in food systems boosts competitiveness	• Giuseppina Luvarà, Unit B.2 Bioeconomy & Food Systems, Directorate General for Research and Innovation, European Commission
09:30 - 10:45	**Panel discussion** Leveraging digital tools and other innovative models, measures and techniques in the agrifood sector to boost competitiveness (covering topics of green jobs, sustainability as a brand and export advantage, social innovation, agri-tourism)	**Moderator:** Elias Demian (ELMEN) **Panellists:** • Carlos Ruiz González, LIFE Olivares Vivos + • Henrique Mira Godinho, LIFE MARONESA • Sigurður Trausti Karvelsson, TERRAFORMING-LIFE • Leonardo Mirone, Barilla SPA • Eirini Xaxiri, Federation of Hellenic Food Industries (SEVT), LIKE A PRO Horizon Europe project
10:45 - 11:00	**Q&A**	Pavlos Doikos and Elias Demian
11:00 - 11:30	**Coffee break**	
Session 3: From Standards to Incentives: Scaling Close-to-Nature Solutions and Ecosystem Services		
11:30 - 12:45	**Panel discussion** Streamlining sustainability standards and incentivising ecosystem services, including biodiversity-friendly practices and sustainable soil management (covering topics of carbon removal & carbon farming, biodiversity-friendly practices, and sustainable soil management)	**Moderators:** Riccardo Valentini (IPCC) and Laurence Menet (ELMEN) **Panellists:** • Patrick Trötschler, LIFE BGP Food and LIFE Responsible Sourcing • Francisca Demmendal-Wit, LIFE IP PAF All4Biodiversity • Albina Yasinskaya, Awarded Best Organic Farmer - female 2025 • Anne Cazin, LIFE Biodiv' France • Jacopo Goracci, Slow Food NGO
12:45 - 13:00	**Q&A**	Pavlos Doikos and Laurence Menet
13:00 - 14:30	**Lunch**	

Parallel workshops		
14:30 - 16:00	1. **Sustainable agricultural practices for climate resilience,** also through valorisation of ecosystem services (topics may include cover cropping, agroforestry, water management, pollination support)	**Moderation**: Carlo Ponzio (ELMEN) **Opening presentation:** Matteo Metta, Agroecology Europe (AEEU)
	2. **Enhancing sustainable competitiveness through agri-tech innovations** (topics may include precision farming, innovative carbon removal technologies, smart irrigation, robotics, AI for pest management, business planning)	**Moderation**: Elias Demian (ELMEN) **Opening presentation**: Carlos Ruiz González, LIFE Olivares Vivos +
	3. **Stakeholder engagement for more sustainable food systems and less food waste** (topics may include innovative reuse of food by-products and agricultural residues, policy and market incentives for circular agri-food systems, bridging the production and consumption of food through education and behavioural change, labelling, and sustainable diets)	**Moderation**: Roberto Ghezzi (ELMEN) **Opening presentation**: Marta Antonelli, LIFE CLIMATE SMART CHEFS and FoodChoices4LIFE
16:00 - 17:15	**Feedback from parallel sessions** and **roundtable discussion** on key proposals for follow-up actions	Pavlos Doikos (ELMEN) and a rapporteur from each Workshop
17:15 - 17:30	**Take home message and closing**	• Emanuele Paolo Sicuro, Directorate-General For Climate Action • Giovanni Dinelli, Head of the Department of Agricultural and Food Sciences