

1st Call for Joint Research Projects on Agriculture, Food, Nutrition and Health - AgroHealth2022.

The Lleida Biomedical Research Institute Dr. Pifarré Foundation (IRBLleida) aims to create synergies between basic, clinical and epidemiological research, so that biomedical research becomes a driver for improving daily clinical practice.

Agrotecnio aims to become an international reference centre addressing key challenges in the food production chain in an integrated manner.

Within the framework of these goals, IRBLleida and Agrotecnio, with the support of the *Departament d'Acció Climàtica, Alimentació i Agenda Rural de la Generalitat de Catalunya* announce the 1st Call for Joint Research Projects on Agriculture, Food, Nutrition and Health – **AgroHealth 2022**.

1. Objective

The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes nutrition as a critical element of health and wellbeing. Better nutrition is particularly related to improved infant, child and maternal health, a stronger immune system, safer pregnancy and childbirth, lower risk of non-communicable diseases (such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease) and longevity. Furthermore, WHO has recently stated that *'by working together, the health and agriculture sectors can ensure policy coherence and deliver a safe and nutritious food supply that not only contributes to good health and well-being but also fosters healthy communities and economies*. Thus, Agrotecnio and IRBLleida will support collaborative synergistic projects that extend the boundaries of knowledge and bridge agriculture in its broadest sense with biomedical research along the nexus of Agriculture, Food, Nutrition and Health.

2. Projects

Projects should target unmet medical needs, including obesity, diabetes, lipidemia, metabolic syndrome, exercise physiology, molecular and cellular human metabolism, nutrient-gene interactions, nutrient-drug interaction or chemoprevention, through approaches such as the reduction of harmful residues from food ingredients, the impact of nutritional intervention on disease, nutrient-gene interactions, or the development of novel functional foods and ingredients, amongst others.

Collaborative research projects between a minimum of one Agrotecnio and one IRBLleida group should eventually lead to new collaborations that are sustained after the completion of the project. Thus, the generation of research outputs should allow the collaborating groups to apply for more ambitious competitive national and international calls.

The projects should follow the EU's **Do No Significant Harm Principle** (DNSH) regulations to undertake scientific research and technological development processes that take into account

effects and potential impact on the environment and society.

3. Principal Investigator requirements

Each proposal must identify two co-Principal Investigators (co-PI), one from each institution who must meet the following requirements:

- Be affiliated to Agrotecnio or IRBLleida.
- Have a doctoral degree.
- Have a scientific/technical track record consistent with the proposed project.

4. Duration, Funding and incompatibility

Funds for the AgroHealth2022 call will be provided by Agrotecnio, IRBLleida and the *Departament d'Acció Climàtica, Alimentació i Agenda Rural*. Up to three proposals with a budget of up to 45,000€ per project may be funded in this first Call. Funding will be for two years from the date of acceptance of the grant by the PIs.

AgroHealth2022 grants are compatible with any other research funds as long as the specific activities to be covered by AgroHealth2022 do not overlap substantially with other ongoing projects. If funding has been requested for activities included in the AgroHealth2022 proposal, within pending grant applications elsewhere, this must be explicitly stated in the application indicating the call or application and the estimated date of award decision. In the event that funding for the Call is finally secured, the Principal Investigators will have to resign from one of the grants.

A researcher who submits a proposal to the Call as co-PI of a project may not participate in any other project submitted to the Call. In the event of non-compliance with this requirement, all AgroHealth2022 Projects with the participation of this researcher will be excluded from the Call. Other researchers participating in the Call as collaborators may do so in no more than two projects, in the event of non-compliance with this requirement, IPs will be contacted and collaborator should choose the two projects on which they want to be maintained.

5. Application

All the materials in the proposals should be written in English. The materials needed for a full proposal to be evaluated are:

- Curriculum vitae (CVA FECYT format) of the two co-PIs of the proposal, selecting the best 5 publications for each of the Co-PI over the last 5 years (period extendable according to Annex 1).
- A detailed project proposal not exceeding 15 pages (single line spacing with Calibri 11) should be submitted using the template provided in Annex 1. The proposal will include the following points:

- Summary in Catalan, English and Spanish
- Background and state of the art
- Relevant bibliography.
- Hypothesis
- Objectives
- Justification of the interest of the Project and synergies brought about by the collaboration Work plan
- Work plan and methodology
- Previous experience of the team related to the project
- Technology and/or knowledge transfer potential
- Prospects of extending collaboration beyond the project
- Other funds granted and/or requested (pending resolution) substantially overlapping with the project proposed
- Adaptation to the principles of Responsible Research and Innovation
- Requested budget, maximum € 45,000 distributed in:
 - Personnel: Directly involved in the proposal
 - Small equipment
 - Consumables
 - Subcontracting
 - Travel expenses
 - Other expenses: publication costs, etc
- If needed, bioethics (CEEA and/or CEIm) and biosecurity committees' approvals or documents indicating that the proposals have been submitted for their approval.

6. Evaluation and selection

The evaluation process will be carried out by the *Agencia Estatal de Investigación* (www.aei.gob.es; ANEP). The key aspects that will be evaluated are the scientific excellence of the proposal, the track record of the research teams involved, the feasibility of the proposal and the potential impact of the project. More specifically, the proposals will be scored according to the criteria indicated in the following table:

Evaluation items	Up to
Scientific-technical quality of the proposal	45 pts
Principal Investigators' CV	25 pts
Potential Technology and Knowledge Transfer	10 pts
Prospects for extending the collaboration beyond the project	10 pts

At least one of the Principal Investigators under the age of 45 on the closing date of the Call (extendable according to Annex 1)	5 pts
Implementation of RRI policies	5 pts
Total	100 pts

7. Evaluation results and grant award decision

A Committee made of the directors of AT and IRBLleida and two senior investigators (one internal and one external) appointed for each institute will be in charge of overseeing the call, reviewing, ratifying and publishing the provisional recommendation for funding. The evaluation of the proposals will be performed by an external agency (ANEP). Any claims to the provisional award decision will have to be submitted to this Committee within 5 days of its publications and a final decision will be sent to the applicants within the following two weeks.

8. Scheduled calendar

Call Opening: May 15, 2022

Call Deadline: June 15, 2022 at 3 p.m.

Provisional Resolution: October 3, 2022

Allegations deadline: October 7, 2022 at 3 p.m.

Final resolution: October 14, 2022

9. Disbursement of funding

Once the final award decision has been announced, the approved funding will be transferred to the two institutions. The two co-PIs will manage their own funds through their respective institutes.

10. Project Monitoring

At the end of the first year of the project, the co-IPs should jointly submit a short report to the internal Grant Office of both institutes indicating to what degree the proposed objectives and milestones have been met, justifying any deviation from the original plan. Within a maximum period of six months after the end of the project, the PIs will submit a joint final report to the internal Grant Office of both institutes, describing the degree of achievement of the objectives and the outputs initially proposed.

11. Acknowledgements

The support of IRBLleida, Agrotecnio and the *Departament d'Acció Climàtica, Alimentació i Agenda Rural* must be duly acknowledged in all project outputs.

Annex 1

Important aspects that will be evaluated in this proposal are inputs (funding, industry contracts, etc) and outputs (publications, patents, etc) of the PIs of the projects during the last 5 years. This period of 5 years can be extended due to the following situations:

- a) Six months for each maternity leave
- b) For temporary disability due to serious illness or accident of the applicant, with medical leave equal to or greater than three months, the extension period will be the same as the disability duration (certified with official leave).
- c) Temporary incapacity during pregnancy for reasons related to it. An extension of the same duration as the sick leave will be accumulated to the extension included in section a).
- d) Care of people in a situation of dependency, in accordance with the provisions of the Law 39/2006, of December 14, on the Promotion of Personal Autonomy and Attention to people in a situation of dependency. An extension will be applied in weeks resulting from the number of weeks of activity as a non-professional caregiver.

All the leaves must be correctly credited at the time of filing the grant application.