

Paris, September 23, 2026

Agricultural innovation across Europe

Agricultural Research: When European Funding Translates into Tangible Solutions

In conjunction with the European Commission's release of its new AgRI 2040 and Food 2040 strategic framework aimed at enhancing research, innovation, deployment, and adoption within the European agricultural and agri-food sector, ACTA and the network of Agricultural Technical Institutes (ITAs) have unveiled a 50-page booklet that effectively showcases the outcomes of applied agricultural research. This publication emphasizes findings from 17 European projects (out of more than 145 in which the network has engaged since 2014), executed in collaboration with partners across Europe. The tools, methodologies, and readily applicable resources presented illustrate the significant impact of ITAs' efforts in supporting farmers and, more broadly, the agricultural and forestry ecosystem during their transition, thereby underscoring the value of the European funding that facilitates such initiatives.

A leading R&I network situated in the core of Europe

A distinctive entity in Europe, the Acta network and its Technical Institutes (ITAs) operate on a fundamental principle: each agricultural sector is represented by its own technical institute, governed by the farmers themselves. This structure facilitates research that is closely aligned with practical needs, enabling the transformation of findings into actionable solutions. In addition to this sector-specific approach, there exists a vital strength: a cross-sectoral and collaborative methodology. Numerous projects see various institutes pooling their efforts, supported by Acta, to tackle the challenges faced by a production system or a territory. Since 2014, the Acta network has positioned itself as a prominent force in European agricultural research and innovation (R&I) with:

- over 500 partners globally,
- over 145 European projects.

The Acta network ranks among the top 10 participants in Horizon projects related to agriculture.

European funding: a tangible lever for French and European agricultural sectors

European projects provide agricultural institutes (ITAs) with a space for collaboration and experimentation that amplifies their capacity for action. By benchmarking their methodologies against those of the continent's premier research centers and engaging with advisory and development partners, the institutes enrich their expertise, expand their operational scope, and accelerate the transformation of knowledge into practical solutions for a sustainable, resilient, and competitive agriculture.

Collective, tangible, and transferable outcomes

Each of these outcomes is the result of collaborative efforts undertaken with European partners, all stemming from consortia in which technical institutes assume a key role. Here are three examples, introduced by their respective contributions:

- A web application that evaluates the nutritional quality and environmental impact of a meal basket simultaneously. This is Foodbasket7, created as part of the European PATHWAYS project (which involves notably IFIP) and recognized with a 1-star Innov'SPACE award.
- An environmental assessment tool for livestock farms, now foundational to the Carbon Agri method recognized by the Low Carbon Label and implemented on several thousand farms. This is CAP'2ER®, developed by Idele-Institut de l'Élevage: initially developed for ruminant livestock sectors as part of the LIFE program, it now encompasses poultry and equines, as well as field crops, as a result of inter-ITA collaborations aimed at harmonizing methodologies across sectors.
- Root phenotyping and genotyping toolkits for the selection of field crop varieties that exhibit greater resistance to water scarcity. This initiative is a product of the Root2Res project, that ARVALIS coordinates.

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A challenge for public policy: establishing the conditions for meaningful impact

Beyond the results themselves, the booklet provides recommendations for policymakers. It underscores that the impact of European projects relies not only on the quality of the research produced but also on the conditions that facilitate its dissemination and adoption. This necessitates viewing projects within a long-term framework rather than as isolated initiatives, reinforcing a multi-stakeholder approach, promoting the valorization of results beyond the project's lifespan, and acknowledging the critical role of intermediary actors who assist in the implementation of innovations at the grassroots level. This is essential for ensuring that European funding continues to yield solutions that support the agricultural transition in the future.

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What matters to the farmers and the sectors is the result: tools, methods, and directly applicable recommendations. This is precisely what the European projects led by agricultural technical institutes, together with their partners, deliver: concrete, transferable solutions serving the competitiveness and sustainability of our farms. By fostering this collective dynamic, Acta enables the institutes to pool their strengths and, at European level, advance the research questions identified by the sectors.

Samuel Bulot, President of Idele-Institut de l'Élevage

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"Grounded in local communities and firmly oriented towards Europe, the Acta-ITA network plays a crucial role in converting scientific knowledge into practical solutions. Over the past twelve years, we have established a robust European presence, and the assistance offered to ITAs on European projects has significantly influenced the overall success of the network. This booklet serves as an invitation to explore what we can collaboratively achieve for sustainable and resilient agriculture, thanks to the support of the European Union."

Cyril Kao, Ministry of Agriculture, Agri-Food, and Food Sovereignty

In practice: The booklet “Agricultural Technical Institutes at the Heart of Innovation in Europe” is accessible in digital format (FR/EN) on acta.asso.fr [link].

About Acta:

Acta serves as the national network that unites and coordinates the 19 French agricultural technical institutes. It fosters collaboration among sectors, organizes national and European collaborative projects, and enhances innovation and knowledge transfer to farmers. Acta employs nearly 2,260 individuals, including 1,900 PhDs, engineers, and technicians, across more than 200 locations throughout France. • www.acta.asso.fr