

Press release

## FEASTS launched: a research project on cultured meat and seafood explores the future of protein.

- FEASTS is a groundbreaking, collaborative research programme funded by the EU Horizon programme, with the goal to deliver a comprehensive, unbiased knowledge base about cultured meat and seafood, and their place in the food system.
  - The focus is firmly on sustainability by design, an interdisciplinary approach and knowledge sharing.
  - FEASTS' central commitment in exploring the future of protein is to include the perspectives of all those involved in producing our food – from farm to fork and beyond.

The FEASTS (Fostering European Cellular Agriculture for Sustainable Transition Solution) programme, which launched in January 2024, will be conducted by a consortium of 36 independent institutions from 17 countries. This project answers to the call “Cultured meat and cultured seafood – state of play and future prospects in the EU (horizon-cl6-2023-farm2fork-01-13)”. Over the next 3 years, participants will delve into the technologies involved in the sustainable production of cultured meat and seafood. They will investigate nutritional, health and regulatory aspects, as well as issues of food safety related to these complementary proteins. Ethical questions connected with cultured meat and seafood will be addressed. Environmental, economic and social life cycle analysis will feed into dynamic systems models and expand the understanding of the multi-dimensional impact of cellular agriculture on the environment and the food value chain.

Prof. Frederico Ferreira, FEASTS Project Manager & Coordinator from IST-ID, the host institution for Técnico Lisbon Research Units activities said: *“Our aim with FEASTS, which has been designed as a think-tank, is to expand the knowledge related to cultured meat and seafood so we can future-proof protein supply. We are focused on responsible innovation and principles of open science to ensure data-sharing, reproducibility and, ultimately, access to the project's findings by key stakeholders. We also welcome input from any institutions operating in the food system which are not yet part of the project. Together, we will create a unique opportunity for an effective reorganisation of the food system and the establishment of resilient value chains in the EU.”*

The FEASTS consortium includes leading universities and research institutes, start-ups, business accelerators, independent consultants, international food innovation initiatives, representatives of farmers and aquafarmers and a consumer association. Also inviting input from food system stakeholders, FEASTS will provide a forum for open and informed discussion about the role of cellular agriculture in meeting the growing demand for protein. Solutions developed over the life of

the project will take into account such considerations as food security and just transitions for farmers and aquafarmers.

Marja-Liisa Meurice, Director, EIT Food North and East region, which is one of the consortium partners, and leader of the EIT Food Protein Diversification Think Tank said: *"Growing demand for protein along with the substantial environmental footprint of traditional animal farming mean we need to look for sustainable sources of complementary proteins, which is exactly what FEASTS is doing. We are looking to identify the most sustainable, economically viable technologies, and to establish their place in the European Union's food system."*

She added: *"We want our findings to ultimately serve as a decision support tool for informed policy and decision-making in the EU."*

An important part of FEASTS is exploring how cultured meat and seafood technologies can contribute to the future of farming. As all cellular agriculture products require the contribution of traditional agriculture, FEASTS will actively involve farmers in designing processes and future scenarios which will generate fair economic returns for them. Another topic of study will be the impact on consumers. Knowledge gaps regarding nutrition and food safety will be addressed with the requisite rigour and transparency, while workshops and focus group studies will put consumer preferences and the vibrant, diverse food cultures of Europe at the heart of research on acceptance of new products on tables across the EU.

Animal farming in the current food system generates 17% of the total greenhouse gas emissions<sup>1</sup> while supplying only 18% of the global calories and 37% of the global proteins.<sup>2</sup> Cellular agriculture, specifically cultured meat and seafood, has the potential to mitigate the negative effects of current intensive agricultural methods on human and animal health, and to address nutritional challenges, which the EU is facing. One of the goals of FEASTS is to establish a stewardship model for the European Union's cultured meat and seafood sector and support its future competitiveness. The ambition is to create a framework for sustainable production resulting in safe, nutritious, and widely accessible cultured products available to all consumers.

## ENDS

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ourworldindata.org/food-ghg-emissions>

<sup>2</sup> <https://ourworldindata.org/land-use>

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## About FEASTS

### Members of the FEASTS consortium

IST-ID Associação do Instituto Superior Técnico para a Investigação e Desenvolvimento, Stichting New Harvest Netherlands, Laboratorio Ibérico Internacional de Nanotecnología, Bruno Cell S.L.R, Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der angewandten Forschung e.V, Wageningen University, Nord Universitet, S<sup>2</sup>AQUA Laboratório Colaborativo, Technische Universität München, Univerza v Mariboru, acib GmbH, VITAL MEAT, Cultimate Foods UG, Supreme (GOURMEY), EurA AG, Ecoinnovazione srl, RESPECTfarms BV, Aarhus Universitet, Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production gGmbH, Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna, Lunds Universitet, Universidad del País Vasco/Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea, Lukas Madl (Innov), Safe Food Advocacy Europe, Agricoltura Cellulare Italia, Cellular Agriculture Greece, CellAgri Portugal – Associação Portuguesa para o desenvolvimento da Agricultura Celular, CellAg Deutschland EV, Agriculture Cellulaire France, EIT Food, ShakeUp Factory, Rügenwalder Mühle Carl Müller GmbH & Co. KG, Agri-food Technology Center Ctica Cita, NaTurtle AG, CULT Food Science, Japan Association for Cellular Agriculture (JACA).

## About IST-ID

The Association of Instituto Superior Técnico for R&D (IST-ID) ([www.ist-id.pt](http://www.ist-id.pt)) is a private not-for-profit institution for which Instituto Superior Técnico (IST) is one of the founding associates. IST is part of the Universidade de Lisboa, and it is the largest and most reputed school of engineering, S&T in Portugal. Its mission is to provide top quality higher education in the areas of Engineering, S&T and Architecture, as well as developing RD&I activities that meet the highest international standards. IST-ID carries out RD&I activities in interdisciplinary areas, cutting across different fields of engineering, science and technology, associated with challenges with high impact on society.

IST-ID is the host institution of the Institute for Bioengineering and Biosciences (iBB), a multidisciplinary research center that excels in research and advanced education (<https://ibb.tecnico.ulisboa.pt/>). The mission of iBB is to promote cross-disciplinary research encompassing the biological, chemical and engineering disciplines to impact the Human Health and Bioeconomy sectors.

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