

OrganicAdviceNetwork project kick-off marks the beginning of the first European network of organic advisors

In April 2024, the OrganicAdviceNetwork project, funded by the European Commission and the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation, brought together 18 partners from various European countries in Brussels, at the IFOAM Organics Europe office, for a three-day event to plan the first steps of this Europe-wide initiative.

Aligned with the EU's target of achieving 25% organic farmland by 2030, as part of the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#), the project addresses the urgent need for skilled advisors in organic farming. Its main objective is to create and animate a network of organic advisors throughout the 27 EU Member States and 7 other European countries.

The meeting provided the project partners with an opportunity for exchange, to discover the diversity of organic advisory services and take ownership of the project mission.

On the first day of the kick-off meeting, Natalia Brzezina, Policy Officer at the European Commission, DG AGRI, and Céline Choquer, Project Officer at the Research Executive Agency, warmly welcomed the consortium partners. They highlighted the European Union's commitment to supporting research and innovation, and stressed the important role of the OrganicAdviceNetwork project in reaching the EU targets through strengthened organic advisory services.

[IFOAM Organics Europe](#) outlined the upcoming steps to establish and energize a pan-European network of advisors and advisory services for the organic sector.

The project will organize overall 30 cross-visits across five geographical zones, 20 cross-visits for arable and ruminant sectors and 10 for vegetable, fruit, and viticulture sectors. Further animation of the network is foreseen through continuous knowledge exchange activities. These include also soft-skills training and online training modules covering diverse agricultural topics, aiming to support new and experienced organic advisors. Special attention will be given to conventional advisors and young graduates willing to acquire skills in advice for organic.

The project will also identify and promote successful business models for structuring and financing organic advisory services through an 'Organic Advice Contest'.

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During the last two days, emphasis was placed on identifying effective knowledge exchange tools, addressing key knowledge gaps among advisors, and developing strategies to recruit advisors for the project activities. Participants discussed how to best communicate and disseminate the project outcomes to AKIS actors, both within and beyond the organic community as well as how to create synergies with other EU projects, initiatives, and policymakers.

Learning on the field from the Flemish advisory partners

Partners got the chance to deepen their understanding of organic advisory services in Flanders. Lieven Delanote, an experienced organic advisor, showcased [INAGRO's](#) 17-hectare experimental organic farm, enabling organic advisors to gain recognition and trust among farmers. Carmen Landuyt from CCBT presented [the FORK-network](#) which facilitates the organic agriculture knowledge flow between Flemish research institutes and farmers. The field trip ended at the organic farm 't Goed ter Heule, a 9-hectare self-picking, family, mixed farm near Kortrijk with a delicious dinner prepared with the organic products produced on the farm.



Caption: OrganicAdviceNetwork Consortium visits
T' Goed ter Heule in Menen-Lauwe

While advisory services from 14 European countries are already involved in the project, the OrganicAdviceNetwork warmly welcomes new and experienced organic advisors in joining the project activities (cross-visits, soft-skills trainings, online courses and other knowledge exchange activities).

Involved organizations in OrganicAdviceNetwork



Relevant links

- [Reaching 25% organic farmland in the EU by stronger and better-connected organic advisors and organic advisory services | OrganicAdviceNetwork | Project | Fact sheet | HORIZON | CORDIS | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)
- organicseurope.bio
- Logos and photos: please download [here](#)
- [Video](#) with OrganicAdviceNetwork Project Coordinators during the Kick-off Meeting



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