Organic Innovation Days - Call for innovations in the organic sector

On 1 and 2 December, TP Organics will organise the Organic Innovation Days in Brussels. One of the main aims of the event is to demonstrate the innovation potential of the organic food and farming sector. TP Organics therefore launches a call challenging farmers, researchers and companies to propose innovative solutions to one of the following needs of the organic sector:

1. Innovative technologies for pest management in organic cropping systems
2. New organic food processing concepts and technologies
3. New business models of value addition at the local level

These are three priority topics identified by the TP Organics Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda. You find the full description of the needs below.

After a pre-selection of the submitted innovations by the TP Organics Secretariat, a TP Organics member will be asked to select the most promising one. The proposer of the selected innovation will be invited to present it at the Organic Innovation Days. A lump sum will be provided to cover travel costs. All innovations submitted will be promoted through the website of TP Organics.

Send your innovation to info@tporganics.eu by 6 September 2015 with the subject: "Innovation submission"

To take part in the Organic Innovation Days as a participant, register here.

Description of topics

1. Innovative technologies for pest management in organic cropping systems

This topic calls for innovative technologies that reduce labour requirements for the control of weeds, diseases and pests in organic farming. Such technologies should be affordable for farmers, and adapted to the small-scale and diverse fields typical of organic agriculture. Examples of technologies include systems that differentiate between crops and weeds making automated, selective mechanical weeding possible, or alternative methods for physical pest control as well as improved technology for monitoring and forecasting pest and disease outbreaks. There is a special interest in ICT tools that make monitoring field operations more easily. However, all kind of technologies that contribute to more efficient and feasible non-chemical weed, pest and disease control in organic cropping systems and so help to reduce production costs are encouraged to apply.

2. New organic food processing concepts and technologies

Most of consumed food, even if organic, is processed. Organic consumers expect that the technologies used to process this food preserve the high quality of organic food and have low environmental impact. However, up to now, only few specific organic processing technologies have been developed and there is no clear guidance on how to select the most appropriate technologies.

This topic calls for examples of innovative organic processing technologies. It should be explained what decision criteria have been used to select or develop these technologies. The proposed criteria should fit in a standardised framework for evaluating technologies that has the potential to be scaled-up. The proposed technologies should lead to improved quality of processed organic products, increased competitiveness of the organic food processing sector, reduced environmental impact and increased consumer confidence.

3. New business models of value addition at the local level

The rural economy depends strongly on the possibility of adding value to agricultural products. Especially for small farms, the option of further processing the raw materials they produce is a key factor in their competitiveness. On-farm or local processing has been combined successfully with organic production, meeting the growing demand for high quality local food among European consumers. However, it remains a challenge for the farmers involved to make the best decisions regarding product concepts, business and cooperation models, labour dynamics, and investments, while still maintaining consumer confidence. This topic calls for successful business models of organic food processing and marketing at local level. These business models should contribute to greater success for individual business development, especially for small-scale farmers, and strengthen rural development.

Template for submitting innovations: see next page