

Press Release

SAGROPIA: Advancing crop protection through bio-based pesticides.



SAGROPIA: Partners at the Kick-off meeting on January 23, 2024, at AIT, Vienna

Vienna, February 2024: The Horizon Europe project SAGROPIA was successfully launched with a three-day kick-off meeting in Vienna from 22nd to 24th January, marking the beginning of a promising five-year collaborative approach to research and innovation in sustainable crop protection. With a budget of €6 million, SAGROPIA comprises a consortium of 10 partners and is led by the EU-funding consultancy, RTDS Association.

SAGROPIA's scientific coordinator, **Dr. Günter Brader** – Senior Scientist/Bioresources from the AIT Austrian Institute of Technology, has the following to say about the project

“In the SAGROPIA project, we will advance strategies of integrated pest management (IPM) for reducing the use of chemical pesticides in the cultivation of potato and sugar beet. Specifically, we aim to replace several so-called “candidates for substitution” (CfS) active substances, which are supposed to phase out because of their toxicological profiles but, due to lack of alternatives, are still commonly applied for crop protection. To replace them, we will test and bring forward promising candidates out of thirteen innovative, biological, and low-risk pesticides. Combined with IPM, this shall maintain high crop quality and secure yields in EU agriculture, while limiting harmful effects on the environment and human health.”

The EU Farm to Fork strategy prioritizes food security and safety, aiming to reduce reliance on chemical pesticides due to environmental and health concerns. EU Institutions seek to replace identified CfS in EC Regulation No. 1107/2009 while maintaining high agricultural yields amidst climate change and pest risks. The agri-food industry is actively exploring alternative approaches and seeking innovative solutions to replace the identified CfS and address the complex issues surrounding pesticide use.

SAGROPIA aims to reduce chemical pesticide use by 50% in potato and sugar beet cultivation. Focusing on biocontrol methods for combatting plant pests and diseases, it aligns with the objectives for sustainable farming and healthy food systems. The project strives for climate-neutral, resilient farming, providing safe, and sustainable solutions while minimizing ecosystem pressure and promoting biodiversity. Additionally, it contributes to climate mitigation, supporting Sustainable Development Goals by fostering inclusive and nutrient-rich food systems. The SAGROPIA consortium brings together

leading research institutes and key agroindustry companies from 8 countries (7 EU and the USA). The objective of this collaboration is to develop and implement innovative and comprehensive Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies. These IPM strategies will be tested in participatory field trials with growers and will be assessed for their environmental, social, and economic sustainability. This approach ensures a robust evaluation process, facilitating swift and reliable market entry and future uptake for the developed SAGROPIA plant protection solutions. As the project coordinator, Dr. Stephen Webb from RTDS remarked

“We are proud to announce the Horizon Europe-funded SAGROPIA, it is the 7th project coordinated by RTDS since Horizon 2020, aligning seamlessly with our commitment to advancing research and innovation in harmony with the European Green Deal, alongside our esteemed consortium partners.”

Specifically, the consortium is made up of:

[AIT Austrian Institute of Technology](#) , Austria

[RTDS Association](#) , Austria

[Rovensa Next](#) , Portugal

[Amoeba](#) , France

[Wageningen University and Research](#) , Netherlands

[Denmark Technical University](#) , Denmark

[Certis Biologicals](#) , USA

[Agroscope](#) , Switzerland

[Südzucker Group](#) , Germany

[VbZ](#) , Germany

More Information on SAGROPIA:

SAGROPIA [Factsheet European Commission: CORDIS](#)

SAGROPIA [RTDS Association Website](#)

SAGROPIA [AIT](#)

For regular updates on SAGROPIA check out the website: www.sagropia.eu

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