

TOFoo (True Organic Food), a collaborative project driven by Eurofins secures over EUR 8 million in funding from the French Government



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Eurofins, the global leader in the field of analytical services and a pioneer in food authenticity testing since its creation, is pleased to announce the launch of the TOFoo (True Organic Food) project. The aim of this collaborative project, comprised of five partners from the food industry, laboratory analysis and digital sectors, and four partners from academia, is to develop analyses and services to ensure the authenticity and integrity of organic food products. The project will be rolled out over five and a half years, with a EUR 17.3 million budget. The project has secured over EUR 8 million in funding from the Future Investment Programme, run by the General Secretariat for Investment (SGPI), and operated by Bpifrance on behalf of the French Government.

Developing state-of-the-art analytical techniques at every stage of the food production process

The new solutions developed as part of the TOFoo project will enable those involved in the organic food sector (producers, food manufacturers, retailers, certification bodies and public authorities) to ensure compliance with authorised practices throughout the entire organic food production process, reinforce protections put in place by the organic sector, protect organic market players, and sustain the dynamic growth of the French organic food exports.

In practical terms, innovative analyses will be developed to ensure the broadest possible monitoring of the sector. They will include methods to facilitate the collection of global analytical fingerprints of food products, allowing for their organic nature to be verified (“untargeted” approach), as well as methods to identify unauthorised food additives in organic products and characterise manufactured nanoparticles. These methods will be applicable to fruits, vegetables, cereals and dairy products. *In situ* analyses will complement laboratory analyses for fast and frequent direct monitoring of industrial or retail sites. Performed using portable analytical instruments, these analyses will provide early warning of issues in relation to the integrity of organic food, which can be confirmed by laboratory analytical methods.

Safeguarding consumer trust in organic food

Despite strict specifications, European regulation and a system of certification for operators, the organic food sector remains vulnerable to practices which call into question organic food integrity and compliance. Furthermore, existing control methods are limited, such as traceability, certification or physico-chemical analyses. According to the “Agence Bio” 2018 barometer, over 60% of consumers have doubts about the authenticity of organic foodstuffs.

Therefore, better analytical tools capable of demonstrating product compliance and conformity could provide a solution to reassure both the organic food sector's players and consumers.

A project driven by a robust consortium with complementary skills

All ten partners will contribute their specific expertise to the project: an analytical laboratory (Eurofins), analytical instruments manufacturers (Thermo Fisher Scientific and Myriade), a digital service provider (Atol C&D), a food company (Bonduelle), and academic institutions (University of Nantes GEPEA and CEISAM laboratories, UniLaSalle Polytechnic Institute, GRAB Organic Farming Research Group). Besides developing new analyses, each partner will also contribute to the development of new solutions: development of mobile devices for fast *in situ* analysis, laboratory equipment utilising emerging technologies to enhance their performance, development and maintenance of a database of several thousand samples through innovative statistical practices at the crossroad of big data and artificial intelligence.

Eurofins, originally founded to provide authenticity testing services over 30 years ago, is proud to be driving this cutting-edge scientific project to strengthen the integrity of organic food production. Eurofins experts, based in the Group's historic Nantes campus, are fully committed to developing innovative untargeted methods and thus contributing to safe, healthy, authentic and sustainable food.

Michel Daigney, Head of the Chemistry and Environment Sector at Bpifrance: « *We are delighted to be part of the launch of the TOFoo project which will provide active support to the organic sector, from production to distribution. Now more than ever, it is essential to make organic labels more attractive through a consolidated quality brand image and tangible proof. The project, driven by a solid consortium with complementary know-how, is based on a breakthrough scientific approach, in particular research on analytical fingerprints specific to organic food products.* »

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Note for the editor

About Eurofins

Eurofins – the global leader in bio-analysis

Eurofins Scientific, through its subsidiaries (hereinafter “Eurofins” or “the Group”), believes it is the global leader in food, environmental, pharmaceutical and cosmetics products testing and in agrosience CRO services. It is also one of the global independent market leaders in certain testing and laboratory services for genomics, discovery pharmacology, forensics, CDMO, advanced material sciences and in the support of clinical studies. In addition, Eurofins is one of the leading global emerging players in esoteric and molecular clinical diagnostic testing. With over 50,000 staff across a network of more than 900 independent companies in over 50 countries generally specialised by end client markets and operating more than 800 laboratories, Eurofins offers a portfolio of over 200,000 analytical methods to evaluate the safety, identity, composition, authenticity, origin, traceability and purity of a wide range of products, as well as providing innovative clinical diagnostic testing services. The Group’s objective is to provide customers with high-quality and innovative services, accurate results on time and, when requested, expert advice by its highly-qualified staff. Eurofins is committed to pursuing its dynamic growth strategy by expanding both its technology portfolio and its geographic reach. Through R&D and acquisitions, the Group draws on the latest developments in the field of biotechnology and analytical chemistry to offer its clients unique analytical solutions and a very large range of testing methods. As one of the most innovative and quality-oriented international groups in its industry, Eurofins is ideally positioned to support its clients’ increasingly stringent quality and safety standards and the increasing demands of regulatory authorities and healthcare practitioners around the world. Shares in Eurofins Scientific are listed on the Euronext Paris Stock Exchange (ISIN FR0000038259, Reuters EUFI.PA, Bloomberg ERF FP).

About Bpifrance

Bpifrance is the French national investment bank: it finances businesses – at every stage of their development – through loans, guarantees, equity investments and export insurances. Bpifrance also provides extra financial services (training, consultancy) to help entrepreneurs meet their challenges (innovation, export, etc.).

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