



# AgriFoodBoost

Project title

**Boosting Excellence in Experimental Research  
for Agri-Food Economics and Management**

*Deliverable D3.5*

## ***Report on the research hub activities***

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**Lead contractor:** FAZ

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**Duration:** 36+6 Months

**Project leader:** Marija Cerjak

WP3 - Visibility and networking

**WP3 Leaders Responsible:** Leader: Josip Juračak (FAZ)

Twin-Leader: Alessandra Castellini (UNIBO)

**Deliverable responsibility:** Damir Kovačić (FAZ)

**Other Contributors:** Josip Juračak (FAZ)

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Dissemination Level		
PU	Public	X
PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	





**This is a report on project activities carried out in line with the WP3 task T3.3 Establishment of a research HUB for experimental economics (Task leader: Kovačić, M 6-30).**

**The report covers the period from the establishment of the HUB to the end of January 2024.**

### **Abbreviations used in the text:**

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AUA - Geoniko Panepistimion Athinon

FAZ – University of Zagreb Faculty of Agriculture

HUB - Center for Experimental Economics of the University of Zagreb Faculty of Agriculture

SLU - Sveriges Lantbruksuniversitet

UNIBO - Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna

WP – Work package in the frame of the project

### **Introduction to the project**

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The University of Zagreb Faculty of Agriculture (FAZ) has qualified scientists in the field of agri-food, who are willing to improve their scientific, innovative and academic capacities in order to become competitive on the scientific market, but also to offer new expertise to the agri-food sector. For this reason, a three-year project has been developed focusing on the application of experimental economics in the fields of agriculture, food and the environment. The project was developed in collaboration with the University of Bologna (UNIBO), the Agricultural University of Athens (AUA) and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU). The AgriFoodBoost project will support the FAZ in becoming a leading regional centre for experimental agri-food economics and management.

AgriFoodBoost activities include researcher exchanges, thematic summer schools and workshops, expert visits, participation in conferences, the establishment of an experimental business laboratory and a research HUB bringing together universities, industry and public administration. Communication, dissemination and exploitation activities will include efforts to raise awareness of recent developments in the experimental economy among the scientific community in Croatia and neighbouring regions. In addition, these activities will target businesses and policy makers to raise their awareness of the goals of the experimental economy, its potential applications and benefits.

### ***The project objectives***

The overall objectives of the project are:

- 1) to enhance the scientific excellence and technological capacity of the Faculty of Agriculture in Zagreb (FAZ) in experimental research for agri-food economics and management
- 2) to raise the research profile of FAZ and its scientists by increasing their knowledge and research capacity in economic experiments and decision-making in the agri-food sector, that can be translated into effective and efficient practice





- 3) to address the existing networking gap by increasing knowledge exchange and collaboration between partner institutions and researchers familiar with challenges of applying experimental economics in the agri-food sector.

In addition to the overall objectives specific to FAZ, two further objectives have been identified:

- 1) to establish a research HUB for experimental economics that supports networking between faculty and industry, including regional as well as external research centres (starting with partner institutions)
- 2) to advance research and scientific knowledge in the field of experimental economics by conducting research that addresses questions of general relevance in the field of experimental economics (methodological issues).

Following are the specific objectives that would allow the achievement of the overall objectives:

- 1) To **upgrade and intensify the scientific research** of FAZ researchers through the use of **modern/ new methodological achievements** in the field of experimental economics in the agri-food sector. This will be enabled by knowledge transfer from internationally-leading EU institutions through innovative training activities such as expert visits, summer schools, workshops.
- 2) To **foster integration** of FAZ and its researchers into the **European Research Area** (ERA) by increasing our scientific visibility (e.g. publications, presentations at conferences) and communication (e.g. participation in open events) as well as by expanding our international cooperation ending with the submission of funding proposals (such as H2020)
- 3) To **boost scientific capacity of early stage researchers** to ensure the sustainability of the research group
- 4) To **improve university-industry collaboration** to ensure a bi-directional flow of information between research and practise and to integrate experimental economics into the Croatian agri-food sector
- 5) To **strengthen the research management and administrative skills** to improve FAZ proposal preparation and project management/administration skills
- 6) To identify and prioritize **follow-up strategy** to use the knowledge gained, but also to expand the insights gained during project implementation.

### ***Objectives of the WP3 “Visibility and networking”***

Specific objectives of WP3 are:

- 3.1. To develop a plan to improve the visibility and networking of research and innovation within and between academia and industry,
- 3.2. The writing of high- quality scientific papers for publication in leading peer-reviewed journals,
- 3.3. To prepare joint scientific project proposals for H2020 or similar funding programmes
- 3.4. To participate in international scientific events with a focus on events that connect science and business,
- 3.5. To establish a research HUB for experimental economics to increase the visibility of FAZ research in the agri-food sector in Croatia and the region.

In order to achieve the stated goals, the following tasks are planned within the framework of WP3:





- T3.1 Development of a plan for enhancement of research visibility and networking among project partners and agrifood business
- T3.2 Strengthening research management and administration skills of FAZ
- T3.3 Establishment of a research HUB for experimental economics
- T3.4 Writing of scientific papers in co-authorship
- T3.5 Joint participations in scientific events

### ***Task T3.3 Establishment of a research HUB for experimental economics***

The aim of this task is to strengthen networking between science and industry through a research HUB that will bring together universities (from Croatia and the region), external research centres (starting with the partner institutions), industry, as well as national and regional authorities and other relevant entities. A research HUB advisory board will be composed of representatives from three sectors: science, business and public administration.

Most of the activities under this task will relate to finding methods for efficient networking with companies through regular meetings and consultations within the HUB. The consultations will take the form of workshops and discussions. Consequently, this task will consist of the following activities:

1. Identification and recruitment of agri-food companies, research institutions, national and regional authorities and other relevant institutions of interest to the project and future cooperation,
2. Workshop on experiences and opportunities for interactive networking between research institutions and agri-food companies,
3. Panel discussion on efficient practices of cooperation between research and industry
4. Formalisation of networking through bilateral agreements (Memorandums of Understanding) between FAZ and commercial enterprises.

### **The overview of HUB activities**

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Research associates on the AGRIFOODBOOST project submitted a proposal for the establishment of a research HUB for experimental economics in the agri-food sector to the Faculty Council of FAZ. The Faculty Council accepted the proposal and on July 6, 2021 passed the Decision on the establishment of the Center for Experimental Economics of the University of Zagreb Faculty of Agriculture (hereinafter referred to as the HUB). Marija Cerjak, head of the AGRIFOODBOOST project, was appointed head of the HUB. The decision of the Faculty Council, that is, the establishment of the HUB successfully completed the key part of Task 3.3 within the framework of WP3 and created the conditions for the initiation of further activities foreseen by this task.

The following persons were appointed to the research HUB advisory board:

1. Ante Andabak, Syngenta Agro d.o.o. (business),
2. Daniel Segarić, Zadar County (local government),
3. Ružica Ločarić, PhD, Faculty of Agrobiotechnical Sciences Osijek (science).





A copy of the Faculty Council decision on the establishment of HUB can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

***Activity 1: Identification and recruitment of potential partners for cooperation in HUB activities***

The first step in reviving the HUB is to inform potential partners about its establishment and include them in the network of collaborative organizations for cooperation in the design or implementation of future research. Initial contacts have included companies, institutions and organizations with which the project staff are already working. At the AGRIFOODBOOST project level, an address book was created, i.e. a contact sheet in electronic format in which information on potential HUB partners is entered. The first organizations and the first data records from this list have been used for recruitment purposes during the organization of HUB events. During the implementation of the project, this contact list will be continuously expanded to include new potential partners.

At the time of writing this report, 84 companies and 20 local and regional self-governments or institutions were registered in the database of contacts. The contact list of potential HUB partners is kept and stored as an internal document and is also a useful tool in the activities to promote and disseminate the results of the AGRIFOODBOOST project.

***Activity 2: Workshop on experiences and opportunities for interactive networking between research institutions and agri-food companies***

On May 18, 2022, a "Workshop on Experiences And Possibilities For Interactive Networking Between Research Institutions And Agri-Food Business Entities" was held at the Polovanec resort in Đurđekovac near Zagreb. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic and the associated restrictions on public events, the workshop was postponed from the originally planned date in September 2021.

The aim of the workshop was to familiarize stakeholders from the agricultural sector and public administration with the AgriFoodBoost project, the experimental economy and the possibilities of cooperation with the newly founded HUB. In addition, the workshop is an opportunity to expand the network of potential partners from industry for future FAZ research projects.

Despite efforts to increase this number, 7 representatives of companies from the agricultural and food sector as well as representatives of local self-government bodies took part in the workshop.

In the introductory part of the workshop, the participants were familiarized with the purpose and examples of application of the experimental economy in the fields of agriculture, food and the environment.

In the discussion, the participants discussed possible forms of cooperation in research projects and possible topics in the field of experimental economics. At the end of the workshop, a memorandum of understanding with the HUB was proposed to representatives of companies and local authorities.





A detailed "Report on the workshop on experiences and opportunities for interactive networking between research institutions and companies in the agricultural and food industry" is available in the project archive and on request.

### ***Activity 3: Panel discussion on efficient practices of cooperation between research and industry***

In accordance with the plan of HUB activities, a panel discussion titled Experiences and Models of Cooperation Between Research Institutions and Business in the Field of Agribusiness was held At the University of Zagreb Faculty of Agriculture on November 24, 2022, The aim of the panel discussion was to bring together representatives of the agribusiness sector and the research community to discuss the importance of economic research and economic experiments for agribusiness management.

The panelists were representatives of the companies Syngenta Agro d.o.o. (Ante Andabak), Croatian Sugar Industry d.d. (Miroslav Božić) and Naše Klasje d.o.o. (Zoran Šimunić) as well as the representative of Zagreb County (Josip Kraljičković, County department head). After welcoming and getting to know the panelists, a discussion developed on the topic of their experiences and recommendations for cooperation companies and research institutions. The panelists presented positive examples and possible obstacles to expanding this cooperation.

Two important conclusions emerged from the panel discussion. First, that there is a need to strengthen collaboration between the research community and policy makers (i.e. the Ministry of Agriculture). The impression is that policy makers do not see the need and do not recognize the opportunities that experimental economic methods offer for planning and evaluating the impact of policy decisions and measures. Another conclusion is that the existing system of science funding is a constraint on the development of collaborations with the private sector. In the scientific promotion procedures, cooperation with the private sector is not highly valued, so that researchers are not motivated to conduct research that is oriented towards real problems and the needs of the economy.

The event was covered in several online and offline media in Croatia.

A "Report on Panel Discussion on Efficient Collaboration Practices Between Research and Business Communities" is available in the project archive and on request.

### ***Activity 3: Formalization of networking through bilateral agreements***

During the work to create the HUB network and identify potential partners for future research among companies, institutions and bodies, more than 50 contacts were made. These are mainly contacts based on personal acquaintances of project staff and official FAZ contacts.

Those who showed a fundamental interest in cooperation when making contact were offered the opportunity to sign a memorandum of understanding. The memorandum is intended as a document that enables the HUB to communicate smoothly with the partner if a research idea could be of use to the partner or if the partner could play an important role. On the other hand, the memorandum enables the partners to approach the HUB when they encounter challenges to which







experimental economics methods could provide an answer. In addition, the agreement gives both parties the opportunity to invite the other party to participate in events of mutual interest.

So far, 5 memoranda of understanding have been signed with the following partners:

1. MLIN I PEKARE d.o.o., Kralja Zvonimira 24, Sisak
2. GEORG d.o.o., Ulica Divka Budaka 1D, Zagreb
3. EURO-MILK d.o.o., Beloslavec 17G, Bedenica
4. DISTRIBUTIVNI CENTAR ZA VOĆE I POVRĆE d.o.o., Rakitovec 244B, Vukovina
5. KAMPANJOLA d.o.o., Svetvinčenat 3, Svetvinčenat

In January 2024, contact was established and an initiative was launched to conclude a memorandum of understanding with three new partners:

1. Hrvatski pčelarski savez (Croatian Beekeepers Federation).
2. Zadar County, regional self-government
3. OPG Miroslav Polovanec, a family winery.

When preparing this report, we decided to include these three partners, so we waited to publish the report until the official confirmation of the partnership, which took place at the beginning of February 2024. For this reason, the publication of the report was postponed to February 15, 2024.

An example of a memorandum can be found in the appendix to this report.

### ***Dissemination***

In order to disseminate information about the HUB to the business community and the public, a dedicated page for the HUB has been set up on the AGRIFOODBOOST project website. The "Research HUB" link on the project's homepage leads to the HUB page, which is intended for the publication of news and other articles or blogs on the topics covered by the HUB. The website address is <https://agrifoodboost.agr.hr/research-hub/>.

### ***Other activities related to the research hub***

While working on the networking activities and cooperation agreements within the HUB, three ideas for research using experimental economics emerged. Below we give a brief overview of these research ideas and the activities carried out.

1. Research on the willingness of consumers to pay a premium for local organic products compared to local conventional and non-local conventional and organic products.

As part of this research, an experimental second price auction was conducted with a sample of 203 people from the Zagreb region. The results show that consumers are willing to pay a higher price for organic apples, while this willingness is less pronounced for local products. The research results were presented at two international scientific conferences.

2. An experiment to determine consumer purchasing and consumption behavior in relation to omega-3 enriched eggs, perceived barriers to purchasing omega-3 eggs, and perceived benefits of consuming omega-3 eggs.





In addition to the objective stated in the previous paragraph, the aim of the research was to estimate consumers' WTP for organic eggs in Croatia. The online survey and discrete choice experiment (DCE) methods were applied based on three attributes with a different number of levels per attribute. Based on the research conducted, an article is currently being written for publication in a scientific journal.

### 3. Research on preferences and willingness to pay for local beer.

In cooperation with a local organic brewery from the county of Istria, a survey was conducted among beer consumers. The aim of the survey was to find out consumers' preferences regarding the origin and method of beer production, the origin of the ingredients and the language used on the label. The survey was conducted in two phases. 237 respondents took part in the first online survey. The second survey was conducted with a sample of 326 respondents recruited through the market research institute. A local brewery can use the results of the survey when planning its marketing strategy.







*Deliverable D3.5*

**Report on the research hub activities**

## **APPENDICES**

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## APPENDIX 1. Decision on the establishment of the Center for Experimental Economics of the University of Zagreb Faculty of Agriculture



Sveučilište u Zagrebu  
Agronomski fakultet

University of Zagreb  
Faculty of Agriculture



KLASA: 002-01/21-01/02

URBROJ: 251-71-29-01/9-21-2

U Zagrebu, 6.7.2021.

Na temelju članka 23. Statuta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu Agronomskog fakulteta, Fakultetsko vijeće Sveučilišta u Zagrebu Agronomskog fakulteta je na 10. redovitoj sjednici u akademskoj godini 2020./2021., održanoj 6. srpnja 2021., elektroničkim putem, pod točkom 11. dnevnog reda, donijelo

### ODLUKU

**o osnivanju Centra za eksperimentalnu ekonomiju Sveučilišta u Zagrebu Agronomskog fakulteta**

#### I.

Osniva se Centar za eksperimentalnu ekonomiju Sveučilišta u Zagrebu Agronomskog fakulteta, u okviru projekta AgriFoodBoost.

Voditeljica projekta: prof.dr.sc. Marija Cerjak.

#### II.

Ova Odluka stupa na snagu danom donošenja.



Dekan  
Prof. dr. sc. Zoran Grgić

Odluka se dostavlja:

1. prof.dr.sc. Marija Cerjak, voditeljica projekta AgriFoodBoost
2. Zavod za marketing u poljoprivredi
3. Kadrovska služba
4. Stalni predstavnik uprave za kvalitetu
5. Pismohrana FV



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## APPENDIX 1. An example of the memorandum of understanding (GEORG d.o.o.)

**SVEUČILIŠTE U ZAGREBU AGRONOMSKI FAKULTET**, Svetošimunska cesta 25, 10000 Zagreb, OIB: 76023745044 kojeg zastupa prof. dr. sc. Ivica Kisić, dekan (u daljnjem tekstu: Agronomski fakultet)

i

**GEORG d.o.o.**, Ulica Divka Budaka 1D, 10000 Zagreb, OIB: 34611008303, kojeg zastupa Dalibor Georgievski, predsjednik Uprave (dalje u tekstu: GEORG) sklopili su dana 27.05.2022. sljedeći

### SPORAZUM O SURADNJI

I.

Na Agronomskom fakultetu osnovan je Centar za eksperimentalnu ekonomiju (dalje u tekstu: Centar). U Centru, koji će biti integriran u Europski istraživački prostor (ERA), provodit će se znanstvena i primijenjena istraživanja namijenjena povećanju konkurentnosti poljoprivredno-prehrambenog lanca vrijednosti.

II.

Uvažavajući navedeno u članku 1. ovog Sporazuma, a u duhu uzajamnog razumijevanja i korisnosti, GEORG i Agronomski fakultet sklapanjem ovog Okvirnog sporazuma potvrđuju potrebu i spremnost za međusobnu suradnju.

Agronomski fakultet i GEORG surađivat će u području poljoprivredno-prehrambene ekonomike, a suradnja će obuhvaćati sljedeće:

- 1) partnerstvo u radu i razvoju Centra za eksperimentalnu ekonomiju Agronomskog fakulteta,
- 2) suradnju u znanstvenim i stručnim projektima s primjenom eksperimentalne ekonomije,
- 3) konzultantske aktivnosti od interesa za razvoj i unapređenje poslovanja poduzeća u poljoprivredno-prehrambenom sektoru,
- 4) zajednički rad na širenju informacija o znanstveno-stručnim spoznajama iz područja poljoprivrede i proizvodnje hrane, kao i na jačanju društvenog utjecaja struke.

III.

Radi provedbe i ostvarenja suradnje prema članku 2. ovog Sporazuma, sporazumne strane će imenovati po jednu odgovornu osobu.

Odgovorna osoba Agronomskog fakulteta za navedenu suradnju je prof. dr. sc. Marija Cerjak.

Odgovorna osoba GEORG-a za navedenu suradnju je Darija Borović.

VI.

Sporazumne strane suglasne su da potpisivanjem ovog Sporazuma ne preuzimaju nikakve financijske obveze.





Svaki oblik suradnje i financijske obveze koje proizlaze iz te suradnje bit će utvrđene posebnim pisanim ugovorom za pojedinu vrstu aktivnosti između sporazumnih strana.

#### V.

Svi prijedlozi za izmjenu ovog Sporazuma trebaju biti predloženi najkasnije tri (3) mjeseca prije njihova uvođenja.

Sporazum se sklapa za razdoblje od 4 godine.

Svaka od strana potpisnica može otkazati Sporazum pisanom obavijesti drugoj strani najkasnije tri (3) mjeseca prije dana namjeravanog raskida.

U slučaju otkaza ovog Sporazuma, svaka sporazumna stranka preuzima obvezu dovršetka započetih projekata, odnosno, izvršenja obveza preuzetih po posebnim ugovorima.

U protivnom, stranka koja ne ispuni preuzete obveze, odgovorna je za štetu koju druga stranka pretrpi zbog neispunjenja obveze.

#### VI.

Ovaj Sporazum je sklopljen u četiri (4) istovjetna primjerka, od kojih po dva (2) zadržava svaka strana sporazuma.

#### VII.

Ovaj Sporazum o suradnji stupa na snagu danom potpisivanja odgovornih osoba.

#### VIII.

Sve sporove iz ovog Sporazuma potpisnici će rješavati sporazumno, a ukoliko to nije moguće, nadležan je stvarno nadležan sud u Zagrebu.

Za GEORG d.o.o.  
Predsjednik Uprave

**GEORG d.o.o.**  
**Zagreb**

Dalibor Georgievski MBA, dipl.ing.agr

Za Agronomski fakultet  
Dekan  
  
prof. dr. sc. Ivica Kisić

KLASA:  
URBROJ:

KLASA: 642-02/22-04/08  
URBROJ: 251-F1-17-01/5-22-3

