

PRESS RELEASE – June 16, 2025

## EPIC-SHIFT Project Officially Launches to Explore Novel Foods and Protein Diversification

### About EPIC-SHIFT

On 6–7 May 2025, the EPIC-SHIFT project consortium gathered at historic Lund University in Sweden for the official project launch. This innovative, collaborative research project—*Securing Holistic and Impactful Food Systems Transformation with Novel Foods Based on Alternative Proteins*—is supported by €4.5 million in funding from the Horizon Europe programme and brings together 20 partner organisations from 14 countries.

The project aims to support the EU Protein Strategy by providing an unprecedented and independent knowledge base on the environmental, economic, and social sustainability of novel foods derived from alternative protein sources (NFAP), as options for protein diversification in human diets. The project will focus on proteins derived from fungi, bacteria, micro- and macroalgae, insects, as well as agricultural and aquacultural by-products.

To achieve this, the project will assess a wide range of topics, including market dynamics, investment incentives and barriers, nutritional and health benefits, just transition principles, the impact of regulatory frameworks on market access, and the acceptance of novel foods by various food system actors, including consumers. Thanks to its multi-actor approach and engagement opportunities, the project will foster collaboration and co-creation among researchers, industry representatives, public authorities, policymakers, and civil society actors. All project findings will ultimately provide recommendations on potential pathways for more sustainable, healthy, resilient, and fair protein diversification in the EU.

**Marja-Liisa Meurice**, Director, EIT Food North and East region\*, one of the consortium partners, said:

*“The growing demand for protein, combined with the significant environmental footprint of industrial animal farming, means we must explore how to diversify the protein sources in our European diets. Within the broader context of the food system, it is crucial to analyse which pathways will support the resilience of the entire EU food system and are economically viable at the same time.”*



EPIC-SHIFT



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*Achieving this requires the involvement of a wide range of actors across the food system — precisely what EPIC-SHIFT is facilitating.”*

\*EIT Food is supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union.

## **EPIC-SHIFT to Support EU Food Systems Transition, Resilience and Competitiveness**

Considering the increasing demand for protein across the EU and the inherent inefficiencies and unsustainability of current food systems, novel foods based on alternative protein sources (NFAP) —including those derived from insects, fungi, bacteria, micro- and macroalgae, as well as agricultural and aquacultural by-products—present a significant opportunity. Encouraging dietary shifts that incorporate these sources alongside existing proteins could help the EU to reduce its reliance on animal-based proteins and mitigate the associated environmental footprint. Novel foods based on alternative protein sources could enhance food system resilience and create value for actors across the food sector. This could play a pivotal role in strengthening the EU’s protein strategy and also supporting adequate nutrition for all in Europe.

However, knowledge regarding the environmental, economic, and social impacts of the widespread production, provision, and consumption of NFAP is still limited and not yet integrated into a holistic vision of the food system to be able to identify trade-offs, interactions between food system actors, and second and third order impacts. The EPIC-SHIFT project aims to address this challenge by conducting in-depth systems analysis through a unique partnership of leading universities, research institutes, startups, recognised food businesses, accelerators, independent consultants, international innovation initiatives, farmers, and consumer associations.

*“Food systems are incredibly complex and dynamic. Addressing the challenges in food systems transformation requires more than isolated efforts”* says **Deniz Koca**, EPIC-SHIFT Project Coordinator and Assistant Professor at Lund University’s Centre for Environmental and Climate Science (CEC).

*“We need interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research and education, collaboration across all sectors of the food value chains, and most importantly, the applied systems science with its tools, methods and approaches to understand complex interactions. Only with a truly holistic understanding we can identify the most effective leverage points for sustainable solutions within our inherently complex and rapidly changing food systems.”*

**Find out more about the project at:** <https://epic-shift.eu> and follow us on [LinkedIn](#).

**For enquiries about EPIC-SHIFT, contact:** [julia.hava@eitfood.eu](mailto:julia.hava@eitfood.eu) (Communication Lead)

## About EIT Food

EIT Food is the world's largest and most dynamic food innovation community, accelerating innovation to build a future-fit food system that produces healthy and sustainable food for all.

Supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union, EIT Food invests in projects, organisations and individuals that share goals and vision for a healthy and sustainable food system. It unlocks innovation potential in businesses and universities and creates and scales agrifood startups to bring new technologies and products to market. EIT Food equips entrepreneurs and professionals with the skills needed to transform the food system and puts consumers at the heart of its work, helping build trust by reconnecting them to the origins of their food.

EIT Food is one of nine innovation communities established by the European Institute for Innovation & Technology (EIT), an independent EU body set up in 2008 to drive innovation and entrepreneurship across Europe. Find out more at [www.eitfood.eu](http://www.eitfood.eu), read the Protein Diversification Food Tank [Policy Brief](#) or follow on via social media: [X](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), and [Instagram](#).

## All members of the EPIC-SHIFT Consortium:

1. Lund University (Lead)
2. University of Oxford: Environmental Change Institute
3. University of Helsinki
4. Technical University of Denmark
5. CNTA – Research & Technology for the Competitiveness of the Food Industry
6. The American College of Greece Research Center (ACG-RC)
7. ECOINNOVAZIONE
8. Safe Food Advocacy Europe
9. EIT Food
10. Stichting New Harvest Netherlands
11. ShakeUp Factory
12. Food+i Cluster
13. Atova Regulatory Consultancy
14. Puratos Group NV
15. Danone Research
16. Innomy Biotech
17. Poseidona
18. DLG German Agricultural Society
19. Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) – Associated Partner
20. NTT DATA Institute of Management Consulting – Associated Partner