



**BRIGHT
SPACE**



Designing effective and sustainable strategies for assessing and addressing the challenges of EU agriculture to navigate within a safe and just operating space

30 November 2022

A new project entitled the BrightSpace Project funded under Horizon Europe is launched to design a roadmap for effective and sustainable strategies for assessing and addressing the challenges of EU agriculture to navigate within a Safe and Just Operating Space.

Increasing the contribution of EU agriculture to climate change action

The European Green Deal, aims, among others, to increase the contribution of EU agriculture to climate change action, improve the management of natural resources, ensure a fair economic return for farmers, and reinforce the protection of biodiversity. EU agriculture and food practices are currently not on the right track to meet the Green Deal ambitions and objectives. These objectives are interdependent, and while often aligned, they may also compete.

Effective and sustainable strategies to navigate within a Safe and Just Operating Space

Synergies and trade-offs between socio-economic and environmental outcomes are brought together in the concept of a Safe and Just Operating Space, where the Safe component reflects the bio-physical boundaries of the ecosystem and the Just component the requirements for the well-being of the involved people.

“Identifying valid, reliable, and measurable indicators to assess the impact of policy measures and technological change in agriculture with regard to the Safe and Just operating space is a key challenge, but also a prerequisite to provide science based information to policy makers and stakeholders.” explains Marc Müller, project coordinator of the Brightspace project and senior researcher at the Wageningen Economic Research Institute.

The BrightSpace collaboration responds to this challenge by designing effective and sustainable strategies to navigate within a Safe and Just Operating Space. BrightSpace provides an analytical toolbox to experiment, analyse, and coordinate the effects of innovative technologies, governance structures, as well as short- and long-term policies related to agriculture, thereby allowing for the execution of consistent, coherent, and lasting strategies with the desired consequences.

PRESS RELEASE



Diversity of challenges, support for effective and sustainable actions

The project emphasises the diversity of challenges regarding the Safe and Just Operating Space across countries and regions and delivers new empirical evidence on cause-effect relations between drivers and outcomes relevant for the Safe and Just Operating Space. A harmonised data framework and modelling toolbox are developed for medium-term and forward-looking projections of possible Safe and Just Operating Space futures by 2050 and beyond. The support for effective and sustainable actions will include the identification of critical pathways for technological, institutional, and consumer-oriented options for EU policies in the areas of agriculture, climate change, trade, and energy.

BrightSpace brings together 14 research institutions from eight EU countries and the UK, and builds on established modelling tools that are used to predict the impacts of climate, agricultural, and forestry policies, at the local, national, and regional levels.

Project kick-off in the Hague

At the kick-off meeting, hosted by Wageningen Economic Research between 30 November and 1 December 2022, the partners discuss how the project can address current challenges to policymakers in the EU and draw up a road map for the first year of the project.

To ensure that the project meets the EU's policy needs in the short- and long-term, representatives of the European Commission, as well as noted experts in agricultural policy and impact assessment will participate in the kick-off meeting. An important point on the agenda is to discuss how recent developments may impact on the proposed research agenda.

“To assess the impact of the current COVID and Ukraine crises and reverse unfavourable long-term trends related to EU agriculture, there is an urgent need to significantly change agriculture related policies. Policy makers and opinion leaders, however, often lack sufficient information to gauge the likely effects of a Safe and Just Operating Space crises on their country. Thus, they miss the opportunity to identify, design, and implement policy actions that can best avoid short- and long-term risk and take advantage of opportunities.” concludes Hans van Meijl, Brightspace scientific coordinator and chief economist at Wageningen Economic Research.

Further information

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