



**Transformation scenarios for boosting organic farming  
and organic aquaculture towards the Farm-to-Fork targets**

Document, report | Public

# **Deliverable D6.2**

## **Prioritised R&I topics for transnational funding by CORE**

### **Organic Pleiades**

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## Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Summary.....	3
History of changes.....	4
Executive Summary .....	5
1. Introduction .....	6
2. Methodology .....	7
2.1. Preselection of TPO SRIA topics using the interstellar tracker.....	7
2.2. Prioritization of the research topics by Core Organic members.....	9
3. Results .....	13
3.1. Results of Preselection of SRIA research priorities using the interstellar tracker 13	
3.2. Prioritization exercise with CO members .....	15
4. Added value of Core Organic network.....	16
4.1. Support services for the CO Pleiades Network members .....	17
4.2. The experienced value from partners regarding being a part of the CORE Organic Pleiades Network .....	18
4.2.1. Inputs from partners via e-mail consultation .....	18
4.3. Suggestions from partners regarding future activities for the CORE Organic Pleiades Network beyond 2026 .....	22
5. Conclusions and future perspectives.....	24
5.1. Summary of outcomes.....	24
5.2. Recommendations for implementation of organic research priorities in Horizon Europe AE partnership .....	25
6. Annexes .....	26



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational**  
**funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

## Summary

<b>Call:</b>	CL6-2021-FARM2FORK-01-01
<b>Project:</b>	OrganicTargets4EU
<b>Duration:</b>	42 Months
<b>Start date of Project:</b>	01/09/2022
<b>Project management:</b>	IFOAM Organics Europe
<b>Person in charge:</b>	Ambra De Simone
<b>Deliverable:</b>	D6.2. Prioritised R&I topics for transnational funding by CORE Organic Pleiades
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<b>Work Package Leader:</b>	AU/ICROFS
<b>Author(s):</b>	Ambra De Simone (IFOAM Organics Europe)
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<b>Version:</b>	Version 1



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational**  
**funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

## History of changes

<b>Version 0.1</b>	01//02/2026	Ambra De Simone (IFOAM Organics Europe)	Draft
<b>Version 0.2</b>	06/02/2026	Ivana Trkulja and Anna Kirkegaard Vaarst (ICROFS)	Inputs on added value of Core Organic network
<b>Version 1</b>	24/02/2024	Ambra De Simone (IFOAM Organics Europe)	Final



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational**  
**funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

## Executive Summary

This deliverable D6.2 “Prioritised R&I topics for transnational funding by CORE Organic Pleiades” reports on the organic research and innovation (R&I) priorities aiming at positioning organic farming within the broader Horizon Europe Agroecology (AE) partnership. It builds from the alignment of the TP Organics Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) published in 2025 with the prioritised research areas identified by Core Organic members in their respective national Organic Action Plans (OAP). It aims at supporting coordinated actions of the Core Organic members network ensuring the organic research topics are represented with the AE partnership. Furthermore, the report includes the Core Organic members’ perception of the added value of the Core Organic network and future perspectives and short-term actions.

Consultations and ad-hoc exchanges were carried out to gather inputs and feedback from Core Organic members on the organic research topic most relevant in their national OAP and identify potential activities for coordinated actions. While the small sample size of the received inputs does not allow a statistic representation of the whole Core Organic network, the information collected indicates that strengthening the position of organic farmers in the value chain is a key element for boosting the organic sector. Furthermore, research topics on climate, soil health, and environmental resilience e.g., carbon sequestration, plant breeding and biodiversity as well as innovative solutions on holistic use of resources such as biocontrol and circular fertilization strategies are considered relevant for coordinated translational actions.

Core Organic members reported the importance of joint translational calls as well as alignment efforts between TPO-SRIA priorities and the AE Partnership SRIA.

Finally, the inputs and feedback received by Core Organic members confirm the perception of the added value of the Core Organic network in facilitating translational funding for organic research and the strategic positioning in the broader HE Partnerships ecosystem.

While the Core Organic network will not launch calls after the end of the projects, in line with the new European Commission initiative and the revised structure of Horizon Europe Partnerships, the prioritised R&I topics reported in this deliverable will serve as a guiding advocacy tool for coordinated action within CORE Organic network to ensure that organic research needs are represented within the AE partnership.



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational**  
**funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

## 1. Introduction

The aim of OrganicTargets4EU is to support the achievement of the EU Farm-to-Fork Strategy (F2F) of reaching at least 25% of the EU's agricultural land under organic farming and a significant increase of organic aquaculture by 2030. The project developed possible scenarios for achieving the targets set by the EU through a two-strand structural approach between (1) Production and Markets and (2) Knowledge and Innovation. One of the objectives the Knowledge and Innovation strand, is to foster coordination and increase of Research and Innovation investments (WP6) by:

- Widen the existing CORE Organic network into the CORE Organic Pleiades network (Task 6.1).
- Promote alignment of national/regional regulations and structures for R&I investments (Task 6.2).
- Catalogue of prioritised R&I topics for future transnational calls (Task 6.3).

The CORE Organic Pleiades (COP) network has supported investment in European organic food and farming Research & Investment Innovation (R&I) efforts since 2004. In response to growing organic sector needs, initially the network was launched under the ERA-NET transnational funding and cooperation scheme. Over four programme periods, partners in the CORE Organic ERA NET launched eight transnational calls and funded 62 projects, investing €61.9 million in organic R&I. Currently, the network operates under the OrganicTargets4EU project (2022-2026) and it encompasses 43 partners from 27 countries/ regions in the EU and beyond, exchanging knowledge about the policy, research and innovation landscape for organics in Europe. Since 2024, transnational funding for organic R&I was channelled through the large European Partnerships, e.g. AGROECOLOGY, FutureFoodS, European Partnership on Animal Health and Welfare (EUPAHW), the Missions and the Green ERA-Hub initiative. Changes in the structural and institutional Horizon Europe (HE) funding led to constrains launching the CORE Organic call after the end of project (Task 6.3 - Prepare for a transnational call to be funded by the COP Network). To adapt to the new structure of the European Partnerships, CORE Organic network currently contributes with advice to organic research policy and funding at the EU, national and regional level bridging its members towards the European Partnerships and ensuring that organic research needs are represented within the HE funding structures.

This deliverable D6.2 "Prioritised R&I topics for transnational funding by CORE Organic Pleiades" builds from the [TP organics Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda \(SRIA\)](#) published in November 2025 and serves as a strategic and advocacy tool. It supports Core Organic members in the cooperation research for organic within the AE partnership ecosystem. TP Organics (TPO) has been officially recognised by the European Commission for communicating research needs of the organic sector.



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational  
funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

This deliverable reports on the:

- Selection and alignment of the relevant TPO-SRIA research priorities with the mission of Core Organic network and the research needs identified by Core Organic members in their national Organic Action Plans (OAPs)
- Recommendations for implementation of organic research priorities within the Horizon Europe AE partnership
- Adds value of the Core Organic network and suggestion for short-term future actions

## 2. Methodology

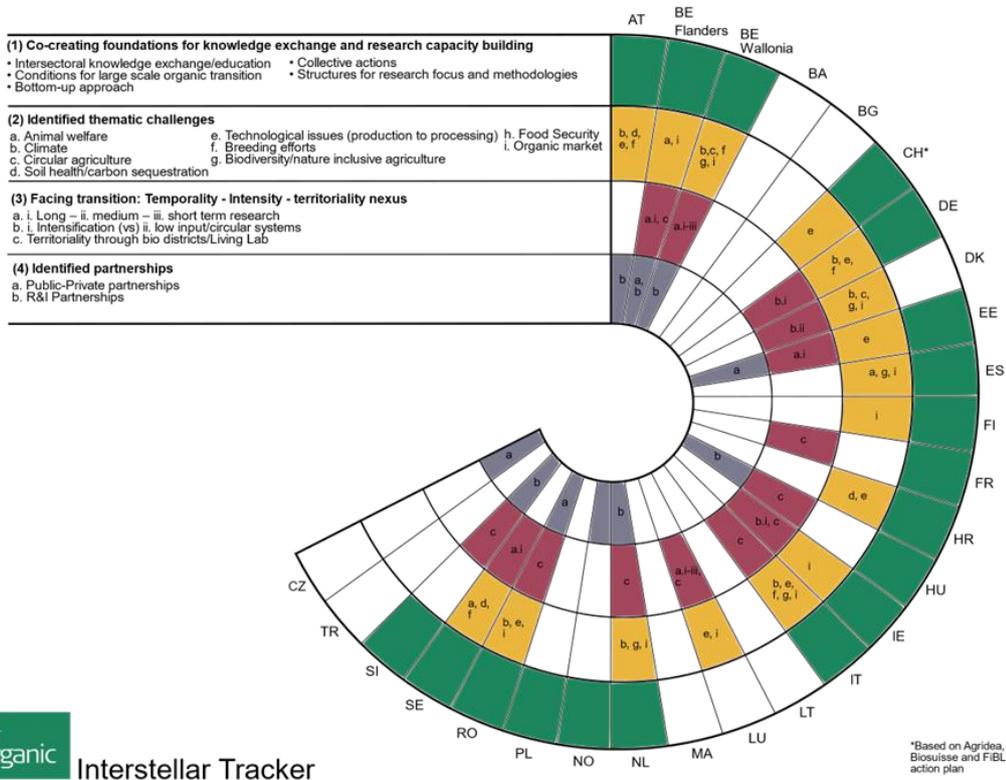
### 2.1. Preselection of TPO SRIA topics using the interstellar tracker

During the second reporting period, CORE Organic members collaborated on identifying thematic challenges based on their respective national or regional OAPs and ultimately creating a joint platform for their policy exchange relevant for transnational research funding engagements. Members clustered research priorities from national or regional OAPs to find overlaps, research gaps, and short and long-term synergies. The results were validated and the thematic priorities summarised in a visual map – [the Interstellar Tracker](#).

Four themes and related sub-themes were identified:

1. Co-creating foundations for knowledge exchange and research capacity building.
  - a. Subtheme: Intersectoral exchange; education; bottom-up; research structures
2. Thematic challenges.
  - a. Sub-theme: Animal welfare; climate; circularity; soil; food security; markets; breeding; food security
3. Facing transition.
  - a. Sub-theme: long- medium- short time frame; inputs/circularity; territoriality
4. Partnerships:
  - a. Sub-theme: Public-private; R&I partnerships

**CORE Organic Pleiades Roadmap 2030**  
**National Organic Action Plans**



**Figure 1** The interstellar tracker is based on the contents of the national/regional organic action plans (OAP). Colours/ letters indicate that the specific theme was identified in the national OAP. A blank field indicates that the theme was not identified in the OAP. Light grey indicates that the country does not have an OAP. Source ICROFS

The four themes and sub-themes served a structural mapping exercise to support alignment of the thematic priorities identified by the Core Organic members with the 31 research priorities of the TP Organics (TPO) -SRIA 2025. Theme 4 “Partnership” was used as qualitative criteria for the preselection, reflecting the fact that research priorities are operationalised via the Partnerships, which enable implementation mechanisms and ensures impact. IFOAM EU carried out the mapping exercise aligning the TPO SRIA research priorities with the research needs identified by Core Organic members and summarised in the Interstellar tracker. It resulted in a preselection of the ten most relevant TPO SRIA research priorities to be used for the prioritization exercise by Core Organic members.

The preselection followed a multi-criteria qualitative approach based on:

- Policy relevance: Contribution to Green Deal, Farm to Fork and Organic action plan objectives.
- Alignment with the four themes and sub-themes of the interstellar tracker.
- Contribution to one or more of the themes – primary and secondary relevance.



## Deliverable D6.2 Prioritised R&I topics for transnational funding by CORE Organic Pleiades

- Balanced and significant representation covering a full range of topics including environment, biodiversity and the climate and, people, communities and sustainable livelihoods as well as knowledge exchange and innovation systems

## 2.2. Prioritization of the research topics by Core Organic members

IFOAM EU presented the 10 preselected TPO SRIA research priorities to the Core Organic members during the Core Organic governing board meeting on the 19 February 2026. The full text of the ten preselected SRIA priorities was shared in advance of the governing board meeting to support Core Organic members in taking informed decision. Following the presentation, Core Organic members were invited to share their inputs and decisions via a survey. The results of the prioritization exercise show the final selection of the research priorities by Core Organic members and will guide them in future research opportunities within the HE Partnerships, specifically the Agroecology partnership. Survey questions go as follows:

The screenshot shows a survey interface with a light blue background. On the left, there is a QR code and a link: <https://forms.office.com/e/1sCmbs1LF>. Below the link is a 'Copy link' button. On the right, the survey title is 'Relevance for your national or regional Organic Action Plan (OAP) - Please drag & drop into priority order'. Below the title, there is a list of seven research topics in light blue boxes, each with a vertical scrollbar on the right. The topics are: 3.1.3.2 Accelerating the development and adoption of biocontrol solutions in organic farmi..., 3.1.1.1 Carbon sequestration and soil management for climate-resilient organic farming, 3.2.2.3 Enhancing the contribution of the organic sector to the EU's protein transition, 3.1.3.4 Circular fertilisation strategies for organic and agroecological farming, 3.2.3.5 Strengthening the position of organic farmers in the value chain, and 3.2.3.2 Organic farming and agroecology as a tool for generational renewal. At the top right of the survey area, it says '0 response submitted'. At the bottom center, there are navigation arrows and the text '1 of 8'.



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

0 response submitted

Suitability for coordinated action within CORE Organic / AE Partnership - Please drag & drop into priority order

Scan the QR or use link to join



<https://forms.office.com/e/J1sCmbs1LF>  
Copy link

- 3.1.2.3 Climate-resilient and diverse plant breeding for sustainable organic food systems
- 3.1.1.1 Carbon sequestration and soil management for climate-resilient organic farming
- 3.1.2.1 Enhancing biodiversity through multifunctional organic crop and livestock systems
- 3.2.3.1 Bio-districts as a strategy for participatory territorial planning and rural revitalisation
- 3.2.3.5 Strengthening the position of organic farmers in the value chain
- 3.2.3.2 Organic farming and agroecology as a tool for generational renewal

< 2 of 8 >

0 response submitted

Top priorities for short-term actions (2026-2027). Select up to 3

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- 3.2.3.5 Strengthening the position of organic farmers in the value chain
- 3.1.1.1 Carbon sequestration and soil management for climate-resilient organic...
- 3.1.1.2 Enhancing water resilience in organic farming systems
- 3.1.2.3 Climate-resilient and diverse plant breeding for sustainable organic food...
- 3.1.3.2 Accelerating the development and adoption of biocontrol solutions in organic...
- 3.1.2.1 Enhancing biodiversity through multi-

< 3 of 8 >



## Deliverable D6.2 Prioritised R&I topics for transnational funding by CORE Organic Pleiades

0 response submitted

### Which implementation modalities are most relevant for the selected priorities?

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Joint transnational call

Coordination with the AE Partnership

Alignments between the TPO SRIA and the AE partnership research priorities

< 4 of 8 >

0 response submitted

### Major gaps or concerns from a CORE Organic perspective

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Responses will be displayed as a word cloud

Wordcloud All responses

< 5 of 8 >



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

0 response submitted

### Additional comments relevant for CORE Organic coordination within the AE Partnership

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Responses will be displayed as a word cloud

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< 6 of 8 >

0 response submitted

### CORE Organic member organisation

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< 7 of 8 >



## Deliverable D6.2 Prioritised R&I topics for transnational funding by CORE Organic Pleiades

0 response submitted

Country / Region represented

Scan the QR or use link to join



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8 of 8

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Results of Preselection of SRIA research priorities using the interstellar tracker

The preselection of the SRIA topics was carried out with a qualitative multi-criteria approach. Each of the 31 SRIA research priority was grouped based on their relevance with the four themes of the Interstellar Tracker and assessed for their contribution to policy framework including Green Deal (GD), Farm to Fork and Organic Action Plan (OAP) objectives. The wide coverage of the preselection included topics: environment, biodiversity and the climate and, people, communities and sustainable livelihoods, knowledge exchange and innovation systems. A scoring of 1-2, where 2 is the highest, was given for relevance towards GD-OAP and for relevance towards Interstellar Tracker—with overall scoring between 2-4.

A total of ten research priorities were selected for the prioritisation exercise by CORE Organic members based on the highest scoring, strongest policy relevance and strong alignment with the Interstellar Tracker themes. The selected research priorities include topics on climate, soil, water management, biodiversity, plant breeding, protein transition, territorial development (bio-districts), value chain, agroecological knowledge and innovation systems (AKIS) - spanning from technological, to socio-economic and systemic approach.



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational  
 funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

**Table 1** Ten selected SRIA research priorities with scoring. Theme I shows the primary and secondary alignments of the SRIA research priorities to the four themes of the Interstellar Tracker (IT) where 1 is Co-creating foundations for knowledge exchange and research capacity building, 2. Thematic challenges, 3. Facing transition. Policy relevance and alignment with IT are scored from 1 to 2, where 2 is the highest score. The overall score shows the sum of policy and IT scores.

SRIA Research priority		Interstellar Tracker (IT) Themes		Score towards policy	Score towards IT	Overall score
		Primary	Secondary	1-2	1-2	1-4
1	3.2.3.5 Strengthening the position of organic farmers in the value chain	1		2	2	4
2	3.1.1.1 Carbon sequestration and soil management for climate-resilient organic farming	2	3	2	2	4
3	3.1.1.2 Enhancing water resilience in organic farming systems	2	3	2	2	4
4	3.1.2.3 Climate-resilient and diverse plant breeding for sustainable organic food systems	2	3	2	2	4
5	3.1.3.2 Accelerating the development and adoption of biocontrol solutions in organic farming	2		2	1	3
6	3.1.2.1 Enhancing biodiversity through multifunctional organic crop and livestock systems	3	1	2	2	4
7	3.2.2.3 Enhancing the contribution of the organic sector to the EU's protein transition	3	2	2	2	4
8	3.2.3.1 Bio-districts as a strategy for participatory territorial planning and rural revitalisation	3		2	2	4
9	3.2.3.2 Organic farming and agroecology as a tool for generational renewal	3		2	2	4
10	3.1.3.4 Circular fertilisation strategies for organic and agroecological farming	3		2	2	4



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational**  
**funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

### **3.2. Prioritization exercise with CO members**

The prioritization exercise by Core Organic members was carried out by the Core Organic governing board meeting on the 19 February 2026. 20 Core Organic members participated to the meeting.

During the Core Organic governing board meeting IFOAM EU presented the 10 preselected TPO SRIA research priorities followed by a plenary discussion with participants. Core Organic members were then invited to share their inputs and decisions via a survey till the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026. While the number of responses (20% response rate) does not allow for statistically conclusions representing the whole Core Organic Network, the inputs provided together with the feedback collected during the plenary discussion give a qualitative indication of the priorities areas among the participants. The limitation of the small sample size should be interpreted as informative rather than formal representation of the whole Core Organic network.

#### **Priorities areas**

- Strengthening the position of organic farmers in the value chain

The TPO SRIA research topic “3.2.3.5 Strengthening the position of organic farmers in the value chain” emerged as common top priority across the participants – highly ranked both for relevance to the national OAP and coordinated action with Core Organic network. It suggests a strong interest in positioning organic farmers in the value chain to achieve socio- economic resilience of the organic sector.

- Climate, biodiversity and environment

Highly ranked TPO SRIA research topics included “3.1.1.1 Carbon sequestration and soil management for climate-resilient organic farming”, “3.1.2.3 Climate-resilient and diverse plant breeding for sustainable organic food systems” and “3.1.2.1 Enhancing biodiversity through multifunctional organic crop and livestock systems”. It suggests that climate adaptation, soil health and biodiversity are key topics in organic R&I.

- Low-input organic systems

Most relevant TPO SRIA research topics included “3.1.3.4 Circular fertilisation strategies for organic and agroecological farming” and “3.1.3.2 Accelerating the development and adoption of biocontrol solutions in organic farming”. This reflects the holistic resource use that characterised the organic food and farming systems and the need of supportive innovations.

#### **Implementation modalities**

All participants expressed joint translational calls as the most relevant for implementing the identified organic research topics within the Horizon Europe AE partnership. Particularly, it was suggested to create standardise procedure supporting collective actions and cooperation among Core Organic partners sharing joint interest in specific research topics. It was also mentioned the importance of alignment between the TPO-SRIA and the AE Partnership SRIA.



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational  
funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

Overall, the prioritization exercise provides a guidance for short-term coordinated actions and confirms the added value of the Core Organic network in facilitating translational funding for organic research and strategic positioning in the broader HE Partnerships ecosystem.

## 4. Added value of Core Organic network

**Lead contributors: Ivana Trkulja and Anna Kirkegaard Vaarst (ICROFS)**

The CORE Organic (CO) network has supported investment in European organic food and farming Research & Innovation (R&I) efforts since 2004. In response to growing organic sector needs, initially the network was launched under the ERA-NET transnational funding and cooperation scheme. Over four programme periods, partners in the CORE Organic ERANET launched eight transnational calls and funded 62 projects, investing €61.9 million in organic R&I. Currently, the network operates under the OrganicTargets4EU project (2022-2026) and it encompasses 43 partners from 27 countries/ regions in the EU and beyond, exchanging knowledge about the policy, research and innovation landscape for organics in Europe. By connecting ministries, research institutions and key stakeholders, the network strengthens the strategic bridge between national organic agendas and EU-level frameworks, ensuring that organic priorities are visible and actionable where policy and funding decisions are made. NET launched eight transnational calls and funded 62 projects, investing €61.9 million in organic R&I. NET launched eight transnational calls and funded 62 projects, investing €61.9 million in organic R&I.

Building on two decades of collaboration under the CORE Organic umbrella, the network offers continuity and collective memory at a time of institutional change. Since 2024, transnational funding for organic R&I was channeled through the large European Partnerships (PS), e.g. AGROECOLOGY, FutureFoodS, European Partnership on Animal Health and Welfare (EUPAHW), the Missions and the Green ERA-Hub initiative. Hence, CORE Organic network objective from 2024 was transformed to contribute with advice to organic research policy and funding at the EU, national and regional level. The network also serves as a bridge for its members towards the European Partnerships as these large HEU funding structures have overarching broad themes, where research relevant for or specific to 'organics' may easily be overlooked.

As a part of broader European policy horizon, through continuous transnational coordination, the CORE Organic Network's objective is to ensure policy support in research areas relevant for the organic sector, particularly to support the implementation of the European Farm to Fork Strategy (2020) with the target of at least 25% of EU agricultural land to be under organic farming by 2030 and continuous growth of the



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational**  
**funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

sector including aquaculture, aiming to create a sustainable, healthy and environmentally friendly food system EUR-Lex - 52020DC0381 - EN - EUR-Lex. To achieve this target and help the organic sector to reach its full potential the Commission has put forward the EU Organic Action Plan (2021-2027), which sets the aim to dedicate at least 30% of the budget in Intervention Area 3 “Agriculture, forestry and rural areas” of Cluster 6 of Horizon Europe to topics relevant for or specific to the organic sector. The EU Organic Action Plan also aims to strengthen coordination of national organic food R&I programmes via the Horizon Europe mission, A Soil Deal for Europe, and via the European Partnerships on AGROECOLOGY, FutureFoodS, and Animal Health and Welfare EUR-Lex - 52021DC0141R(01) - EN - EUR-Lex .

While OrganicTargets4EU is coming to an end, the CORE Organic Pleiades Network is determined on continuing as a network. At the CORE Organic Pleiades Network Annual Workshop 2025 and 5th Governing Board Meeting in Brussels, 5th of November 2025, the members decided to extend the network beyond OrganicTargets4EU for the remaining of 2026 in order to finalize the network’s current Roadmap 2030 and the Action Plan 2025–2026. Furthermore, it was decided to seek opportunities to carry on the network beyond 2026 as well.

The reasons why to continue the network and the perceived added value of being a part of the network has been explored among partners and is summed up in the remaining of this chapter as well as the support services provided for the network members and partners’ perspectives on future activities for continuing the CORE Organic Pleiades Network beyond 2026.

#### **4.1. Support services for the CO Pleiades Network members**

During the OrganicTargets4EU project (from Sep. 2022), CO Pleiades network partners received relevant information about the Horizon Europe research funding and were actively engaged in network activities aiming at organic policy exchange and alignment of organic national/ regional priorities with transnational European objectives.

The CORE Organic Pleiades Network has jointly embarked on:

- **10 Horizon Europe Exchange and Anniversary Meetings** organised remotely since 2022
- **3 CO Annual Workshops** organised in-person in Brussels, BE (2023, 2024, and 2025)
- **3 Technical visits to Biofach Organic Food Trade Fair** organised in-person in Nuremberg, DE (2023, 2024, and 2025)
- **20 CO Management Board Meetings** organised remotely since 2022
- **6 CO Governing Board Meetings** organised both as in-person and remote meetings (2023, 2024, 2025, and the last is planned on 19 Feb. 2026)



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational  
funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

- Coordination of strategic documents as **CORE Organic ROADMAP 2030 and Action Plan 2025-2026**
- Liaising with TP Organics on preparation of the **TP Organics 'Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda'** supported by CORE Organic members (launched in November 2025)

In addition to core coordination activities funded under OrganicTargets4EU, the Core Organic network has benefited from complementary analytical work developed by ICROFS including:

- Preparing **Impact Assessment Study regarding the HEU funding mechanisms** supporting organic R&I (available soon).
- Preparing a **Policy Brief on transnational cooperation policy support for organic R&I** (available soon).

## **4.2. The experienced value from partners regarding being a part of the CORE Organic Pleiades Network**

To capture partners' perception of the network's value, the Secretariat circulated three questions by e-mail to 23 partners (35 individuals) who could not attend the CORE Organic Annual Workshop (AW) 2025 & 5th Governing Board (GB) meeting in Brussels (5 November 2025).

The three questions were:

1. What has been the value of the CORE Organic network for your organization since 2022?
2. Do you have suggestions for future activities or priorities?
3. Would your organization be interested in continuing as a member in 2026 to finalize the current CORE Organic Action Plan 2025-2026?

A first outreach (17 October 2025) collected inputs from 12 partners; a second e-mail (19 December 2025) with the same three questions to all partners collected inputs from additional 7 partners. The following section sums up the six overall thematic areas mentioned across the e-mail replies complemented with relevant points raised at the Annual Workshop and GB meeting.

### **4.2.1. Inputs from partners via e-mail consultation**

The following six thematic areas have been identified across the inputs received regarding the added value of the network. Each theme is opened by one or two *illustrative quotes* mentioned by partners representing the theme, followed by a description elaborating on the specific theme across all replies as well as outputs from the Brussels AW and GB meeting.

#### **1) Knowledge sharing, networking and being up to date regarding organic R&I**



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational**  
**funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

*“The collaboration with the CO network has been very valuable for us. We have had excellent opportunities to network, exchange knowledge, and further strengthen our position within the European sustainable food systems community.”*  
ERIAFF/SEAMK (Finland)

*“Through the network, we have been able to closely follow developments at the European level in the field of organic farming and food systems, see examples of experiences and best practices from similar organizations, and learn about the progress of action plans in other countries. This process has been a very good experience for us”* GDAR, (Turkey)

Across most replies, partners emphasise the value of regular information exchange and peer-to-peer connectivity that they do not obtain (or not as efficiently) through purely national channels. Respondents value the ability to track European developments in organics, learn from others’ action plans, best practices and project outputs, and maintain live contacts that help subsequent collaboration.

*(Mentioned by SLU, GDAR, REM, MMM, ERIAFF/SEAMK, BML, UEFISCDI, DAFM, Dep.LV, RCN, output from Brussels AW & GB meeting)*

## **2) Strategic coordination and policy alignment with EU agendas and partnerships**

*“Overall, the CO network has been highly valuable in strengthening Ireland’s engagement in European R&I on organic farming. (...) It has enhanced policy and research coordination with EU partners, aligning with and supporting evidence-based policymaking under Ireland’s National Organic Strategy 2023–2030 and Food Vision 2030.”* DAFM (Ireland)

*“CORE Organic Pleiades Network has an important role to shape future Horizon Europe and future partnerships to ensure that organic theme is more visibly integrated in the partnerships.”* REM (Estonia)

Several funders and research actors underline the network’s role in aligning national priorities with EU-level frameworks (Horizon Europe partnerships, CAP-related action, and the Farm-to-Fork/Biodiversity objectives), as seen in the opening quotes.

At the Brussels AW & GB meeting, partners discussed how CORE Organic can function as a policy interface to partnerships (Agroecology, FutureFoodS, EUPAHW), missions (Soil; Climate Adaptation) and the Green ERA Hub, with partners calling for continued policy exchange and co-ordinated inputs into topic design.



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational**  
**funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

*(Mentioned by DAFM, BMLEH, UEFISCDI, Dep.LV, MMM, ERIAFF/SEAMK, REM, output from Brussels AW & GB meeting)*

**3) European perspective and institutional visibility, possibilities and positioning**

*“Participation in the CORE Organic Network has been useful to us. (...) It is very useful to see also the international dimension as we work much at national level. CORE Organic has given a broader and more long-term view of organic issues. Also networking with other people and institutes working with this area has been very fruitful.” MMM (Finland)*

Respondents value the broader, long-term European perspective the network provides (MMM, SLU), including institutional visibility within a wider community of funders and knowledge actors (ERIAFF/SEAMK, GDAR). This perspective helps frame national actions within a shared European narrative and fosters cross-sectoral links (e.g. to food processing and downstream value chain issues highlighted by ERIAFF/SEAMK).

*(Mentioned by MMM, SLU, ERIAFF/SEAMK, GDAR, output from Brussels AW & GB meeting)*

**4) Access to and impact from transnational funding and projects (historical and ongoing)**

*“23% of the farmland in Estonia is certified organic. That is the reason why the participation in previous CORE Organic ERA-Nets and in CORE Organic Pleiades Network is important for us. To be a part of the community, sharing information and knowledge, preparing future activities, having contacts are the most valuable benefits.” REM (Estonia)*

*“For UEFISCDI, Romania participation in the CORE Organic Pleiades Network was very fruitful. Many projects with Romanian researchers have been funded with excellent outcomes and great visibility. It was a great opportunity to better support the organic sector in RO. (...) In Romania, the organic sector became more stable and mature and the research organizations are still waiting for the appropriate window of funding to innovate more and explore scientific advances.” UEFISCDI (Romania)*

Respondents acknowledge benefits from participation in transnational projects and calls (e.g. prior ERA-NET/CORE Organic calls), citing capacity gains and visibility for national research communities (UEFISCDI, DAFM). Even where current funding opportunities are tighter, partners stress that coordination and



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational  
funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

brokerage via the CORE Organic Pleiades Network increase readiness for Horizon Europe calls and help avoid fragmentation.

*(Mentioned by UEFISCDI, DAFM, REM,, output from Brussels AW & GB meeting)*

### **5) Capacity building, including early-career support**

*“The value of continuing the network is seen primarily in the provision and exchange of information among members. Numerous events were organized by the secretariat to provide insight into important topics. These events were very valuable, as they provided a compact insight into a topic and allowed participants to learn about the different perspectives of the members on the topic (i.e. regenerative agriculture). (...) The involvement and information from partners in the OrganicTargets4EU project were very valuable. (...) Moving grants were also funded from 2022 onwards. This is an important measure for attracting young scientists.”*  
*BMLEH (Germany)*

Partners note contributions to organisational capacity (e.g. better grasp of EU processes, improved project management exposure) and, specifically, mobility grants that support early-career researchers (BMLEH). Ireland similarly reports capacity and resilience gains for the national organic sector through network engagement (DAFM). At the Brussels AW & GB Meeting, it was further mentioned that mobility support, even if modest, is perceived as a talent pipeline measure.

*(Mentioned by BMLEH, DAFM, UEFISCDI, output from Brussels AW & GB meeting)*

### **6) Community and identity around organic principles**

*“CORE Organic Pleiades Network has been valuable as a community with shared principles and objectives for organic production”* CRA-W, (Belgium – Wallonia).

Some partners emphasise the value of belonging to network with shared objectives, as illustrated in the opening quote. This collective identity supports coherence and mutual learning across diverse national contexts.

*(Mentioned by CRA-W, REM).*

A few partners (ÖMKi, AM, RCN) note capacity constraints and a perceived lower direct added value when the network is not linked to dedicated calls, although they continue to participate to maintain networks and stay informed. The Governing Board will in February 2026 respond to these concerns by discussing targeted 2026 activities and by exploring lean coordination models.



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

In order to provide an overview of key thematic areas mentioned as values of the CORE Organic Pleiades Network, the Table 2 on next page sums up the key themes mentioned by partners.

**Table 2 Key added values of CORE Organic Network mentioned by partners**

Theme (count of partners mentioned this)	Institutions mentioneing the theme
<b>Knowledge sharing, networking &amp; being up to date regarding organic R&amp;I (15)</b>	UEFISCDI (RO), SEAMK/ERIAFF (FI/ERIAFF), SLU (SE), BMLEH (DE), BML (AT), GDAR (TR), REM (EE), DAFM (IE), MMM (FI), LAMMC (LT), ZUM – Ministry of Agriculture (LT), RCN (NO), Dep.LV (BE-FL), ERIAFF/UNIBZ (IT), CRA-W (BE-WAL)
<b>Strategic coordination &amp; policy alignment with EU agendas and partnerships (7)</b>	DAFM (IE), UEFISCDI (RO), BMLEH (DE), Dep.LV (BE-FL), SEAMK/ERIAFF (FI/ERIAFF), MMM (FI), REM (EE)
<b>European perspective &amp; institutional visibility, possibilities and positioning (4)</b>	MMM (FI), SLU (SE), SEAMK/ERIAFF (FI/ERIAFF), GDAR (TR)
<b>Access to and impact of transnational funding &amp; projects (3)</b>	UEFISCDI (RO), DAFM (IE), REM (EE)
<b>Capacity building &amp; including early-career support (3)</b>	BMLEH (DE), DAFM (IE), UEFISCDI (RO)
<b>Community and identity around organic principles (2-3)</b>	CRA-W (BE-WAL), REM (EE)

### 4.3. Suggestions from partners regarding future activities for the CORE Organic Pleiades Network beyond 2026

The majority of the partners suggest to **keep CORE Organic Pleiades Network alive as an orientation, exchange and coordination platform and to ensure coherency and guidance for funders**. The suggestions below sum up the additional inputs from partners regarding potential future activites of the network beyond 2026:

#### 1) Policy interface and alignment with EU frameworks (Horizon Europe, Partnerships, SCAR)

- Work purposefully to ensure **organic remains visible and integrated** in Partnerships (Agroecology, FutureFoodS, EUPAHW) and relevant EU processes (e.g., SCAR).
- Consider CORE Organic Pleiades as an **expert body in Partnerships** advising co-funded call topics from an organic perspective. This has already been implemented in PS AGROECOLOGY, since ICROFS' proposal of a dedicated task



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational  
funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

for a CORE Organic Expert Network within this partnership from 2026-2033 has been accepted.

- Use the network as a **channel for coordinated inputs** to topic design and as a **bridge** between national strategies and the EU agenda.

*Proposed by: REM (EE), DAFM (IE), MMM (FI), ÖMKi (HU), RCN (NO), ERIAFF/UNIBZ (IT), outputs from the Brussels AW & GB meeting.*

## 2) Matchmaking, project development and funding opportunities

- Establish **concrete matchmaking pathways** and **coordinated project development** (ideally around Action Plan themes).
- Explore **alternative funding routes** and/or **re-enable/support new calls** for organic research (production and value chain).
- Provide an ongoing **overview of EU funding opportunities** to partners.

*Proposed by: UEFISCDI (RO), ÖMKi (HU), CRA-W (BE-WAL), ERIAFF/SEAMK (FI/Int.),  
output from Brussels AW & GB meeting.*

## 3) Strengthening visibility of the CO network and improving dissemination of knowledge

- **Systematise and clarify** network activities, objectives and **results**; sharpen messaging and make it easy to disseminate.
- Focus on **knowledge capture and transfer to advisory services/practice** so project results are genuinely taken up (e.g., best practice formats).-practice formats).

*Proposed by: BML (AT), ZUM/LT Ministry (LT), SLU (SE), GDAR (TR), output from Brussels AW & GB meeting.*

## 4) Value chain focus and co-creation with farmers and practice actors-chain focus-creation with farmers and practice actors

- Strengthen the **link from primary production to processing and markets** (food processing, value chain development, implementation of agroecology).-chain development, implementation of agroecology).
- Increase **farmer/farm participation** in projects and applications; bring their **problem statements** into research questions; share **best practice**.

*Proposed by: ERIAFF/SEAMK (FI/Int.), DAFM (IE), BML (AT).*

## 5) Early-career researchers, networking and mentoring

- Build **networks and mentoring schemes** for early-career researchers and practitioners to strengthen the next generation in organic R&I.

*Proposed by: GDAR (TR), output from Brussels AW & GB meeting*



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational  
funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

## 6) Links between organics and themes related to climate, eco-systems and food security

- Seek **synergies with plant-health actors and networks** to address shared themes.
- Prioritise **climate mitigation and adaptation** in organic systems (GHG, resilience, carbon sequestration) and **standardised indicators** of environmental benefits.
- Reinforce the links between organics and **climate, biodiversity and food security**—including **commercialisation** of solutions.

*Proposed by: REM (EE), DAFM (IE), GDAR (TR)*

## 5. Conclusions and future perspectives

### 5.1. Summary of outcomes

Since 2022, partners credit the CORE Organic Pleiades Network with efficient knowledge exchange, policy alignment and strategic positioning via EU frameworks, leverage for transnational projects, and capacity building, including for early-career researchers.

While some partners note added-value constraints in a no-call phase, the majority of partners agree that the CORE Organic Pleiades Network demonstrably delivers EU-level added value that Member States cannot achieve in isolation. It compares national organic agendas through shared prioritisation tools (e.g. Interstellar Tracker), brokers inputs to Horizon Europe partnerships and Missions, widens participation, and improves the visibility and uptake of organic R&I results—thereby turning national efforts into a coherent, strategically positioned European contribution.

In order to keep strengthening the organic sector’s collective capacity to contribute credibly to the EU’s organic targets towards 2030, the partners present at the CORE Organic Pleiades Network Annual Workshop 2025 & 5th Governing Board meeting in Brussels (5 November 2025), agreed to continue the CORE Organic Pleiades Network until 31 December 2026.

The objective during this period is to finalise action points from the CORE Organic ROADMAP 2030 and Action Plan 2025-2026 with specific focus on the following:

1. **Inclusion of organic research themes** in HEU Partnership calls until 2030, and more immediately in calls 2025/ 2026: Partnerships AGROECOLOGY, FutureFoodS and EUPAHW.
2. **Continuous policy exchange** for funders, stakeholder partners, researchers and the European Commission (EC) representatives.



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational**  
**funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

3. **Continuation of the CORE Organic network 2026-2030** (Subject to a decision of the network members and availability of the future activity funding).
4. Through engagement of ICROFS CO Programme Secretariat, the network **members can additionally be involved in more thematically focused activities.**

## **5.2. Recommendations for implementation of organic research priorities in Horizon Europe AE partnership**

Core Organic Pleiades network is well positioned to ensure that organic research is represented in the Horizon Europe funding mechanisms. Through a strong coordination among national funders, and their engagement with the Agroecology Partnership, Core Organic members can operationalise the prioritised SRIA research topics.

Recommendations for the Core Organic Network include:

- Align the national R&I priorities (e.g. themes identified in the national OAP) with the AE Partnership Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas and facilitate dialogue among funders.
- Stimulate increased investment for organic research by mobilising national authority to fund and implement organic R&I priorities.
- Engage with TP Organics to identify gaps and alignments between the TPO SRIA and the AE partnership research priorities to ensure that organic research needs are coherently represented in the HE funding mechanisms.
- Setting up tools and process to collect expression of interests by Core Organic members on specific organic research topics and facilitate potential of future collaboration.

## 6. Annexes

Full list of the 30 TPO SRIA research priorities showing the alignment and scoring with the primary and secondary Interstellar Tracker themes where 1 is Co-creating foundations for knowledge exchange and research capacity building, 2. Thematic challenges, 3. Facing transition. Policy relevance and alignment with IT are scored from 1 to 2, where 2 is the highest score. The overall score shows the some of policy and IT scores.

SRIA Research priority	Interstellar Tracker (IT) Themes		Score towards policy	Score towards IT	Overall score
	Primary	Secondary	1-2	1-2	1-4
<i>3.1.1.1 Carbon sequestration and soil management for climate-resilient organic farming</i>	2	3	2	2	4
<i>3.1.1.2 Enhancing water resilience in organic farming systems</i>	2	3	2	2	4
<i>3.1.2.1 Enhancing biodiversity through multifunctional organic crop and livestock systems</i>	3	1	2	2	4
<i>3.1.2.3 Climate-resilient and diverse plant breeding for sustainable organic food systems</i>	2	3	2	2	4
<i>3.2.2.3 Enhancing the contribution of the organic sector to the EU's protein transition</i>	3	2	2	2	4
<i>3.2.3.1 Bio-districts as a strategy for participatory territorial planning and rural revitalisation</i>	3		2	2	4
<i>3.2.3.2 Organic farming and agroecology as a tool for generational renewal</i>	3		2	2	4
<i>3.2.3.5 Strengthening the position of organic farmers in the value chain</i>	1		2	2	4
<i>Building agroecologically oriented AKIS frameworks</i>	1	4	2	2	4
<i>3.1.3.4 Circular fertilisation strategies for organic and agroecological farming</i>	3		2	2	4
<i>3.3.1.2 Harnessing AI for better organic certification and knowledge systems</i>	1		2	1	3
<i>3.1.3.2 Accelerating the development and adoption of biocontrol solutions in organic farming</i>	2		2	1	3



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational**  
**funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

3.1.3.3 Upscaling organic aquaculture	2	3	1	2	3
3.1.1.3 Integrating renewable energy into organic farming for climate resilience and vital rural areas	2	3	1	2	3
3.1.2.2 Diversified and resilient perennial systems in organic farming	3	2	1	2	3
3.1.2.4 Breeding resilient, long living, and multi-purpose animals for organic farming	2	3	1	2	3
3.1.3.1 Integrating medicinal plants and biodiversity in organic livestock under One Health	2	1	1	2	3
3.1.3.5 Diversified and climate resilient organic feed systems for monogastrics and ruminants	3	2	1	2	3
3.1.3.6 Resilient and multifunctional free-range livestock systems for organic farming	2		1	2	3
3.1.3.7 Sustainability assessment, benchmarking and reporting for organic farms	3	1	1	2	3
3.1.3.8 Enhancing the soil microbiome for resilient and productive organic agriculture	3	2	1	2	3
3.2.2.1 Strengthening processing capacity and infrastructure for resilient organic food systems	2	1	1	2	3
3.2.3.3 Developing organic farming policies for better market, environmental and social outcomes	1		1	2	3
3.2.3.4 Improving access to land for organic farmers through better governance and policy support	3		1	2	3
3.2.3.6 Improving socio-economic performance of organic and agroecological production systems	1		1	2	3
3.1.3.9 Strengthening organic beekeeping	2		1	1	2
3.2.1.1 Making organic food accessible for all: strategies for inclusive consumption	3		1	1	2
3.2.1.2 Bridging the gap between consumer attitudes and actual purchasing behaviour for organic food	2		1	1	2



**Deliverable D6.2**  
**Prioritised R&I topics for transnational  
 funding by CORE Organic Pleiades**

<i>3.2.2.2 Understanding the health impacts of organic food consumption</i>	3		1	1	2
<i>3.3.1.1 Integrating AI and robotics in organic agriculture: needs, risks, and opportunities</i>	1		1	1	2
<i>Knowledge-based strategies for prevention of non-authorized substances in organic supply chains</i>	1		1	1	2



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