



From field to fork

Multidisciplinary research along the whole food chain

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- LIVESEED
- DiverIMPACTS

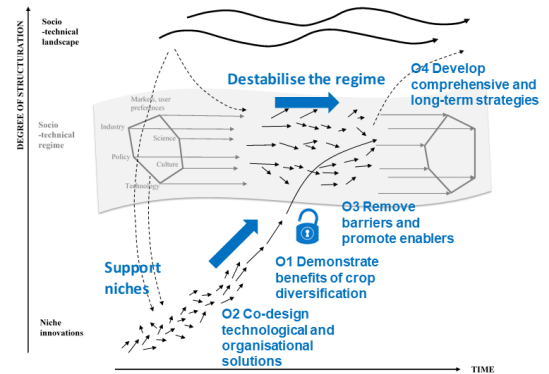


Farming and food systems are inherently complex in nature and scientific advances must recognise this through their multi-disciplinary approach. In this way, ORC's overall objective to accelerate progress towards more healthy and resilient farming requires research effort spanning and connecting natural and social sciences and multiple subject areas within them. Any one project brings in expertise from different areas, and this ensures that each strand of research is targeted, contextualised and therefore impactful.

In the 4-year LIVESEED EU Horizon 2020 project, ORC's crops researchers investigated the role that heterogenous crops, and breeding for organic systems, can play in improving organic crop yields. This was supported by undertaking traditional, farmer-led variety testing to increase knowledge of varieties' performance in organic systems. This agronomic expertise was complemented with that in business and markets, with an ORC-led socio-economic work package exploring the attitudes of stakeholders towards organic seed and organic breeding and assessing how different measures could improve the market and the regulatory arrangements for organic seed and breeding.

The results of research in the field are inconsequential without supportive attitudes and policies along the value chain.

Similarly, in DiverIMPACTS field experiments have quantified the impacts of crop diversification (rotation, intercropping and multiple cropping) at a farm, landscape and societal level. But this EU Horizon 2020 project also seeks to understand how the wider socio-technical system – upstream and downstream of production – can enable and sustain crop diversification to enhance these benefits. ORC uses its skills in convening stakeholders and actor-oriented research to identify needs in training/education, value chains and national and local level policy instruments.



Framework of multi-disciplinary research behind DiverIMPACTS - adapted from Olivier et al. (2018); Geels (2002)

FURTHER READING

1. Winter et al. (2021) doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2021.1931628
2. Orsini et al. (2020) doi.org/10.3390/su12208540