

## Press Release

### Launch of the European Research Project AGRICYGEN

During 13-15 September 2017, the successful launch event and first consortium meeting place of the European Project **AGRICYGEN** (Cyprus AGRicultural Genomics CENtre) took place at the Agricultural Research Institute, Lefkosia, Cyprus. The project is funded by the Teaming (Phase 1) call of the Horizon 2020 framework programme. **AGRICYGEN** aims at establishing a Centre of Excellence in Animal and Plant Production in Cyprus. The Agricultural Research Institute, a department of the Cyprus **Ministry of Agriculture, Rural development and Environment**, acts as coordinator. AGRICYGEN encompasses a



pioneering research collaboration between the Agricultural Research Institute, the **Cyprus Institute**, the **Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics**, the Cyprus-based Development Organisation, **RTD TALOS LTD**, alongside leading research institutions in Europe. Specifically, the Consortium's Advanced

Partners are, the **University of Edinburgh (UK)**, the **National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA) (France)**, and the **Institute for Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research (IPK) (Germany)**, all experts in various fields in Agrigenomics. The advances partners will provide the necessary background and know-how to establish the Centre of Excellence in Cyprus.

The AGRICYGEN project aims at the establishment of a Centre of Excellence in Cyprus, which will take advantage of cutting-edge technologies and expertise in order to facilitate:

- a) *Increased milk production* from local sheep and goat breeds
- b) *Increased production of local ruminant feed*
- c) *The ecological enrichment of Cyprus soils*

The project outcomes will have direct impact on the Cyprus economy and society, and will significantly contribute to sustainable development of agriculture and animal production on the island. The initial focus of the project will be on employing research approaches for fulfilling the halloumi cheese PDO requirements in small ruminant milk and feed production, within the harsh and fluctuating environmental and climatic conditions of Cyprus. AGRICYGEN will also aim at further advancing research and innovation activities in various domains connected with the primary production sector.

AGRICYGEN ranked fifth out of 208 submitted proposals from 13 countries. Overall, 30 projects received funding in the current Teaming Phase 1 call. During Phase 1, the European Commission grants 400,000 euros for a period of 12 months, in order for the project consortium to demonstrate the potential of the future Centre of Excellence by developing a thorough Business Plan, through effective collaboration and the sharing of expertise. During Phase 2, the successful proposals will receive up to 15 million euros from the European Commission, and a matching fund from the respective national government, for a period of 5-7 years, in order to launch the Centre of Excellence.



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