



Press Release

Launch of DETECTIVE. A Horizon Europe project on New Genomic Techniques

DETECTIVE - Detection of NGT products to promote innovation in the European union

DETECTIVE, a four-year EU-funded research project was launched in Malmö, Sweden, from 17 to 19 January 2024. It aims to develop, validate, and promote innovative detection methods for plant and animal products of new genomic techniques (NGTs) such as gene editing and cisgenesis.

The European and international food production and distribution systems are interlinked and the need to trace plants and animals and their food products is important for labelling, traceability, and consumer choice. This requires the development of (cost)-effective and comprehensive detection systems in the field of plants and animals obtained through NGTs. Therefore, DETECTIVE works towards sustainable food systems and ensures the integrity and reliability of food products on the European market, actively contributing to the objectives of the European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy.

Recognising the shortcomings of existing analytical methods for detecting NGTs, DETECTIVE is enhancing its research and development efforts by exploring alternative approaches to identity preservation in the supply chain. It will involve key stakeholders - official and private laboratories, farmers, and agri-food supply chain stakeholders - to jointly identify detection needs and ways to improve knowledge for reliable detection.

DETECTIVE will complement its technical R&D activities in analytical methods with a comprehensive exploration of non-technical approaches. Using responsible research and innovation (RRI) and systems mapping approaches, DETECTIVE will actively involve stakeholders to support a plan to improve the detection capabilities

of laboratories, enabling them to fulfil their responsibilities for the detection of NGTs. DETECTIVE will establish a community of practice (CoP) to facilitate knowledge sharing among laboratories. A train-the-trainer programme will be provided to ensure effective implementation.

The European Commission has adopted a text aimed at revising the legislation on NGTs which is currently being negotiated at the level of the European Parliament and the European Council. In response, DETECTIVE will closely monitor legal developments and carry out analyses of the various and potential EU policy scenarios with a view to identifying socio-economic impacts at both the EU and international levels.

The consortium of DETECTIVE is led by the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. It includes a multi-disciplinary consortium of 20 partners from eight EU Member States, Switzerland, and China as well as the Joint Research Centre from the European Commission:

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