Agrofood startup of the year challenge
Embracing and stimulating the best ideas and entrepreneurs

The FoodNexus project ‘Agrofood startup of the year challenge’ will strengthen its EU network of startups, investors and corporates within the agritech and food area. It will set up a two-round challenge for food startups. The best startups will be connected to investors and corporates to strengthen and build the EU network of startups, investors, researchers, educators and corporations. It will demonstrate how entrepreneurship and innovation can solve societal challenges in agritech and food.

RATIONALE AND AIM
This project is developing a European Agrifood startup of the year challenge in cooperation with FoodNexus partners across Europe. The challenge has preliminary national rounds and ends with a European round awarding the ‘Best European Agrofood Startup of the Year’. The aim of the challenge is to:

- Strengthen and build the EU network of startups, investors and corporates
- Celebrate and inspire: demonstrate how entrepreneurship and innovation can solve societal challenges in agritech and food.

THE CONCEPT
The European Agrofood startup challenge in Europe will consist of:

- National rounds in 5 EU countries, with each country delegating the 3 best national startups to the EU final.

WHAT’S IN IT FOR STARTUPS?
The winner will get business development support as well as a cash prize. Yet the main added value for startups for participating is visibility and networking within the FoodNexus corporate network as well as:

- Connection and feedback from investors and corporates
- Support from the FoodNexus Corporate Startup Engagement programme
- Strong communication and visibility
- Confirmation of the strength of its business idea and impact.

This project is an example of the FoodNexus partnership’s role as a change agent for stimulating an entrepreneurial mindset and at the same time better integrating the food sector.

An EU final with changing locations in Europe.
A final consisting of 15 startups from the organising countries and 5 wildcards for startups from other countries (European selection).
The challenge will choose the best EU startup in agritech and food, and connect them with investors and corporates.
The thematic challenges will depart from the strategic objectives of FoodNexus.
A startup is defined as an organisation of max 6 years with a team in place and the basis of the business model designed, but before the scaling phase. To be accepted in the challenge, its potential must have worldwide economic and social impact and it must fit within the thematic areas. A set of requirements for national organising partners is in place in order to ensure that only relevant, excelling organisations with proven track records in organising capabilities and startup networks can participate.

**STATUS AND NEXT STEPS**

In March 2017, the project received seed funding from FoodNexus. A consortium of best in class partners from within the partnership is committed to leading the national rounds and some are engaging with investors within their own region in Europe.

The project has engaged a group of national leading partners, has appointed StartLife as the owner and driver of the European setup of the concept in 2017 and is looking for main European sponsors.

Throughout 2017, with a kick-off in May, the national rounds will take place ending up in December 2017.

**SPONSORSHIP**

StartLife and the national FoodNexus partners are looking for European and national corporate partners and sponsorships, and have developed a sponsorship plan. Corporate partners are part of the European and national selection rounds and in this way get access to and contact with the most interesting startups.

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**FOODNEXUS PARTNERS PARTICIPATING IN THE PROJECT:**

- Enterprise Ireland
- FIAB
- Food+i
- Future Food Innovation
- Liege and Ghent University
- RISE
- StartLife
- The Entrepreneurship Center of the University of Bologna
- Vitagora

**LEARN MORE AND ENGAGE:**

The FoodNexus partnership is open to collaboration with relevant organisations and individuals sharing our vision and mission. Project activity is updated on the FoodNexus website, where you can also read more about the FoodNexus partnership, as well as follow news and activity. For more information about this particular project you are welcome to get in touch with the contact person.

**STARTUP OF THE YEAR CHALLENGE CONTACT PERSONS:**

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