

Future Food Utrecht – Call 2021

Call to participate in a two-day Sandpit-based workshop
Circular Agriculture to build a partnership and develop an
multidisciplinary research proposal
Closing date, 19 April 2021, at noon

Are you currently carrying research out related to topics that contribute to Circular Agriculture? Are you interested in becoming part of a consortium of UU researchers that jointly aim to acquire a large research grant to catalyse the transition towards Circular Agriculture? If so, the FFU sandpit call may be of interest to you. Future Food Utrecht is pleased to invite UU researchers to apply to attend a two-day Sandpit-based workshop on **Circular Agriculture**.

Sandpits are interactive workshops of a few days involving a small, interdisciplinary group of participants. Sandpits are intensive discussion forums where free thinking is encouraged to delve into the problems on the schedule to uncover innovative solutions. This two-day workshop is based on the Sandpit approach and adjusted to the needs of this specific call. This two-day workshop aims to explore and build a partnership for developing an interdisciplinary research proposal. The intended outcome is a collectively written, strong research proposal.

The research topic of the FFU Sandpit-based Workshop

Circular agriculture has been proposed as a solution to minimize the environmental impact of the current agricultural system and shift to sustainable resource use. By closing the cycles of carbon, nitrogen and phosphorus, minimizing the production and maximizing the reuse of waste, it is expected that the impact of agriculture to climate change, eutrophication, biodiversity loss and unsustainable natural resource use will be diminished, and agricultural production can stay within planetary boundaries.

However, the current food system can be considered as a complex system that is characterized by a lot of feedbacks between different components of the system at a variety of spatial scales. It is therefore hard to outline what a truly circular system looks like, at what scale cycles should be closed, what kind of unintended negative effects, such as unintended recycling of pollutants, toxins and diseases, or negative impacts on animal health and welfare, can potentially arise and whether the proposed changes will actually deliver on the proposed goals of a circular system, and not simply pass on the environmental issues to elsewhere. Furthermore, it remains unclear under what socio-economic boundary conditions and institutional arrangements such a system can take shape and persist in a sustainable and fair way. These questions are especially relevant to agricultural development in the global South.

Keywords: circular economy, food security, animal welfare, transitions,

biogeochemical cycles, environmental impact analysis, health, recycling, sustainable resource use

Aim and outcome of the FFU Workshop

Future Food Utrecht wishes to reinforce the research related to Circular Agriculture at Utrecht University by bringing together scientists from different disciplines. The outcome of this Sandpit-based workshop is to draft one or more project proposals led by UU researchers for the development of full proposals to be submitted to EU or Dutch Funding Agencies. To facilitate this process, RSO staff will be present during the workshop. If the draft proposal is deemed sufficiently effective and innovative for achieving a food production transition and competitive enough for attaining funding, the Board of Future Food Utrecht will award the consortium further financial support to write the full proposal (see below). It is expected that the UU will be expanded at that stage to include stakeholders and other (international) research institutes to complete the consortium for submitting a competitive research proposal.

Funding available

Future Food Utrecht will organise several Sandpit-based calls related to its research themes and in 2021 it will make €200k available to support the interdisciplinary teams to develop competitive proposals. Each team is expected to receive roughly €50k when they have resulted in competitive research ideas and commitment. These funds can be used for hiring capacity to aid proposal development and to cover material costs necessary for proposal development.

Applying to participate in the FFU Sandpit-based workshop

Applications are invited from individual researchers who feel that they can contribute to the challenges in this topic. Applicants should complete an expression of interest (EoI) through the **Motivation form**, which is added below. The size of the group participating in the workshop is essential not only for the interaction but also to make sure that every participant can be a partner in the final proposal. That is why from the received applications, approximately 8-10 participants will be selected to take part in the Sandpit. The Future Food Utrecht Board will make a selection, based on (i) expertise, (ii) motivation, and (iii) track record relevant to the topic of the Sandpit. Please note that for the track record we are explicitly not only looking for your academic publication or research track record, but also for other skills, particularly: the ability to develop new, groundbreaking research ideas, approach to interdisciplinary problems, ability to work in a team, and knowledge valorisation. Within the pool of applicants selected based on these criteria, the panel will bring together a multidisciplinary team with diverse experience, gender and background.

Deadline

The deadline for applications is 19 April 2021 12 AM.

Timeline

Activity	Date
Call Launched	April 2021
Call closes (expressions of interest)	19 April 2021
Participant Selection FFU Board	22 April 2021
Workshop (2 days) participation is compulsory	Day 1 25 mei 2021 Day 2 7 June 2021(tentative)
Funding Announcement:	July 2021

THE INTENTION IS TO HOLD PHYSICAL WORKSHOPS. DEPENDING ON THE DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, WE WILL EVENTUALLY OFFER AN ONLINE ALTERNATIVE.

The next Future Food Utrecht sandpit-based workshops will focus on: Early life nutritional opportunities for a resilient life (OPEN now), Nature inspired food production (expected to open in June/July) and Inclusive transformation of food systems (expected to open in September).