

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE PARTNERS OF THE
ALLIANCE FOR FRUIT GROWING, VITICULTURE AND VEGETABLE CULTIVATION



Allianz
**FÜR OBST-, WEIN-
& GEMÜSEBAU**

Dated November 21, 2024, the Partners are:

1. **Hochschule Geisenheim University**, located in 65366 Geisenheim (D), legal representative Prof. Dr. Hans Reiner Schultz
2. **Julius Kühn-Institute - JKI**, located in 06484 Quedlinburg (D), legal representative Prof. Dr. Frank Ordon
3. **Agroscope**, located in 3003 Bern (CH), legal representative Dr. Eva Reinhard
4. **Weinbauzentrum Wädenswil**, located in 8820 Wädenswil (CH), legal representative Kaspar Wetli
5. **Leibniz Institute for Agricultural Engineering and Bioeconomy - ATB**, located in 14469 Potsdam (D), legal representative Prof. Dr. Barbara Sturm
6. **Höhere Bundeslehranstalt und Bundesamt für Wein- und Obstbau - Klosterneuburg**, located in 3400 Klosterneuburg (A), legal representative HR DI Dr. Reinhard Eder
7. **Laimburg Research Centre**, located in 39051 Pfatten (I), legal representative Dr. Michael Oberhuber
8. **University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna**, located in 1180 Vienna (A), legal representative Univ. Prof. MMag. Dr. Eva Schulev-Steindl, LL.M.
9. **Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences**, located in 49074 Osnabrück (D), legal representative Prof. Dr. Andreas Bertram
10. **Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops (IGZ)**, located in 14979 Großbeeren (D), legal representative Prof. Dr. Nicole van Dam
11. **Free University of Bozen-Bolzano**, located in 39100 Bolzano (I), legal representative Prof. Alex Weissensteiner

ARTICLE I – **Aim of the Memorandum of Understanding**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishes a collaborative relationship in research as well as professional education and training between the Partners, which shall be conducted in a coordinated manner as the Alliance for fruit growing, viticulture and vegetable cultivation (“Allianz für Obst-, Wein-, und Gemüsebau”), hereafter referred to as the “Alliance”. It establishes the responsibilities of the Partners and adherence to the general principles for their cooperation.

ARTICLE II – **Objectives of the Alliance**

The Alliance aims to address the challenges posed by the current situation in the agricultural sectors of fruit growing, viticulture and vegetable production. These crops are of great interest to the partner of this alliance, as they strongly relate with research and innovation as well as education and training. The related food systems are knowledge-intensive, requiring a high degree of specialization among farmers, as well as continuous innovation in cultivation, pest control, transformation and storage. Being resource efficient by enabling the generation of a high net productivity on comparatively little land surface, and also in creating added value in terms of promoting healthy diets, fostering biodiversity and shaping recreational space, the food systems mentioned offer solutions and perspectives to the agrifood sector and the society at large for the imminent societal challenges mentioned.

The Alliance aims at developing and exploiting synergies and fostering, by this, research and innovation related to the production and storage of fresh produce of the above-mentioned crops, as well as wine production. A further focus lies on collaborating in the education and training at the professional and higher education level in the fields of fruit growing, viticulture and enology and vegetable production. The following objectives guide our collaborative efforts to foster sustainability and drive positive change:

Knowledge Exchange, Networking and Collaboration: One of our primary objectives is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise among partner institutions. By creating a platform for continuous dialogue, we seek to overcome the limitations faced by individual organizations in addressing the multitude of complex questions and issues of the sector. Through collaborative efforts, we will promote a deeper understanding of challenges and explore innovative solutions that can be implemented in food systems practices.

Resource Optimization: Fruit growing and vegetable production encompass a wide variety of crops and, together with viticulture and enology, require a vast amount of specialized knowledge to overcome current and future challenges. Recognizing that financial and personnel resources are constrained for individual institutions, the Alliance seeks to optimize these valuable assets by pooling them. By consolidating our resources, we can enhance research and innovation capabilities, enabling us to tackle the ecological and economical challenges of the sector more efficiently.

Achieving critical mass and inclusivity: In research, extension and education, critical mass may often be a limit for the development and launch of a project or educational programme. By

joining efforts among institutions with complementary competences, critical mass and an inclusive approach may be made possible.

Transboundary Solutions: Many challenges in fruit growing, viticulture and vegetable cultivation transcend regional borders and have international implications. As an alliance, our objective is to foster cross-regional and international cooperation. By transcending geographical boundaries, we can address shared challenges holistically and develop sustainable solutions applicable on a regional as well as global scale.

Enhanced Impact and Influence: Through our collective efforts, we seek to amplify the impact of our research and educational initiatives and to strengthen the sector's voice. A unified communication of the added value of these crops, along with their challenges, creates awareness and provides greater visibility, also in terms of additional financing opportunities. A united front will enable us to advocate for positive changes in policies and practices, both at national and EU level.

Strengthening professional education and training: The partner institutions report difficulties in finding young talents interested in working in the sector. By fostering international cooperation in professional education and training, we seek to create appealing training opportunities and cultivate interest in the sector among young people.

ARTICLE III – **Activities of the Alliance**

The Partners of the Alliance will conduct various collaborative activities on the related topics, which may include one or more of the following:

I. Mobility

- Actively support the exchange of researchers, students (where applicable) and specialists.

II. Research

- Enhance research co-operation through establishment of multi-lateral research projects, and by reinforcing cooperation at institutional level;
- Coordinate and share information related to funding opportunities and proposal calls from the European Commission;
- Implement actions to promote various topics and to foster their relevance in national, trans-national or EU calls;
- Promote the alignment between national and European agendas.

III. Professional education and training

- Organize joint seminars, workshops and conferences with complementary themes and goals;
- Explore possibilities for creating joint education and training programmes.

IV. Others

- Write position papers related to the topics of the Alliance;
- Conduct any other type of cooperation as agreed upon between the Parties.

ARTICLE IV – Specific Arrangements

Activities (joint scientific and educational events and projects, sharing of infrastructures, etc.) will be organised, when necessary, based on a separate agreement to this MoU, which will include all relevant information, such as responsibilities and possible resource commitments of each Partner, implementation plan, confidentiality, intellectual property rights, etc. Each project must be approved by authorised representatives of the involved Partners before it is undertaken.

ARTICLE V - Financial Responsibilities

The co-operation described above will in every case be dependent upon the availability of funds. For each activity, the Partners will define financial responsibilities based on the following principle: the Partners will assume the costs for their staff and their participation in cooperative activities, except when the Partners decide otherwise and additional funds can be made available via third parties.

ARTICLE VI - The Nature of the MoU

This MoU represents each Partner's willingness to cooperate and to explore possible avenues of collaboration but does not constitute a legal obligation with legal, limiting or binding effect. Any obligation or liability to be undertaken by any Partner will require and must be set forth in separate agreements as outlined in article IV.

Nothing in this MoU modifies existing bilateral agreements between the Partners or any other bilateral or reciprocal arrangement that the Partners may have with Partners in other Countries.

ARTICLE VII - Management of the MoU

The executive officers responsible for coordinating and carrying out this MoU will be designated by the respective signatories. These executive officers will also constitute the MoU management committee. This committee will meet regularly to determine the activities to be carried out in the following period.

ARTICLE VIII - Intellectual Property and Confidentiality

The Partners will discuss intellectual property rights and confidentiality for each initiative carried out under this MoU in compliance with the laws of each country. Provisions related to intellectual property rights and confidentiality will be detailed in separate agreements as outlined in Article IV.

ARTICLE IX – **Governing law and settlement of disputes**

The terms of this MoU and any dispute arising from it shall be governed by the law of the defendant's country of origin.

Any dispute between two or more Partners concerning the interpretation and the execution of this MoU shall be settled by negotiation between the involved Partners or by another agreed mode of settlement.

ARTICLE X - **Duration and Amendment**

This MoU takes effect on November 21, 2024.

This MoU takes effect for a period of 5 years from this date. After a joint assessment by the Partners, it may be renewed.

This MoU may be amended with the mutual written consent of all Partners.

Any Partner can revoke its membership of the Alliance for fruit growing, viticulture and vegetable cultivation with 3 calendar months' notice. The revocation does not have any effect on possible on-going separate agreements that will be brought to an end, unless differently specified in the separate agreements themselves.



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Dr. Michael Oberhuber
Director



Julius Kühn Institute
Prof. Dr. Frank Ordon
President



Leibniz Institute for Agricultural Engineering and Bioeconomy
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Scientific Director , Chair of the Board



Hochschule Geisenheim University
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