EXCALIBUR– Public Meeting

Exciting Bioinoculants, Lasting Legacy on Soil

Monday, 5 May 2025
Venue: ISTAT Main Hall, via Cesare Balbo, 16 – 00184, Roma

The EXCALIBUR project

Soil biodiversity is vital for agricultural productivity, but what happens beneath our feet is still largely unknown. The EXCALIBUR project explores this connection, focusing on the effectiveness of biocontrol and biofertilization practices in horticulture by using new multifunctional bioinoculants, thus contributing valuable knowledge to agroecology. In fact, the application of microbial inoculants in agriculture represents a promising option to reduce chemical inputs.

However, their efficacy in the field is still limited and heterogeneous. Thus, EXCALIBUR has developed novel microbial bio-products to support plant nutrition and protection and tested them under both controlled and field conditions on tomatoes, strawberries, and apples. Bioproducts that proved to be effective in field conditions were taken to higher TRL with the support of industrial partners. Innovative tools for the detection and tracking of bioinoculants in soil were developed. To assess soil health, EXCALIBUR also created a PCR-based tool that provides a QR code-linked soil quality report, paired with a decision tree using key soil parameters. This low-cost tool supports sustainable farming, informed policymaking, and empowers farmers, scientists, and stakeholders. This project has generated so much interest that it was selected as one of the top five projects among more than 600 initiatives funded by Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe. As a result, it was invited to present its main findings during the EU Agri-Food Days 2024, held in Brussels in December 2024.

In this final conference, the main results of the EXCALIBUR project will be presented. Several distinguished speakers will address exciting topics, including microbial inoculant research, regulatory frameworks, strategies to support the application of bioproducts, and the multifunctionality of soil biodiversity.

For remote attendance, please use this link: https://imup.cc/J8hN1e

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 817946.

Agenda

TIMING	SUBJECT	PRESENTER
9:00 – 9:30	**Opening registration**	
9:30 – 9:45	Welcome	**Dott. Stefano Menghinello** (Director of DIAE – ISTAT) and **Prof. Giuseppe Corti** (Director of CREA-AA)
9:45 – 10:00	Introduction & Mentimeter questionnaire	**Stefano Mocali** (CREA)
10:00 – 10:30	Overview of EXCALIBUR highlights	**Stefano Mocali** (CREA)
10:30 – 11:00	Microbial inoculants research in agriculture	**Eligio Malusà** (INHORT)
11:00 – 11:15	**Break**	
11:15 – 11:45	Regulatory framework	**Alessandra Trinchera** (CREA)
11:45 – 12:45	Main outcomes: *From lab to field*	**Nikolay Vassilev** (UGR), **Maria Grazia Tommasini** (RINOVA), **Gabriele Berg** (TUGRAZ), **Arjen Bjere** (NIOO-KNAW)
12:45 – 13:15	Innovative kits and tools for supporting the application of the bioproducts	**Loredana Canfora**, **Corrado Costa** (CREA)
13:15 - 14:45	**Lunch at "Restaurant La Gallina Bianca"** Via Antonio Rosmini, 9, 00184 Roma	
14:45-15:45	Round table: *Multifunctionality of soil biodiversity*	Invited science & project representatives: **David Fernández Calviño** (SoilDiverAGRO, BIOservicES), **Fabio Terribile** (LANDSupport), **Annamaria Bevivino** (SIMBA, DELISOIL)
15:45-16:45	Final discussion and conclusion	

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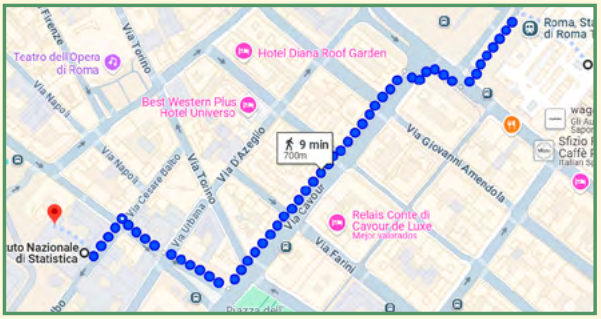
Directions from Rome Termini Station to ISTAT



1. Proceed southwest on Piazza dei Cinquecento towards Via Giovanni Giolitti (26 m)
2. Turn right and take Via Giovanni Giolitti (54 m)
3. Turn left and take Via Cavour (350 m)
4. Turn right and take P.za dell'Esquilino (86 m)
5. Continue on Via Agostino Depretis (61 m)
6. Turn left and take Via Cesare Balbo.
   Your destination is on the right

Organizing committee

Stefano Mocali (CREA)
Loredana Canfora (CREA)
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Francesco Vitali (CREA)
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