

*Call for 'agrotech' projects open until January 21st, 2022*

## **CaixaBank joins forces with the European Innovation Council to accelerate innovation in the agricultural sector**

- **The program is a joint initiative of the agricultural sector divisions of CaixaBank, AgroBank, as well as the [European Innovation Council \(EIC\)](#), the flagship innovation program of the European Union.**
- **More than 5,000 'start-ups' funded by the European Innovation Council are called upon to present their proposals in strategic areas for the future of the agricultural sector: precision farming, traceability and vertical agriculture; robotics and process digitization; biotechnology; sustainability, water and energy efficiency and new digital marketing models.**
- **Selected companies will be able to commercialise their solutions with the support of CaixaBank and its subsidiaries through the network of 1,300 AgroBank's offices in Spain.**

**December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

CaixaBank, through AgroBank, the entity's business line aimed at the agri-food sector, and the European Innovation Council (EIC), the flagship innovation initiative of the European Union, [launch a pilot program](#) to select international agrotech companies that develop innovative solutions for the agricultural and livestock sector in Spain.

This pilot program aims to respond to the main challenges of the agricultural sector through collaboration with highly innovative companies ([Startups/Scaleups/SMEs](#)) funded by the EIC (more than 5,000 from 37 UE Member States and Associated countries). Those companies will provide solutions to increase the productivity of the agricultural sector, improve its sustainability and reach new markets.

EIC beneficiaries interested in the call can present their candidacy until January 21st, 2022 through the [EIC website](#).

## Call's Challenges

The pilot initiative, under the title "[Innovation Procurement pilot in AgroTech: Looking for technological disruption](#)", includes six strategic areas:

- **Precision farming, traceability and vertical agriculture:** Solutions to provide an integrated data collection service, management platform and advice in decision-making with the use of innovative technologies, such as blockchain or/and Big Data.
- **Robotics and digitalisation:** Solutions that will empower the automation of processes to increase productivity and reduce production costs.
- **Biotechnology:** Innovative Genetic solutions and new products or new uses of natural resources, as well as new techniques to manage biological waste.
- **Sustainability, biodiversity and circular economy:** Solutions to achieve a more sustainable world based on biodiversity and circular economy.
- **Water and energy efficiency:** Better use of natural resources, as well as generation of green energy for self-consumption.
- **New digital marketing models:** Solutions that improve distribution models such as e-commerce and farm-to-fork commerce.

The finalists in each category will present their projects to the EIC and AgroBank. Selected candidates will receive top-tier specialised coaching and business support from the EIC and access to CaixaBank and AgroBank large expertise and selling channels to commercialise their proposed solutions.

## Collaboration scenario in innovation development

This pilot initiative is part of CaixaBank's commitment to a scenario of collaboration with start-ups in the development of innovation. This collaboration improves agility and efficiency in innovation, accelerates the process from idea to market for new products or and allows a better identification of talent.

Agriculture sector accounts for 9% of Spanish GDP and its future development is linked to its industrial digital transformation and automation. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for a strategic autonomy and digitalisation of the agricultural and livestock sector, both in Spain and in the rest of the European Union.

For start-ups, collaborating with corporates like CaixaBank allows them to scale up faster. This collaboration gives them the opportunity to have a multitude of very valuable resources, such as approaching an important portfolio of clients, access to large distribution channels, improving their brand positioning and gaining visibility.

CaixaBank promotes co-creation initiatives with start-ups to foster shared innovation, for example: [Zone2boost](#) and [Start4big](#). The Spanish bank also supports the entrepreneurial ecosystem through initiative like the [DayOne Open Innovation Program](#), within the framework of the [EntrepreneurXXI Awards](#).

### **About the European Innovation Council**

The [European Innovation Council \(EIC\)](#) is Europe's flagship innovation programme to identify, develop and scale up breakthrough technologies and game changing innovations. It supports innovation, entrepreneurs, small businesses and world-class scientists with brilliant ideas and the ambition to scale internationally.

EIC has been established under and it is one of the main novelties of the [EU Horizon Europe programme](#), with a budget of €10.1 billion for the period 2021-2027.

Supporting innovators, entrepreneurs, small businesses and scientists under the European Innovation Council goes far beyond the awarding of grants and includes:

- [Business Acceleration Services \(BAS\)](#) that help accelerate the pace of innovation, including business advisory and flagship services such as the [EIC Corporate Partnership Program Days](#), EIC Investor Days, [Innovation procurement](#) or [EIC Women Leadership Programme](#), where innovative Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) can take advantage of opportunities to grow through their collaboration investors, business partners and peer innovators.
- The [new EIC Fund](#), which makes direct capital and quasi-equity investments (between 0.5 and 15 million euros) in the capital stock of emerging and expanding European companies with deep technology and high impact.
- The [EIC Greenhouse Gas \(EIC GHG\) program](#), in which SMEs receive expert support and

guidance to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and co-create green innovations.