

## LAUNCH OF A GROUND-BREAKING PROJECT TO SHIFT EUROPEAN AGRICULTURE ONTO A MORE CIRCULAR AND SUSTAINABLE PATH

Brussels, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017,

On the 1<sup>st</sup> June, SYSTEMIC launched a new project that will demonstrate how it can be economically viable to recover and recycle nutrients from bio-waste, animal manure and sewage sludge for agriculture.

Nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium are crucial for plant growth. In the EU, half of the phosphorus and nitrogen applied annually to croplands is derived from non-renewable sources such as phosphate rock or is produced by processes which consume large amounts of fossil fuels like natural gas. In our present system, a high percentage of valuable nutrients are lost through the incineration or disposal of waste (like organic matter and nitrogen) or through emissions of nutrients to the environment which causes eutrophication problems (nitrogen and phosphorus enrichment of waters).

These inefficiencies in the system, combined with population growth and the enlargement of the livestock sector, are having severe effects on soil, air and water quality and threatening the long-term sustainability of EU agriculture. The recovery and reuse of nutrients from bio-waste, food and feed waste, animal manure, and sewage sludge can help to turn this situation around.

SYSTEMIC will contribute to reducing the reliance on non-renewable resources, lower greenhouse gas emissions, reducing soil, air and water pollution by using fertilisers which meet with the crop requirements (rather than the direct spreading of organic residues), and helping livestock farmers and urban centres to manage their waste.

The SYSTEMIC project will work with 5 demonstration plants to show, for the first time, how recovering nutrients from waste can be economically viable and how to produce high grade nutrients that can be cycled back to croplands. It will evidence how European bio-waste, animal manure and sewage sludge treatment can be taken to the next level by applying novel technologies to produce energy and recover nutrients.

Using the experience gained at these plants, the coalition will develop business case studies and support their further take up by additional plants and thereby contribute to the expansion of nutrient recovery across the European Union and thereby facilitate the move to a more circular economy.

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