

# RFI Food for Tomorrow-Cap Aliment

## A. CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROPOSAL

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### A.1. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The increase of world population, climate change and the scarcity of natural resources require a transformation of the agricultural and food model that has dominated since the end of World War II. In this "globalized" system, agricultural commodities are goods whose intensive exploitation is essentially guided by the law of supply and demand. The contours of this global market are defined by the international trade law and the international investment law. The transition of agricultural and food systems aims at moving from a globalized production system whose unsustainability is unanimously recognized to a new order based on the rational and sustainable use of natural resources in line with meeting basic social needs, in particular food and nutrition, and beyond to combine the respect for nature and human well-being. This approach of "environmental transition" requires rethinking the law in order to "re-embed" economic activities in society in the words of Karl Polanyi. Therefore we need to establish the legal framework that is necessary to adapt the current economic model of agriculture and food production to the priority satisfaction of basic social needs of people. This re-embeddedness will remedy the "social, economic, cultural, environmental disconnection" between what is produced and what we consume. This will give people, local authorities and states, the political and legal means to implement agricultural systems that are adapted to their food, specific nutritional needs, to the natural resources of their territory, to their own socio-economic and environmental development. This approach is expressed through the promotion of "integrated food systems".

### A.2. SCIENTIFIC CONTEXT

Thinking integrated agri-food systems implies above all to question the ecological transition of agri-food systems, that is to say, in an international and European context, to consider the "transformations" that the global environmental and societal changes require. A prerequisite, for the research world, is to provide consistency to the concept of "ecological transition" and to the key concepts associated with the emergence of an integrated agricultural and food system. A system that intends to redefine the link between agriculture and food security by including environmental protection, land management, public health, economic and social development, food and cultural practices, etc. In the field of social sciences, the concept of transition presents an "enigmatic" aspect as it refers to both a goal and the different successive steps to move from one state to another.

We need to interrogate on how each discipline apprehends or focus on one or the other of these elements.

Implementing transitions also requires to establish a "diagnosis" of the blocking points (the "bottlenecks") at the international, regional, national and local scales, which hinder the transformation of agricultural and food models; "Bottlenecks" that we need to identify in order to consider then the institutional, processual and substantial means to "remedy" them. Finally the agricultural and food systems transition will be able to rely on societal experiments, encompassed in

a wider movement to reorient public intervention to cope with the food, ecological and climatic challenges. Thinking about the transitions of agricultural and food systems requires associating a deductive approach and an inductive approach based on localized experiments implementing technical and social tools to transform agricultural and food systems. In order to be efficient, such an experiment-based approach needs to be conducted in the context of a politically organized area with given governance: the Pays de la Loire region.

## **B. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMME, PROJECT ORGANISATION**

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The Lascaux Center on ecological Transitions (CELT) aims at studying the transitional phenomena that our time commands, from the related concepts and the identified reality of complex ecological transitions stated in environmental, economic, agricultural, food, social, cultural, but also community and cultural terms. Currently, it is indeed a set of energy, agriculture and food, economic, social and environmental transitions that seem necessary. This is why the plural is required. And these transitions are designed to transform societies in which the plural is also required. This highlights the fact that transitions involve human beings in all their environments: ecological, social, economic, community, national. This shows also that different scientific disciplines must be mobilized to think these transitions and to implement them. This conceptual and interdisciplinary lighting of the CELT is only meaningful if it takes part in an ambitious reflection to define the successive steps that must be overcome to respect the natural capacities of the territories, to ensure the socio-economic needs of people and to reach the horizon of the necessary sustainability.

The theme of the transition of agriculture and food systems will be a privileged field of analysis of the CELT: how to ensure that all people at all times, have the physical, the social and the economic opportunity to provide sufficient, safe and nutritious food and this in a context marked by the increase in world population (to feed 9 or 10 billion people in 2050), climate change and the progressive depletion of natural resources? The challenge of "food security" remains unsolved and calls for a change in the dominant and globalized agricultural model. The choice in favor of an intensive and specialized agriculture, increased international trade and the deployment of international food aid have obviously not solve the problems of undernourishment and malnutrition. Worse, this globalized system has aggravated the phenomena of looting of natural resources or of abuses to the traditional and farmers' skills (family farming ...). However, on the opposite, the *only* way of "reterritorialization", as currently promoted, presents the risk of a discriminatory effect at the expense of food security of those living on territories deprived of exploitable or sufficient agricultural resources. This reterritorialization is not absolute guarantee to a regular access to quality food, neither to more sustainable agricultural production.

The transition of agricultural and food systems requires reconsidering the link(s) between "agriculture" (primary production) and food security in ways other than the only opportunities offered by the global market and the law of supply and demand. But nowadays, the main directions of an under-construction law are only configured for a market system only limited by an environmental law unevenly existing in the world and itself configured to accompany the dominant model without being able to influence it. Yet this major configuration of the law, both international and national, should be reconsidered in order to put into perspective the food business economy with the basic needs of people, in order to put into perspective the society with the nature. Indeed, by stretching the link between nature and society, we allowed to loosen the link between agriculture and food and, as a consequence, between producers and consumers. The result is a growing discrepancy between what is produced, processed, marketed and what consumers may wish to "put in their plates," if the law allowed them not to be consumer-eaters anymore but to become consumer-citizens. This raises the question of the consumer choice, which is a dietary choice but also a cultural, ecological, economic, social, and even political choice.

This results in several successive research objectives.

In the medium / long term, the CELT will propose institutional, processual and substantial legal means needed to change the relationship between human beings and nature in the sense of a correlation between the sustainable use of natural resources and the satisfaction of the basic social needs of people.

This requires the establishment of "integrated" agricultural and food systems allowing, by the participation of all public and private stakeholders of the various geographical and political areas concerned, correlating the use of agricultural natural resources and the food, nutritional, environmental and societal needs of the population of these areas. Therefore, an agri-food system must integrate environmental protection, land management, public health, economic and social development, food and cultural practices, etc.

Such "systems" will be designed from a research previously carried out and in the shorter term. This preliminary phase of research is necessary since the deployment of such integrated systems, focused on agriculture, food, the environment, if they are increasingly desired by the people; still face significant legal difficulties that we need to identify, to diagnose and to analyze. This is the purpose of this original "bottleneck" research proposal. These difficulties are twofold. First, they come from the coexistence of different levels of law: international law (WTO, international investment law, free trade bilateral treaties...), the European law and national law (competition law, rural law, property law, public procurement law ...) and also from the convoluted layered distribution of powers of local authorities in respect of environmental, food, agricultural and economic policies. Moreover, these difficulties come from the lack of positive rules to build such integrated systems regarding mainly social and environmental concerns. Such systems require indeed strengthening some environmental and social provisions (eg. Greater consideration of these provisions in the public procurement law, implementation of the principle of non-environmental regression, development of local democratic consultations ...).

These difficulties, although centered on law, can only be understood with a conceptual vocabulary yet juridically unusual, and coming from other disciplines (around natural resources and ecosystems, social and socio-economic fundamental needs, environmental services, ecosystem services ...). Beyond this conceptual aspect for which all legal approaches require interdisciplinary work, the legal difficulties targeted are all encompassed in a framework itself interdisciplinary because of the implications of the economy (market), geography (reality of the "living areas", watersheds ...), sociology (food culture, lifestyles ...), history (local traditions and practices ...). Research and analysis of legal bottlenecks to open will therefore be necessarily using the views of economics, geography, sociology, political science, but also natural sciences.

To carry out this research, the CELT would like to hire a scientific "bottleneck" researcher who will be responsible for diagnosing and analyzing political and legal obstacles to the deployment of agricultural and food systems. The work carried out by the "bottleneck" researcher will be supervised by a scientific council composed of Agathe Van Lang, François Dutilleul Collart, Valérie Pironon and Marine Friant Perrot. The scientific council will therefore supervise the post-doc researcher's activities, specifically the scientific conception of expected deliverables.