



PRESS RELEASE

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The Project

TealHelix is an EU-funded project that aims to create a personalised, inclusive and targeted approach to sustainable food labelling. The project brings together **17 partners** from **11 European countries**, including academic and research institutions, NGOs, market research companies and marketing agencies. **Coordinated by KU Leuven**, a leading research university in Belgium and with a budget of €6.5 million, TealHelix responds to the current status quo of low incentive behind sustainable food consumption by understanding the motivational characteristics of consumers and empowering them in making informed, sustainability-aligned decisions.

As the project TealHelix concludes its second year, the consortium celebrates a period of significant scientific progress, strengthened European collaboration and the transition from research towards practical solutions that will help consumers make more informed and sustainable food choices. This milestone also offers an opportunity to reflect on the project's journey and honour the person whose vision made it possible.

In Memoriam – Prof. Dr. Justina Baršytė

As TealHelix enters a new year, we remember our Project Coordinator, Justina Baršytė, whose vision, leadership and dedication shaped the project from its very beginning. She brought together the consortium, laid the foundations for our collaboration, and inspired everyone through her commitment and generosity. As we celebrate the progress made during the past year, we also honour the person who made much of it possible. Her legacy continues to guide our work every day.

Strengthening the evidence for better sustainability labels

The second year of TealHelix marked an important scientific milestone with the successful completion of Work Package 2. WP2 combined extensive literature reviews on food sustainability labelling, stakeholder interviews, an EU-wide mapping of food sustainability labels, consumer surveys across 11 European countries, media and marketing analyses, and social media research to better understand how consumers interact with sustainability information.

The findings revealed a fragmented and often confusing labelling landscape, where overlapping certification schemes, inconsistent communication and varying methodologies can undermine consumer confidence. The research also highlighted that affordability remains one of the biggest barriers to sustainable food choices and that consumers engage with sustainability information in different ways depending on their needs, motivations and social contexts.

Sharing knowledge across Europe

Throughout the year, TealHelix researchers actively contributed to international scientific dialogue by presenting project results at leading conferences and collaborative events.

At the ERSCP 2025 Conference in Prague, researchers from BOKU University explored the external influences and socio-cultural factors shaping sustainable consumption, contributing to discussions on circular economy approaches and responsible production and consumption.

Later, at SPUDM 2025 in Lucca, researchers from Copenhagen Business School introduced the FINDS Framework, examining how consumers search for, interpret and use sustainability information when choosing food products. The framework generated valuable discussions on consumer decision-making and the role of personalised sustainability information.



The project also participated in two CUES Joint Webinars: **‘Understanding What Shapes Sustainable Consumer Behaviour’** and **‘Less Enabling, More Structuring: The Role of Consumers in Sustainable Food Policy in the EU’**, bringing together various European research initiatives. During the webinars, TealHelix researchers shared new insights into how sustainability conversations develop across social media and how online communication influences consumer perceptions and behaviour.

Beyond scientific excellence, TealHelix continued strengthening the connection between research and real-world impact. In collaboration with Dietwise, project coordinators at KU Leuven organised a dedicated Valorisation Workshop, encouraging early-career researchers to explore how scientific discoveries can evolve into practical innovations capable of generating societal and economic value. The workshop equipped participants with entrepreneurial thinking and highlighted pathways for transforming research into solutions that can benefit consumers, businesses and society.

Strengthening collaboration across the consortium

Collaboration remained one of TealHelix's greatest strengths throughout its second year. In May 2026, project partners gathered in Riga, Latvia, for the consortium's 3rd General Assembly, bringing together researchers and stakeholders for two days of strategic discussions, scientific exchange and collaborative planning. Partners reviewed progress across the project, discussed preparations for the next implementation phase and strengthened cooperation ahead of the upcoming pilot activities. The meeting also featured valuable contributions from the Stakeholder Board and continued collaboration with sister Horizon Europe initiatives, reinforcing TealHelix's role within Europe's growing ecosystem of food sustainability projects.

Another milestone reached during this period was the successful completion of TealHelix's first project progress review. Reviewers confirmed that the project is making good progress and remains on track to deliver innovative food sustainability labelling solutions for consumers. The project's scientific approach and expected impact were also positively assessed.

Turning research into practical solutions

As TealHelix moves closer to its piloting phase, the project is increasingly focused on developing practical tools that empower consumers. One of the year's most significant milestones will be the launch of LabelGuide, an innovative digital application designed to help consumers better understand sustainability labels on food products.

By providing accessible, reliable and easy-to-understand sustainability information, LabelGuide supports more informed purchasing decisions while helping consumers navigate the increasingly complex world of sustainability claims with greater confidence. Together with the upcoming HowiBuy application, LabelGuide represents an important step in translating scientific research into everyday tools that can support more sustainable food choices across Europe.

Growing visibility and collaboration

During its second year, TealHelix continued expanding its communication and outreach activities. The project released its first promotional video, introducing TealHelix's vision for more transparent, personalised and trustworthy sustainability communication while highlighting the challenges consumers currently face when navigating food sustainability labels.

The consortium also continued strengthening collaboration within the EU Cluster for Food Traceability & Trust, which has now grown to include thirteen European projects working together to promote transparency, innovation and trust throughout food systems.



Looking ahead

As TealHelix enters its third year, the project is entering an exciting new phase focused on co-creation, testing and implementation.

In September, the project will launch a series of Go Green Hub co-creation workshops across the Baltic region. Organised by AdCogito and Rimi Baltic, these workshops will bring together citizens, researchers, businesses and other stakeholders to co-design and test ICT tools that support sustainable food choices. Participants will share ideas, experiences and feedback, helping refine TealHelix's digital solutions to ensure they respond to real consumer needs and local contexts.

The consortium will then reconvene in Vilnius, Lithuania, in October for the project's 4th General Assembly, where partners will review the outcomes of the co-creation activities, assess project progress and prepare for the next stage of pilot implementation across Europe.

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