



Science Fund  
of the Republic of Serbia

Potentials for improving  
the competitiveness of the agri-food  
sector in the function  
of sustainable economic  
development

**P**  **T**4food

**Realized panel discussion**



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<b>Abstract</b>	The "Realized panel discussion" is a deliverable within WP3 entitled "Conference and panel discussion" of the POT4food. This report shows realization of the panel discussion.
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### ***VERSIONING AND CONTRIBUTION HISTORY***

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

POT4food	Potentials for improving the competitiveness of the agri-food sector in the function of sustainable economic development
WP	Work package
EFSUNS	Faculty of Economics in Subotica, University of Novi Sad
EKOF	Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Belgrade
IAMO	The Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies

## **INTRODUCTION**

As part of its activities, the POT4food project envisages the organization of panel discussions to foster dialogue on key elements of the competitiveness of agri-food sector. The main goal of these discussions is to formulate recommendations for decision-makers in the context of agricultural policy and the new strategy. In addition to academic experts, invitations for discussion were sent to representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Management of the Republic of Serbia, as well as experts from European universities and agribusiness companies.

The panel discussion was focused on the digitalization of agriculture, as an important factor for improving the competitiveness of agri-food sector. As a result of this discussion, a set of recommendations for policymakers was developed. Unfortunately, due to the specific political situation in Serbia, representatives of the MAFWM were unable to attend this event.

The structure of the report is as follows: Chapter 2 explains the idea and structure of the panel discussion; Chapter 3 describes its implementation; Chapters 4 and 5 address awareness-raising activities and the evaluation process.

## **DESCRIPTION OF PANEL DISCUSSION**

In focus of the panel discussion is digitalization in agriculture. It is realised in cooperation with expert from Biosense Institute (Oskar Marko) and business representatives: Miroslav Marković (owner of company AgroBioChem) and Slobodan Tatić (owner of a crop farm).

BioSense, Research and Development Institute for IT in biosystems, is a pioneer in digital transformation of agriculture in Serbia, founded in 2015. Exploring scientific and technological frontiers regarding the application of IT in agriculture, the Institute strives to deliver state-of-the-art digital solutions to the farming sector in Serbia and the world, in order to ensure higher yields with smaller investments. Material science, micro and nano electronics, sensor design, remote sensing, Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, biosystem research, cellular agriculture and bioarcheology are just some of the scientific fields BioSense integrates to make agriculture more efficient and uses science as a backbone for economic growth, social well-being, and employment. Thanks to such a transdisciplinary approach, the Institute has left an indelible mark in the international scientific community. This is proved by the participation in 30 national and around 50 international projects, most of them from the European Union's Research and Innovation Program – Horizon 2020, as well as numerous national and international awards that researchers from BioSense have won. The most prominent project, ANTARES (H2020), supported by the European Commission and the Republic of Serbia, aims to turn the BioSense Institute into a leading European Center of scientific excellence in sustainable agriculture. None of the scientific breakthroughs remain bound within the walls of our laboratories. They are integrated into society and available to farmers, extension services, companies, policy makers, students, and pupils. In March 2018, BioSense launched the first Digital Farm in Serbia that provides all stakeholders with hands-on learning opportunities and showcases how AgTech solutions can be implemented in real-world settings. The virtual part of the farm – the AgroSense digital platform – enables farmers and extension services to monitor crops for free and plan activities using computers and mobile phones, based on the data collected from satellite images, drones, robots, various sensors, and meteorological stations. More than 15,000 registered users are an indicator of successful digital transformation. Due to the partnership with the European Space Agency, BioSense is the only distributor of Sentinel satellite imagery in the country. Also, the impact is spread globally through other collaborations with FAO, EBRD, World Bank and UNICEF. The Institute creates a bridge between science and business and fosters an entrepreneurial mentality in Serbia. The BioSense accelerator provides mentoring, business, and scientific support to innovative local AgTech entrepreneurs, startups, and small businesses in developing new digital solutions and improving the existing ones.

AgroBioChem d.o.o. began as a company with a clear belief: that modern agriculture works best when knowledge, technology, and responsibility grow together. From the very start, its role went beyond simply distributing products. AgroBioChem became a partner to farmers—

bringing materials for plant nutrition and protection, while also introducing modern technologies that make agricultural production more precise, efficient, and sustainable. As agriculture evolved, so did AgroBioChem's sales program. It was continuously refined to follow the latest trends in intensive production, ensuring that farmers had access to up-to-date solutions tailored to real conditions in the field. Behind every product stood an experienced and professional sales and development team, ready to offer practical advice and guide producers in applying solutions correctly, safely, and effectively. The goal was always the same: safe food production and maximum annual crop yields. Over time, AgroBioChem built its reputation on trust and results. Its solutions proved successful across different production systems, combining innovation in conventional agriculture with a forward-looking vision. That vision gradually expanded toward complete, integrated solutions for biological and organic production - responding to growing demand for sustainability and environmental responsibility. Today, AgroBioChem d.o.o. stands as a bridge between tradition and innovation in agriculture, helping farmers grow healthier crops while preparing the sector for a more sustainable future.

## REALISATION OF PANEL DISCUSSION

The panel discussion focused on the digitalization of agriculture and was organized in cooperation with Oskar Marko (BioSense), Miroslav Marković (AgroBioChem), and Slobodan Tatić (owner of a crop farm). The main objective was to enable an expert from a scientific institution to share experiences related to digitalization and the application of new technologies in agriculture, while business representatives presented their perspectives on the challenges of implementation in practice. Oskar Marko from BioSense delivered the keynote address, and the panel discussion was moderated by Bojan Matkovski. The panel discussion was also attended by other members of the project team, representatives of the University of Novi Sad (UNS), as well as third- and fourth-year students of the Faculty of Economics. These students had previously been introduced to agricultural policy issues within the courses Agricultural Policy and Sustainable Development and Agri-food Market. The total number of participants was 83. At the beginning of the session, Oskar Marko delivered an introductory presentation aimed at familiarizing the participants with issues related to organic production and agricultural policy.

**Picture 1.** Agenda



**DR OSKAR MARKO**

**PANEL DISCUSSION**  
**DIGITALIZATION IN AGRICULTURE**

**16.12.2025.** EKONOMSKI FAKULTET U SUBOTICI  
ODELJENJE U NOVOM SADU

**Picture 2.** Presentation at panel discussion



After that, there was a discussion that resulted in the creation of recommendations for the creators of Serbia's agricultural policy and conclusions that can be summarized as follows:

*Serbia has strong agricultural potential - diverse production, skilled farmers, and a growing IT sector - but digitalization will only deliver results if it is inclusive, practical, and trusted by farmers. Policymakers should therefore focus on three pillars: access, capability, and confidence.*

*First, access. Precision agriculture depends on connectivity, data, and equipment. Many rural areas in Serbia still lack reliable broadband and mobile coverage, which immediately creates inequality. Public investment in rural digital infrastructure is not optional; it is foundational. At the same time, incentive schemes for precision tools - such as soil sensors, GPS-guided machinery, drones, and farm management software - must be designed with small and medium-sized farms in mind. Subsidies should favor shared equipment models, cooperatives,*

*and service providers, rather than only individual ownership. This lowers costs and accelerates adoption.*

*Second, capability. Technology alone does not create value - people do. Policymakers should invest heavily in digital literacy and advisory services. Agricultural extension systems must be modernized to include data interpretation, precision inputs, and decision-support tools. Training programs should be practical, region-specific, and delivered through trusted local institutions. Partnerships between universities, agri-tech startups, and farmer associations can turn Serbia's strong technical talent into real on-farm solutions. Importantly, young people should be encouraged to see agriculture as a high-tech, innovative sector, not a fallback option.*

*Third, confidence and governance. Farmers will not adopt digital tools if they fear losing control over their data or being locked into opaque platforms. Serbia needs clear rules on agricultural data ownership, interoperability, and privacy. Farmers should own their data and be able to switch service providers without penalty. Policymakers should also support open standards and pilot projects that demonstrate measurable benefits—such as reduced input use, higher yields, or better climate resilience. Seeing results on neighboring farms is often more persuasive than any policy document.*

*Finally, digitalization should align with broader national goals. Precision agriculture can directly support environmental protection, water management, and climate adaptation—key issues for Serbia's future. Policymakers should integrate digital tools into agri-environmental schemes and climate strategies, rewarding farmers not just for production, but for efficiency and sustainability.*

## **RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT PANEL DISCUSSION**

Visibility of the course is achieved through:

- Website of the project;
- Website of the Faculty of Economics;
- Social media of POT4food (Instagram);
- Social media of Faculty of Economics (Instagram).

Also, all activities have been intensively promoted via project Instagram account of the project as well as Instagram account of the Faculty of Economics (ekonomski\_fakultet\_subotica). Based on number of followers on these social media, activities have been visible approximately to 5.200 people.

## **EVALUATION OF THE PANEL DISCUSSION**

The quality of the panel discussion was monitored through the implementation of a participant survey. After the workshop, participants completed a questionnaire via Google Forms; The results indicate a very high level of satisfaction.