Grantee Spotlight: The Protein Project

The Giving Green Fund is awarding a restricted grant to The Protein Project for its work to strengthen policy support for fermentation-derived proteins. The Protein Project is based in Brussels and advances EU policies that support lower-emission proteins from plant, animal, and novel food sources.

The Protein Project's work falls within our philanthropic strategy of scaling alternative proteins. Please see Giving Green's strategy report for more information, including potential risks and co-benefits, recommended sub-strategies, theory of change, funding need, and key uncertainties.

Last updated: October 2026

What Is The Protein Project?

Founded in 2025, The Protein Project advances policies to promote low-emissions, profitable, and resilient protein production in Europe. Its aims include diversifying protein intake to increase the share of plant and novel proteins in the food system, and incentivizing best practices across plant, animal, and novel protein production, as identified in its sector roadmaps. To do this, it builds value chain task forces, publishes research, and creates neutral forums to highlight the benefits of protein diversification and depolarize agricultural policy.

What Are We Funding, and How Could It Help Address Climate Change?

The Protein Project plans to use our grant to improve the policy environment for fermentation-derived proteins while maximizing their societal value, primarily by addressing regulatory barriers and innovation funding gaps for innovative, low-emission proteins. It is actively engaging with open policy windows that could shape several years of EU support for fermentation. For example, it is exploring provisions to address the needs of the fermentation value chain in the EU Biotech Acts I and II, and financial support for novel alternative proteins in the design of the next Framework Programme

(€175 billion, around $200 billion USD) and the European Competitiveness Fund (€234 billion, around $270 billion USD).

The Protein Project combines direct engagement with policymakers with broader activities to increase support for novel proteins across the political spectrum. It convenes stakeholders across the value chain, such as farmers, nonprofits, and food companies, to develop a shared roadmap. This process identifies societal benefits and key bottlenecks for fermentation, while also making its investment case. It also unites allies across the political spectrum through deep engagement with neglected groups and by demonstrating the role of novel and plant-based protein to improve food security, resilience, and strategic autonomy.

The Protein Project first applied this method to legumes in its Towards a Legume Renaissance in Europe roadmap and is now applying the same approach to advanced fermentation.

Why Do We Think The Protein Project Will Use This Funding Well?

In its first year, The Protein Project has already gained impressive policy traction. It co-developed its legume roadmap with 19 value-chain organizations and more than 90 experts. The EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Food gave the keynote at its launch in the European Parliament, and members of the European Parliament from across political groups have since used its key recommendations in their amendments to the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. In part because of The Protein Project's work, the European Commission recognized fermentation in its Protein Action Plan. The Protein Project convened a forum of civil society, researchers, and industry to constructively engage on the topic of fermentation.

The Protein Project has also established two working groups for policymakers advancing the protein transition. It established a cross-party working group on protein policy in the EU Parliament, bringing together parliamentary assistants from five political parties, and also co-convenes a separate group of EU Council member state representatives working towards protein diversification.

We have been impressed by The Protein Project's deep engagement with important but neglected stakeholders, resulting in policy recommendations that serve the interests of commonly overlooked communities. We think this approach fills a gap in EU policy discussions and has contributed to The Protein Project's unusually strong policy traction. We believe The Protein Project is well suited to continue securing policy support for fermentation-derived proteins in the EU.

We publish grant spotlights to offer transparency to Giving Green Fund donors and resources for those interested in the impact strategies each grant supports. Giving Green believes our Top Climate Nonprofits have the greatest impact potential for large,

unrestricted gifts. For several reasons, we also disburse and recommend grants to other organizations surfaced through our research process for work that we believe is at least as impactful as grants to our top recommendations.

This is a non-partisan analysis (study or research) and is provided for educational purposes.

The Protein Project is a registered nonprofit in Belgium.