

Focusing on agrofood research



STPS - SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PARK



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STPS was founded in 1991, with capital investment from 26 associates, the majority of them in the Sicily Region (through the Industry Assessorship 88%), to a total of over 13 million euro. STPS represents the bridge between research institutions, industrial laboratories and the market scenario for the Region.

The headquarters is based in Palermo and the research laboratories are in Catania. STPS has set up and developed an efficient network of relations among local SME's, research centres, universities, trade associations and local agencies, thanks to the teamwork of the Universities of Catania, Messina, and Palermo.

The laboratories set up in Catania host scientists committed to research in many convergent activities, who share ideas, projects, and instrumentation.

There are three laboratories: Chemistry, Biotechnology and Microbiology applied to agro food and agro environment. Research projects include genetic and molecular characterization of organ-

isms; GMO analysis in food; gene cloning of agro industrial enzymes; gene and protein analysis for agricultural and food industries; DNA sequencing; genomic and proteomic analysis; traceability in agriculture and food using molecular markers; identification and isolation of pathogenic agents; monitoring of micro organisms in the food industry; selection and production of useful micro organisms (starters); search of microbial metabolites and their agents.

Vast network

A strong network of more than 120 researchers, belonging to 12 laboratories, focus their efforts on new bio products and bioprocesses as follows:

- The research group of Citrus Genetic Improvement at the, Dept. of Horticulture, Floriculture and Arboriculture and Agro-food Technologies (University of Catania) is mostly involved in gene sequencing and cell transformation in order to improve the yield performance and the resistance to destructive pathogens,

such as malsecco disease. Also the analysis of genes involved in the ripening process of clementines is under study. Finally the study of ROL gene transformed rootstocks.

- The Phytosanitary Sciences and Technologies Department (University of Catania) analyses the genomics of plant viruses and bacteria in order to evaluate their properties as pathogens; biological control agents and non conventional applications for phytoremediation disease control; plant growth control; the phylogenesis of some organisms is understudy. Advanced molecular diagnosis methods are routinely set up for many diseases.

- Proteomics of different foods: cereals, tomato, olives and oil, milk are investigated in cooperation with the laboratory of proteomics at the Department of Chemistry (University of Catania), to support genetic improvement and technological evaluation for the agro food industry.

- Rhizobia isolated from different crops are studied at the Dept. for Agronomic, Agro-chemical and Animal Production Sciences in order to characterize biological agronomic and molecular profiles in relation to the enhancement of crop production.

New innovative films are evaluated for different agro applications (mulching, solarisation) at the Department of Agricultural Engineering which is also involved in phytodepuration of waste water for reuse. ■

PARK DETAILS

Year of foundation	1991
Space for companies	1'600 sqm
N.° researchers	40
Companies established	Cosmo S.p.A and A.A.T S.p.A
Technology transfer	Managing Projects Office
Research focus	Agrofood and pharmaceuticals