

RUSAGRO Announces the Results of the ‘Rusagro Tech Challenge’ - Agrotech Projects Contest

On December 17, 2021, Rusagro completed the competition of innovative projects in the areas of crop production, meat, oil-and-fat, and sugar businesses. Five projects became the winners of the Rusagro Tech Challenge competition. The company plans to invest up to 100 million rubles in the pilot launches with the winners.

The Rusagro Tech Challenge competition was held from August 30 till December 17, 2021, in cooperation with the Skolkovo Foundation (VEB.RF Group) with the goal of scouting the innovative projects and technologies for subsequent integration into Rusagro's production processes. Startups, scientific and educational institutions, and scientists, whose teams were able to present products and technologies ready for the pilot implementation, were all invited to participate.

The final round of the competition and the selection of the winners took place at a closed online conference. The election was held in 25 priority areas within all four business segments of Rusagro. Competitive applications passed three levels of examination. At the first stage, a formal inspection and evaluation by external experts was carried out, at the second stage – an inspection by Rusagro industry experts, and at the third stage the teams got acquainted with the Company's specific internal specialists.

Over the course of the Challenge, Rusagro received more than 300 applications, 294 of which passed the formal check and went through the internal industry expertise of the Company. In order to examine the projects in depth, Rusagro specialists held online meetings with 76 teams. Of these, 28 projects were selected to explore further potential opportunities for cooperation, and 7 projects made it to the final round.

On December 17, at the Demo day, the finalist teams presented their concepts to the top management of Rusagro. The winners became five projects in the following areas:

1. Intensive sweetener production technology.
2. Technology of microalgae biomass production as a source of protein and biologically active compounds for animal feeding, as well as the use of microalgae for post-treatment of wastewater and utilization of CO₂.
3. A complete solution for the introduction of crop protection products using drones, with one operator controlling the entire system.
4. Autopilot system of agricultural machinery.
5. Complex for robotic agrochemical inspection.

The winners will have an opportunity to launch pilots with Rusagro for the total amount of up to 100 million rubles. To do this, together with the Company's experts, they will need to assess the economic and technological efficiency of the solution and defend the investment project prior to the launch of the pilot.

Maxim Basov, CEO of Rusagro: *"Rapid technological changes and the size of Rusagro's business present huge opportunities for the development of agro-industrial innovations. The goal of the Rusagro Tech Challenge competition is to find unique solutions for complex scientific and technological problems. Thanks to the support of Skolkovo and the work of our experts, the competition was a success. We have received a lot of high-quality applications and selected as winners the projects that can help not only Rusagro, but we believe can also become successful in the wider Russian and international markets."*

Kirill Kaem, Senior Vice President for Innovations at Skolkovo Foundation: *"Following the results of the Rusagro Tech Challenge competition, we can say with confidence that this was an extremely important venture: the coverage of technological areas and the funnel of projects were indeed the largest for the Russian agricultural industry. We hope that this competition has helped the Rusagro Group of Companies to see the full scope of innovations in agrotech, and the most effective solutions will find their worthy application in Rusagro's existing businesses."*