



# Serving European public research



*Icons, a specialist in science communication, social and business innovation, works with the Eu and with public and private partners*



Elena Gaboardi

An organisation with twenty years' experience, a historical player - on the Italian market, but also on the European one - in communication activities, dissemination and (increasingly) impact measurement and engagement for European projects of all kinds, and first of all, H2020. We are talking about Fondazione Icons of Lodi, born in 2016, after an experience that started in the late 1990s. Today it is an economically independent non-profit entity, which aims to enhance European public research and provide advice to operators. "In over twenty years, we have taken part in around seventy Horizon projects, and today

we have 22 under way," says Elena Gaboardi, founder and co-chair of Icons together with Mario Martinoli. At first our main approach was communication, but today we deal with everything that lies between research and society, including business and social innovation. We also work for European agencies and directly for the European Union: we are partner of the Horizon Results Booster, the largest dissemination service for European projects. This is a substantial job, employing around forty staff (including employees and consultants) of different nationalities and having as its core business active participation in numerous H2020s.

"Let me mention two in particular," continues Gaboardi. "The first is called eNeuron, and aims

to develop tools for the design and operation of local energy communities.

It's an innovative concept, with many application challenges: we need to bring together different actors, finding methodologies for the approach, from gathering needs to analysing the context.

The other is dRural, and develops a digital marketplace for rural areas, involving users through co-development and validation methodologies. Rural areas in several European countries were chosen, and, on the basis of the needs of the territories, we analysed how various population groups accept digital technology. We created a measurement framework with economic, but also socio-economic and environmental indicators: a very exciting project". ■



Mario Martinoli