

WEBINAR 1:

Food losses, food waste reduction and organic waste management in the Mediterranean region

FOLLOW-UP REPORT

Document elaborated by WE&B





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1. Context of the Webinar

Reducing food losses and food waste and enhancing organic waste management forms part of the solution to accelerate the transition of the Mediterranean region towards more sustainable food systems and a green and circular economy. These two key areas of action fall within the scope of the **2030GreenerMed Agenda** of the Union for the Mediterranean which identifies them as potential game-changers for reaching the environmental SDGs in the region.

The Call to Action:

“The COVID-19 pandemic has made the unsustainable foundations of current food systems particularly visible, increasing food loss and waste, affecting incomes in the agri-food sector and jeopardising food security in some places. Tackling these challenges requires collaboration among decision-makers, researchers, civil society, agriculture and food producers. This is a call to action to come together in a coordinated Mediterranean approach to address these challenges and to pool our resources to create sustainable blue and green economy food systems.”

In light of this urgency, **the Union for the Mediterranean and the Interreg MED Green Growth community** jointly provided knowledge sharing and collaboration opportunities through the webinar entitled:

SAVE THE DATE

Webinar: Food losses, food waste reduction and organic waste management in the Mediterranean region

21st of October 2021
9:30-12:00h (CET)

The poster features a central graphic of a sliced orange with a circular arrow around it, symbolizing a circular economy. The background is dark blue.

Logos at the bottom of the poster include:
- Union for the Mediterranean (Union pour la Méditerranée / الاتحاد من أجل المتوسط)
- Interreg Mediterranean (Project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, GREEN GROWTH)
- PRIMA (The PRIMA programme is supported and funded under Horizon 2020, the European Union's Programme for Research and Innovation)
- Sweden (Sverige)



Food losses, food waste reduction and organic waste management in the Mediterranean region

on 21st of October 2021

The webinar provided the Mediterranean stakeholders with the state of the art, longer term perspective, project examples and learning materials and tools in order to advance food waste reduction along the entire agri-food value chain and practices to improve organic waste management. The webinar was supported by PRIMA and with the collaboration of FAO and ENI CBC MED programme.

This webinar report presents participants with a summary of the webinar and the resources and useful links that were gathered during the event. The report also provides a set of recommendations and potential follow-up activities that have emerged from the event.

The webinar has been **recorded**, and can be accessed through the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yo4gqdlEUus>



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2. Webinar Objective and Agenda

The objective of the webinar was to respond to the call to action and to share knowledge (from speakers and training materials) on the most pressing challenges from the Mediterranean region with regards to the sustainability of food systems. The contents of the event linked directly to the Key Actions of the UfM's [2030GreenerMed Agenda](#):

- ✓ **KA3** Adopt innovative solutions along the entire value chain (across sectors and industries, urban and rural)
- ✓ **KA4** Promote changes in business practices, trade, public policy
- ✓ **KA6** Engage all stakeholders (private, public and society/consumer level) and raise awareness



The webinar was structured around the following agenda:



3. Webinar Highlights and Resources

The webinar was opened with welcoming words by Mrs Alessandra Sensi (Head of Environment and Blue Economy at UfM) and Mrs Mercè Boy (Beta Technological Center – UVic/UCC and Interreg MED Green Growth community coordinator).

3.1. Keynote Speeches

We had the pleasure to welcome three relevant keynote speakers who set the scene, illustrated current areas of concern and provided inputs for a longer term vision of Mediterranean food systems.

Dr. Octavi Quintana, Executive Director of the PRIMA Secretariat, started the round by explaining the numerous challenges and problems the food sector is facing and concluding that there is a global food crisis that we should tackle by increasing the productivity of food production, increasing the shelf-life of products, and valorising food losses.



Mrs. Maryam Rezaei, Food System Advisor at FAO, gave a speech about the activities FAO is conducting to reducing food waste and losses and how to avoid them. She stressed that the exact measurements of the food waste and losses and where they occur are essential to managing them. However, she also raised the point of the difficulty of data collection in many southern Mediterranean countries that hampers food loss and waste management.



The last keynote speech was given by **Mr. Sergio Ponsa**, Director of the BETA Technological Centre at UVic-UCC. He provided participants with statistics on food waste, its causes, and innovative solutions that are already being applied, like biodegradable packaging, or edible coating for fruits and vegetables. He stressed that the challenge also bares opportunities to develop new business models and green jobs, in particular in rural areas.





3.2. Project Presentations

Five inspiring project speakers introduced the initiatives that they are working on the ground, to give an insight into how food waste and losses are tackled in a more practical way in the Mediterranean region. Below, you can find the projects' websites, the corresponding presentations and contact person, in case you want to explore each project further. Through these presentations, participants were able to obtain practical experience from projects ranging from organic waste composting, insect-based packaging, initiatives to extend the shelf-life of products, to business innovations from the developing Blue Biotechnology Community in the Mediterranean.



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Table 1: Project titles, presentation links and the project speakers.

Project	Speaker	Presentation	Speaker Description of the presentation
B-BLUE Marina Platform (Interreg MED)	Mrs. Elisabetta Salvatori (ENEA)	The B-Blue Project : a Med community to exploit the innovation potential of Blue Biotechnologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The objective is to build the Med Blue Biotechnology community and activate a coordination mechanism in the Blue Biotechnology sector at Mediterranean level (including Med Southern Shore countries) ✓ Outliving of the BBT HUBs community, also in connection with wider communities already existing and/or foreseen (i.e. Innovation Alliance) ✓ Euromediterranean dimension: collaboration with Cluster Blue Italian Growth and Cluster Maritime Tunisienne: mapping suitable territories for replicating the italian HUB experience in Tunisia ✓ The B-Blue HUB model is adaptable to all contexts in the MED area including MENA countries
DECOST (ENI CBC MED)	Mr. Joan Colón Jordà (U-VIC; Beta Centre)	The experience of DECOST and MED4WASTE projects on organic waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Divert food waste from landfills, increase circularity of organic waste ✓ Home and community composting able to treat 100% of organic waste in a town. More than 100 t/year treated in the Spanish pilot. ✓ Source-selection of waste fractions increased from 42% to 84%.
Med4Waste (ENI CBC MED)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Facilitate new governance models for integrated and efficient urban waste management policies across the Mediterranean ✓ Low-tech solutions at competitive costs. Easy to replicate
FEDKITO (PRIMA)		PRIMA Actions: Minimizing and Valorizing Agrofood Wastes and By-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reduction of wastes for fresh food pest and pathogen control at post-harvest & storage stages



	Mr. Mohamed Waghei (PRIMA)	products in EU and Mediterranean Countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To produce new packaging materials from insects reared on waste that prevent pest and fungi attack and monitor the presence of contaminants. ✓ New process, for dairy companies to elaborate the most valuable key ingredient on infant formula: from any milk or cheese whey. ✓ Validation of a new spray-drying technology, with 30% less energy than present equipment (mainly for milk and whey powder). ✓ New dairy products made from concentrated cheese whey (mainly fermented products). Suitable for SMEs.
DAINME (PRIMA)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reduce waste of fresh fruit, vegetables, aromatic plants through the application of physical means (ozone, electrolysed water), natural compounds (chitosan, essential oils), biocontrol agents
STOP Med Waste (PRIMA)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To reformulate traditional Mediterranean tomato products, using leaf proteins (by-products of sugar beet processing) and olive powder by using novel and eco-friendly processing technologies that will impact the nutrients minimally.
ValICET (PRIMA)			
Switch-Med & Green Entrepreneurship	Mr. Alessandro Miraglia (Switch-Med)	Entrepreneurship-driven innovation to reduce food losses and food waste: The case of the Switchers Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ SwitchMed Business Ecosystem Approach ✓ The Switchers.org: the digital ecosystem for circular business modelling ✓ The Switchers.org: a digital ecosystem for green and circular business models ✓ CIRCULAR ECONOMY BUSINESS STRATEGIES: Conceptual Framework to Guide the Development of Sustainable Business Models, Barcelona.
WES: Education for Sustainable Development	Mrs. Iro Alampe (WES)	The WES experience on Educating about Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ to protect the environment and improve water management in the Mediterranean.

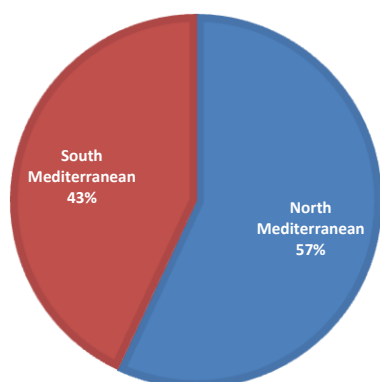


			<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Education for Sustainable Development, an umbrella type of education that can fit with different audiences and topics. It enables a much needed 'whole system perspective'✓ Trainings as source of inspiration & networking: There are no quick fixes, nor ready answers to all of our challenges.✓ Projects can and should be contextualized, based on our needs.✓ Synergies among different sectors can be beneficial.✓ Communication is missing in many initiatives.
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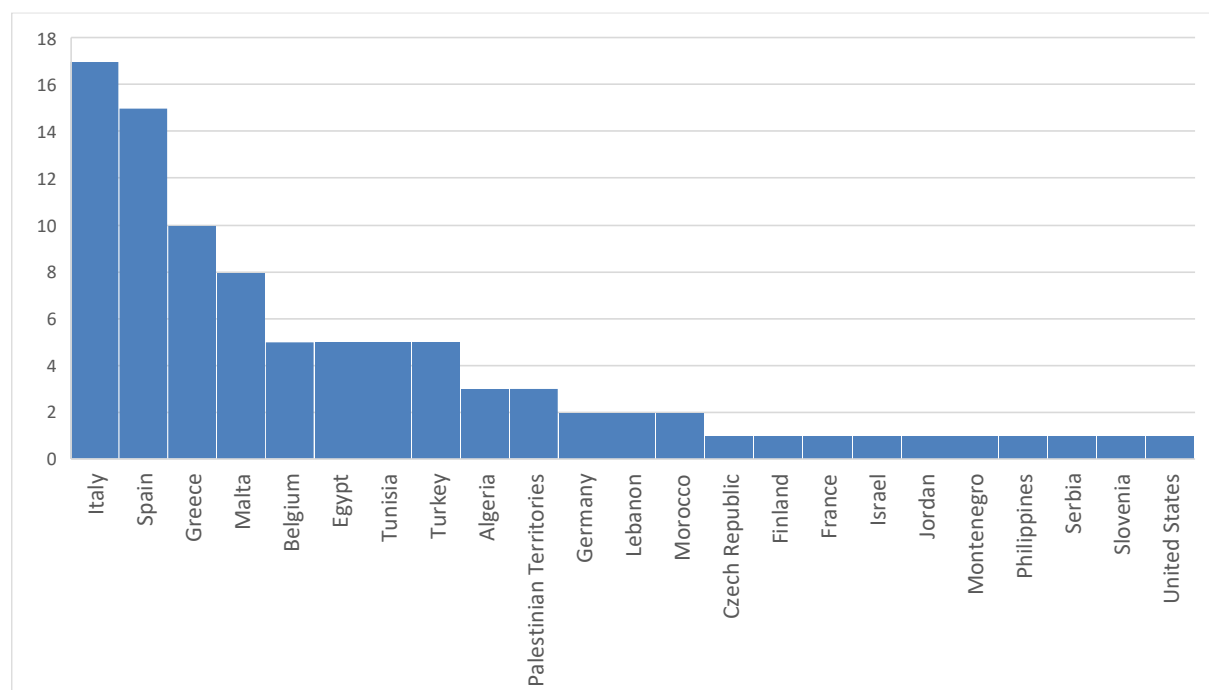


4. Conclusions, Key Messages and Recommendations

A total of 93 participants attended the webinar from across the Mediterranean. There was good representation from both North and South Mediterranean. With 57% from representing the Northern Mediterranean and 43% representing the Southern Mediterranean.



Participant representation from North and South Mediterranean



Participant representation from across the Mediterranean and abroad



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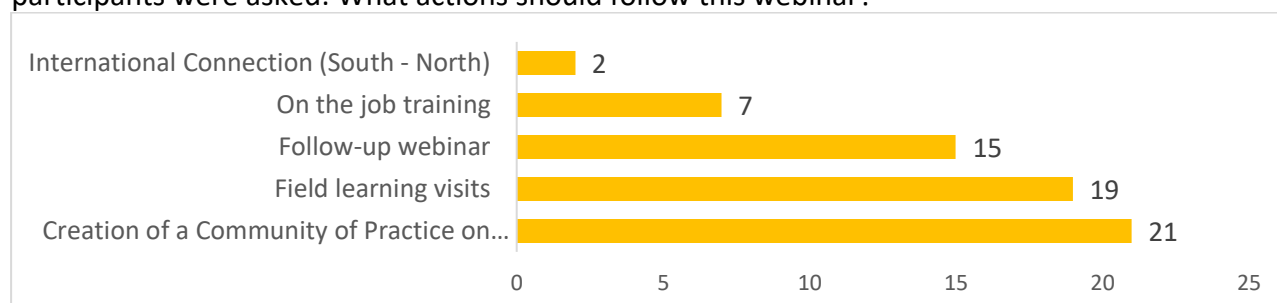




Participants showed keen interest in the presentations and asked several questions, inquiring for details on tools to track and reduce food waste at municipal level, or specifications about data collection processes. The participants also requested to have the potential to interact.

Indeed, one of the objectives of this webinar - other than sharing knowledge - was to connect interested stakeholders across the Mediterranean region and to explore the opportunities for future collaborations. This objective was strengthened by the pre-webinar survey results, where **89% of participants agreed that there is a need to create a Mediterranean food system network of collaborators.**

Moreover, keen interest was shown in the follow-up activities during the webinar where the participants were asked: What actions should follow this webinar?



Participant responses to the actions that should follow the webinar

The engagement part did provide an intermediate session where participants had the opportunity to not only listen to the speakers but provide their own ideas and input to a set of questions that were displayed and answered via the online survey platform “Sli.do”.

Through an open question, the participants were asked to list the networks or associations in the field of food systems and food waste that they are aware of. The participants listed the following networks they were aware of

- **Interreg MED Green Growth Community**
- **Sustainable Food System Network**
- **EU Platform on food loss and waste**
- **General actors: FAO, CIHEAM, UFM, PRIMA, One Planet**

When asked regarding ways to reduce food loss and waste, participants saw better consumer knowledge and habits, as well as education as the top approach.





Where would you like to see more focus required in order to reduce or eliminate food losses and waste in the Mediterranean?

0 2 8



Following on from the previous question, add a word here for any other aspect that would help to reduce food losses and food waste.

0 2 1



1: Input from participants regarding the reduction of food waste and losses.

4.1. Key Messages

The webinar provide a set of key messages that the participates were presented with at the end of the webinar. These included:

- ✓ There is a need for harmonised data collection methodologies and reporting in order to support improved med food systems.
- ✓ There is a call for increased collaboration on food systems in the Mediterranean
- ✓ More than 90% of those that answered the webinar poll have seen the need to create a Mediterranean food system collaborative network.
- ✓ There is a call from participants for Intergovernmental organisations, private companies and public authorities to run informative field visits.
- ✓ There is also a call from the participants for a follow-up webinar
- ✓ There is a need for the consumers role and an active involvement from them to drive the market;
- ✓ the SFS Platform -MED has a strong potential and is just starting, one key pillar will be the community of practice
- ✓ There is a need to collect data and hormonised methodologies in order to take actions and provide recommendations on how to improve
- ✓ There is a need to provide innovative and efficient solutions for a transition towards circular agrifood systems;
- ✓ The thematic of Food losses and waste and organic waste management provides many opportunities ahead such as:
 - The creation of green jobs and new skills (education)
 - Lever to strengthen urban-rural linkages;
 - To iintegrate systematically education for sustainable development



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4.2. Recommendations

The creation/participation in a Community of Practice (CoP), field learning visits, and follow-up webinars were some of the main areas of interest that emerged from the webinar.

Thus, the recommendations and follow up actions include:

- To explore the possibilities to **create and/or enhance the visibility of current Community of Practice**
It could be sensible to explore possibilities to establish such a CoP within the framework of existing initiatives by extending their scope of activities (e.g. FAO, CIHEAM, UfM, PRIMA, Interreg MED Green Growth community, Sustainable Food Systems Network, etc.)
- To find **entities that could host field learning visits**
According to participant feedback, this could be the case especially for public authorities, intergovernmental organisations, and NGOs
- To develop **further webinars** on the topic. Webinars should focus on deeper learning on tools and methodologies for food waste and food loss reduction.

Would you like to know more or contact one of the projects?

Are you **interested in joining** one of the follow-up activities?

Would you want to organise or host field experience visits?

If so, you can answer the webinar follow-up form here:

<https://forms.gle/zw8ariYX6iGVqiNZA>



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Further useful links:

Related platforms, clusters, and databases:

Interreg MED Green Growth Community



<https://interregmedgreengrowth.eu/food-systems/>

Sustainable Food Systems Network



<https://fit4food2030.eu/sustainable-food-systems-network/>

EU Platform on food loss and waste



https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food-waste/eu-actions-against-food-waste/eu-platform-food-losses-and-food-waste_en

FAO Platform on food loss and waste



<https://www.fao.org/platform-food-loss-waste/flw-data/en/>

SFS MED Platform



<https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/initiative/sfs-med-platform>

We are interested in your opinion on the webinar! Did you already participate in our **feedback** survey?

<https://forms.gle/H4N9n4df69HxfnR87>

Furthermore, the webinar has been **recorded**, and can be accessed under:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yo4gqdlEUus>



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