

WEBINAR 2:
*Driving sustainable
production and
consumption through
Ecolabelling in the
Mediterranean region*

FOLLOW-UP REPORT

Document elaborated by WE&B





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1 Context of the Webinar

Combating the current challenges of unsustainable growth and consumption and production patterns in the Mediterranean can only truly be accomplished by involving all stakeholders that have an interest in green and circular economy practices, in the Mediterranean. Therefore, the webinar had the objective to share knowledge (from speakers and training materials) on the experiences gained from sustainable production and consumption through eco-labelling in the Mediterranean.

The Call to Action:

“The environmental impact of the same product can vary up to 50-fold – depending on the producer (Poore & Nemecek, 2018). This difference is not directly visible to consumers in the store who must make a purchase decision.” This is a call to action to actors across the Mediterranean to join their forces and to promote the use of ecolabels or certification schemes with transparent criteria and to enhance the awareness of consumers to increase the uptake of labelled or certified products.

In light of this challenge, **the Union for the Mediterranean and the Interreg MED Green Growth community** jointly provided knowledge sharing and collaboration opportunities through the webinar entitled: **Driving sustainable production and consumption through Ecolabelling in the Mediterranean region**

SAVE THE DATE

Webinar 2: Driving sustainable production and consumption through eco-labeling in the Mediterranean region

4th of November 2021
9:30-12:00h (CET)

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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

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The webinar was held on the 4th of November 2021 from 9h30 to 12h00



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The webinar provided the Mediterranean stakeholders with vision, project examples, learning materials and tools in order to understand and apply the benefits of labelling and certification schemes. The webinar was supported by PRIMA and with the collaboration of FAO and the ENI CBC MED programme.

This webinar report provides participants with a summary of the webinar and the resources and useful links that were gathered during the event. The report also provides a conclusion and a set of messages and recommendations that have emerged from the event.

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

<https://youtu.be/mpZWncBMhWY>



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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 related to projects/activities on the ground, in light of sustainable production and consumption through ecolabelling in the Mediterranean. The contents of the event linked directly to the Key Actions of the UfM's [2030GreenerMed Agenda](#):

- ✓ **KA1** Support Sustainable Consumption and Production
- ✓ **KA2** Increase Resource Efficiency
- ✓ **KA3** Adopt innovative solutions along the entire value chain (across sectors and industries, urban and rural)
- ✓ **KA6** Engage all stakeholders (private, public and society/consumer level) and raise awareness



The webinar was structured around the following agenda:

Time Total 2,5 hours	Who	Objective
Welcoming and Icebreaker session 9:30 – 9:40 10 min	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> UfM CoPresidency/ UfM Secretariat, Alessandra Sensi <i>Head of Sector Environment and Blue Economy</i> Mercè Boy Roura <i>Interreg MED Green Growth coordinator</i> David Smith WE&B <i>Director</i> 	Welcoming remarks setting the scene and objectives of the session. To provide an opportunity for everyone to know who is in the "room". Get participants used to using Sli.do
Session 1 Keynote speeches 9:40 – 10:10 30 min	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> PRIMA Prof. Angelo Riccaboni <i>Chair of PRIMA Foundation</i> FAO Florence Tartanac <i>Senior Officer of the FAO Nutrition and Food Systems Division</i> 	Inspirational speeches to provide vision to the challenges and solutions facing production and consumption through eco-labelling





Time Total 2,5 hours	Who	Objective
	3. SMK Ineke Vlot <i>Chairperson of the Board EU Ecolabelling</i>	
Session 2: Engagement Session 10:10 – 10:45 35 min	Lead Facilitator David Smith WE&B	Through engagement tools, the participants will identify potential solutions; match with existing challenges and to think further on the challenges for their specific regions. Finally, participants will provide areas where they see collaboration and networking opportunities
Session 3: Training session: Tools & methods for capitalization activities (Project Examples) 10:45 – 11:50 65 min	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interreg MED PEFMED Plus <i>Nicola Colonna ENEA</i> 2. Interreg POCTEFA Innotranslact <i>Joan Colón Jordà CT BETA, UVic-UCC</i> 3. PRIMA SUREFISH <i>Marco de La Feld PRIMA</i> 4. Interreg MED ARISTOIL Plus <i>Emilia Arrabito SVI.MED.</i> 5. ENI CBC Med Programme STAND Up! <i>Martin Heibel ENI CBC Med Programme</i> 	We will hear from 5 case study projects in the Mediterranean. The projects will focus on the specific methods, tools and processes they have provided to overcome production and consumption challenges through certification and labelling schemes in the Mediterranean. The presentations will be engaging with the use of short videos and many visuals. There will be time for Q&A from the participants.





Time		Who	Objective
Total 2,5 hours			
Wrap-up and conclusions	11:50 – 12:00 10 min	UfM CoPresidency/Secretariat	Key discussion point, outcomes of the sessions and conclusions.





3 Webinar Highlights and Resources

3.1 Keynote Speeches

Mrs Alessandra Sensi (Head of Environment and Blue Economy at UfM) opened the webinar and Mrs Mercè Boy (Beta Technological Center and Interreg MED Green Growth community coordinator) provided background on the work done by the UfM and Interreg Green Growth Community in this field. They mentioned the importance of cooperation among territorial programmes and other initiatives in the Mediterranean region to exchange knowledge and practices.

We had the pleasure to welcome three significant keynote speakers who set the scene, provided current areas of concern and vision for Ecolabelling in the Mediterranean.

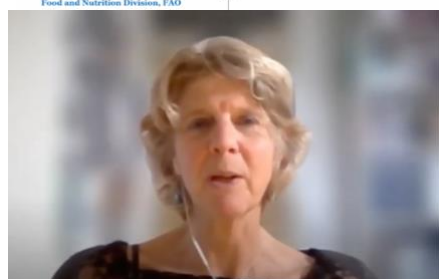
Prof. Angelo Riccaboni, Chair of the PRIMA Foundation, gave the example of three food labels that serve slightly different purposes: The Nutri-Score which indicates how healthy a product is, the Nutri-inform Battery with detailed information of the nutritional content of the product, and the ECO-SCORE that is based on LCA analysis. He also highlighted the crucial role of consumer education.



Mrs. Florence Tartanac, Senior officer of the FAO Nutrition and Food Systems Division, started her speech with an introduction to ecolabelling and the different definitions according to the ISO standards. She put special focus on Geographical Indications that promote the origin of a product that has a certain quality or reputation associated. She emphasized the importance of setting criteria for labels in a co-creative manner together with local producers and stakeholders and gave an example of saffron production from Talouine in Morocco.



Finally, **Mrs. Ineke Vlot**, Chair of the EU Ecolabelling Board, introduced the EU Ecolabel, as the only EU-wide ISO Type 1 ecolabel and targeting non-food items with an environmental focus. She highlighted results from the Eurobarometer which revealed that 80% of consumers already trust the EU Ecolabel. Moreover, she stressed the benefits the label has for consumers, producers, and the public administration side, e.g. through providing guiding criteria for public tenders and sustainable public procurement.



Did she mention why food products are not covered



3.2 Project Presentations

Besides the keynote speeches, we had 5 stimulating project speakers introducing the initiatives that they are currently working on in the field and gave an insight into how sustainable production and consumption are tackled in a more practical sense in the Mediterranean region. Below, you can find the projects' websites, the corresponding presentations, a description of each presentation and the 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 healthy olive oil, trustworthy declaration of sustainable fish, and the support for sustainable textile producers to the promotion of sustainable and regional agricultural and dairy products.



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

Project	Speaker	Presentation	Description of the presentation
PEFMED PLUS (INTERREG MED)	Mr. Nicola Colonna (ENEA)	Sharing and transferring Product Environmental Footprint experiences and methods to neighbouring countries of the Adriatic agri-food sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Applicability of the new EU Product Environmental Footprint method (P.E.F.) for some specific product food types in 9 MED Agrofood regional systems (clusters & supply chains) ✓ Agrifood sectors have a different perception on the labelling strictly connected to market conditions, regulatory framework and consumer trends ✓ The Agrifood sector needs a massive campaign of capacity building to increase the skills of their workforce and to be ready to meet the challenges represented by the future environmental labelling schemes
INNOTRANSLACT (INTERREG POCTEFA)	Mr. Joan Colón Jordà (CT BETA, UVic-UCC)	Ecolabelling experiences in the agri-Food sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The project objective is to promote the development of a more sustainable traditional dairy sector and therefore, increase its competitiveness in the European market ✓ There is a clear increase in the demand for ecolabels by private companies in the dairy sector. ✓ Companies are not yet optimized to go through ecolabelling processes making the overall process longer and more expensive than it should be. ✓ There is a necessity to develop more easy to use tools targeting product and corporate sustainability at sector level.
SUREFISH (PRIMA)	Mr. Marco de la Feld (Enco)	Fostering Med Fish Ensuring Traceability And Authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ SureFish provided qualitative research to generate both intrinsic and extrinsic fish attributes which potentially affect consumer preferences

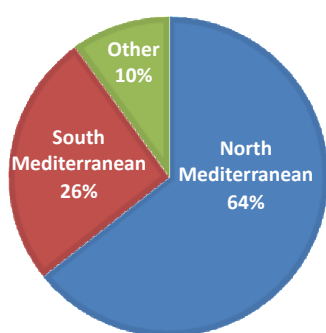


			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Economic analysis to quantify the effect of both intrinsic and extrinsic variables on consumer preferences and purchase intention ✓ Sensory evaluation with a panel of 50 consumers to evaluate the effect of intrinsic attributes on consumer acceptability and, fish freshness and authenticity perception. ✓ The fish sector now has a traceable label through the implementation of this project.
<u>ARISTOIL PLUS (INTERREG MED)</u>	Mrs. Emilia Arrabito (Svi.Med. Centro)	<u>Aristoil Plus – Not All Extra Virgin Olive Oils Are The Same!</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The project looks to increase the consciousness of Mediterranean Olive actors around the benefits and innovative methods of producing Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO) rich in polyphenols ✓ Increase consumers' awareness on the healthy attributes of EVOO rich in polyphenols ✓ There is a positive correlation between EVOO with high concentration of polyphenols and anticipation of harvesting date ✓ Consumers need to find in the market the identification of Healthy Extra-Virgin Olive Oil as a functional food.
<u>STAND Up! (ENI CBC MED)</u>	Mr. Martin Heibel (ENI CBC MED JTS)	<u>Fostering green and circular businesses in the Mediterranean fashion and textile industry</u> <u>The STAND Up! project</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ STAND Up is accelerating the transition to a circular model through enhancing scalable, replicable and inclusive circular economy ventures in the textile and clothing sector in the Mediterranean ✓ To break the barriers of circularity: importance of transversality in key sectors (tourism, agro-food, textiles, built environment, water, packaging, etc.) ✓ There is a need to involve stakeholders/end-users in project implementation ✓ To make project outcomes useful, relevant, applicable for end-users



4 Webinar Participation and Results

A total of 97 participants attended the webinar from across the Mediterranean. There was good representation from both the North and South Mediterranean. Taking the information from the engagement sessions and contrasting with the Zoom platform connection details, we see that 64% (mainly from Spain and Italy) connected from North Mediterranean and 26% (mainly from Morocco and Algeria) connected from the South Mediterranean (See figure 1 and 2 below).



North Med	South Med	Other
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Algeria	Congo, Democratic Republic of the
France	Egypt	Kenya
Greece	Jordan	United States
Italy	Morocco	Belgium
Malta	Tunisia	Germany
Spain		Netherlands
Turkey		Portugal
		Sweden

Figure 1: Participant representation from North and South Mediterranean



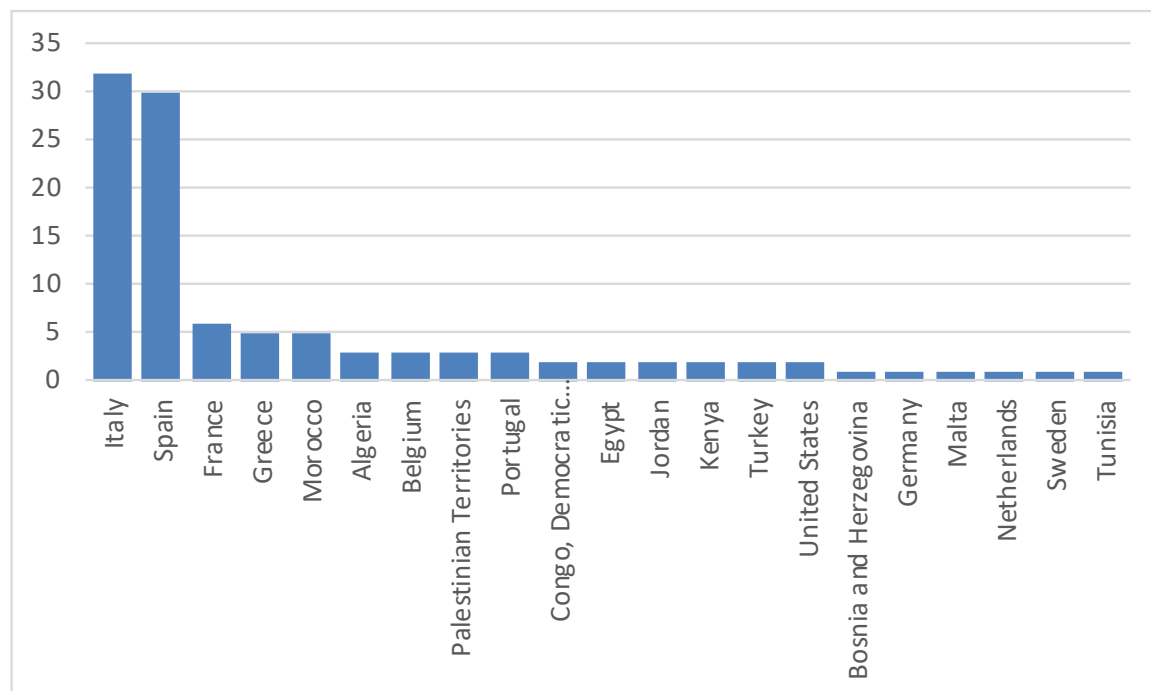


Figure 2: Participant representation from across the Mediterranean and abroad

In the days leading up to the webinar, a survey was launched to gain an understanding of what the participants would like to achieve from the webinar, how they would like to interact and if they participate in networks or clusters on Ecolabelling and certification.

In terms of the participants area of interest for attending the webinar, it lay mostly in learning new methodologies, processes or tools related to Ecolabelling and certification schemes from the webinar (figure 3a). When asked if they believed that Ecolabelling should only be granted to locally produced goods (to reduce the carbon footprint etc.) the general consensus was that the participants disagreed with this notion (figure 3b). When asked what the participants believed were the potential factors that could help motivate retailers and businesses to promote eco-labels, there was no clear guidance between improved policies (29%), competitive prices (30%) and consumer awareness (41%) (figure 3c).





WHAT IS YOUR AREA OF INTEREST IN SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION THROUGH ECO-LABELING

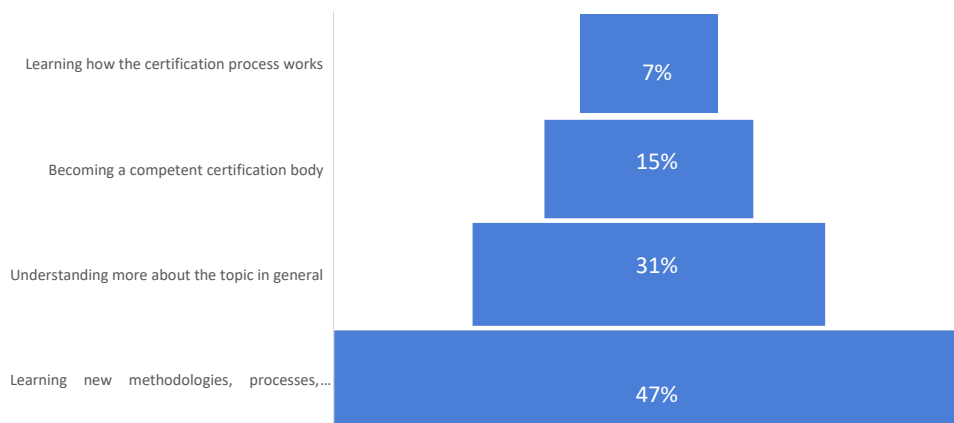


Figure 3a: Pre-webinar survey results

Should ecolabels be granted only to locally-produced goods? Considering the environmental impact of transport; trust in other countries' declaration of environmental standards etc?

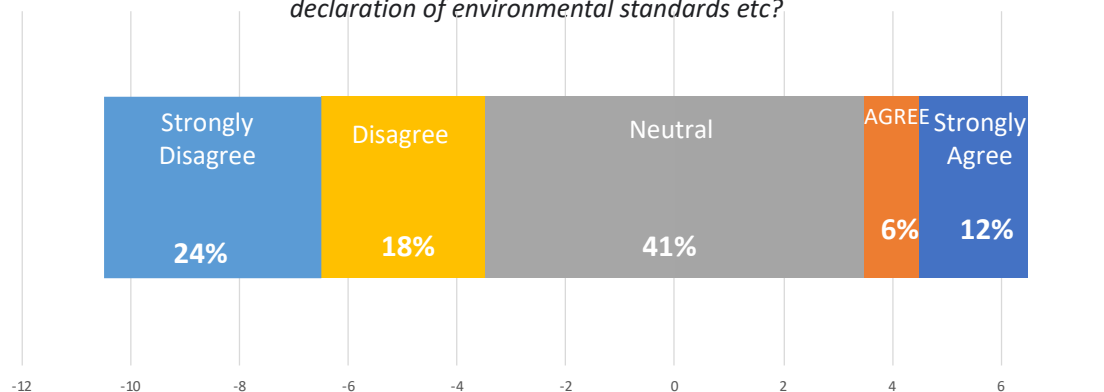


Figure 4b: Pre-webinar survey results





WHAT FACTORS COULD POTENTIALLY HELP MOTIVATE RETAILERS/BUSINESSES TO PROMOTE ECOLABELS?

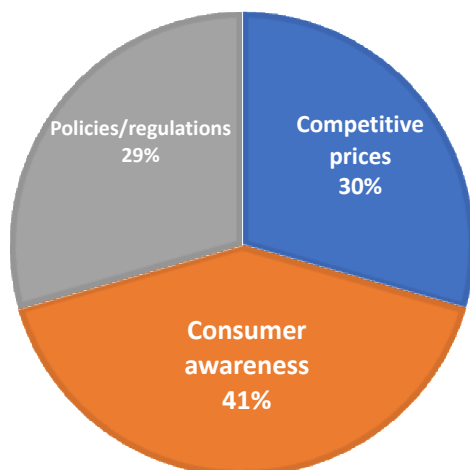


Figure 5c: Pre-webinar survey results

Using the results of the pre-webinar survey, questions were developed that we integrated into the Sli.do poll. This allowed for live polls to be made and for the immediate results from the participants to be commented on. Analysing the results of the feedback during the session, we can see where the main concerns and areas of interest originated from the participants.

As facilitators we had a specific interest to know if the participants have sufficient possibility to collaborate on Ecolabels and certification in the Mediterranean and if so with which entity type. Clearly, the participants feel that there are not sufficient opportunities (71% of the participants) to collaborate or network on Ecolabelling activities in the Mediterranean. Those that do participate in collaborative opportunities have found that networks (31%) and Public Private Partnerships (24%) have been the most effective means to collaborate on Ecolabelling in the Mediterranean.

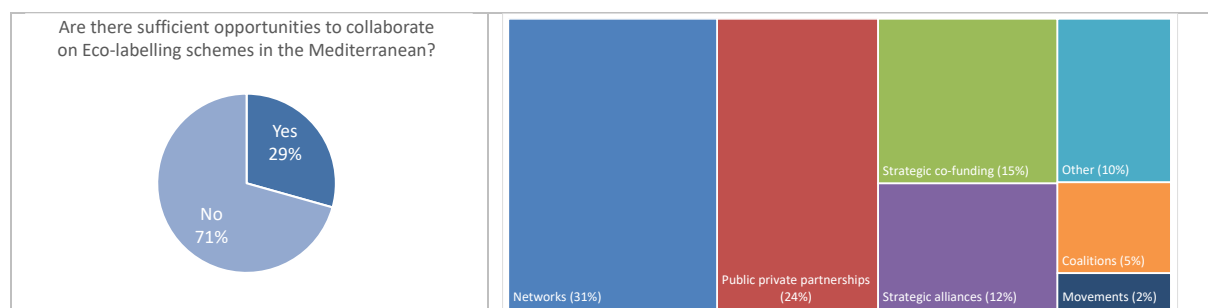


Figure 6: Opportunities to collaborate on Ecolabelling in the Mediterranean

Our research prior to the webinar showed that one of the barriers to widespread implementation of Ecolabelling in the Mediterranean was consumer awareness. The poll during the webinar revealed that the participants believed in improved communication including awareness raising in schools and media would increase consumer awareness (61%





of participants). They also believed that harmonised and simpler labels (27% of participants), enhanced trust (8% of participants) and economic benefits (4% of participants) would also help in the awareness raising amongst consumers.

In your opinion, what could be done to increase consumer awareness?

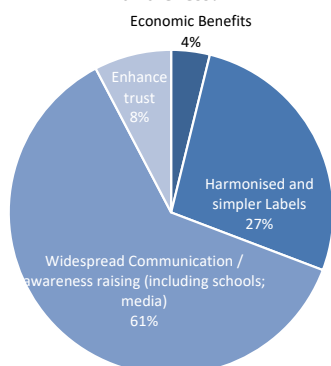


Figure 7: Participants view on how to increase consumer awareness.

We also wanted to know, from the participants point of view, what could incentivise the producers to sign up to an Ecolabel scheme. The participants showed that if there was a clear idea of the benefits of the Ecolabel scheme (25% of the participants) and if they were provided with a competitive advantage or promotional opportunities (25% of the participants) this could better incentivise producers. To have an open European market (21%), financial support (13%), to make it mandatory (8%) and to have focussed training (8%) were the other options provided by the participants.

In your opinion what can incentivize producers to sign up to an eco-label scheme?

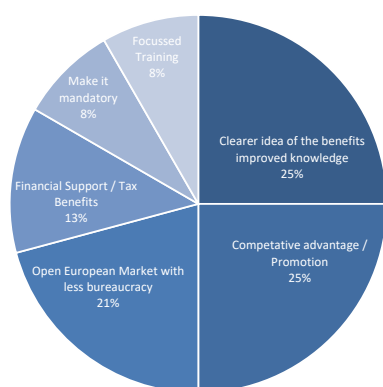


Figure 8: Participants view on how to incentivize producers to sign up to an Ecolabel scheme.

Although the participants were keen to learn new methodologies and tools from the webinar, they were also keen to see a follow-up. In this sense, the participants were keen to participate in a technical course on the specific details of Ecolabelling (33% of the participants) followed by creating or enhancing existing working groups on Ecolabelling (25% of participants). The participants were also keen to go on field learning visits (20% of the participants) and to





participant in a second webinar on the subject to dive deeper into the subject (15% of the participants). Finally, 7% of the participants want to know more about how they can become a competent body.

What would you like to see as a follow-up this webinar?

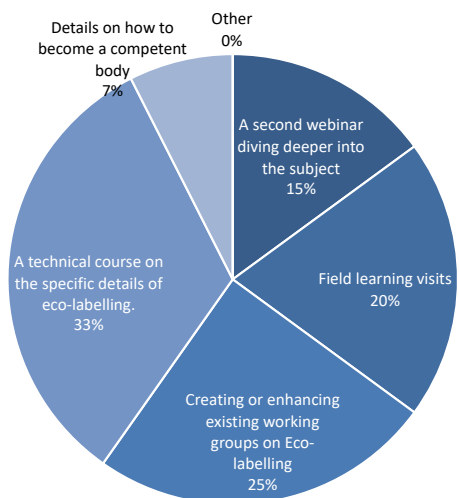


Figure 9: Participants view on what they would like as a follow-up to the webinar.



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5 Conclusions, Key Messages and Recommendations

The webinar enhanced the learning and capacity on Ecolabelling and certification through a varied mix of keynote speeches and project presentations that implement their actions in the different regions of the Mediterranean. Furthermore, the webinar provided the space for actors to come together and to discuss the current status of sustainable production and consumption through Eco-labelling in the Mediterranean. The participants were also provided the opportunity to debate the way forward and to enhance the learning and action in this space.

5.1 Key Messages

The main conclusions from the webinar are summarised through the following points:

- ✓ There is a need to address the issue of harmonization of existing labels and to reduce consumer confusion and the large number of labels that exist.
- ✓ More data is required from the Mediterranean region on label implementation and use.
- ✓ Further action is required to bring on board competent bodies in the Southern Mediterranean countries
- ✓ There is a need for greater incentives to implement eco-labels through financial support, tax benefits and soft loans.
- ✓ Labelling schemes need to move from an environmental tool to a sustainability tool to ensure that social aspects are included within the schemes.
- ✓ There is a call for more sound legal schemes to be introduced to assist companies in labelling
- ✓ Consumer awareness needs to be a principle factor to motivate businesses, this should be done through education, awareness raising campaigns etc. within the entire Med region.

Furthermore, the keynote speeches provided stimulation to the audience to ask questions and to investigate further the ideas behind the presentations. A selection of these questions included:

Question: *Are there R&D institutions with the Ecolabel?*

Answer: The development or revision of EU Ecolabel criteria is carried out by JRC of the European Commission. Sometimes other institutes are contracted for specific research topics (tenders).

Question: *Is Eco label cost for enterprises within the EU and in the Mediterranean countries harmonized or consistent? what is the range in terms of cost for the enterprises?*

Answer: EU Ecolabel fees may differ between CBs/countries, see: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/documents/eu-ecolabel_fees.pdf, there are discounts for SMEs or micro-organisations





Question: Great talk! And so many projects and ideas! Maybe you have said it already and I missed it or it is already out there but was wondering about initiatives to add in the food labels some kind of distance metric to easily visualise if you are buying a product from really far away or from "home"...I guess this is also complex and there is already the "Km0" products as well as the country of origin but was wondering if in this eco-labels you also consider the "distance/transport". Thanks! Great discussion!

Answer: The carbon footprint would be related to transport/distance

Question: Can every food product get an eco label?

Answer: Yes, following several ecolabelling schemes under ISO14025 or ISO14067, there are opportunities to provide an eco-label for each food product.

Question: is ARISTOIL considering sustainable criteria in the production of high-quality olive oil?

Answer: Aristoil project focused on Health Claim on polyphenols levels of olive oil , because it is a not well known label for this product, both from consumers and producers. There are other labels focusing on sustainable criteria already known in the market but of course a product should have both!

The project presentations provided the practical details of how different industries are moving towards labelling or sustainable consumption and production processes in the Mediterranean.

Given the responses from the audience with the need for more information on the ecolabelling schemes, the following recommendation should be taken forward following the webinar.

5.2 Recommendations

Following on from the webinar and seeing the reaction from the participants it is clear that the participants feel that there is a need for greater collaboration on Ecolabels in the Mediterranean. Communication, awareness raising, and education were some of the main topics extracted from the participants as to where they feel further focus is required in terms of Ecolabelling. The participants are also calling for clearer knowledge of the benefits to producers to include an Ecolabel and to have more learning opportunities in relation to Ecolabelling schemes in the forms of: technical courses and webinars, working groups, field learning visits.





Further useful links:

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

<https://forms.gle/BPXZhwKXRvPBoM5y9>

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

<https://youtu.be/mpZWncBMhWY>



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