

NEWSLETTER

December 2023



Figure 1: Agri Innovation Expo 2023 at the Agricultural University of Athens (21- 23 September 2023).

THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS FROM THE EXCEL4MED PROJECT:

Numerous events and activities have been undertaken to promote the EXCEL4MED project.

The first living lab in Greece held on the 4th of July, at the University of Athens.

Additionally, a comprehensive consumer survey was carried out across three European countries: Greece, Malta, and France.


Events and dissemination activities

1. Agri Innovation Expo 2023: Smart Agro Hub. Throughout this dynamic three-day event, enriching dialogues were engaged in with various stakeholders in the agri-food industry. Collaborations were fostered with distinguished researchers from the Agricultural University of Athens and other European institutions, Greek authorities, and fruit farmers.
2. Excel4Med at 9th International Conference on 'Chemical Reactions in Food': Showcasing research and innovations led by Prof. Marilena Dasenaki from National & Kapodistrian University of Athens, contributing to sustainable food practices.
3. Excel4med was featured at the Science in the City Event in Valletta, Malta, led by Georgios Psakis from the University of Malta. The initiative aims to bridge the gap between scientists and the public.
4. At the 37th EFFoST International Conference 2023 in Valencia, Spain, Vasilis Valdramidis, the Project Coordinator, and the ELGO DIMITRA team represented Excel4Med, showcasing cutting-edge food science technologies for sustainable solutions.
5. An outreach event was arranged by the Malta Food Agency at the Farmers Market Ta' Qali Malta on November 18th. The objective was to engage with consumers and provide information about EXCEL4MED.
6. The 10th International Conference Mikrobiokosmos! Vasilis Valdramidis, the EXCEL4MED Coordinator, engaging in a fruitful discussion with Giorgos Markou, the AquaTech4Feed Coordinator.



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First Living lab in Greece

On July 4th, 2023, the first living lab at the University of Athens, Greece was organized. The primary goal was to foster dynamic discussions focused on promoting nutritious food products and extracting value from food industrial by-products.

This event brought together a diverse community comprising of farmers, researchers, policymakers, and representatives from the Mediterranean fruit processing sector. Participants seized the opportunity to collaborate, brainstorm, and exchange ideas pertaining to sustainable processing methods for innovative and healthier products. The collective dedication and enthusiasm witnessed during the event were truly inspiring, signifying a shared vision for shaping a more sustainable future for the Mediterranean fruit processing industry. The valuable insights and feedback gathered during this occasion carry significant weight and will be integral in guiding our future initiatives towards a more sustainable path.



Figure 2: First Greek Living Lab held at the Agricultural University of Athens (4 July 2023).

Consumer survey

As part of Work Package 2, a comprehensive and representative consumer survey was conducted across Malta, Greece, and France. The survey aimed to assess consumers' acceptance and their willingness to purchase agricultural products and foodstuffs currently being produced thanks to the project's research, as well as their willingness to pay a premium for these items. Bioactive substances extracted from the waste of citrus and pomegranate fruits will enhance various traditional food items, elevating their nutritional content, contributing to disease prevention or control, and extending their shelf life.

Based on the outcome of the three-nation survey, the main barriers to adopting novel food products are consumers' reservations and negative perceptions regarding food additives (even if vitamins), reflecting consumers' general preference for wholesome food. The survey highlights that naturalness, tradition, healthiness, and locally produced food items significantly influence consumer preferences. Additionally, there is a reluctance among consumers to pay extra for smoothies, juices and cheese in brine with additional bioactive enrichments. Despite a considerable interest in trying out these new food products, consumers typically showed a reluctance to exceed a 5% additional cost for any of the proposed products.

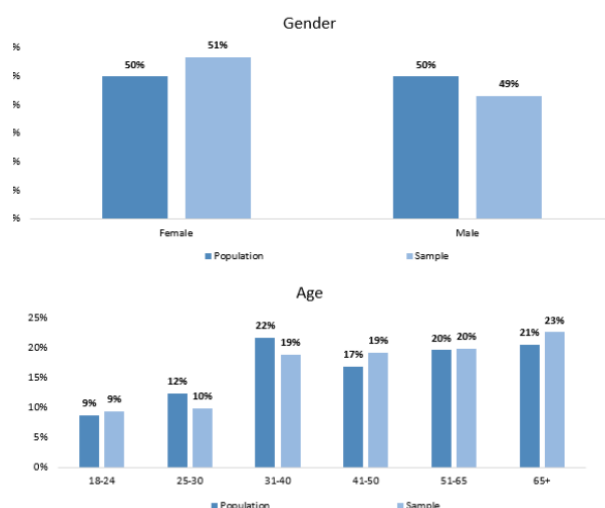
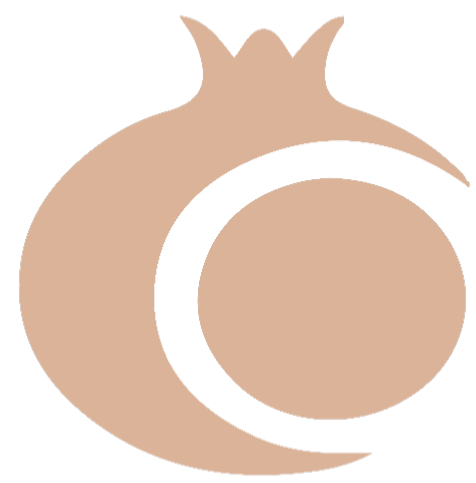
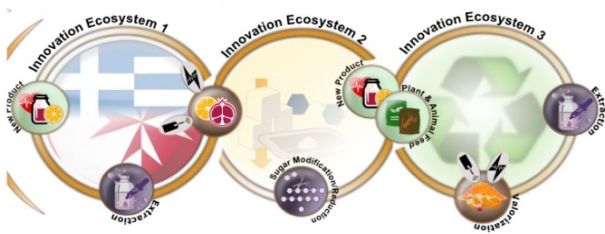


Figure 3: Demographics from the collected Maltese data sample.





Incoming Events



The second consortium meeting is scheduled to take place on the 26th of January 2024 at the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise & Industry in Valletta, Malta.

Stay tuned for more exciting updates in the next edition of our newsletter and follow our progress as we continue to shape a sustainable and innovative future for Mediterranean food practices.

Figure 4: Three separate innovation ecosystems will be created by EXCEL4MED.



Prepared by Malta Food Agency

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