

NEWSLETTER

June 2023



Figure 1: Kick off meeting at Law School Library (old Chemistry building) of National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (11 January 2023).

Kick-off Meeting

The first in person meeting of the Horizon project for the food supply chain was held in Athens, Greece on the 11th of January 2023. The meeting served as the official launch of the project, aiming to promote sustainable practices in the food supply chain and enhance collaboration between different entities. Among them are research institutions, governmental bodies, private companies of agro-industrial products such as juices and agricultural products, consumer and farmer representatives who will be mutually reinforcing each other in a Mediterranean context, with the aim of raising the level of excellence in research and innovation. The project is coordinated by Associate Professor Vasilis Valdramidis from the National & Kapodistrian University of Athens.

The meeting included an introduction of the different organizations involved in the project, highlighting their respective roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, the meeting provided an overview of the overall aim and objective of the project, which is to develop a circular economy model for the food supply chain that maximizes the use of resources and minimizes waste by the use of green technologies. EXCEL4MED strives to make Mediterranean fruit supply chains resilient and sustainable in the eastern Mediterranean through an Excellence Hub, contributing to the Farm to Fork Strategy and the European Green Deal.

What is EXCEL4MED?

EXCEL4MED is a four-year project funded by the European Union, as part of the call HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ACCESS-04, which aspires to strengthen the Mediterranean food value chains by focusing on producing nutritious food products and maximizing food industrial side-streams by the use of green technologies. The project involves a cross-border collaboration between 14 organizations from Greece, Malta, and France.



CONNECT WITH US

<https://excel4med.eu/>



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101087147

Stakeholders Living Lab 4th

The first set of Living Labs for the EXCEL4MED project were recently held in Malta.

The first Living Lab session involved engaging with stakeholders in discussions aimed at evaluating and promoting green technologies that can strengthen the Mediterranean agri-food supply chain. This session allowed for a fruitful exchange of ideas between stakeholders, with the aim of enhancing sustainability and promoting innovation in the food industry.

Moreover, one of the primary research techniques employed in the living labs was the Q-methodology, a research technique that combines qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis.

Q-methodology allows to identify and measure the subjective perspectives and attitudes of different stakeholders and users towards a particular product or service, which can then inform the design and development process.



Figure 2: 1st Living Lab with the stakeholders at the Malta Life Science Park (4 May 2023).

Consumers Living Lab 5th

The second Living Lab session was an interactive workshop with consumers to capture their thoughts, ideas, and recommendations for the proposed green technologies. This session aimed to gather valuable insights into consumer perspectives and preferences related to sustainability in the food industry.

Overall, the Living Labs were a success, providing valuable input from both stakeholders and consumers towards achieving the project's objectives. We are excited about organizing more Living Labs in the future and are committed to promoting sustainability and innovation in the Mediterranean food industry.



Figure 3: 2nd Living Lab with consumers at the Malta Life Science Park (5 May 2023).





Way Forward...



Figure 4: Meeting with partners involved in the consumer survey at the Malta Life Science Park (5 May 2023).

Moving forward, the next step is to conduct another round of Living Labs in Greece, building on the insights gained from the previous sessions in Malta. The Living Labs will allow for continuing the dialogue with stakeholders and consumers on promoting the production of nutritious food products and the valorisation of food industrial side-streams. The focus is on strengthening the Mediterranean food added-value chains and innovation ecosystems.

Additionally, there is a plan to conduct a representative survey in Malta to gauge the perspectives of the public regarding the proposed green technologies that aim to valorise food waste products. Meetings are already begin held in preparation for the consumer survey. This survey will provide valuable insights into consumer preferences and expectations.



Prepared by Malta Food Agency

FOLLOW US!

<https://excel4med.eu/>



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101087147

 **EXCEL4MED** 