

NEWSLETTER

June 2024



Figure 1: EXCEL4MED presented by Smart Agro Hub at Agrotica 2024.

Driving Innovation in Mediterranean Food Production

We are delighted to present the most recent updates on the EXCEL4MED project, which seeks to promote innovation and sustainability in Mediterranean food production. Here are some important highlights from our recent activities:

Recent Events

The EXCEL4MED consortium held its 2nd meeting on January 26th, 2024, hosted by the Malta Chamber. Project members together with Associate Professor Vasilis Valdramidis from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Greece), who is the project coordinator, presented the project's status. Significant achievements across the work packages (WPs) were highlighted, and the consortium discussed progress and planned upcoming milestones.

CIHEAM-IAMM successfully presented the EXCEL4MED project at the "VIII PhD Students Meeting in Environment and Agriculture" in Evora, Portugal, on December 11th-12th, 2023.

EXCEL4MED participated in the "WIDERA Excellence Hubs in the MED and SEE Region" online workshop on February 20th, 2024, sharing insights with other regional projects.

Dr. Vasilis Valdramidis presented EXCEL4MED at the "3rd FunShield4Med" workshop. This event provided a valuable opportunity to discuss the project's activities and advancements with an engaged audience.

The first journal publication from EXCEL4MED is out in Frontiers in Chemistry "Exploring hydrodynamic cavitation for citrus waste valorisation in Malta: from beverage enhancement to potato sprouting suppression and water remediation", authored by Georgios Psakis, Frederick Lia, Vasilis Valdramidis and Ruben Gatt: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fchem.2024.1411727>



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

Outreach and dissemination

Inspiring Future Innovators in Athens:

Smart Agro Hub has been actively engaging with students across multiple schools. They presented EXCEL4MED at the 2nd Technical School of Athens on March 8th, 2024, the 2nd Technical Evening School of Piraeus on March 14th, 2024, and the 3rd Technical School of Athens on March 29th, 2024. Additionally, NKUA visited the 1st General Secondary School of Drapetsona.

These interactions fostered discussions about the future of agriculture and sparked curiosity among students.

Excel4Med at the 3rd Annual Symposium at NKUA!

PhD students Ioannis Dimitros and Grigorios Chamoukos showcased the EXCEL4MED project at the "3rd Annual Symposium of Graduate Students" at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

Their presentation on the "Chemical Profile of Pomegranate Seed Oil: The Impact of Drying Technologies and Prospects" highlighted the effects of drying technologies on the oil's chemical composition and potential applications. The symposium provided a great platform for exchanging ideas and gaining insights into the field of chemistry.



Figure 2: Smart Agro Hub presented EXCEL4MED at the 3rd Technical School of Athens (14 March 2024).

Workshop in Argos

On May 17th, 2024, a workshop in Argos focused on best practices in citrus cultivation and gathered valuable insights from both farmers and consumers. Hosted by ASPIS Hellenic Juice Industry, the event saw enthusiastic participation from attendees.

Other Dissemination Activities:

Smart Agro Hub presented the EXCEL4MED project during two other EU-funded projects' kick-off meeting: TALLHEDA on January 29-30, 2024, and NextGenBioPest on April 23rd, 2024. These events provided an excellent opportunity to inform the agricultural community about our project's activities and goals.

EXCEL4MED was showcased at SEVT's stand, from March 9-11, 2024, where the project's objectives and activities were communicated to attendees.

EXCEL4MED was also featured on the "The Food Processors" podcast on April 16th, 2024: <https://excel4med.eu/results/podcasts>. This podcast episode is in Greek; however, more episodes are forthcoming.

Smart Agro Hub created a video explaining the objectives and next steps of EXCEL4MED: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JiEBoOk1cPM&t=2s>



Figure 3: A workshop in Argos, hosted by ASPIS Hellenic Juice Industry (17 May 2024).



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Moving Forward



Figure 4: EXCEL4MED at the 3rd Annual Symposium at NKUA.

The EXCEL4MED project is progressing well, thanks to the collaborative spirit and dedication of our consortium members. We look forward to more groundbreaking research, stakeholder engagement, and practical applications that will pave the way for a sustainable and nutritious food future.

As part of WP2, additional living labs will be conducted in both Malta and Greece to maximize project impact and stakeholder engagement. On the other hand, the Triple-Layered Business Model Canvas will be completed to assess and improve business models and value chain arrangements.

Regarding WP3, this will include further research on pomegranate seed oil, optimizing juice processing parameters, and expanding investigations on extraction methods.



Prepared by Malta Food Agency

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