



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



CIHEAM



Union for the Mediterranean  
Union pour la Méditerranée  
الاتحاد من أجل المتوسط



PRIMA  
PARTNERSHIP FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION  
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

# FOOD WASTE MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN MEDITERRANEAN CITIES

Wednesday 25 May 2022 | 09:00 - 10:30 (CEST)

## BACKGROUND

While food systems are failing to feed an ever-growing population, high amounts of food are wasted every year, mainly by retailers, food services and consumers. **Food waste affects Mediterranean countries** and jeopardizes the efforts to produce and supply food through an efficient use of natural resources and trade investments. Shifting from a linear economy's "take-make-waste" approach to a circular economy approach for sustainable food systems enables to recognize and maintain the value and utility of food products, nutrients and resources for as long as possible, minimizing resource use and upcycling food waste and by-products.<sup>1</sup>

In October 2021, the Union for the Mediterranean and the Interreg MED Green Growth community, in collaboration with PRIMA and FAO, organized a first training webinar about *Food losses, food waste reduction and organic waste management in the Mediterranean region*, where participants highlighted the importance of **better consumer knowledge and sustainable behaviors**, as well as the availability of data collection processes and **tools to track and reduce food waste at municipal level**, as crucial actions to tackle food losses and waste effectively. Participants demonstrated interest in cooperation among stakeholders and to create a **Mediterranean food system network of collaboration** to raise awareness and increase education on the extent of the issue and tackle the social, economic and environmental impacts of food waste, through an integrated multi-disciplinary approach towards circularity of food systems.

The transition towards circular food economies creates opportunities to reduce the environmental footprint of food systems, improve food security, diversify the job market through new skills and engage every citizen in more sustainable lifestyles. It is estimated that cities will consume 80 percent of the global food supply by 2050; however, instead of being the final destination of food, **cities can act as hubs of innovation and connectivity transforming food by-products into more valuable materials**.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, cities can influence food demand in a way that promotes local sourcing and regenerative agriculture, reducing the need for excess packaging, reconnecting consumers with surrounding peri-urban and rural areas, and alleviating the burden on the natural environment. Technological advancements, conscious and informed consumers, and networks of skilled workers equip cities with unique assets to drive the transformation towards regenerative and circular food systems.

**In the Mediterranean region, over 70 percent<sup>3,4</sup> of the population lives in urban areas**, and this proportion will continue to grow in the next decades.<sup>5</sup> Urbanization trends across the Mediterranean are leading to extended food chains, expansion of the food offer and changes in consumption behaviors that tend to amplify food waste and increase pressure

<sup>1</sup>ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability et al. 2021. *Circular city actions framework*. Bonn, Germany, ICLEI. <https://bit.ly/3FdM1Qh>

<sup>2</sup>Ellen MacArthur Foundation. 2019. *Cities and circular economy for food*. Cowes, United Kingdom, EMF. <https://bit.ly/3LHDkjN>

<sup>3</sup>Riccaboni, A., Sachs, J., Cresti, S., Gigliotti, M. & Pulselli, R.M. 2020. *Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean. Report 2020*. Transformations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Siena, Italy, Sustainable Development Solutions Network Mediterranean (SDSN Mediterranean). <https://bit.ly/3vDeprX>

<sup>4</sup>European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed). 2021. *IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook 2021*, p. 449. Barcelona, Spain, IEMed. <https://bit.ly/3vJevyt>

<sup>5</sup>European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed). 2018. *IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook 2018*, p. 362. Barcelona, Spain, IEMed. <https://bit.ly/3kJdIHq>

## THE SFS-MED PLATFORM

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) have joined forces in a [multi-stakeholder initiative for Sustainable Food Systems in the Mediterranean \(SFS-MED Platform\)](#), as an affiliated project of the One Planet Network Sustainable Food Systems Programme. The SFS-MED initiative aims at promoting dialogue and collaboration among Mediterranean countries and stakeholders while they implement national and local efforts for a transformation to more sustainable food systems.

## THE SFS-MED WEBINAR SERIES

This series of technical webinars is organized to leverage the knowledge and expertise of a network of researchers, development practitioners and decision-makers. The webinars aim at **strengthening knowledge sharing** and **stimulating debate** around themes relevant to food systems transformation in the Mediterranean, **peer exchange** about recent research and study findings, as well as **showcasing successful and inspiring actions** to promote the operationalization of food systems approaches.

Building on the findings of a [stocktaking exercise of the UN Food Systems Summit \(UNFSS\) Dialogues held in the Mediterranean](#), the webinar will revolve around a set of shared priorities and trends that are common to most countries in the region, considered as entry points or main thematic areas regarding what to transform in the Mediterranean food systems. Many of these were reflected as well in the national pathways for food systems transformation that countries developed within the UNFSS process during 2021.

on scarce land, water and energy resources. By choosing to implement innovative actions that integrate waste streams from agriculture, forestry, fisheries and the food and feed industry into bio-economy processes, cities have the chance to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, to increase supply of safe and nutritious food also through social protection programmes, and to mitigate the burden on natural resources caused by food production.<sup>6,7</sup> **In a renewed pledge to curb food waste as a lever for more sustainable food systems, Mediterranean cities and local authorities are increasingly playing a crucial role** in adopting circular bio-economy strategies and revising food safety and quality standards as to integrate food waste reduction and valorization, recovery and redistribution of safe food. For this transition to happen, local authorities are also engaging in **city-to-city and multi-stakeholder exchanges** that facilitate advocacy and the sharing of experiences and knowledge, paying special attention to education and awareness raising of several food systems actors, especially aiming at behavioral change of consumers, as well as partnering with the private sector and civil society (e.g. wholesale and retail markets, food service providers, food banks, etc.) to invest in green technologies that make the most of by-products and effectively recover and redistribute surplus food.<sup>8</sup>

The [UN Food Systems Summit](#) in 2021 helped emphasizing the role of urban food systems and food waste management in shaping a more sustainable transformation and led, among others, to the establishment of the [Coalition on Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Food Systems](#) and the [Coalition on Food is Never Waste](#). The two coalitions aim at bringing their area of focus in global, regional and national agendas as well as facilitate the exchange of knowledge, information and experiences. Furthermore, a stocktaking exercise<sup>9</sup> of Summit dialogues in the Mediterranean, developed by the SFS-MED Platform, confirmed that stakeholders in the region recognize the role of cities as one of the key drivers for food systems transformation and food loss and waste management as a central aspect in developing greener and circular food systems.

<sup>6</sup>Tefft, J.F., Jonasova, M., Adjao, R.T.O.A. & Morgan, A. M. 2017. *Food Systems for an Urbanizing World*. Rome, FAO, World Bank Group. [fao.org/3/i8346en/i8346en.pdf](https://doi.org/10.4060/ca3151en)

<sup>7</sup>FAO. 2019. *FAO framework for the Urban Food Agenda*. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca3151en>

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>FAO, CIHEAM and UfM. 2021. *Food systems transformation – processes and pathways in the Mediterranean: a stocktaking exercise*. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7978en>

## OBJECTIVES

### KNOWLEDGE

Create a knowledge base about opportunities, innovative solutions and gaps or limitations for food systems transformation, specific to the Mediterranean context.

### EVIDENCE SHARING

Facilitate replication and upscaling of concrete solutions for food systems transformation through the dissemination of evidence about successful approaches and lessons learned from across the Mediterranean.

### AWARENESS

Promote and raise awareness on food systems thinking by facilitating multi-disciplinary and multi-sectorial exchanges.

## ENVISAGED PARTICIPANTS/ TARGET AUDIENCE

The webinar is open to stakeholders engaged in sustainable food systems, food waste management and circular economy across the Mediterranean. Special focus will be given to the participation of stakeholders working with local governments and city and regional networks.

## EXPECTED OUTCOME

Based on this background, and in the framework of the Urban Food Agenda, the SFS-MED platform is organizing this webinar to bring together stakeholders from across the Mediterranean to share practical experiences of their engagement in circular economy practices for food waste management at urban/local level. Tackling food waste and circularity from diverse angles of the Mediterranean food systems, they will reflect on success factors and challenges, and discuss ways to facilitate partnerships and replication of solutions across the Mediterranean.

The webinar will aim to address a key question: **how can Mediterranean cities ensure multi-stakeholder engagement in food waste management and applied circular economy practices?**



## AGENDA

Interpretation will be provided in English, French and Turkish

9:00-9:05

### Welcome and technical background

Setting the scene, lessons from the past: outcomes emerging from the UfM-Interreg MED Green Growth Community partnership



**Mercè Boy Roura**

Coordinator of [Interreg MED Green Growth](#) and [ENI CBC MED Med4Waste](#)

9:05-9:15

### Keynote remarks

Food waste management as entry point for sustainable food systems and multi-stakeholder engagement at local level



**Mohamed Higazy**

Director of [North Africa Regional Office, United Cities and Local Governments \(UCLG\)](#)  
Advisor to Egyptian Minister of Local Development

9:15-10:25

### Panel discussion

Experiences of local governance on circular economy practices for food waste management

Experiences of local engagement of private sector and civil society in circular economy practices for food waste management

Leveraging multi-stakeholder engagement and networking towards food waste management and circular economy in Mediterranean cities



Moderator:

**Jamie Morrison**

Director, [Food Systems and Food Safety Division, FAO](#)



**Elisa Porreca**

Food policy officer, Food Policy Department, [Municipality of Milan, Italy](#)



**Eugénia Carrara**

Secretary General, [World Union of Wholesale Markets \(WUWM\)](#)



**Ilirian Gjoni**

Executive Director, [Food Bank Albania](#)



**Birol Ekici**

Secretary General, [Turkish Union of Municipalities \(TBB\)](#)



**Michael Scoullas**

Chairman, [Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development \(MIO-ECSDE\)](#)

10:25-10:30

### Closing remarks



**Peter Defranceschi**

Head Global Food Program, Head of Brussels Office, [ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability](#)

### Events

- FAO. Impact webinars. In: *SAVE FOOD: Global Initiative on Food Loss and Waste Reduction*. Rome, FAO. <https://bit.ly/3laA70d>
- UfM. Webinar “Food losses, food waste reduction and organic waste management in the Mediterranean region”, follow-up report. Barcelona, Spain, UfM. <https://bit.ly/3shjc0f>
- UfM. Webinar “Food losses, food waste reduction and organic waste management in the Mediterranean region”. In: YouTube: *Union for the Mediterranean*. Barcelona, Spain, UfM. <https://bit.ly/3vURAAh>

### Publications

- Barilla Center for Food & Nutrition (BCFN) & Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP). 2018. *Food & Cities. The role of cities for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals*. Parma, Italy, BCFN. <https://bit.ly/3y8WV8B>
- De Cunto, A., Tegoni, C., Sonnino R., Michel, C. & Lajili-Djalai, F. 2017. *Food in cities: study on innovation for a sustainable and healthy production, delivery, and consumption of food in cities*. Brussels, European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation. <https://bit.ly/3ydBR0H>
- FAO. 2019. *FAO framework for the Urban Food Agenda*. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca3151en>
- FAO. 2021. *Food Loss and Waste Reduction in Europe and Central Asia: Programme overview and approach to implementation*. Budapest, FAO. [fao.org/3/cb6937en/cb6937en.pdf](https://bit.ly/3y8WV8B)
- FAO. 2021. *Voluntary Code of Conduct for Food Loss and Waste Reduction*. Rome, FAO [fao.org/3/nf393en/nf393en.pdf](https://bit.ly/3y8WV8B)
- Flanagan, K., Robertson, K. & Anderson, C. 2019. *Reducing Food Loss and Waste. Setting a Global Action Agenda*. Washington, DC, USA, World Resources Institute (WRI). <https://doi.org/10.46830/wriipt.18.00130>
- ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability. 2021. *City Practitioners Handbook: Circular Food Systems*. Bonn, Germany, ICLEI. <https://bit.ly/3sb8oAH>
- Magarini, A., De Cunto, A., Roiatti F. & Porreca, E. 2018. *Food Losses and Waste in European Cities*. Milan, Italy, City of Milan. <https://bit.ly/381DYtG>
- Micheaux Naudet, P., Marrazzo, G. 2021. *The governance of circular bioeconomy. Practices and lessons learnt from European regions*. Brussels, Association of Cities and Regions for sustainable Resource management (ACR+). <https://bit.ly/39CYstm>
- UfM. 2021. *Towards a Sustainable Blue Economy in the Mediterranean region*. Barcelona, Spain, UfM. <https://bit.ly/3vJFMkl>
- UNEP DTU Partnership and United Nations Environment Programme. 2021. *Reducing consumer food waste using green and digital technologies*. Copenhagen and Nairobi, UNEP. <https://bit.ly/3Ffci0K>
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). 2021. *Food Waste Index Report 2021*. Nairobi, UNEP. <https://bit.ly/3sbWiay>

### Websites and other online resources

- European Commission. EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste. Brussels, European Commission. <https://bit.ly/3kEky0N>
- FAO. 2020. *Turkey's National Strategy Document on Prevention, Reduction and Monitoring of Food Loss and Waste and its Action Plan*. Ankara, FAO. [fao.org/3/cb1074en/CB1074EN.pdf](https://bit.ly/3cb1074en/CB1074EN.pdf)
- FAO. Food Loss and Waste Database. Rome, FAO. <https://bit.ly/3sccljc>
- FAO. The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Monitoring Framework. In: *FAO Urban Food Agenda*. Rome, FAO. <https://bit.ly/3scHRmr>
- Food Loss & Waste Protocol. *Food Loss & Waste Protocol multi-stakeholder partnership*. Washington, DC, USA, WRI. [flwprotocol.org](https://bit.ly/3scHRmr)
- Région Provence-Alpes- Côte d'Azur (PACA). Regional network for the fight against food losses and waste (REGALIM). In: *Regional Directorate for Food, Agriculture and Forestry, PACA*. Marseille, France, Région PACA. <https://bit.ly/3kJWoBS>
- UfM. 2021. *Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Action*. Cairo, UfM. <https://bit.ly/3LLVfVY>
- UfM. 2021. *Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy*. Barcelona, Spain, UfM. <https://bit.ly/38TwR6V>
- UfM. 2022. *Towards 2030: Agenda for a Greener Mediterranean. Contributing to Achieving the Environmental SDGs in the Mediterranean (2030GreenerMed)*. Barcelona, Spain, UfM. <https://bit.ly/3Fd6xke>

### Articles

- FAO. 2020. Milan, Nairobi and Kigali meet to achieve sustainable urban food systems. In: *FAO Urban Food Agenda*. Rome, FAO. <https://bit.ly/3sdNjpf>
- Singhal, A.A. & Lipinski, B. 2015. *How food waste costs our cities millions*. In: *WRI Insights*. Washington, DC, USA, WRI. <https://bit.ly/3KGSVP5>

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