



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



CIHEAM
International Center for Advanced
Mediterranean Agronomic Studies



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



PRIMA
PARTNERSHIP FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

CONSUMERS AND THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET: TOWARDS FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

WEBINAR OUTCOMES

KEY MESSAGES

- **Empowering consumers to make informed food choices is key to enable the transformation of Mediterranean food systems.** Engaged consumers, adequately equipped to choose healthy, nutritious and environmentally sustainable diets, are a driving force to ensure a conducive environment for sustainable consumption and production, while increasing transparency and trust within the whole food system.
- **Restoring adherence to the Mediterranean diet requires a new approach that combines the benefits of local food heritage with modern lifestyle changes.** Taking into account its environmental, social, cultural, health and economic benefits, the Mediterranean diet represents a strategic resource for driving transformative change in Mediterranean food systems.
- **Education for sustainable consumption enables individuals and social groups to become actors of change** by providing knowledge, values and skills to make environmentally friendly, ethically sound, and responsible decisions as consumers. Innovation is needed to adapt educational processes, infrastructure, and curricula to embrace sustainability through experiential learning.
- **Involving consumers in research and innovation processes is needed to better understand their needs and preferences.** Consumer-driven data collected through surveys, digital tools (e.g. mobile apps), and comparative analyses enable researchers to develop recommendations and guidelines to drive more sustainable consumption patterns.
- **Public food procurement is a good example of a flexible policy instrument with the potential to achieve multiple objectives across the food systems.** Targeted policy frameworks and multi-stakeholder partnerships can leverage public food procurement schemes to promote the Mediterranean diet, while supporting local economies and environmental sustainability.

SPEAKERS



Moderator:

Giuseppe Provenzano

Project manager, Union for the Mediterranean ([UfM](#))



Hamid El Bilali

Senior Researcher, [CIHEAM](#)



Florence Tartanac

Senior Officer, [Food and Nutrition Division](#), FAO



Marco De La Feld

Head of R&D Unit [ENCO srl](#), [PRIMA project [SWITCHtoHEALTHY](#)]



Darine Dogui

Director of Studies, Research, Analysis and Comparative Trials, [Tunisian National Institute for Consumer Affairs](#)



Aravella Zachariou

Head, Unit for Education for the Environment and Sustainable Development ([EESD](#)), Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth of Cyprus



Laura De Matteis

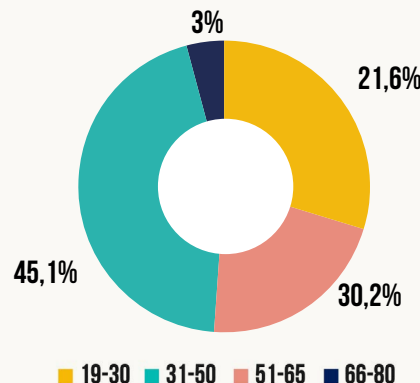
Food Systems Expert, [FAO](#)

Participation statistics | 162 participants from 32 countries. Of which, 134 participants from 16 Mediterranean countries.

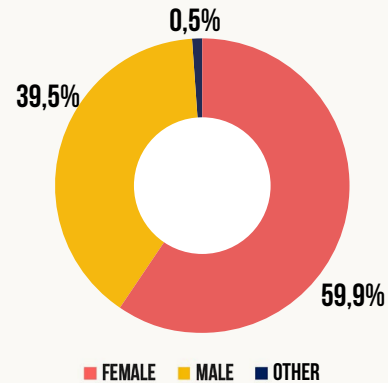
Number of participants by stakeholder group



Participants by age range



Participants by gender



MULTI-STAKEHOLDER EFFORTS TO ENGAGE CONSUMERS IN RETHINKING THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

Opening remarks and technical background to the panel discussion were provided by:



[Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari \(CIHEAM Bari\)](#)

represented by Hamid El Bilali, Senior Researcher.

CIHEAM Bari is a centre for post-graduate training, applied scientific research and design of partnership actions within the framework of international research and cooperation programmes. Cooperation and research actions concern important issues such as food security, poverty alleviation, capacity building at the institutional level, more efficient use of natural resources, improvement of agricultural production and productivity, promotion of organic farming, development of sustainable food systems, resilience to climate change, integrated management of coastal areas, gender empowerment, youth entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems. The synergy between training/education, applied scientific research and cooperation provides tangible answers to topical issues such as food safety/security and agricultural quality and innovation.

The opening remarks provided the technical background for this webinar, where CIHEAM emphasised the need for a change of route to transition to more sustainable and resilient Mediterranean food systems. This change of route demands for **a change of perception about the Mediterranean diet**, which should not only be appreciated for its capacity to provide healthy and nutritious food but seen as a comprehensive food model for a “sustainable lifestyle” and **a strategic resource for the sustainable development of the whole Mediterranean region**.

The Mediterranean diet, rich in plant-based, mostly fresh, seasonal, local, and often traditional foods, has been associated with significant improvements in health benefits related to non-communicable diseases and nutritional status.¹ It has also been recognized as a sustainable diet because of its lower environmental impact on the use of soil, water and energy² and the positive potential for climate mitigation.³ In addition, its social and cultural relevance led UNESCO to acknowledge it as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity.

However, evidence^{4,5} shows a decline in adherence to the Mediterranean diet in countries across the region. Among the drivers, urbanization trends and lifestyle changes are reducing the time available for cooking and the regularity of meals, leading to a shift in consumers’ demand for more resource-intensive food products, such as ultra-processed and pre-cooked meals, pre-packaged food products with longer durability. If we consider the food environment as the ‘interface’ and settings where consumers engage with the food system to make deci-

EMPOWERING CONSUMERS CAN IMPACT FOOD SYSTEMS’ SUSTAINABILITY

sions about acquiring, preparing, and consuming foods, there is **a need to innovate the food environments and find a balance between the Mediterranean food heritage and modern lifestyle changes**.

Consumers are the ultimate reason why food is produced, and, as such, empowering consumers (both individual and institutional) has a tremendous potential to impact food systems’ sustainability. Processes for rethinking the Mediterranean diet should be inclusive and participatory to allow the largest involvement of the concerned stakeholders, especially consumers. Bringing

together representatives from consumer organizations, national ministries, local authorities and government agencies, producer organizations, academia and research centres, the private sector, and civil society, is paramount for the rethinking of the Mediterranean diet and influence the food systems agenda in the region to better serve people and the planet. **Multi-stakeholder engagement has the potential to amplify and channel consumers’ voices to decision-makers,**

and to offer a deeper understanding of consumers’ rights and needs. Education and awareness raising can play a central role in equipping individuals to make informed food choices, while increasing transparency and trust in the food system. Research is needed to address the intention-behaviour gap among consumers. Moreover, stimulating consumers’ behavioural changes requires effective collaboration between national and local authorities, educational institutions, consumer organizations and mass media.

THIRD WORLD CONFERENCE ON THE REVITALIZATION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

COLLABORATION / MEDITERRANEAN

In September 2022, the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) organized the [3rd World Conference on the Revitalization of the Mediterranean Diet](#) in Bari, Italy. With the technical support of FAO, this edition of the Conference revolved around the theme “*A change of route towards more sustainable and resilient food systems in Mediterranean countries*”. Thematic sessions offered a variety of perspectives about the Mediterranean diet as a lever for sustainability at both local and regional level, bridging sustainable food consumption and production. The SFS-MED platform organized a high-level roundtable on the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) follow-up process gathering National Convenors of Summit dialogues from Mediterranean countries, where the Mediterranean diet came across as a lever – or even a guide – for collaboration.

OUTCOMES OF THE PANEL DISCUSSION

The webinar aimed to address the following key questions: **what is the active role that consumers can play in shaping more sustainable food systems and what are the implications for rethinking Mediterranean diets?** The panel discussion allowed to exchange experiences of several groups of stakeholders.

ENGAGING CONSUMERS IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION TO DRIVE MORE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION CHOICES

Views about consumers' engagement in research and innovation were presented by:



National Institute for Consumer Affairs of Tunisia (INC)

represented by Ms Darine Dogui, Director of Studies, Research, Analysis and Comparative Trials.

INC is a public institution under the supervision of the Ministry of Trade and Export Development. Its main mission is to provide technical support to national institutions and civil society organizations (CSOs) and to promote consumer information, orientation and awareness raising through research, analysis, and comparative studies on the scientific, economic, legal and social aspects of the consumption of goods and services.



Engineering & Consulting (ENCO)

represented by Mr Marco de La Feld, Head of Research & Development Unit and Senior Project Manager of PRIMA's SWITCHtoHEALTHY project.

ENCO is an innovation consulting firm, specialized in providing services and support to private companies and research centres in the entire cycle of the innovation management. ENCO assists its clients with highly specialized services in research and innovation projects, providing support and guidance from the proposal development to the project implementation.

The panelists highlighted the importance of **involving consumers in research and innovation processes**. Consumers' perspective and consumer-driven data collected through surveys, questionnaires, and comparative analyses enable researchers to develop recommendations and guidelines to drive more sustainable consumption patterns. **Dedicated research is needed to understand consumers' needs**, as emerging trends and technologies transform food systems; the results of such research, disseminated through consumers' organizations and other entities in charge of consumers' information, are key to empowering consumers to make informed food choices that can influence the food industry and markets.

Marketing strategies of food manufacturers, distributors and retailers predominantly promote eating styles that contribute to unhealthy diets (especially including fast food, sugar-sweetened beverages, and confectionery), with evidence suggesting that children are particularly exposed to food marketing for unhealthy food choices.⁶

Within this framework, the main mission of the National Institute for Consumer Affairs of Tunisia (INC) is the contribution to the promotion of adequate and relevant information for the consumers, through orientation and rationalization of their behaviors. The achievement of this main objective is guaranteed, among others, by conducting comparative tests that supply objective information about food products and ingredients to consumers and help them in their purchasing choices. In addition, toll-free numbers are another channel to provide information or receive complaints from consumers.

DEDICATED RESEARCH IS NEEDED TO UNDERSTAND CONSUMERS' NEEDS

The panelists referred to research, studies, and comparative trials that demonstrated how a return to more traditional diets, such as the Mediterranean one, usually based on whole* and nutritious foods with low environmental impact, is beneficial for human health, for the environment, and for local economies. Ongoing projects based on this type of research are promoting an increased adherence to the Mediterranean diet among consumers of the region (see box below).

INC provided examples of successful multi-stakeholder collaboration that enabled Tunisian consumers' associations to represent consumers' perspectives in decision-making processes for the development of food system strategies and policies. These include the participation in the National Dialogues held in the framework of the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021, as well as the ongoing revision of the **regulation about labelling** of pre-packaged foodstuffs, which aims at making nutritional labelling binding. The new regulations will thus make it possible for Tunisian consumers to compare the nutritional quality between products.

The boxes below also provide examples of partnerships between Ministries, scientists, NGOs and schools to raise awareness of young consumers and their families about the sustainability of their consumption patterns. In this context, the SWITCHtoHEALTHY project is an example of how **innovation and ICT allow for the design of interactive awareness-raising tools through digital platforms** to promote participatory actions for sustainable diets, as a catalyser for the needed food systems transformation.

*Food that has been processed or refined as little as possible and is free from additives or other artificial substances.

INC is leading several activities aimed at promoting food education among consumers to raise their awareness on how their habits impact the health of the planet.

- Since 2016, the INC has been partnering with the [Ministry of Education](#), the National Institute of Nutrition and Food Technology ([IN-NTA](#)), the National Agency of Sanitary and Environmental Control of Products ([ANCSEP](#)) and some CSOs, to implement a nationwide project entitled “[National caravan for consumers’ education in school environments](#)”. This project carries out participatory and playful activities with educational, training and awareness-raising objectives, both for elementary school students (10-12 years old) and for the teachers and educational staff who attend the sessions. Caravans tour about 20 schools per year. The project aims at sensitizing children’s consumption patterns and enabling them to acquire the necessary knowledge to develop their awareness on issues related to human health and the quality of products and services offered on the market, so that they can become responsible, informed, and influential consumers. With a focus on the Mediterranean diet, the main themes are health, nutrition, physical activity, sustainable consumption, and food loss and waste. Concrete examples of awareness raising materials are available [at this link](#).
- Among its activities, INC regularly conducts comparative research that result in recommendations for both customers and producers. Many of these trials focus on comparing ultra-processed foods such as chips or breakfast cereals and disseminate information about their unhealthy content, being very rich in sugar, trans-fats, saturated fats, and salt. As a result, INC provides recommendations to producers to improve the quality of their products, promoting the Mediterranean diet principles also for packed and processed goods; for example, by making use of olive oil instead of full fats, or of whole cereals instead of processed ones.
- INC organized an event with the Ministry of Agriculture of Tunisia, inviting scientists and consumers (including children) to collaborate in workshops focusing on the seasonality of ingredients, the co-design of healthy snacks (e.g.: burger with healthy products), and food education for healthy choices.

Funded by PRIMA with a research grant of EUR 2.8 million, the [SWITCHtoHEALTHY](#) project is implemented in 3 countries by 13 partners over the period 2022-2025. The project aims to generate a dietary behaviour change in the direction of a greater adherence to the Mediterranean diet, by strengthening the role of families in the process of acquiring and maintaining healthy eating habits. The project methodology is based on a citizen-centric circular approach starting from citizens and delivering innovations back to them. A total of 360 families from three Mediterranean countries (Spain, Turkey, and Morocco) will be selected. A combination of hands-on educational materials (toolkit, recipe book), digital tools (mobile apps, social media posts) and innovations (easy-to-eat healthy snacks) are co-designed with selected families to foster eating changes on the basis of a learning-through-playing approach. The project focuses on consumer engagement through surveys and focus groups to generate impact on food consumption patterns, foster adherence to the Mediterranean diet and understand and influence food preferences of families.

CONSUMERS’ EDUCATION AND AWARENESS AS KEY LEVERS OF SUSTAINABILITY

The perspectives on the importance of education in driving sustainability were provided by:



[Unit for Education for the Environment and Sustainable Development \(EESD\)](#)

at the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth of Cyprus, represented by Ms Stella Hadjiachilleos on behalf of Ms Aravella Zachariou, Head of the Unit.

EESD is a permanent horizontal structure of the Ministry of Education with the aim of monitoring the implementation and updating of the National Strategic Planning for Environmental Education with a focus on Sustainable Development, which is the foremost policy text of the Republic of Cyprus for the promotion of Education for the Environment and Sustainable Development, in formal and non-formal education. The key actions of EESD include: management and supervision of education centres, professional development of teachers and educators, production of educational material, implementation of curricula and education programs for the environment and sustainability in schools and communities, networking and cooperation, implementation of European competitive programs, production of reports and policy texts.

Education plays a central role in promoting the change to a more sustainable lifestyle, particularly in its ability to share knowledge about available alternatives, to raise awareness about climate change and environmental degradation, to motivate individuals to take responsibility for their impact and change underlying social norms. Awareness resulting from education on sustainable lifestyles is vital to make these drastic lifestyle shifts acceptable and change peoples' mindsets, not necessarily to consume less, but to consume differently. **Education for sustainable consumption enables individuals and social groups to become actors of change** by providing knowledge, values and skills to make environmentally friendly, ethically sound, and responsible decisions as consumers. In the Mediterranean region, education for sustainable consumers' behaviour has a special meaning, since the Mediterranean diet unifies all countries to work together for better societies. Mediterranean diet and food production are closely related to the culture and history of the region, and this is an intrinsic part of education, which can inspire consumers to more sustainable choices.

All forms of education (formal, non-formal and informal) and inter-generational communication need to align in promoting more sustainable consumption choices. **Every educational institution**

should adapt processes and mechanisms in its curricula and professional development that could promote sustainable patterns through experiential learning. Key actions and activities that education institutions can implement to drive sustainable choices include: organizing information campaigns (such as on the importance of supporting local products, organizing days and special events to get to know and promote fair-trade products); conducting research about students and families' consumption habits and preferences and sharing results with the civil society; initiatives such as vegetable gardens with substantial participation of students; promoting sustainability through creativity (e.g.: upcycling clothes and food packaging); gathering evidence about lifestyle of previous generations to understand their relationship with the land and the environment, studying ancient recipes and connecting them to people's nutritional choices in the past and today; disseminating recipes based only on local produce, tracking the geographical origins of today's diet and estimating the carbon footprint of consumption habits (e.g. the countries/geographical regions from which materials are derived and tracking the routes and stages of food products today). One of the boxes below presents some examples gathered from the experience of the Ministry of Education in Cyprus.

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION, BEHAVIOUR AND LIFESTYLES. A COLLECTION OF CASE STUDIES

EXPERIENCE / 📍 MEDITERRANEAN

This [publication](#), developed by the Union for the Mediterranean ([UfM](#)), in collaboration with the Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production ([SCP/RAC](#)) and the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development ([MIO-ECSDE](#)), presents a collection of successful case studies to spark innovative ideas from educational centres, decision makers, stakeholders as well as citizens and to promote the adoption of sustainable actions. The publication shows how both formal and non-formal education is equally important when it comes to the transfer of knowledge and ideas more intrinsically linked to consumption choices.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION IN CYPRUS

EXPERIENCE / 📍 CYPRUS

In Cyprus, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth, through its EESD Unit implements programmes on the main topics of sustainability. Some examples are provided below:

- The [Food Waste](#) interactive tool, which was created under the framework of the European Union (EU)-funded [LIFE programme](#), comprises 14 online modules that are implemented to primary and secondary schools through direct (face-to-face) instruction with tablets. The content of the modules examines several aspects of food waste. The instructors of the modules are qualified educators (mentors in education for sustainable development) and different pedagogic techniques are used.
- The [CAPture the Future Generation](#) programme, part of the EU-funded *Information Measures relating to the Common Agricultural Policy (IMCAP)* programme, aims to capture the attention of future generations and to encourage them to adopt more sustainable lifestyles, including consumption patterns, understanding that the Mediterranean diet is the common thread that can lead towards sustainability. Digital modules inform children and students focusing mainly on biodiversity, climate change, hunger, and innovation and entrepreneurship in the agrifood sector. All the lessons promote local, regional, and global sustainable consumption models, including those inspired by the Mediterranean diet.
- **Food production and consumption is a thematic unit examined throughout primary education curricula:** schools select an issue of interest in their specific context and correlate it with production and consumption practices. Specific education materials openly available online are used to facilitate the examination of consumption patterns and their social, economic and environmental impact on the local community. Consumption patterns are examined holistically through synergies of the schools with other stakeholders

such as local enterprises, crafts centers, NGOs, etc. Through multi-disciplinary approaches, the impact of adopting Mediterranean nutritional habits is examined (e.g. on our health and well-being, on the sustainability of the local enterprises producing food, on the preservation of our local food culture, etc.). Through a variety of pedagogic techniques (e.g. moral dilemmas, debates, field studies, concept maps, etc.), students can critically reflect on their consumption habits regarding nutritional choices and their impact on the local cultural, financial and social sustainability.

- The Cyprus Governmental Network of Environmental Education Centers offers, among others, **education programmes focused on local and traditional food products** in seven different locations on the island. Programs include field studies in local homes or small enterprises during which students can study traditional food products, how they are made and how they utilize local produce. These programs involve the local community and, emphasizing intergenerational communication, familiarize students with these products and with their importance for the sustainability of local communities at present and in the past.

GUIDELINES FOR PROVIDING PRODUCT SUSTAINABILITY INFORMATION

EXPERIENCE /  GLOBAL

Edited by the United Nations Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)) and the International Trade Centre ([ITC](#)), the [Guidelines](#) aim to provide value chain and public sector professionals with clear guidance on how to make effective, trustworthy claims to consumers about product-related sustainability information. They are applicable to all regions and companies of all sizes. A key, long-term objective is to generate global consensus by creating a level playing field for developing new, and revising existing, product sustainability information. Ultimately, the Guidelines aim to empower consumers to make informed sustainable choices. The target audience includes providers of information, as well as those that regulate and analyse consumer information (e.g. governments, certification bodies, NGOs). The development of the Guidelines was supported by the German government through the [International Climate Initiative](#). A presentation [video](#) was also produced by UNEP and the Akatu Institute.

SODEXO/INDITEX COLLABORATION: THE “360° SUSTAINABLE RESTAURANT” PROJECT

EXPERIENCE /  SPAIN

The multinational catering company [Sodexo](#) and the Spanish fashion giant [Inditex](#) have joined forces to implement the “[360° Sustainable restaurant](#)” project, piloted at Inditex’s company canteen. Hinging on 6 main axes (local products, sustainable use of resources and raw materials, circular economy to achieve zero waste, efficient and sustainable space, comfortable environment and good eating habits, free of single-use plastics), the main objective of this initiative is to generate a positive impact on people, communities, and the environment, understanding sustainability in a cross-cutting manner and encouraging the commitment of customers and consumers. The canteen feeds 1 600 employees and its menu is made up of 65% local products from short supply chains, often coming directly from the farm, including over 40 organically farmed products. The restaurant uses no plastic, and leftovers are systematically repurposed (animal feed, compost, biogas/fuel, etc.).

SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC FOOD PROCUREMENT BRIDGING CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

The role of public food procurement in transforming food systems through more sustainable consumption and production patterns was illustrated by:



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

represented by Ms Florence Tartanac, Senior Officer

The Food and Nutrition Division assists countries to improve diets and raise levels of nutrition and provides support with appropriate policies, strategies, and methodologies for improving the efficiency and inclusiveness of their agriculture and food systems. As a knowledge leader, areas addressed include dietary assessment, support on nutrition-sensitive food and agriculture policies and programmes, effective nutrition promotion programmes, food value chains, market linkages, post-harvest handling, food loss and waste reduction and nutrition-sensitive agro-processing. FAO is committed to support Members in their efforts to improve nutritional outcomes as stated in the Rome Declaration on Nutrition (November 2014) and to mainstream nutrition across all of the work of the Organization.

In the last decade, there has been an increasing recognition of public food procurement (in particular school food procurement) as a development tool and as an entry point to trigger more sustainable food systems. The potential of public food procurement has been expressly recognized by the African Union (through [Ho-](#)

[me-Grown School Feeding programmes](#) where school meals are linked to local procurement from smallholders), the European Union (in the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#)), and the UN Food Systems Summit (through the [School Meals Coalition: Nutrition, Health and Education for Every Child](#)).

Sustainable public food procurement can influence food consumption, driving choices about what foods to purchase, which could lead to an increase in the variety and quantity of nutritious foods served to consumers in public institution and school canteens and to the promotion of the value of local dietary habits and traditional nutritious food, such as in the case of the Mediterranean diet. **At the same time, sustainable public food procurement can influence the food supply side**, driving choices about whom food is purchased from (e.g.: local smallholder farmers, small- and medium-sized enterprises or other producers' groups, such as women and youth, etc.), therefore becoming an instrument to support the local and smallholder producers and to stimulate the economic development of communities. Finally, **public food procurement can support and promote forms of agricultural production that ensure environmental sustainability, including natural resources management and biodiversity conservation**.

It could be a potential lever for Mediterranean smallholders to transition to agroecology or other sustainable practices. It also holds the potential to promote environmental benefits in terms of reduced packaging, food waste, and lower food miles.

Public food procurement is an important policy instrument with the potential to achieve multiple development objectives, including healthy diets for consumers and food systems transformation. Thanks to its flexibility to adjust to different policy goals according to countries' specific priorities, public food procurement is a unique transversal instrument that can be used in very different contexts, ranging from low to high-income economies. Nevertheless, there is still much to be done, especially in terms

of strengthening the recognition and connection between food procurement and the broader sustainable public procurement agenda. To address the many constraints that might hinder public food procurement, institutions such as FAO strive to implement a holistic approach and intervene at different levels. **A successful implementation of public food procurement requires interventions at supply, demand, policy, institutional and legal levels**; cross-sector coordination and synergies between agriculture, nutrition, health, education, and public procurement are crucial to trigger food systems transformation.

From the supply side, there is a need to support smallholders and enable them to produce in compliance with food quality and safety requirements, to meet the demand for new products (e.g. agro-ecology, organic products), to access available finance mechanisms and to aggregate in collective markets. From the demand side, governments and the public sector should establish smallholder-friendly procurement mechanisms (e.g.: development of specific manuals in collaboration with the national public procurement regulatory authority). Finally, accompanying policy instruments and regulatory frameworks are needed (such as family farming registries, monitoring systems, food-based dietary guidelines, protocols to guarantee food safety and quality, etc.), for which different ministries and local authorities need to work together.

However, instruments used by the governments alone are not sufficient to ensure the successful formulation and implementation of public food procurement initiatives: civil society and commercial and private actors, also have a key role to play (see box below).

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL MEALS IN VALENCIA

EXPERIENCE / SPAIN

The [Municipality of Valencia](#) is implementing a [sustainable school meals project](#). Municipal legislation set specific tendering criteria for school caterers, requesting that the menus of the eight municipality-run schools and nurseries be made of local, fresh, sustainably-produced and environmentally-friendly products. This effort was coordinated between the Educational Centres Section of the Department of Education, the Municipal Food Council ([CALM](#)) and the Centre for Rural Studies and International Agriculture ([CERAI](#)). The new specifications require school menus to be fresh, seasonal and 50% organic (100% for oranges and tangerines). More specifically, the citrus fruit, olive oil and rice must be locally sourced and produced; fish is to be served one to three times a week and the consumption of pre-cooked products is limited (maximum three times a month). In the evaluation of the tendering criteria, quality is considered the most important, while the price has become less important (a reduction from 49% to 10% of the score). School caterers purchase foods from the city's wholesale market, which includes an organic food hub ([ECOTIRA](#)) liaising between the local organic farmers' network and the school canteens.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER FORA FOR INCLUSIVE FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
represented by Ms Laura De Matteis, Food Systems Expert.

The FAO Food Systems and Food Safety Division provides strategic leadership in the development of more sustainable agrifood systems, working in close coordination with national governments, food systems practitioners, and international partners, striving to integrate FAO's scientific and economic analysis to provide improved policy guidance and targeted investment for the transformation to more sustainable agrifood systems.

Multi-sectoral engagements and multi-stakeholder platforms such as the SFS-MED (see box below) or the One Planet Network's [10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production \(10YFP\)](#) have the potential to promote a participatory and inclusive approach that amplifies and channels consumers' voices to decision-makers; by sharing knowledge and research findings, such platforms promote a deeper understanding of consumers' needs that are the basis for healthier diets and more inclusive and sustainable food systems in the Mediterranean.

Mediterranean stakeholders engaged in [national and independent UN Food Systems Summit Dialogues during 2021](#) empha-

sized that food systems transformation requires inclusive and equitable governance, which recognizes the power of informed and aware consumers as actors of change. Regional and global fora also demonstrated collective interest in consumers' role for food systems transformation, such as the 3rd World Conference on the Revitalization of the Mediterranean Diet organized by CIHEAM with the technical support of FAO, as well as the [School Meals Coalition](#) established during the UN Food Systems Summit. There is **momentum for leveraging the power of consumers to transform agrifood systems; their engagement in multi-stakeholder cooperation will be key** to foster a conducive environment for sustainable consumption.

SFS-MED PLATFORM

COLLABORATION /  MEDITERRANEAN

The [SFS-MED Platform](#) is a multi-stakeholder initiative co-led by FAO, CIHEAM, UfM and PRIMA as an affiliated project of the One Planet Network's SFS Programme. The Platform is a **forum** for multi-stakeholder dialogue and collaboration, a **network** for strengthening knowledge sharing and capacity building, and a **catalyst** for regional cooperation on priority themes for sustainable food systems transformation in the Mediterranean. The SFS-MED Platform is open to all food systems stakeholders in the Mediterranean region and aims to create a community to leverage and share the knowledge, experience and skills of food systems actors across the Mediterranean region towards concerted action for the sustainable transformation of food systems.

Contact the [SFS-MED Platform's Coordination Desk](#) for further information about the modalities of engagement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This webinar was designed within the framework of the SFS-MED initiative. Deep appreciation is due to the SFS-MED Platform's Coordination Desk (CIHEAM, FAO, PRIMA, UfM), with a specific mention for the *ad hoc* team who curated the design of this webinar: Antonella Autino (PRIMA), Laura De Matteis (Food Systems and Food Safety Division – ESF, FAO), Tommaso Mattei (ESF, FAO), Giuseppe Provenzano (UfM), Jacopo Schürch (ESF, FAO), Alessandra Sensi (UfM), Afef Tlili (UfM), José Valls Bedeau (ESF, FAO).

Special appreciation to Florence Égal (Food Security and Nutrition Expert) and Denis Lairon (Université Aix-Marseille) for the resources shared during the live webinar.

The graphic layout is by Simone Mari.

NOTES

¹Lacirignola C., Capone R., El Bilali H., Debs P., Cardone G.L., Driouech N., Dernini S., Burlingame B., Gitz V. and Meybeck A. Priority 5: Mediterranean food consumption patterns: diet, environment, society, economy and health. In: Petruzzella D., Sancassiani S. (eds.). 2017. Options Méditerranéennes, A No. 120 - Feeding Knowledge. Bari, Italy, CIHEAM. <https://bit.ly/3UPHcnk>

²Hachem, F., Capone, R., Yannakoulia, M., Dernini, S., Hwalla, N. & Kalaitzidis, C. 2016. The Mediterranean diet: a sustainable consumption pattern. In: FAO and CIHEAM. *Mediterra 2016. Zero Waste in the Mediterranean. Natural Resources, Food and Knowledge*, pp.243-261. Paris, Presses de Sciences Po. <https://bit.ly/3XwBtEX>

³Castaldi, S., Dembska, K., Antonelli, M. et al. 2022. The positive climate impact of the Mediterranean diet and current divergence of Mediterranean countries towards less climate sustainable food consumption patterns. In: *Scientific Reports* 12, 8847. Nature. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-12916-9>

⁴FAO. 2021. *Europe and Central Asia – Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2021: Statistics and trends*. Budapest, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7493en>

⁵FAO. 2021. *Near East and North Africa – Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2021: Statistics and trends*. Cairo, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7495en>

⁶World Health Organization. 2022. *Food marketing exposure and power and their associations with food-related attitudes, beliefs and behaviours: a narrative review*. Geneva, WHO. <https://bit.ly/3xXygCG>

RESOURCES

The recording of the webinar is available at this [link](#) and the agenda of the webinar is available at this [link](#).

Events

- **CIHEAM Bari.** *Third world conference on the revitalization of the Mediterranean diet. A change of route towards more sustainable and resilient food systems in the Mediterranean countries.* Bari, IAMB. <https://bit.ly/3EorVE9>

Publications

- **CIHEAM and FAO.** 2015. *Mediterranean food consumption patterns: diet, environment, society, economy and health. A White Paper Priority 5 of Feeding Knowledge Programme, Expo Milan 2015.* Bari and Rome, Italy, CIHEAM-IAMB, FAO. fao.org/3/i4358e/i4358e.pdf
- **Consumers International (CI).** 2019. *How Consumer Organisations Can Contribute to More Sustainable Food Systems.* London, CI. <https://rb.gy/qcxhh0>
- **CI.** 2021. *Consumers call for action at the United Nations Food Systems Summit.* London, CI. <https://rb.gy/wdyqxy>
- **CI.** 2022. *Consumers in Crisis: An Action Agenda for Future Food Systems.* London, CI. <https://rb.gy/nmukti>
- **FAO.** 2021. *Consumer organizations and the right to adequate food – Making the connections.* Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb3685en>
- **FAO.** 2021. *Consumer organizations in action – A collection of practices driving the right to adequate food.* Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7566en>
- **FAO.** 2022. *Thinking about the future of food safety - A foresight report.* Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb8667en>
- **FAO, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT and Editora da UFRGS.** 2021. *Public food procurement for sustainable food systems and healthy diets – Volume 1.* Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7960en>
- **FAO and CIHEAM.** 2016. *Mediterra 2016. Zero Waste in the Mediterranean. Natural Resources, Food and Knowledge.* Paris, Presses de Sciences Po. <https://bit.ly/3XwBtEX>
- **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>
- **Mathie, R. G. and Wals, A.E.J.** 2022. *Whole School Approaches to Sustainability: Exemplary Practices from around the world.* Wageningen University. <https://doi.org/10.18174/566782>
- **Meddeb, S.** 2020. *Modes de consommation et production durables en Tunisie. Rapport général.* In: One Planet Network > Knowledge Centre. <https://bit.ly/40o9vfQ>
- **Scoullou, M., Malotidi, V., Farnese, M., Bicocchi, R., Salman, N., Atrash, I., Elhir, S., Ftouhi, M., Reda, M. and Ahmadein, G.** 2021. *Mediterranean Food – Our legacy, Our Future: A resource handbook to promote intercultural dialogue and sustainability through the Mediterranean Food & Diet.* Athens, MIO-ECSDE. <https://bit.ly/3zqaYr4>
- **Sodexo.** 2019. *Fiscal 2019 Integrated Report.* Issy-les-Moulineaux, France, Sodexo. <https://bit.ly/3jBlTZo>
- **Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).** 2019. *Education for Sustainable Consumption, Behaviour and Lifestyles - A collection of case studies.* Barcelona. <https://bit.ly/3WZQgX1>
- **United Nations (UN).** 2016. *United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection.* New York and Geneva, UN. <https://rb.gy/prvysx>
- **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and International Trade Centre (ITC).** 2017. *Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information: Global guidance on Making Effective Environmental, Social and Economic Claims, to Empower and Enable Consumer Choice.* Nairobi, UNEP. <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/22395>
- **World Health Organization (WHO).** 2022. *Food marketing exposure and power and their associations with food-related attitudes, beliefs and behaviours: a narrative review.* Geneva, WHO. <https://bit.ly/3xYgCG>

Articles

- **Castaldi, S., Dembska, K., Antonelli, M. et al.** 2022. The positive climate impact of the Mediterranean diet and current divergence of Mediterranean countries towards less climate sustainable food consumption patterns. In: *Scientific Reports* 12, 8847. Nature. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-12916-9>
- **Empresas por el clima.** 2022. *Restaurante Sostenible 360°: un proyecto de Sodexo e Inditex.* In *Empresas por el clima > Actualidad.* Zaragoza, Spain, Fundación Ecología y Desarrollo. <https://bit.ly/3DEyFx5>
- **Lacirignola C., Capone R., El Bilali H., Debs P., Cardone G., Driouech N., Dernini S., Burlingame B., Gitz V. and Meybeck A.** **Priority 5: Mediterranean food consumption patterns: diet, environment, society, economy and health.** In: *Petruzzella D., Sancassiani S. (eds.). 2017. Options Méditerranéennes, A No. 120 - Feeding Knowledge.* Bari, Italy, CIHEAM. <https://bit.ly/3UPHcnk>
- **Medina, F.X., Solé-Sedeno, J.M., Bach-Faig, A. and Aguilar-Martínez A.** 2021. Obesity, Mediterranean Diet, and Public Health: A Vision of Obesity in the Mediterranean Context from a Sociocultural Perspective. In: *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.* 18(7):3715. Basel, Switzerland. MDPI. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18073715>

- **Serra-Majem L., Tomaino L., Dernini S. et al.** 2020. Updating the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid towards Sustainability: Focus on Environmental Concerns. In: *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(23):8758. Basel, Switzerland. MDPI <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17238758>
- **Serrano, Á.** 2022. El nuevo menú que servirán los colegios municipales de Valencia. In *Las Provincias > Valencia ciudad*. Valencia, Spain, Las Provincias. <https://bit.ly/3RLyBRP>

Websites and other online resources

- “C’est qui le patron?!” La marque du consommateur. 2022. Paris, La Société des Consommateurs. <https://bit.ly/30lBU0t>
- “Chefchauen – The Mediterranean Diet project.” 2017. Chefchauen, Morocco. Department of Environment and Cooperation, City of Chefchauen. <https://rb.gy/hhhuao>
- **One Planet network.** 2021. Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information. In: Youtube. https://youtu.be/w00Bn_RUKVE

The SFS-MED Platform is an affiliated project of the One Planet Network’s Sustainable Food Systems Programme

This document was produced with financial assistance from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of FAO and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the Italian Government.



Some rights reserved. This work is available under a CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO licence



For further information and contacts:
coordinationdesksfsmplatform@iamb.it