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CIHEAM
International Center for Advanced
Mediterranean Agronomic Studies



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PRIMA
PARTNERSHIP FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

COORDINATING LOCAL AND NATIONAL ACTIONS TO REDUCE FOOD LOSS AND WASTE IN MEDITERRANEAN CITIES

This event is organized in the framework of the [Food is Never Waste Coalition](#)

Tuesday, 28 January 2025 | 11:00 - 12:30 (CET)

Background

Food loss and waste presents significant challenges to food security, sustainability, and resource management across the Mediterranean.¹ With over 70 percent,^{2,3} of the region's population living in urban areas – a figure expected to grow in the coming decades⁴ – cities play a major role as both consumers of food and producers of food waste. In 2022, the European Union recorded 59 million tonnes⁵ of fresh food lost or wasted, averaging 132 kilograms per person, with households accounting for 54% of this total (71 kilograms per person). By comparison, this figure is lower in Eastern Europe, with an average of 53 kilograms per person at household level, and considerably higher in the Near East and North Africa region, with food waste at household levels averaging 114 kilograms per capita annually.⁶ Despite these challenges, **cities have the potential to drive innovation and systemic change** and play a key role in reducing food losses and waste towards more sustainable agrifood systems and a circular (bio)economy.⁷

Reducing food loss and waste in urban areas offers broad environmental, social, and economic benefits. Repurposing organic waste and agrifood residues – e.g. composting, converting to fertilizer, animal feed, or biogas – can significantly cut greenhouse gas emissions, including methane from landfills, while reducing harmful pollutants linked to respiratory diseases and other health issues.^{8,9,10} Effective waste management also promotes natural resource conservation¹¹ and limits environmental contamination, such as land pollution and water eutrophication, lowering risks of zoonotic diseases and enhancing public health.^{8,9} Economically, these initiatives generate jobs in waste collection, recovery, recycling and related sectors, promoting innovation and driving the shift toward a circular economy¹² and enhancing economic inclusion of marginalised groups, such as youth and women. Socially, circular agrifood systems help address food security by reducing losses across supply chains, redistributing surplus, and transforming waste into sustainable products, thus strengthening urban-rural connections and fostering community engagement.^{13,14,15}

Nevertheless, achieving these co-benefits requires coordinated actions at both the national and local levels. National governments can establish policies and legislative frameworks, create incentives and disincentives, promote investments and innovative initiatives, and foster the cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder coordination needed to address food loss and waste comprehensively and systemically. At the same time, subnational governments (such as local authorities, municipalities, states, regions, provinces) can influence national policies, by adopting innovative approaches and developing local strategies with benefits that reach far beyond their borders. Ensure coordination between national and local efforts – often referred to as **multi-level governance** – is key to ensuring strategies are sustainable, scalable and effective in the long term.

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 webinars 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.

The webinar is organized within the framework of the [Food is Never Waste Coalition](#), which aims to halve global food waste and reduce food losses by at least 25 percent by 2030 by fostering collaboration among stakeholders, facilitate learning and sharing best practices, promoting investment in food loss and waste reduction and driving action through initiatives such as the “[123 Pledge](#)”. The webinar also builds on previous activities in the framework of the SFS-MED Platform, including the first webinar of this series, which highlighted the importance of food waste management as key entry point for integrating agrifood systems thinking at the local level, by promoting capacity building and investments in innovation to increase stakeholders’ awareness to drive a shift towards more sustainable behaviours;¹⁶ the research conducted by FAO and Let’s Food on agrifood systems transformation in Mediterranean cities,¹³ and insights from other multistakeholder dialogues in Cairo¹⁷ and online.¹⁸ Other relevant pillars of the work on food loss and waste in the region are the Union for the Mediterranean’s (UfM) “*Greener Med*” agenda, which creates technical and financial convergence around the regional priorities agreed by the 43 UfM member countries, including waste and food waste in a wider green and circular economy logic, and takes stock of the Mediterranean regional projects supporting these efforts, including those related to food waste in the agrifood chain,¹⁹ and PRIMA’s dedicated cross-action, supporting research and projects that are developing innovative and sustainable solutions, such as restorative approaches, and innovative preservation techniques.²⁰

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.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

This webinar is expected to raise awareness and promote dialogue on options to strengthen collaboration between national and local stakeholders to support effective local food loss and waste reduction interventions contributing to agrifood systems transformation. It will open a space for sharing experiences to explore how cities and subnational entities can contribute to national policies and inclusive governance mechanisms that can strengthen the enabling environment for food loss and waste reduction. The event seeks to enhance coordination across the region, promoting more integrated and effective approaches and actions to agrifood systems transformation by addressing food loss and waste-related challenges at the local level.

This session will aim to address the key questions:

- **How can national policies and frameworks effectively support cities/ local governments in implementing food loss and waste reduction strategies and initiatives?**
- **In what ways can cities drive innovation and contribute to the development of national food loss and waste reduction policies?**



- ¹**CIHEAM & FAO.** 2016. *Mediterra 2016. Zero Waste in the Mediterranean. Natural Resources, Food and Knowledge.* Paris, Presses de Sciences Po & Rome, FAO. <https://www.ciheam.org/publication/zero-waste-in-the-mediterranean/>
- ²**IEMed (European Institute of the Mediterranean).** 2021. *IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook 2021*, p. 449. Barcelona, Spain, IEMed. <https://bit.ly/3vJevyt>
- ³**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, Sustainable Development Solutions Network Mediterranean (SDSN Mediterranean). <https://bit.ly/3YqJXj8>
- ⁴**IEMed.** 2018. *IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook 2018*, p. 362. Barcelona, Spain, IEMed. <https://bit.ly/3zRbd0A>
- ⁵**Eurostat.** 2024. Food waste and food waste prevention – estimates. In: *Eurostat. Statistics explained.* Luxembourg. [Cited 18 October 2024]. <https://bit.ly/3YrnR04>
- ⁶**United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).** 2024. *Food Waste Index Report 2024.* Nairobi. <https://www.unep.org/resources/publication/food-waste-index-report-2024>
- ⁷**Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).** 2021. *Theories of Change and Impact Pathways. Support for the Union for the Mediterranean Regional Platform in Research and Innovation.* Barcelona, Spain, UfM. <https://bit.ly/3Z8AKfX>
- ⁸**Rudziak, P., Batung, E. & Luginaah, I.** 2024. The effects of gases from food waste on human health: A systematic review. *PLoS One*, 19(3). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0300801>
- ⁹**World Health Organization (WHO).** 2024. Chapter 4. Solid waste. In: *Compendium of WHO and other UN guidance in health and environment, 2024 update.* Geneva, Switzerland, WHO. <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/378095>
- ¹⁰**Yang, N. H. N. & Yang, A.** 2022. Urban bioeconomy: uncovering its components, impacts and the urban bio-symbiosis. *Cleaner Production Letters*, 3:100015. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clpl.2022.100015>
- ¹¹**Witek-Krowiak, A., Gorazda, K., Szopa, D., Trzaska, K., Moustakas, K. & Chojnacka, K.** 2022. Phosphorus recovery from wastewater and bio-based waste: an overview. *Bioengineered*, 13(5): 13474–13506. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21655979.2022.2077894>
- ¹²**International Labour Organization (ILO), Circle Economy & World Bank Group.** 2023. *Decent work in the circular economy: An overview of the existing evidence base.* Geneva, Switzerland, ILO. <https://www.ilo.org/publications/decent-work-circular-economy-overview-existing-evidence-base>
- ¹³**FAO.** 2024. *Agrifood systems transformation in Mediterranean cities – Opportunities for collaborative action and shared learning.* Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd1262en>
- ¹⁴**Sundin, N., Bartek, L., Osowski, C.P., Strid, I. & Eriksson, M.** 2023. Sustainability assessment of surplus food donation: A transfer system generating environmental, economic, and social values. *Sustainable Production and Consumption*, 38: 41–54. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.spc.2023.03.022>
- ¹⁵**Tenuta, N., Barros, T., Teixeira, R.A. & Paes-Sousa, R.** 2021. Brazilian Food Banks: overview and perspectives. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(23): 12598. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182312598>
- ¹⁶**CIHEAM, FAO, PRIMA & UfM.** 2022. *Food waste management and circular economy in Mediterranean cities – Webinar outcomes.* Rome, FAO. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cc1926en>
- ¹⁷**FAO.** 2023. Partnering for action in Mediterranean cities. In: *FAO Agrifood Systems.* Rome. [Cited 22 October 2024] fao.org/food-systems/news/news-detail/Partnering-for-action-in-Mediterranean-cities/en
- ¹⁸**FAO.** 2023. Promoting sustainable food systems in the Mediterranean: fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange among cities. In: *FAO Urban Food Agenda.* Rome. [Cited 22 October 2024] fao.org/urban-food-agenda/news-events/news-detail/en/c/1644208/
- ¹⁹**UfM.** 2023. *Towards 2030: Agenda for a greener Med. Contributing to Achieving the Environmental SDGs in the Mediterranean.* Barcelona, Spain, UfM. <https://bit.ly/48RUtDy>
- ²⁰**PRIMA.** 2024. PRIMA's fight against food loss: solutions from field to fork. In: *PRIMA.* Barcelona. [Cited 27 November 2024]. <https://bit.ly/3Vf6FZB>

AGENDA

Interpretation will be provided in English and French

11.00-11.10	Opening remarks	Joan Borrell <i>Deputy Secretary General, Higher Education and Research, UfM</i> Angelo Riccaboni <i>Chair, PRIMA</i>
11.10-11.20	Keynote remarks	Corinna Hawkes <i>Director, Agrifood Systems and Food Safety Division, FAO</i>
11.20-12.25	Panel discussion <hr/> <i>Local perspective on waste management plans</i> <hr/> <i>Local perspective on city-to-city exchanges to strengthen FLW managementx</i> <hr/> <i>National-local coordination on food waste law design and implementation</i> <hr/> <i>Promoting research and innovation for regional FLW solutions</i> <hr/> <i>Role of civil society in influencing local and national policies and practices</i>	<i>Moderator: Louison Lançon</i> <i>Project Manager and co-founder, Let's Food</i> <hr/> Oussama Jraied <i>Deputy Director, Development, Municipality of La Goulette, Tunisia</i> <hr/> Kassab AlShakhanbeh <i>Manager, Amman Central Market, Greater Amman Municipality, Jordan</i> <hr/> Erwan de Gavelle <i>Head of Food Policy, Directorate-General for Food, Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry, France</i> <hr/> Gianfranco Romanazzi <i>Action Chair, Sustainable Network for agrofood loss and waste prevention, management, quantification and valorisation (FoodWaStop)</i> <hr/> Lydia Merrouche <i>Managing Director & Founder, Fossoul Agricole</i>
12.25-12.30	Closing remarks	Teodoro Miano <i>Secretary General, CIHEAM</i>

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RESOURCES

Publications

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- Zero Waste Europe.** 2020. *France's law for fighting food waste. Food Waste Prevention Legislation.* Brussels. <https://bit.ly/3CfOpbN>

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- Owasi, Y.R. & Formentini, M.** 2021. Investigating the Role of Institutional Frameworks in Food Waste Reduction at the Retailer Interface in the European Union. In: A. Dolgui, A. Bernard, D. Lemoine, G. von Cieminski & D. Romero, eds. *Advances in Production Management Systems. Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable and Resilient Production Systems. APMS 2021.* IFIP Advances in Information and Communication Technology, vol 631. Cham, Switzerland, Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-85902-2_66
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Websites and online resources

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FAO. 2024. Food Loss and Waste Reduction in the Near East and North Africa. In: *FAO. Technical Platform on the Measurement and Reduction of Food Loss and Waste*. Rome. [Cited 18 October 2024]. fao.org/platform-food-loss-waste/regions/neareast/en

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