

PRESS RELEASE

SISTERS, new EU project led by AITIIP, kicks off: innovations in the agri-food value chain for a reduction of food waste.



SISTERS Consortium in kick-off meeting.

- AITIIP Technology Centre leads SISTERS, a project that seeks to minimize waste and residues throughout the food chain.
- The initiative proposes a series of cross-sectoral innovations to reduce food losses by 27% and CO2 emissions by 20% in the case studies.
- SISTERS develops innovative solutions that cover the entire agri-food value chain: production, processing, logistics, marketing, and consumption.

December 2021 - AITIIP technology centre is leading the European SISTERS project, which proposes a holistic solution to the challenges of the food industry to reduce losses and waste generated at each stage of the food value chain in Europe by 27% and reduce CO2 emissions by around 20% in the project's case studies. With a budget of 10.1 million euros, of which 8.3 million are provided by the European Commission, the consortium is made up of 18 partners from 8 different European countries with a wealth of experience in food science and technology.

SISTERS develops solutions for each of the linkages in the agri-food value chain, specifically:

The project proposes the creation of the **first European online platform for farmers and the primary sector to sell the surplus of their productions and, thus, favour the local economy**, as well as facilitating access to nutritious and healthy food for the most disadvantaged social groups. For example, this space will include fruit and vegetable crops that do not meet the standards of size or appearance required by the market for their subsequent commercialisation, but which are perfectly suitable for consumption.

SISTERS will also design **smart food containers** that help to minimise food losses during transport, keeping both bulk and packaged food in optimal conditions thanks to the installation of advanced sensors that will allow precise control of the environment in which the product is being transported or preserved. Thus, among other parameters, the temperature, humidity and gas composition of the environment will be measured.

To improve the maintenance of food quality, **a series of bio-based packaging will also be developed**, using biopolymers based on polyesters and polylactic acid (PLA) that can be composted at home, thus reducing the negative impact on the environment. Additives extracted from agricultural waste will be added to these materials to extend the useful life of the products. On the other hand, a second additive will also be used to favour the biodegradability process of the final product.

As a complement to this global strategy, SISTERS will create a **seal of excellence** that aims to promote sustainable retail practices. It will provide consumer information through a **QR code** and dynamic labelling in order to increase sustainability awareness for both customers and retailers.

Thanks to these cross-sectoral innovations, **SISTERS expects to achieve an ambitious environmental and economic impact on the current dynamics of the food system in terms of production, processing, logistics, marketing, and consumption**, contributing to the reduction of food waste at all stages of the process and changing the mentality of consumers about their less sustainable behaviour.

The SISTERS project officially started on November 1st, 2021 and is scheduled to end on April 30th, 2026. The project partners are Fondazione Edmund Mach (Italy), Rebus Labs AG (Switzerland), Kungliga Tekniska Hoegskolan (Sweden), Safe Food Advocacy Europe (Belgium), Munster Technological University (Ireland), Bio-mi (Croatia), Innovarum (Spain), Gaia Biomaterials (Sweden), BM Services (France), Riberebro Integral SA (Spain), Eroski (Spain), Laboratori Archa SRL (Italy), Asociación de Organizaciones de Productores de Frutas y Hortalizas de Murcia (Spain), ITC Packaging (Spain), Natureplast SAS (France), Enco SRL (Italy) and Carbiolice (France).



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