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# MedSNAIL

## Sustainable Networks for Agro-food Leading in the Mediterranean

MedSNAIL is a project funded by the European Union, through the ENI CBC MED Programme. Its main aim is fostering socially and environmentally sustainable development of agro-food SMEs by valorising traditional Euro-Mediterranean products according to a “slow” approach and short-chain principles. Fo this aim, it will attempt to provide

consultancy, support and training to local actors, and will promote clustering of traditional products and producers in the cooperation area.

[Read more](#)

NEWSLETTER #2 – December 2020

## PARTNERSHIP

MedSNAIL brings together 7 Partners from 7 countries:

- Andalusian Federation of Towns and Provinces (Lead partner) (Spain)
- Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity (Italy)
- American University of Beirut (Lebanon)
- The Rural Women's Development Society Economic, social and political Empowerment for rural women's (RWDS) (Palestine)
- University of Sfax (Tunisia)
- Gozo Regional Development Foundation (Malta)
- Women for Cultural Development (Namaa) (Jordania)



Fondazione Slow Food  
per la Biodiversità  
ONLUS



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## WHY SHOULD YOU FOLLOW MedSNAIL?

You should follow MedSNAIL if you are interested in agrofood and you want to know more about the project principles and topics (local food communities, sustainable rural development, fair agro-food production) and on the advantages of the slow approach to

define new pathways for a sustainable and durable development, beyond major economic trends. We will keep you informed about the on-going work.

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## **MedSNAIL project progresses in time of COVID-19: first desk reviews by the partners on the state-of-the-art of sustainable agrofood systems in the Mediterranean**



The health crisis provoked by the expansion of Covid-19 all over the world is undoubtedly having an important impact on the normal development of European projects, as most of them deal with issues that need to be tested on the territory, for which mobility is of utmost importance. Transnational cooperation means working on a topic locally under a common approach agreed by a number of partners, and exchange experiences and know-how, trying to transfer good practices into other contexts.

European projects act as real ideas labs where to test and implement new ways of doing to improve governance, and management of resources with a wide approach involving innovative and experimental methodologies as a result from cooperation with European counterparts.

No contingency plan could foresee the development of a pandemic which would prevent people from going out and doing normal life, we are at a rare occurrence and we must find ways to go on working with our projects, adapting working plans to the current situation. That is what we're trying to do in MedSNAIL. WE are deciding alternative paths for our project, such as turning in-person events originally programmed into virtual sessions.

At present, we are at the stage of mapping products (raw materials, animal breeds, processed products, traditional techniques, recipes) present in the area of intervention, and assess their potential in terms of conservation of the cultural and environmental

heritage, as well as their potential to boost virtuous territorial dynamics from a socio-cultural, environmental and economic point of view.

The first phase of this mapping includes desk reviews by all partners aimed at analysing the target contexts and first approachment to stakeholders in the territories. Preliminary diagnosis have been made by every partner, which were to be pooled and confronted in the frame of a workshop addressed to project partners scheduled to be held in Beirut in June, with the aim to support partners to identify stakeholders and local leaders.

But the situation has made impossible to go on with this scenary, That is why we have agreed on a series of bilateral virtual meetings through which Slow Food Foundation, Italian partner in the project, has assisted and advised partners on how to optimise their desk reviews; in an attempt to reinforce partners' skills to face better prepared the engagement of their stakeholders and local leaders.

If you want to know more about which areas have been chosen by each partner, and go deeper in their desk reviews, you can find more information by clicking the following button:

### Desk reviews

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## **Second part of mapping: getting closer to the identification of products to be included in MedSNAIL catalogue**

In order to conclude mapping of the products and producers, we have solved mobility restrictions by setting a new round of bilateral training sessions addressed to each partner individually and aimed at building capacities to carry out their field interviews with local rural communities and public authorities, on the one hand, and training them for the selection of their communities, producers, products and structures able to enter the market.

Thanks to these sessions, MedSNAIL's catalogue is starting to take shape. Let's see some of the products selected by the partners:

### **The Product- Khabeesa (JORDAN)**

One of the classic sweets in the area of intervention is –*khabeesa*. A product that is made from Salti Grapes, the local grape that is grown in the area. Historically, grapevines were amongst the first fruit to be cultivated in the Middle East and the Mediterranean

periphery. It is estimated that it originated in the Levant during the second half of the 4th millennium B.C.

The Salti Grapes bear the name of the municipality of Balqaa, Al Salt City, in the area of intervention. Many historians believe that the name “Salt” comes from the latin word Saltus “land of figs and grapes”, as the area has been known for the quality of its grapes for centuries. Because of the abundance of grape production in the city, food production of Salti grapes based products also flourished.. *Khabeesa's* preparation is passed from generation to generation, it is usually prepared when the grapes season is to an end. The custom of picking and preparing the grapes is deeply rooted within the local community, it is a festival with big family gatherings where they camp in the grapevines and the entire family gets involved in the process.

The people of the area still use the traditional method of preparing the leather like product that is prepared by squeezing Salti grapes by hand and boiling the juice on wood fire with whole-wheat flour until it thickens into a paste. This paste is laid out thin and flat on cloth under the sun until it dries, then its hanged and splashed with water to moisten and remove the golden brownish thin layers form the cloths. This beautiful combination of sweet-sour flavor, chewy leather and crunchy seeds is a great source of energy and is enjoyed as a snack especially during the winter.



### **Eminium Spiculatum Aqueous Leaf Extract (Palestine)**

The agrobiodiversity research in Palestine identified more than 80 crops in Jenin area. The inventory includes a list of edible wild collected plants going back deep in the food heritage. One very common plant is Blume schott (*Eminium spiculatum*) called Ja'adeh in Arabic.

Jaa'deh is a member of family Araceae. It's a cormous perennial herb with pedately dissected leaves, appearing together with the flowers. Spathe is very large up to 15 cm long, with an open, inside purple mottled tube ending in an inside blockish purple warty limb. The plant is fairly common in the Mediterranean coastal region. It grows with first rain to end of rainy season March -April. It is native to Palestine. Many plants in this family are poisonous if eaten raw, this toxin gives sensation as if hundreds of tiny needles are sticking into the mouth tongue. However, toxins are easily destroyed by cooking.

Jaa'deh is collected from the wild not cultivated. It is also sun dried and kept for use all over the year. One kilogram costs around \$100. However, many people collect it and keep for their own use.

When a mother delivers a baby there is a menu of dishes and drinks for the puerperal and women who visit her for congratulating. In many Jenin villages and few other villages in Tulkarm just on borders of Jenin, a special soup made of Jea'deh *Eminium spiculatum* and eggs is usually offered for puerperal. The dish is called "Ja'ajeel Jaadeh". The dry Ja'adeh leaves are hard cooked before adding onions and olive oil then a special dough is prepared from flour, eggs and spices, small balls are made and dipped into the cooked soup. Looking into references about the nutritional value of *E. spiculatum* a medical reference shows that it has anticoagulant effect, which means it helps puerperal recover from delivery. Local women said "*this dish helps in milk production and mother recovery*".



## Products Identified in the region of Kerkennah (Tunisia)

### **I.1. Fatoura Bread**

As their island does not provide them except with little giving, kerkennian women used every thank, even the rest of olives called Fatoura (figure 2a) is used to prepare "Fatoura Bread" (figure 1) which exists only in kerkennah.



**Figure 1.** Fatoura bread

## **I.2. Barely Bread**

Sfaxien knew bread since ancient times and was closely linked to his daily life like Guallit bread (figure 2a). It is a dry bread used by the Tunisian army in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It has a round shape and thin thickness that is cooked in the oven to the point of firmness.



**Figure 2.** Guallit bread (a) and Barely bread (b)

This bread is distinguished by its long preservation period and is known in kerkennah as sailors use it. Another type of bread that Kerkennah is famous for is barley bread (figure 2b). Barley cultivars in kerkennah are native to the Islands and resist more to drought. Thus, it produces genetically better seeds used also in Aoula.

## **II. Dried grape Zbib**

Drying grapes to make raisins Zbib is often done in the field, on the ground. There are many uses: Zbib is used in Mesfouf mixed with couscous, to prepare Laklouka, which is very popular in the islands and also for Charmoula (figure 3b) especially on the occasion of the Aid El Fetr feast. The dish of "charmoula" is attributed to Charles Mulla, a Greek sailor who was exposed to a storm on the shores of the Black Sea, where his boat crashed and sank. When the storm calmed down, he searched for the wreckage of his vehicle and found some raisins in Zeer. He lit a fire and poured the raisins into a pot of boiling water, and found an onion that he cut in pieces and added salt and oil to it and cooked all the

ingredients until you got a plate that was enough to keep him alive.



**Figure 3.** Zbib

**More products in the next newsletter**

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## **MedSNAIL YouTube CHANNEL**

The MedSNAIL YouTube channel was launched last October, at the moment you can find two interesting videos.

The American University of Beirut, Lebanese partner of the MedSNAIL project, has created a video, which is the first episode of the “The Heritage Guardians” video series, to highlight local producers and traditional products in the project's target regions. This video shows the production of traditional tomato pasta in West Bekaa, Lebanon.

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I make all kinds of products, but tomato paste is my favorite product to produce.

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Women for Cultural Development (Namaa), our partner from Jordan, has produced a video which shows the process of the mapping made in order to identify food products that are deeply rooted within the culture and heritage of Balqa (Jordan), the pilot area chosen for the development of the project.



We met with several producers who are still growing these crops, breeding indigenous species of animals and processing these products.

التقىنا بالعديد من المنتجين اللذين ما زالوا يقومون بزراعة هذه المحاصيل وتربية سلالات الحيوانات الأصيلة وتصنيع هذه المنتجات.

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## UPCOMING PROJECT EVENTS

## Terra Madre Salone del Gusto 2020 - “How it is made” Initiative

Terra Madre Salone del Gusto is an international gastronomy exhibition organized by Slow Food Foundation, organisation partner of MedSNAIL project. This event takes places every two years in Turin, bringing together food producers and artisans from across the world. Due to the global pandemic, the event was launched in a new format: both physical and digital and it will last 6 months until April 2021.



**TERRA  
MADRE**  
SALONE DEL GUSTO  
#TerraMadre #SlowFoodForChange  
**OUR** FOOD  
PLANET  
FUTURE

MedSNAIL partners will participate in Terra Madre through the initiative called “How it is made”, a collection of short videos that show and discover a know-how, a skill, a recipe, a preparation, or a profession. Thus, the local leaders, producers, farmers or chefs of the pilot areas selected by each MedSNAIL partner, through the videos, will be able to show their profession, their work and the product or recipe they would like to present. These videos would be a tool and an opportunity for people to learn more about a traditional dish or recipe, or to learn a skill.

More information by clicking the following button:

[Terra Madre Salone del Gusto](#)

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AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTS!**





***This project is funded by the European Union under the ENI CBC MED Programme***

MedSNAIL (Sustainable Networks for Agro-food leading in the Mediterranean) is a project attempting to foster the valorisation and development of small-scale traditional agro-food value chains, combining enhancement of market potentialities and socio-environmental sustainability. MedSNAIL project is running from September 2018 and will have a duration of 36 months. It has a **total budget** of Euro **2.028.807,74 €**, and an **ENI Contribution** of Euro **1.825.926,97 € (90%)**

**Lead Partner:** FAMP - Federación Andaluza de Municipios y Provincias, Andalusian Federation of Municipalities and Provinces

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