
TASK FORCE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

In cooperation with



First meeting of the task force “Sustainable Agriculture in Small Islands”, organized in cooperation with INSULEUR and Instituto Tecnológico de Canarias.

Details

Date: February 16, 2021

Participants:

- **Gonzalo Piernavieja** - Research & Innovation Director, Instituto Tecnológico de Canarias (ITC)
- **Georges Asonitis** - INSULEUR Technical Committee
- **Amani Alfarra** - Water Resources Officer, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- **Antony Hili** - Gozo Chamber of Commerce
- **Vanessa Raya** - Senior Researcher at the Canary Islands Institute of Agrarian Research (ICIA)
- **Ricardo Díaz** - Head of ITC’s Environmental Analysis Dpt.
- **Nicos Miliarakis** - Board Member, Wines of Crete
- **Terence Ienfa** - Project manager for European affairs in Paris, Delegation for international, European and Pacific affairs, Presidency of French Polynesia
- **Gianni Chianetta** - Director, GTI
- **Francesco Luise** - GTI Observatory Technical Coordinator
- **Angelo Nogara** - Senior Strategy Development Manager, GTI



Minutes

Key inputs for the task force focus:

- Pesticides reduction – toward a pesticide free target;
- Soil regeneration;
- Create common criteria to evaluate agriculture practices and compare case studies;
- Scale up best practices and reach islands worldwide (also through international events);
- Nature based solutions;
- Policy recommendations on EU Common Agricultural Policy and Farm to Fork Strategy;
- Possible campaign for “Pesticide Free Islands”.

Opportunities:

- Demand for innovation in agricultural sector: RES, new climate-resistant and high-yield technologies and circular practices can help farmers grow, improving efficiency in the use of water, energy and soil, while creating jobs and economies of scale;
- Alternatives to pesticides are biological pest control and biopesticides, to be combined with techniques to improve the quality of the soil/nutrients in order to reinforce the plants;
- Technical advisory it’s needed for local farmers to reduce pesticides;
- Nature-based solutions: dry walls, bees as balancing other insects, plants mutual protection, residues as soil cover to preserve humidity;
- Ensure high price of high quality products;
- Focus on the production of varieties that require less water;
- Establish mandatory rules for rain harvesting;
- Islands have small cultivation land so it could be profitable to plant the sea: sea weed farms value globally 1 trillion €;
- Monitoring of international calls and tenders on sustainable agriculture.

Challenges:

- Overall decline in the agriculture’s share in islands’ GDP;
- Overall decline in the level of food self-sufficiency in islands;
- Food imports compete with local products, it is necessary to ensure a good level of agricultural productivity in order not to lose production while going sustainable;



- Innovation in the sector is much needed, especially for water scarcity: innovative water treatment and unconventional systems of irrigation;
- Traceability of agricultural local products is important even though costly;
- Protect the environment and preserve biodiversity is the most important objective of the EU Farm to Fork strategy for islands. It targets to reduce use of the more hazardous pesticides by 50% by 2030 (which is a very low target, especially for hazardous pesticides, which should be banned as soon as possible);
- The target of Organic farming at 25% of total farmland is linked with the pesticides target. It's possible in the long term;
- Targeted public interventions at all levels are needed to help islands retrieve their dynamism in agriculture from production to marketing.

Next Steps:

- To present an abstract for a session on small island agriculture at the **World water week 2021** – Actions: GTI to discuss with FAO;
- To elaborate **policy recommendations** for regional areas concerning EU common Agricultural Policy and Farm to Fork Strategy, which is open for consultations – Actions: ITC to propose a first draft, as a base for a potential “Pesticides Free Islands” campaign;
- To define a **2021 plan for the GTI task force** reporting a calendar of meetings and events, involving the actual participants to the task force and eventually other GTI Observatory members, in pursuing the targets discussed – Actions: GTI to send a proposal;
- To consider adding the agriculture category to the **GTI Observatory Index** to measure the progress of islands – Actions: GTI to prepare a proposal for the next meeting;
- To continue discussing the topics advanced by the task force on the **GTI App** (available on desktop and mobile) Task Force Forum already available – Actions: Task force participants to register and request access to the Agriculture forum.

