



Slow Food, Global Footprint Network, Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE) and GOB Menorca launch joint project to accelerate the transition to sustainable food systems

Italy, March 9th, 2021 - Foodnected, a new project designed to promote the transition to sustainable and fair food systems in the Mediterranean region, will be launched on March 10 at a virtual event as part of the international festival Terra Madre Salone del Gusto, project partners Slow Food, Global Footprint Network, Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE), and GOB Menorca announced today.

“After striving for years to stress the importance of education and raise consumers’ awareness of the value of their food and their connection with the people who produce it, we are excited to collaborate with sustainable fishing and farming organisations to progress to a world where all the actors can come together through common initiatives to improve each other’s lives through an essential aspect of what it means to be human: the food we choose to consume to not only feed our bodies, but also nurture our spirits and communities,” said Paula Barbeito, Foodnected Coordinator at Slow Food.

Funded by the MAVA Foundation over a two-year period, Foodnected is about “Connecting people and nature around local, fair and sustainable food systems.”

“Our foundation supports sustainability initiatives that protect nature and support people's livelihoods. The way we consume and produce food impacts our environment. We believe that short-chain food systems grounded in local traditions hold a great potential to maintain and preserve biodiversity -- both cultivated and wild,” said Julien Semelin from MAVA Foundation.

Foodnected is driven by the vision of bringing producers and consumers together through a Community of Practice grounded in shared values. By shortening the distance between producers and consumers and developing an ethical code of environmental and social values for the way food is produced and consumed, the project will address shortcomings in the prevailing market system and reverse the unfair situation faced by small-scale producers.

“Gaining fair access to resources and markets is a fundamental struggle for small-scale low-impact fishers who make up the majority of the European fleet. We believe that working together with others is essential to achieving a positive and meaningful change in our food systems. To be viable, fishers must be rewarded for the value they add through their good practices. On the other hand, consumers need to be able to easily identify sustainable, healthy and fair products, and to know their story, so they can value and select them,” said LIFE Executive Secretary Brian O’Riordan.

Ultimately, Foodnected intends to facilitate the emergence of short-chain food systems that work for nature and people – both consumers and the small-scale producers who depend on them for their livelihood.

The project is scheduled to unfold in three phases. First, it will clarify an approach to fair and sustainable food systems through nurturing the development of a Community of Practice composed of actors along the value chain.

“All of us – as citizens, producers and consumers – can play a central role in the transition towards sustainable food systems. But making the right choices depends on the possibility to rely on scientifically-sound information. For this reason, relying on a science-based approach to identify pertinent practices is going to be a strong aspect of this project. By applying Ecological Footprint accounting, we will be able to quantitatively monitor the impact of such practices,” said Alessandro Galli, senior scientist and the Mediterranean-MENA Program Director at Global Footprint Network.

Second, pilot initiatives will be implemented to develop market solutions for fair and sustainable food production and consumption at local level, especially in the Balearic Islands (Spain).

“The work we’ve been developing through our local network of farmers is set to enjoy a wider impact thanks to this collaborative project. We’re excited to be actors and to witness firsthand how we can accelerate change at home and inspire other communities,” said GOB Menorca’s Programme Director Miquel Camps.

Finally, the project aims to share lessons at a regional level. Results from the first two phases will be disseminated through advocacy work at national and wider regional – Mediterranean (GFCM) and EU – levels, especially within the framework of the EU Farm to Fork Strategy and in the context of the FAO *International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (in 2022)*.

Foodnected launch event is to take place on Wednesday, March 10 at 2:00 pm CET. Anyone interested in learning more about the project is invited to attend. Information about event details and access can be found here: <https://terramadresalonedelgusto.com/en/event/sustainable-food-system-for-the-mediterranean/>

About Slow Food

Slow Food is a global network of local communities founded in 1989 to prevent the disappearance of local food cultures and traditions and counteract the rise of fast-food culture. Since its founding, Slow Food has grown into a global movement involving millions of people in over 160 countries, working to ensure that everyone has access to good, clean and fair food. www.slowfood.com

Media contact: Alessia Pautasso (Italy) +39 342 864 1029 ~ a.pautasso@slowfood.it

About LIFE

The Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE) is an organisation of organisations of small-scale fishers around Europe. LIFE represents the interests of 31 organisations in 15 EU Member States associating around 10,000 small-scale fishers across all European sea basins from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Its mission is to commit small-scale fishers (SSF) to fishing in a low-impact manner, to transform low-impact SSF into an attractive and economically viable profession, which sustains fish stocks and protects the marine environment, and contributes to prosperous coastal communities. www.lifeplatform.eu

Media contact: Brian O’Riordan, Executive Secretary, deputy@lifeplatform.eu, +32 486368855

About Global Footprint Network

Global Footprint Network is an international sustainability organisation that is helping the world live within the Earth's means and respond to climate change. Since 2003 we've engaged with more than 60 countries, 40 cities, and 70 global partners to deliver scientific insights that have driven high-impact policy and investment decisions. Together, we're creating a future where all of us can thrive within the limits of our one planet. www.footprintnetwork.org

Media contact: Laetitia Mailhes (France) +33 650 979 012 ~ laetitia.mailhes@footprintnetwork.org

About GOB Menorca

GOB Menorca is a non-profit organisation established in 1977. Its basic objective is to help achieve a truly sustainable economy by making human activities compatible with the preservation of the environment. GOB Menorca has several lines of work: land protection, marine conservation, recovery of wild fauna, promotion of sustainable gardening, environmental education, and the Agricultural Stewardship Programme (called Custòdia Agrària).

The Agricultural Stewardship Programme, which is based on the signing of an "Agreement on Sustainable Agrarian Practices", aims to create, encourage and channel social alliances that, together with public initiatives, can achieve the maintenance and recovery of the local agricultural sector, while guaranteeing the preservation of the landscape and its associated biodiversity. GOB is considered an entity of Public Utility and has received numerous awards and recognitions from both public administrations and private companies. It counts with over 1.400 members and is considered a main influencing actor in the island. www.gobmenorca.com

Media contact: Jara Febrer (Spain) +34 971350762 - jfebrer@gobmenorca.com

About the MAVA Foundation

MAVA was born from the passion and vision of its founder, Luc Hoffmann, an extraordinary naturalist who believed fiercely in protecting the planet's wild splendour.

The MAVA Foundation conserves biodiversity for the benefit of people and nature by financing, mobilising and strengthening its partners and the conservation community. MAVA also accompanies them on their conservation journey, helping them develop the skills they need and strengthening their ability to deliver. <http://mava-foundation.org/>

Media contact: Julien Semelin, julien.semelin@fondationmava.org