

THINK TANK DEMOGRAPHICS



109 stakeholders across 4 countries including: educators, farmers, distributors, retailers, politicians, consumers



42 Men
67 women



Where: Galway City, Ireland
When: December 11, 2024
Who: 26 participants - 6Men/20 Women



Where: Poland,
When: December 12, 2024
Who: 30 participants - 10Men/20Women



Where: Zero Waste Research Center, Capannori (LU), Italy
When: January 17, 2025
Who: 23 participants - 20Men/3 Women



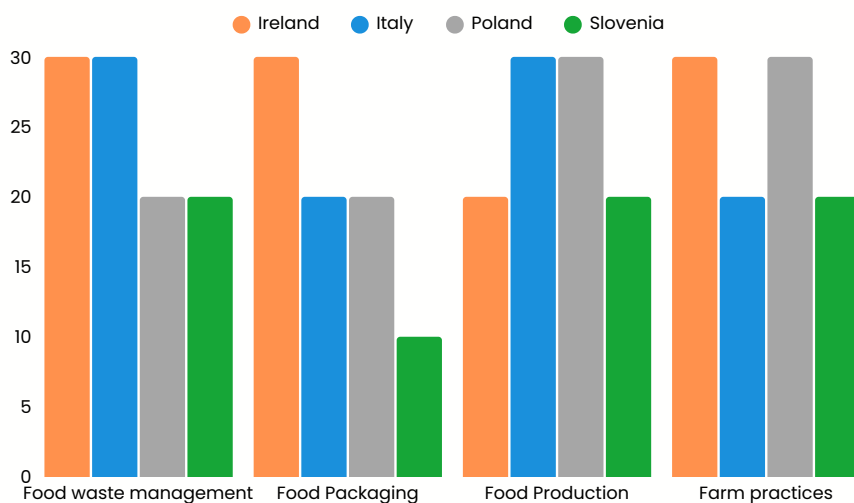
Where: Biotehniški Center Naklo
When: January 10, 2025
Who: 30 participants - 2Men/28Women

5 THEMES EMERGED FROM THE THINK TANKS

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1. INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS
2. EDUCATION, AWARENESS AND CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT
3. INSTITUTIONAL AND STRUCTURAL APPROACHES
4. COMMUNITY AND LOCALISED RESPONSES
5. BARRIERS, OPPORTUNITIES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Relative emphasis on each sustainability pillar by TT Location



4 SUSTAINABILITY PILLARS

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- FOOD WASTE MANAGEMENT
- FOOD PRODUCTION
- FARM PRACTICES
- FOOD PACKAGING

INNOVATIVE & SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS

1

Sustainable Practices & Techniques

- Agroecology, regenerative farming & precision agriculture help reduce environmental imPact.
- Resource efficient techniques support water conservation and reduced tillage.

2

Creative Waste Solutions

- Transform food waste into added-value products (e.g., biogas, natural dyes).
- Repurpose “less-than-fresh” produce into items like pickles, sauces, and ketchup..

3

Eco-friendly Materials

- Food packaging industry needs to become proactive for sustainability.
- Move from petroleum-based packaging to biodegradable options.

4

Technological Advancements

- AI, vertical farming & aquaponics are key technologies for sustainable food production..
- Integrate tech-based learning (e.g., game-based food production) to boost engagement with agri-food careers.

EDUCATION, AWARENESS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1 Educating Consumers

- Consumer education & behavioural change are essential for sustainability.
- VET can build consumer literacy by embedding it into training modules.
- Educators must create real-world learning experiences that help learners apply sustainable practices.

2 Participation & Engagement

- VET should link formal & informal learning to involve external stakeholders in sustainability education.
- Place-based and project-based learning strengthens relevance and community engagement.

3 Consumer Impact

- All stakeholders share responsibility for guiding consumers toward responsible decisions.
- Clear & transparent food packaging supports better recycling and reduces food waste.

4 Marketing & Innovation

- Emotive marketing can strengthen consumer-producer connections and promote sustainable choice.
- Smart packaging innovations help consumers identify 'safe-to-eat' food and reduce waste.

INSTITUTIONAL & STRUCTURAL APPROACHES

1 Institutional Initiatives

- Adopt whole-institution models where sustainability is embedded across all campus operations.
- Align curricula with policy, integrating EU Green Deal and Farm-to-Fork frameworks.

2 Support Mechanisms

- Enhance support structures that promote fair, sustainable supply chains.
- Use financial or practical incentives to motivate stakeholders toward sustainable practices.

3 Regulations & Incentives

- Strengthen regulatory frameworks to ensure transparent, fair, and sustainable supply chains.
- Provide incentives to improve economic viability and encourage sustainable production

4 Business Approaches

- Tackle inefficient resource management that contributes to food waste.
- Promote education and innovation, including pre-order systems and small-portion tastings, to support sustainable operations.

COMMUNITY & LOCALISED RESPONSES

1 Localised Agriculture

- Integrate agri-food business skills into education to support alternative, locally-focused farming models.
- Provide targeted training for local producers on the environmental and economic benefits of sustainable practices.
- Develop unified policy and secure funding to increase stakeholder engagement in localised agriculture.

2 Community Based Solutions

- Community farming offers practical solutions to local sustainability challenges.
- Urban and community gardens build appreciation for locally grown food.
- Community fridges reduce food waste and improve food security by redistributing surplus food.

BARRIERS, OPPORTUNITIES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

1 Challenges

- High Costs for producers and consumers
- Logistical and safety constraints
- Consumer resistance and low incentivisation

2 Opportunities

- Consumer behaviour change as a catalyst for sustainability
- Enhancing accessibility and visibility of sustainable options

3 Future Directions

- Improve affordability of sustainable solutions
- Strengthen infrastructure for reuse and refill systems
- Streamlining regulations to support safe, sustainable packaging