

# Newsletter

Issue 1 | July 2026



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## Food Waste into Sustainable Fibers



**Dear ENFiber community,**

Since its launch in **September 2025**, ENFiber COST Action CA24111 has grown into an active international network for **scientific exchange, researcher mobility and training**.

Together, we are working to transform food and agro-processing side streams into **sustainable fiber sources** through green extraction, shared characterisation methods, product development, impact assessment and industry uptake.

This first issue looks back at the network's early milestones and the activities ahead.

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**The Kick-Off Meeting**

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**A new ENFiber-related publication**

## ENFiber at a glance

### 644 members across 62 countries and territories

- **40 / 41 COST Full Member countries represented**
- **358 Young Researchers and Innovators**, representing **56%** of WG membership
- **471 members from Inclusiveness Target Countries**, representing **73%**
- **259 members from Türkiye**, the network's largest delegation
- **79 Management Committee members** from 41 countries
- **13 YRIs in Working Group leadership roles**
- **150+ responses** to the Fiber Source Survey
- **33 STSM applications**, with **13 researchers selected**
- **One international conference completed**
- **Fiber 101 Training School** planned for September 2026
- **One recent ENFiber-related publication**

By July 2026, ENFiber had become a broad international community with particularly strong participation from early-career researchers and Inclusiveness Target Countries.



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## Where it began: The Kick-Off Meeting

**One meeting in Brussels set the foundation for four years of collaboration.**



ENFiber held its **Kick-Off Meeting and first Management Committee Meeting on 23 September 2025** at the COST Association.

Representatives from **37 COST countries**, joined colleagues from Partner, Near Neighbor and International Partner Countries to establish the Action's structure and first-year priorities.

**Middle East Technical University** was confirmed as the Grant Holder Institution. **Prof. Mecit Halil Öztop** was elected Action Chair and **Dr. Lillian Barros** Vice Chair.

Leadership teams were also appointed across ENFiber's **seven Working Groups**.

**By July 2026, the Management Committee had grown to 79 members representing 41 countries.**

## A growing international research community

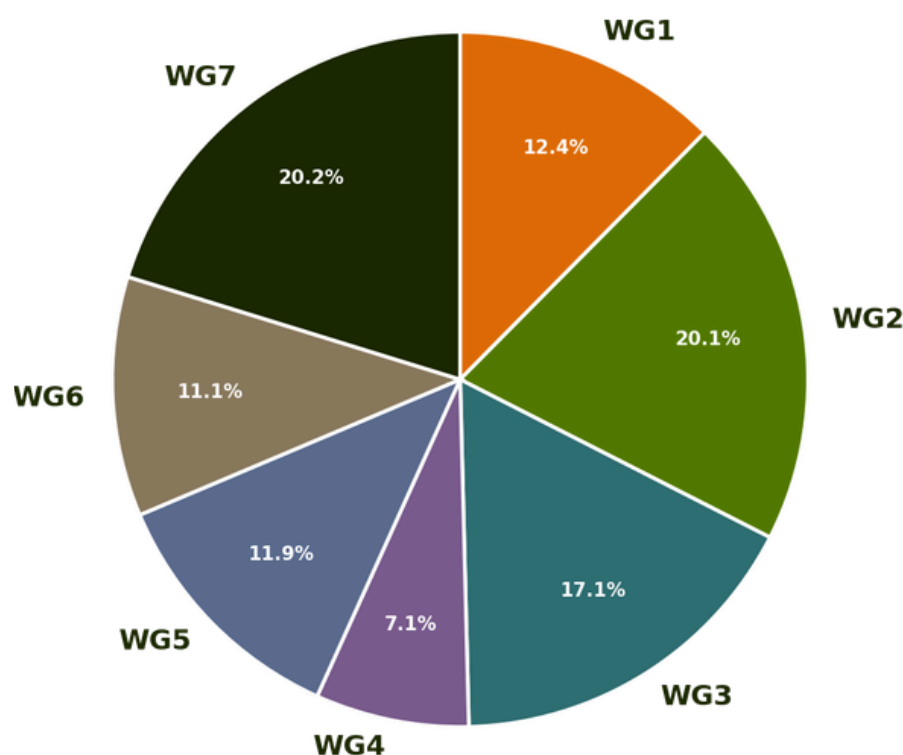
By July 2026, ENFiber’s Working Groups included **644 registered members from 62 countries and territories**, with all **41 COST Full Member countries** represented.

**Young Researchers and Innovators accounted for 56%** of WG participation, while **73% of members came from Inclusiveness Target Countries**.

Women represented approximately **62% of WG membership**, compared with **38% men**.

Türkiye had the largest national delegation, with **259 WG members**, representing approximately **40% of the network**.

Working Group Membership Distribution





## Diversity across the network

ENFiber's Management Committee included **79 members**, with **45 women** and **34 men**, corresponding to **57% female** and **43% male** representation.

The committee also included:

- **27 Young Researchers and Innovators**
- **48 members from Inclusiveness Target Countries**
- Representatives from **40 COST Full Member countries and Israel**

**Beyond participation, 13 Young Researchers and Innovators were already contributing in Working Group leadership roles.**



## The Fiber Source Survey

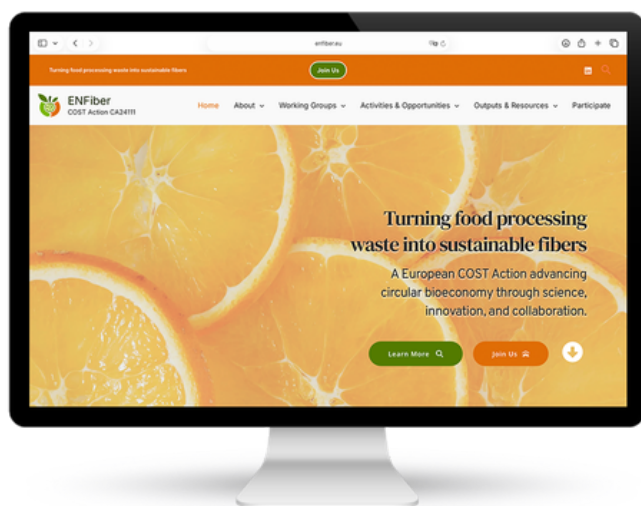
### Mapping promising side streams for future research

One of ENFiber's first scientific deliverables was the **Fiber Source Survey**, created to identify food-processing side streams with potential as sustainable fiber sources.



The survey received **more than 150 responses** from across the network. The results will help identify promising raw materials and guide later work on extraction, characterization, functionality and industrial applications.

### The ENFiber website is live



The website brings together network news, events, calls, Working Group information, resources and details about STSMs, Training Schools and other opportunities.

## The first STSM call

### Researcher mobility moves into action

ENFiber's first **Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM)** call received **33 applications** from researchers across the network.

Following a competitive evaluation, **13 researchers were selected**, corresponding to a **39% selection rate**:

- **10 YRIs**
- **3 non-YRIs**
- **9 women**
- **4 men**

The selected projects cover **fiber valorization, sustainable processing, food applications and bio-based systems**, reflecting the broad scientific scope of the Action.

Through these research visits, participants gain access to new methods, equipment and expertise at host institutions, while strengthening knowledge exchange and building opportunities for future collaboration.

The first STSM grantees are expected to present their results at the next Management Committee Meeting, allowing their experiences and findings to be shared with the wider ENFiber community.

## The 1<sup>st</sup> ENFiber International Conference



From **4 to 6 May 2026**, researchers, industry representatives and COST Action members gathered in **Tartu, Estonia**, for the first ENFiber International Conference, hosted by the **Estonian University of Life Sciences**.

The programme focused on the recovery, processing and use of food and agro-processing side streams, with sessions on:

- Green extraction and analytical methods
- Fermentation and bio-based materials
- Health-related applications
- Scale-up, standardisation and sustainability

Presentations explored materials including **cocoa bean shells, apple and olive pomace, and mushroom by-products**, encouraging exchange across disciplines and processing approaches.



## From Tartu to the next stage

The conference concluded with **Working Group and Management Committee meetings** focused on the next stage of the Action. The required quorum was confirmed, with representatives from at least two-thirds of participating COST countries attending.

Members reviewed network growth, Working Group participation, the STSM programme, communication activities, budget and upcoming Training School, alongside plans for the remainder of the grant period.

The Management Committee also selected **Yerevan, Armenia**, as the location of the second ENFiber Conference and Management Committee Meeting, planned for **May or June 2027**.



## Supporting research through the first grant period

ENFiber's first active grant period runs from **1 November 2025 to 31 October 2026**, with an allocated budget of **€147,496**, while a further **€210,000** has been approved for the second grant period.

The funding supports mobility, meetings, Training Schools, communication and other activities across the network. For the next period, ENFiber is considering a broader mix of opportunities, including further STSMs, grants for YRIs and ITC researchers, virtual mobility and dissemination support.



The final allocation will be confirmed by the Management Committee, with the aim of balancing scientific exchange, participation and visibility across the Action.

## Fiber 101 Training School in Ljubljana



ENFiber's first Training School, **Fiber 101: Fiber Basics**, will take place on **10-11 September 2026** at the **National Institute of Chemistry in Ljubljana, Slovenia**.

The programme is designed for researchers and professionals who are new to fiber science or have limited experience in the field.

### The programme includes:

- Fiber fundamentals and theory
- Fiber characterisation
- Hands-on demonstrations
- Applied fiber research
- Textile applications
- Hydrogel preparation
- A mini-poster and networking session

The Training School is expected to welcome four invited lecturers, with priority given to **Young Researchers and PhD candidates**.

Applications closed on **12 July 2026**, with results scheduled for **30 July**.



## A new ENFiber-related publication

A recent article in *Polysaccharides*, titled “**Decoding the Bioactive Potential of Blackcurrant Pomace Extract,**” examined blackcurrant pomace as a source of bioactive compounds for functional cotton textiles.

The study was authored by Aleksandra Ivanovska, Marija Ćorović, Anja Petrov Ivanković, Tanja Lunić, Anita Tarbuk, Xiang-Kui Ren and Igor Jordanov.

### [Read the article](#)



### Would you like your scientific output to be featured?

Share publications, projects and other relevant outputs through the [ENFiber dissemination form](#).



## The work ahead

ENFiber has established its governance, grown to more than **640 Working Group members**, launched researcher mobility and held its first international conference.

Across its seven Working Groups, the network will continue to:

- Identify fiber-rich food-processing side streams
- Improve green extraction and processing methods
- Develop shared characterisation protocols
- Study bioactive and health-related properties
- Assess sustainability, safety and regulation
- Connect research with product development and industry

**Thank you to every member, applicant, grantee, speaker, host institution, organizer and participant who has contributed to ENFiber's first activities.**

## Write for the next issue

We are now looking for **ENFiber members to contribute short articles, research updates, project news, opportunities and event highlights** to the next newsletter.

To propose a contribution, contact us at [enfiber@metu.edu.tr](mailto:enfiber@metu.edu.tr).

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## Disclaimer

This newsletter is based upon work from COST Action ENFiber, CA24111, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).

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