

REALLY ETH(N)IC

Intercultural and linguistic mediation for sustainability.
Single use plastics and separate waste collection in ethnic
restaurants in **Milan, Bergamo and Brescia**



Patrocinated by



PATROCINIO
Comune di
Milano



COMUNE DI
BRESCIA



COMUNE DI
BERGAMO

Funded by



Fondazione
CARIPLO



NOVAMONT

Partners



Economia e
Sostenibilità



Amsa
GRUPPO a2a



Aprica
GRUPPO a2a



aDL
zavidovici



coopeRativa
Ruah



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI
DI MILANO
DIPARTIMENTO DI LINGUE, LETTERATURE,
CULTURE E MEDIAZIONI

REALLY ETH(N)IC

Intercultural and linguistic mediation for sustainability. Single use plastics and separate waste collection in ethnic restaurants in Milan, Bergamo and Brescia.



REALLY ETH(N)IC

Intercultural and linguistic mediation for sustainability.

Single use plastics and separate waste collection in ethnic restaurants in Milan, Bergamo and Brescia

Patrocinated by



Funded by



Supported by



Project by



Coordination: Chiara Bergonzini, Francesca Federici
Texts: Chiara Bergonzini, Francesca Federici, Roberta Garruccio
Graphic project and layout: Gloria Cossa, Riccardo Massarotto, Giulia Tagliente
Cover: Riccardo Massarotto
Maps and infographics: Gloria Cossa, Giulia Tagliente



Project partners

ESTà (leader):

Chiara Bergonzini, Giacomo Cellottini, Gloria Cossa, Francesca Federici, Francesca La Rocca, Massimiliano Lepratti, Riccardo Massarotto, Alessandro Musetta, Chiara Pirovano, Giulia Tagliente

ADL a Zavidovici:

Maddalena Alberti, Lucia Martinelli

Amsa:

Roberta Battisti, Lorenzo Cavallo, Mariarita Colicchio, Simone Orsi, Danilo Vismara

Aprica:

Giulia Fanconi, Eliana Loiacono, Giuditta Sileo, Saverio Zetera

University of Milan – DLLCM:

Maria Matilde Benzoni, Maria Vittoria Calvi, Mario De Benedittis, Roberta Garruccio, Bettina Mottura, Letizia Osti

Ruah:

Nada Charara, Thiamba Ndiaye, Laura Resta

Intercultural and linguistic mediation:

Emiliano Barcella, Yosr Ben Othmen, Chiara Bergonzini, Dayana Miranda Contreras, Wissam Fadlo, Mahjoub Ghamraoui, Vanesa Gutierrez, Nadia Hemmami, Hakima Jemrane, Umair Ghaffari Khawaja Hafiz, Dominga Leone, Man Li, Jordana Mauer, Thiamba Ndiaye, Shagufta Noor Hussain, Francesco Michael Scaringella, Wendy Wambo Wendja, Wei Zhao

Thanks to:

Eliana Bruschera, Francesco Casati, Giorgio Casiraghi, Andrea Di Stefano, Christian Garaffa, Andrea Magarini, Stefano Mambretti, Mattia Marziali, Daniele Pelliccioli, Nunzio Pisano, Francesco Pizzorni, Alessandro Ridoli, Roberto Tavernini, Flavia Vigoriti, Raoul Tiraboschi

Publication:

December 2022

Creative Commons Licence BY-NC-SA



This publication was released under a Creative Commons Licence Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.5 Italy (CC BY-NC-SA 2.5 IT). To read a copy of the licence go to <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/it/deed.en> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94942, USA.

Use this quotation: **Really Eth(n)ic, Està (2022)**

Some icons used in the infographics use the creative commons of The Noun Project

Table of contents

Introduction	1
The choice of ethnic restaurants: some cautions of method	4
The Really Eth(n)ic compostable food bags	5
Nudging and linguistic and cultural mediation: an experimental connection	6
The SUP Directive	7
Separate waste collection	9
The operational phases of the project	14
Interaction with restaurateurs	16
Tools and contents of the interaction	17
The app	17
Communication materials	17
Training	18
Results	22
Single-use plastics	22
Separate waste collection	36
Conclusions	46
Would you like to replicate the project in your area?	49

Introduction

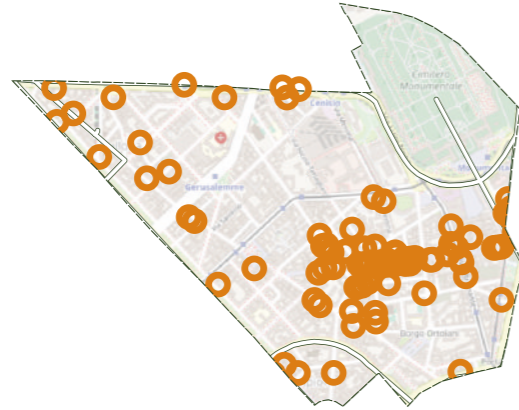
The project Really Eth(n)ic uses intercultural and linguistic mediation as an approach to engage some “ethnic” restaurants (by “ethnic” we mean restaurants that are owned or managed by people whose first language is not Italian) in the cities of Milan, Bergamo, and Brescia to reach two specific objectives. The first one is to inform restaurant owners about the newly introduced restrictions by the European Directive “Single Use Plastics” (hereafter SUP Directive), which has banned various single use plastic products from being placed on the market, and many of these items are frequently used by restaurants, especially for takeout and home delivery services. The second objective is to improve the quality of the waste sorting that takes place in restaurants. The project also hopes to indirectly engage and raise the awareness of the customers of the engaged restaurants, as well as that of the communities they belong to.

The following maps show both the targeted ethnic restaurants that have received the first contact and information materials by the mediators, and those that have taken part in the entire project path: for Bergamo and Brescia, the project scope extended to the entire municipal area, while for Milan, given the high number of ethnic restaurants present, it was chosen to focus the work on three specific areas that are highly characterized from an ethnicity point of view: Paolo Sarpi (predominantly Chinese communities), NoLo/Via Padova (predominantly South American communities) and Porta Venezia/Buenos Aires (predominantly African and Middle Eastern communities). The project partnership included the association EStà as project leader, the Department of Languages, Literatures, Cultures and Mediations of the University of Milan, the associations Ruah and ADL in Zavidovici active in Bergamo and Brescia, respectively, and Amsa and Aprica, the companies involved in separate waste collection in these cities.

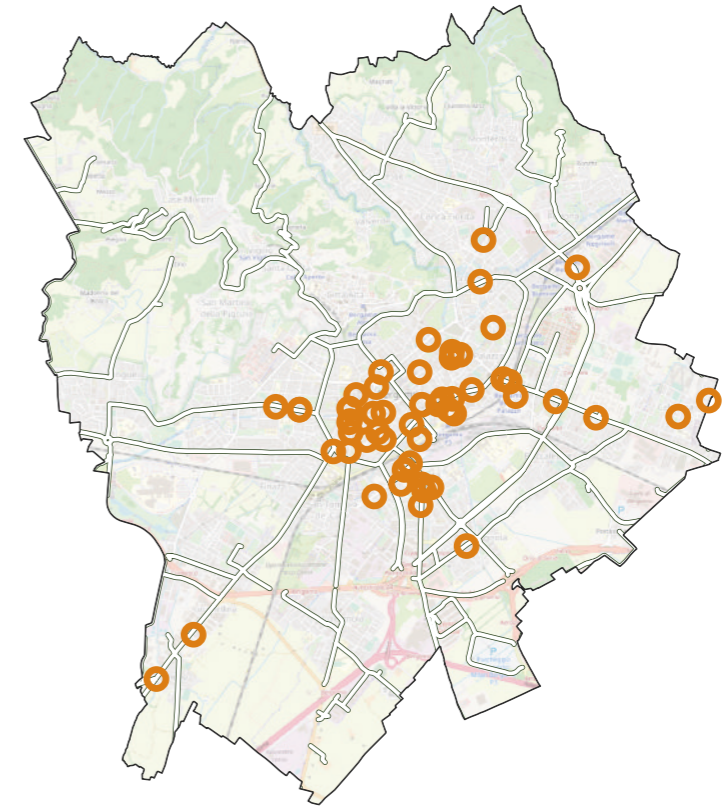
The Really Eth(n)ic project was proposed in response to the 2020 Plastic Challenge call from Fondazione Cariplo, which was the main funder together with Novamont.

Milan

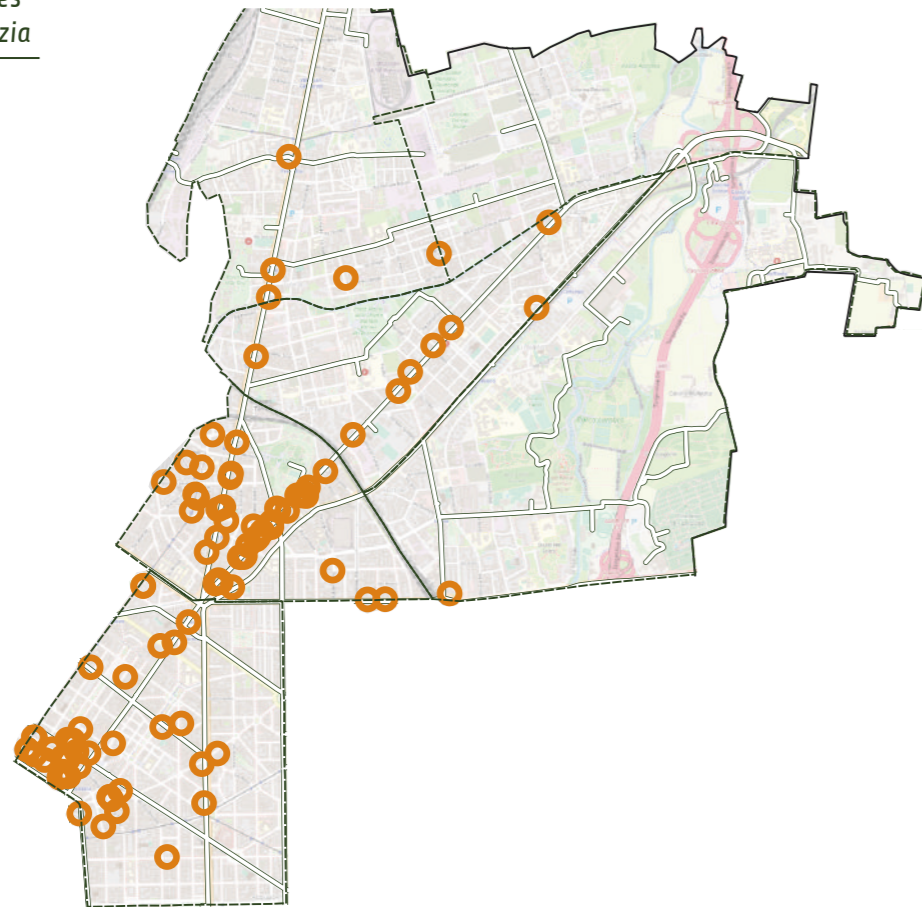
Paolo Sarpi



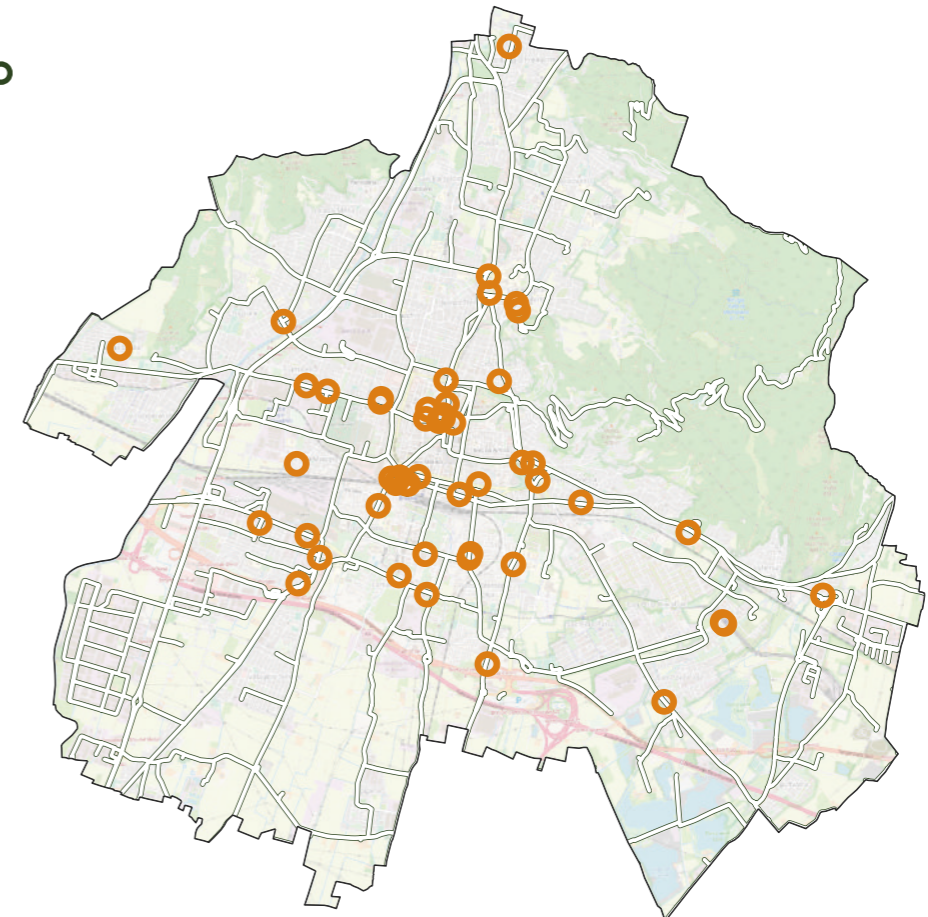
Bergamo



Nolo
Via Padova
Buenos Aires
Porta Venezia



Brescia



The choice of ethnic restaurants: some cautions of method

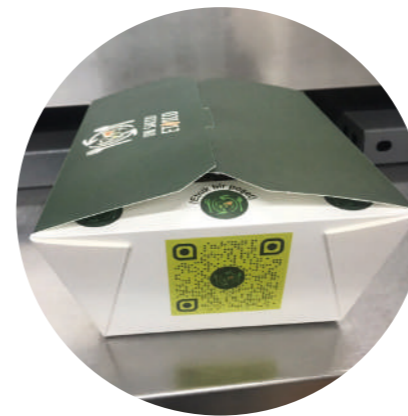
The choice to target ethnic restaurants was made based on the following considerations: restaurants (ethnic and non-ethnic) make high use of single-use plastic products in take-out and home delivery services and – due to the hectic pace of work, frequent staff turnover, and the high amount of waste produced – they tend to make mistakes in waste sorting; language and cultural barriers may hinder understanding of regulations and dialogue with institutions and subjects who could provide support; several ethnic restaurants, as reference points for the communities to which the people who run them belong, are privileged places for the involvement and awareness of a wider, often non-Italian-speaking, user base about the project issues; finally, the success of a pilot project carried out in 2018–2019 in some Milan¹ neighborhoods also influenced the choice.

Yet, in the structuring phase of the project, the definitional issue around the adjective “ethnic” that forms the pivot of the selection of the targeted restaurants came back into discussion. The attribute “ethnic” was understood as addressing the type of cuisine of the restaurants involved (non-European cuisine) and the ethnicity/nationality of those who run the restaurants (i.e., those who make the business and purchasing choices and those who generally make the decisions) and the staff who oversee the dining room, kitchen, and waste management. The project has thus kept the focus on restaurants where non-Italian or non-native Italian-speaking citizens work, who also cater to a clientele that is itself non-Italian and/or non-native Italian speaking.

Ethnic restaurants thus constitute a focus of interest regardless of ethnicity: the interest lies in the fact that this type of restaurant, which is relatively low-cost, makes much use of take-out and home delivery services or on-site consumption in fast food mode, tending to employ food service products (cutlery, glasses, plates, food containers...) made of disposable plastic, with a more difficult management of waste collection.

There is no specific evidence that, compared to tout court restaurant businesses, ethnic restaurants are less virtuous in terms of compliance with regulations on separate waste collection or less quick to adhere to the SUP Directive. Rather, there is general evidence that separate waste collection can be improved, and that the implementation of the SUP Directive is problematic in the time contingency related to the pandemic and the uncertainties of the economic scenario. And it is in this respect that ethnic restaurants become an area to be studied closely.

¹ The report is available on Està's website, www.assesta.it, in the “Pubblicazioni” page



Finally, the significance of the intervention that Really Eth(n)ic represents does not lie in the statistical significance of its results: in fact, these are limited by the small numbers of restaurants that agreed to participate in the entire project pathway (an element, that of active participation, which was beyond the power of control of a project conducted during a pandemic conjuncture). Rather, the relevance of Really Eth(n)ic lies in its nature as exploratory research, guided by precise initial questions, and thus in its proposing itself as a way forward that is also fruitfully replicable.

The Really Eth(n)ic compostable food bags

Also due to the economic-health crisis that began in 2020, restaurants are faced with two trends: the ever-increasing need to ensure hygienically safe food service, and the increase in demand towards take-out and home delivery services that have largely replaced on-site consumption during lockdown periods and that, even after reopening, have continued to be highly requested. In this type of service, replacing single-use food service with reusable bailable products is still confined to niche projects, while some solutions – such as eliminating cutlery delivery – are already widespread.

Really Eth(n)ic, in communicating to restaurateurs about the restrictions introduced by the SUP Directive, has chosen to inform them about the available compostable single-use products (and their proper disposal in the organic waste bin), which are environmentally more sustainable -- but more expensive – alternatives to non-compostable single-use plastic products. This choice is in line with the Italian transposition of the SUP Directive, which excludes biodegradable and compostable single-use plastic products from bans. As an incentive to participate, the project provided restaurateurs with free compostable food bags made available by Novamont and customized with the project's logo. This is an opportunity – to be carried out always within a context supported by a mediator – to learn what products can achieve a better balance between functionality, sustainability, and containment of the cost of the ecological transition.

Nudging and linguistic and cultural mediation: an experimental connection

3

The Really Eth(n)ic project responded to Fondazione Cariplo's 2020 Plastic Challenge call for proposals, which had the intention of supporting initiatives aimed at preventing and reducing the consumption of single-use plastic packaging through the use of nudging tools.

The nudge theory is based on the use of "nudges" to change people's choices, orienting them towards certain behaviors: in this case, towards more environmentally sustainable choices. Nudging makes use neither of coercive or otherwise freedom-restricting instruments (such as, for example, bans and sanctions) nor of economic incentives (such as, for example, taxation of certain products or reward schemes). Instead, it acts by expanding the alternatives available to subjects, an expansion that goes hand in hand with informing them about new options and reinforcing intentions for "virtuous" behaviors.

The Really Eth(n)ic project has decided to consider the linguistic and cultural mediation (LCM) approach as a nudging tool, taking it out of the spheres in which it is typically used (such as education, health, legal and judicial, humanitarian, and generally that of the first reception of migrants), to direct it instead to the field of commerce and in particular to the issue of environmental sustainability.



At the heart of LCM is expertise in written, oral and web translation (and all three came into play in the project). In fact, the first task of every mediator is to facilitate language exchange as much as possible; but compared to translation or interpreting as pure tools, LCM brings into play the ability to make synthesis between different cultural practices: to make languages and cultures mutually accessible, to open up the possibility of exchange and negotiation, and to help create new knowledge, potentially capable of triggering change and inspiring new ways of thinking and new behaviors. LCM demands that its agents take an active part in the communicative process and contribute to the pursuit of its goals; it thus ends up embracing elements that are often only marginally linguistic in nature and more pronouncedly extra-linguistic, involving cognitive and affective components (as well as the mediator's personal experiences). In the specifics of the project, the activity that restaurateurs spontaneously engage in among the cultural practices of their communities is also recognized as a relevant – though informal – LCM activity.

4

The SUP Directive

Growing awareness of the environmental impacts associated with the production and use of plastics, particularly single-use plastics, led the European Union to adopt the Single Use Plastics Directive in 2019, part of the broader European Strategy on Plastics in the Circular Economy. The SUP Directive bans from July 3rd, 2021, the placing on the market of certain single-use plastic products and fishing gear, which make up 70% of marine litter. Among those banned, there are many products that are used extensively in the restaurant industry: cutlery, plates, straws, coffee stirrers, and expanded polystyrene food and beverage containers. For other products, however, consumption reduction obligations are placed on member states: these are beverage cups and glasses and food containers made of plastics other than expanded polystyrene.

In Italy, the decree transposing the Directive into national law was not published in the Official Gazette until early November 2021, so the official entry into force of the SUP happened late, on January 14th, 2022. This delay is also due to the clash with the European Union over the Italian decision to exclude from the marketing ban "products made of biodegradable and compostable material, certified in accordance with the European standard of UNI EN 13432 or UNI EN 14995, with percentages of renewable raw material equal to or higher than 40% and, from January 1st, 2024, higher than at least 60%."

5

Separate waste collection

The cities in which the project took place have excellent performances in terms of separate waste collection. Bergamo and Brescia, medium-sized cities, reached percentages of 73.1% and 72.4%, respectively, in 2020; Milan, which stands at 62.7% in the same year, is the first European city with a population of more than 1 million in terms of the amount of municipal waste sent for recycling. Bergamo and Milan have a door-to-door collection system, Brescia has a mixed system of street and door-to-door collection. Continuous improvement in separate waste collection (in terms of quantity out of total waste generated and in terms of quality) is essential to achieve the reuse and recycling targets set by the European Union, namely 55% in weight by 2025, 60% by 2030, and 65% by 2035 (Directive 2018/851). Improvement also comes through information and training activities such as the one conducted in this project towards restaurants, which play a key role since they produce significant amounts of organic waste, which represents by weight the largest fraction of the total collected waste (in 2020 in Italy organic waste accounted for 7,174,948 tons out of 18,245,851 total tons of separate waste collected).

An incentive to quality separate collection is also the knowledge of the destination the different fractions have after collection, which is represented in the infographic 1 (these infographics were given to restaurateurs along with a leaflet summarizing the project objectives and some key data on waste collection).



The participation of Amsa

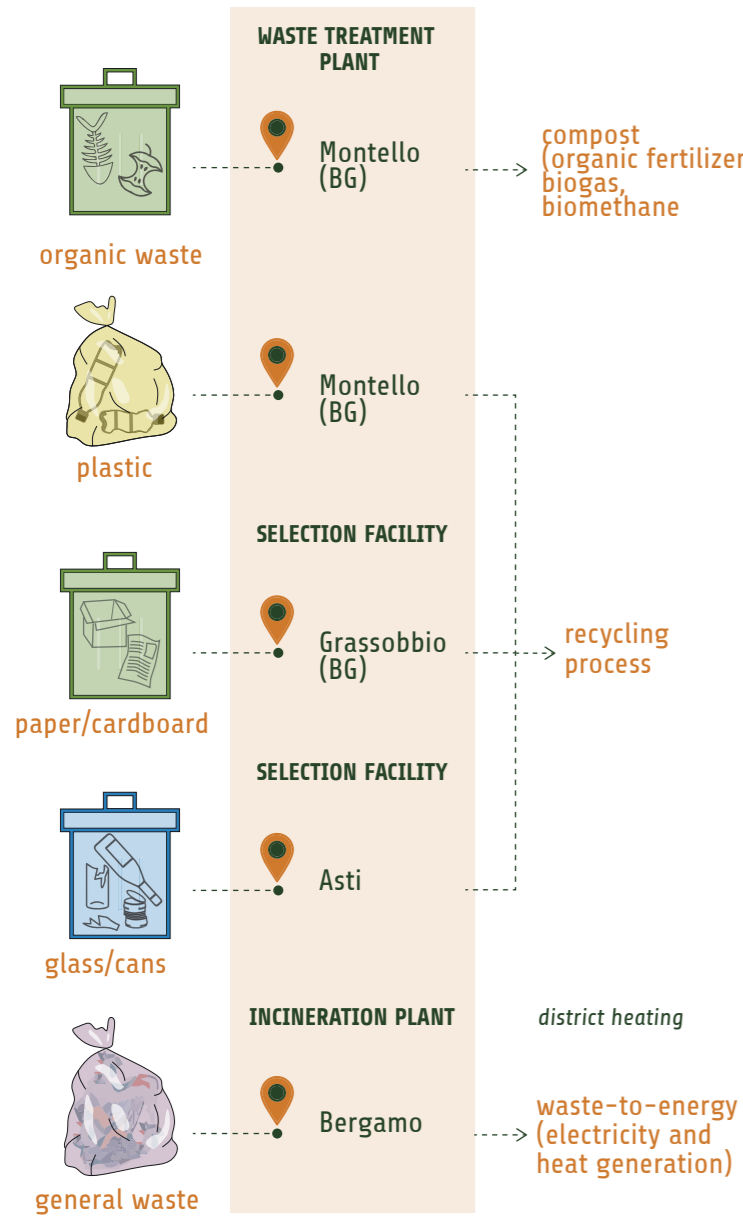
Amsa enthusiastically joined the second edition of the Really Eth(n)ic project, which involved about 200 ethnic restaurants in Milan and extended its activities also to Bergamo and Brescia, with the participation of Aprica.

The initiative allowed us first of all to give continuity to the involvement – already very positive in the previous experience in 2019 – of ethnic restaurants, a very important reality in the Lombardy capital, in order to make them increasingly aware of the importance of the correct separation of waste, both in the domestic and commercial sphere, through information and training, for the purpose of a final valorization of the waste itself. All this has made it possible, through targeted methods and tools – such as language mediation – to increase the awareness of owners staff and customers with respect to the issues of circular economy and environmental sustainability, as well as to contribute to maintaining Milan's high percentage of separate waste collection (above 62% at the end of 2021), confirming it as a virtuous reality both in Italy and internationally.

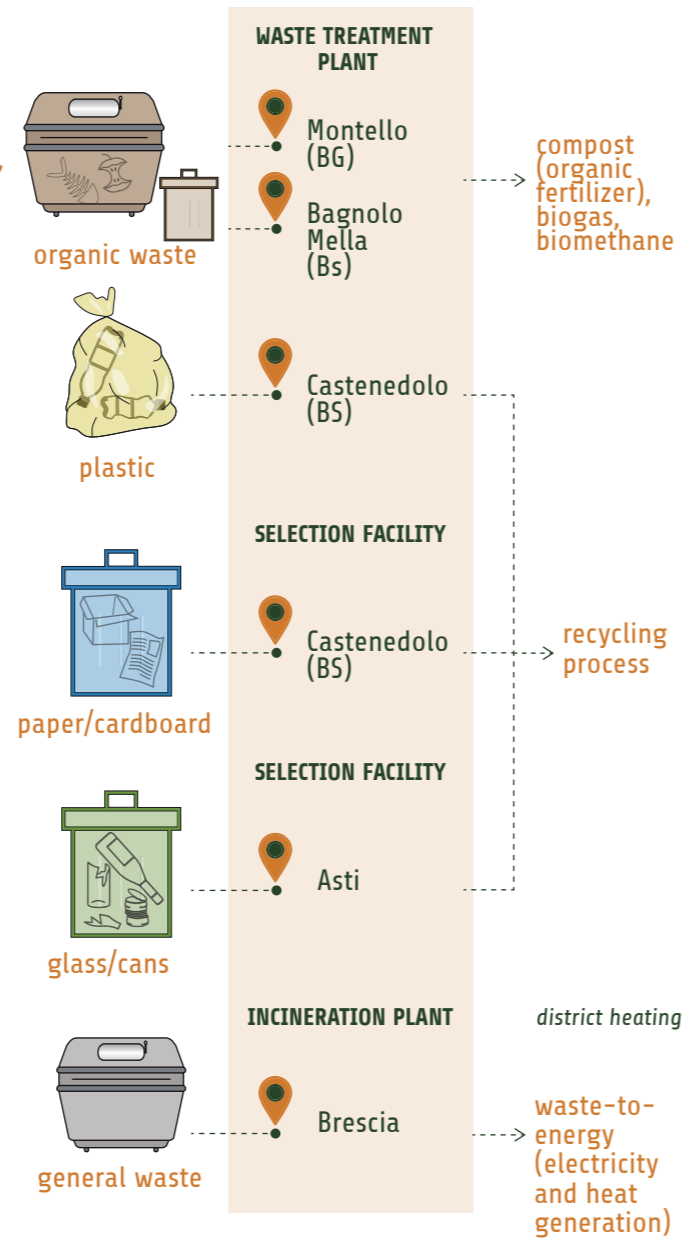
Secondly, the project offered a valuable opportunity for Amsa and the Municipality of Milan to continue their commitment to the campaigns already activated to reduce resource waste and phase out plastic materials (e.g., Plastic Free), especially single-use plastic, in favor of more sustainable alternatives such as bioplastics and compostable products, continuing their path towards achieving the goals imposed in the international context of the C40 Cities Network and the related "Advancing Towards Zero Waste Declaration."

Danilo Vismara
Territorial Marketing Manager, Amsa S.p.A.

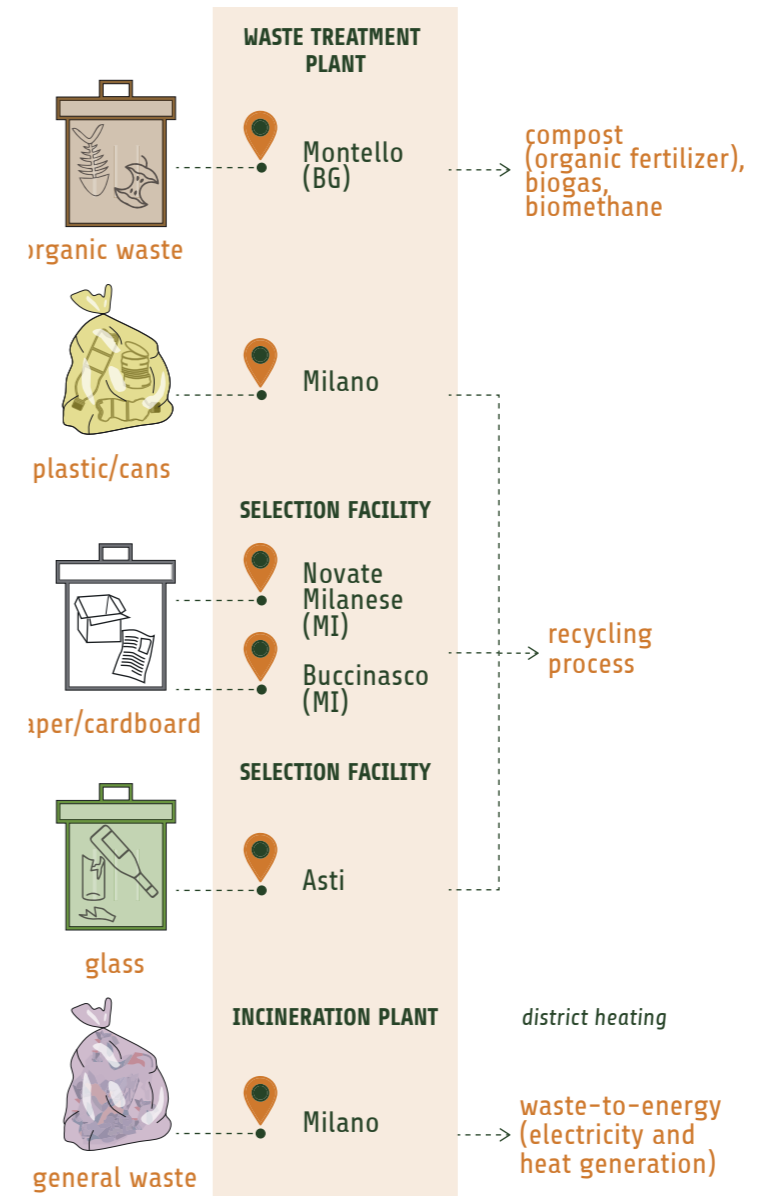
BERGAMO - THE FLOW OF EACH FRACTION



BRESCIA - THE FLOW OF EACH FRACTION

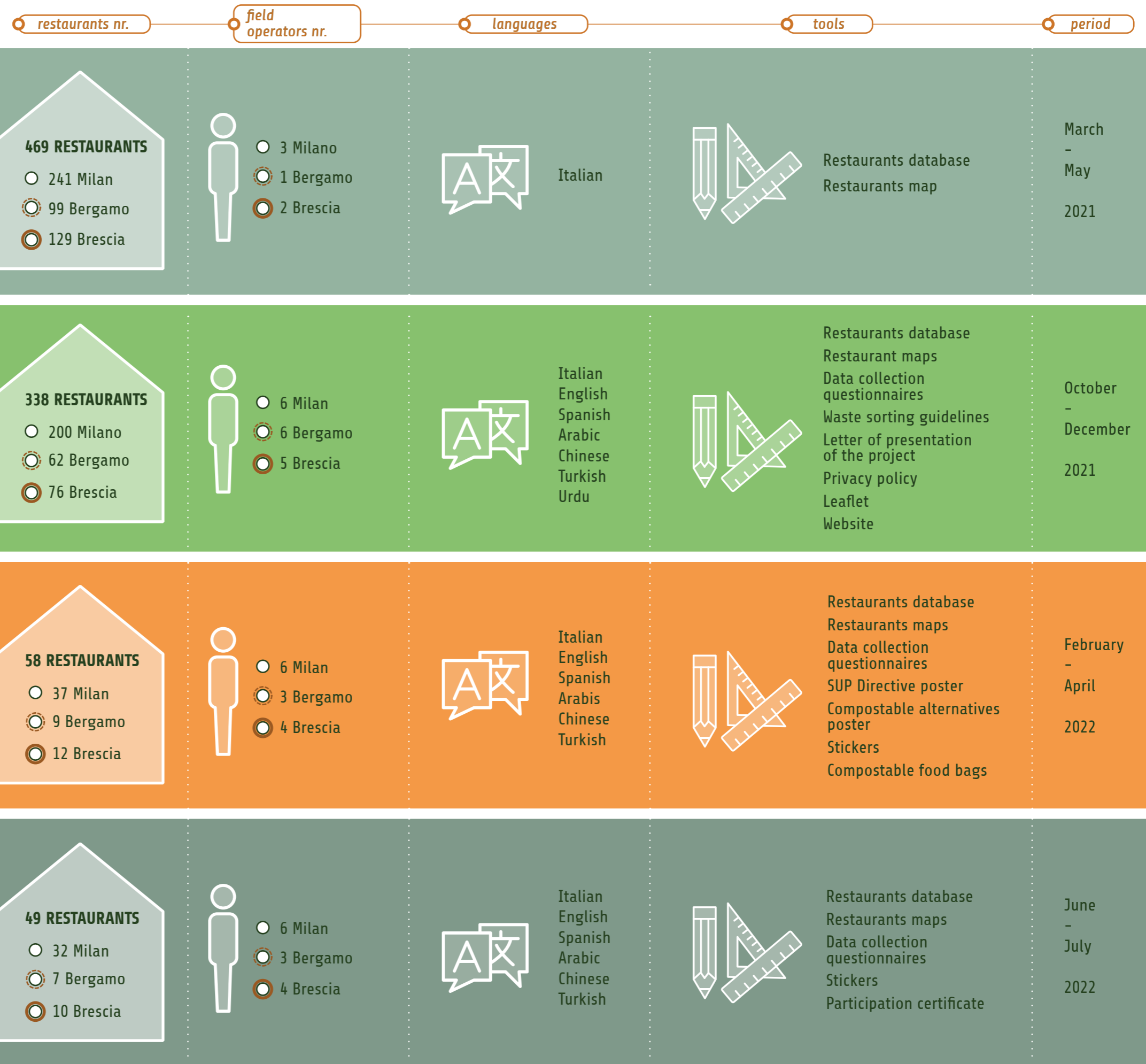


MILAN - THE FLOW OF EACH FRACTION



OPERATIONAL PHASES

This infographic summarizes the operational phases of the project and shows, for each phase, the number of involved restaurants, the number of involved field operators (it always includes one member of staff from Amsa/Aprica and varying a number of mediators based on the languages needed in each



phase), the languages that were used (the changes are due to some restaurants not accepting to participate), the tools used by field operators and the period in which the phase was carried out.

The operational phases of the project

6

The project is carried out over **four main phases**.

- **Territorial analysis**, in preparation for the field activities: this phase involved the writing of questionnaires for interaction with restaurateurs, the preparation of the project website (www.unsaccoetnico.it) and the communication material to be distributed (translated into the different project languages: Italian, Arabic, Chinese, English, Spanish, Turkish and Urdu), the creation of the app for data collection on restaurants, and the selection of mediators and their training on the project themes.
- **Pre-engagement**: this is the first of three meetings with restaurateurs and is aimed at presenting the project, communicating some basic information about its contents, and asking for participation in the following phases (200 restaurants in Milan, 76 in Brescia, and 62 in Bergamo were contacted).
- **Engagement**: an in-depth meeting, training, and interview on the topics of the SUP Directive and separate waste collection. This second meeting took place only with the restaurants that agreed to participate in the following phases (37 in Milan, 12 in Brescia, and 9 in Bergamo). During this phase, restaurants that were interested in receiving the free compostable food bags received about 1,000 of them, to experiment with as a more sustainable alternative to non-compostable single-use plastic products for takeout and home delivery. In addition, 10 restaurants in Milan and 4 in Bergamo were offered an in-depth material analysis of their waste.
- **Monitoring**, the last meeting with restaurateurs, which took place a few months after the engagement phase and was aimed at verifying any improvements achieved as a result of the training, as well as collecting feedback and delivering the certificate of participation.

The participation of Aprica

For Aprica, the Really Eth(n)ic project represents an activity carried out as part of Territorial Marketing, as it pursues the cultural and social growth of the geographical areas involved.

In the continuous interlocution that Aprica has with the territories it serves, with citizens and businesses, the need to promote the improvement of the quality of separate waste collection, and in particular of plastic collection, has long emerged.

Aprica joined the project by focusing its activities on the territories of Brescia and Bergamo with the aim of reducing single-use plastic waste and contributing to the improvement of the recycling rate by analyzing and improving the quality of plastic separate collection. In addition, the birth of the new consortium Biorepack, the first European extended producer responsibility (EPR) system dedicated to biodegradable and compostable plastic packaging that is part of CONAI, which is responsible for communicating to users the correct way to separate compostable bioplastic products, was an additional incentive to participate in the project.

Aprica engaged in conducting visual analyses of the separate collection of restaurants that took part in the project, thus keeping track of developments after the introduction of compostable biodegradable plastic. The language and cultural mediation approach adopted in the project proved to be very useful in the campaign to engage, educate, inform, and raise awareness of the restaurateurs of various nationalities and their customers. Through this project, it became clear how much the issue of recycling is close to the hearts of all cultures; many of our stakeholders were interested in better understanding collection activities to make their own contributions.

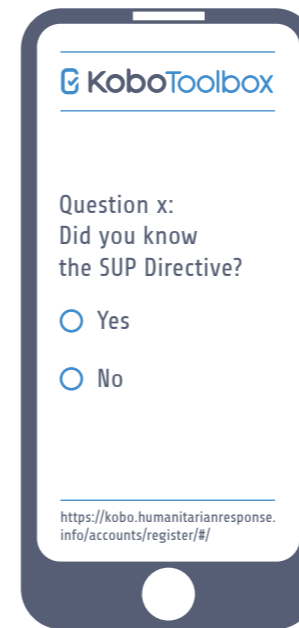
The outcomes of the project will be useful in the future for further information and awareness-raising interventions on separate waste collection in general and on the issues of reducing single-use plastics and replacing them with biodegradable and compostable products.

Saverio Zetera
Customer Relations and Separate Waste Collection Development
Office Manager, Aprica S.p.A.

Interaction with restaurateurs



The interaction with restaurateurs – which happens in the pre-engagement phase through the mediator and in the later phases (engagement and monitoring) through the mediator always accompanied by Amsa or Aprica staff – was structured to be a fruitful exchange, with mutual learning: restaurateurs receive elements of contextual understanding, practical information and answers to any doubts; field operators acquire information about the products used and waste sorting practices. However, it has not always been easy to gain the trust of restaurateurs and to establish a cooperative relationship with them, or even to have their attention. The role of mediators in this regard has been crucial. Contacting people on their workplace, who are often very busy, and convincing them to give their time to the project has been challenging: not all of them are sensitive to the issue of environmental sustainability, particularly in a time of economic crisis, and there have been frequent responses of refusal from those who claimed to already be experts in waste sorting and informed about the SUP Directive. The presence of the mediator also helped overcome mistrust of Amsa and Aprica staff, generated by fear of receiving fines. The absence of sanctioning intent was immediately made clear in the pre-engagement phase, but the visual inspection of the waste bins during the engagement phase – designed to help restaurateurs resolve the main doubts about waste sorting starting precisely from the mistakes found – was an obstacle to overcome. On the other hand, the presence of Amsa/Aprica staff remains essential to ensure the technical expertise needed to answer all the questions of the people interviewed. Finally, it is necessary to allow time elapse between the engagement and monitoring phases because restaurateurs need to have time to learn and change their behavior (there were also forced breaks due to the health emergency), but this carries the risk of a loss of interest on their part. The ability of mediators to maintain contact and explain the importance of each phase for the success of the project has been crucial. It is very helpful to this end to ensure that it is always the same mediator who goes to a certain restaurant, and to ensure that a personal contact of the person of the restaurant staff who intends to follow up on the project is provided from the beginning, so that a dialogue is established between two specific people and there is no need to start over again at each meeting.



Tools and contents of the interaction

In order to facilitate the interaction, support the information and training work done by the field operators, and collect the necessary data, a number of supports were produced: an app to collect the answers to the questionnaires related to each phase of the project, as well as the results of the visual inspection of the waste sorting bins carried out by Amsa and Aprica staff, and various communication materials (leaflets, stickers, participation certificates, the website www.unsaccoetnico.it) and training support materials (posters and manuals) to be given to the restaurateurs.

The app

The app, developed on an open-access platform and made available on the cell phones and PCs of operators, allows to fill out questionnaires related to all project phases:

- an observation grid to be filled out during the first visit of the restaurants (pre-engagement), to point out potentially relevant aspects such as, for example, the size of the restaurant, the presence of recycling bins, the possible presence of roadside bins in poor condition near the restaurants;
- a questionnaire to be administered during the same phase to gather initial information about the restaurants (e.g., verification of the nationality of the person in charge, use of single-use plastic products) and whether or not they are willing to participate in the following phases;
- a questionnaire to be administered during the engagement phase, to collect more in-depth responses regarding the knowledge restaurateurs have of the project themes (especially the SUP Directive and separate waste collection), to report what single-use products (non-compostable plastic or compostable material) are present in the restaurant, and to explore some aspects regarding their sensitivity to the issue;
- a questionnaire for the results of the visual inspection of the recycling bins (inspection that is conducted both during the engagement and the monitoring phase), aimed at indicating the number and type of mistakes found for each fraction viewed;
- a questionnaire to be administered during the monitoring phase to gather information on any progress made as a result of the project.

Communication materials

The following communication materials were produced, translated into the project languages and given to restaurants:

- a leaflet with an explanation of the project and some information on why the issues it addresses are important, to be handed out during the pre-engagement phase to ask for participation in the following phases;

- a sticker with the project logo to attach to the shop windows;
- a certificate of participation to celebrate the commitment shown, to be handed out during the monitoring phase (only to restaurants that participated in all phases);
- a website with all the information about the project and with the possibility of downloading materials in all languages.

Training

The topics on which restaurateurs were trained are: proper waste sorting (training delivered mainly during the visual analysis of bins, taking any mistakes found as a starting point), the main contents of the SUP Directive in relation to banned products, more environmentally sustainable alternatives, and how to recognize compostable products including through certifications (this training was delivered using both the products used in the restaurants themselves and some products that Amsa and Aprica staff and mediators brought with them). The materials supporting the training are:

- a handbook with recycling guidelines, which is different according to the city, to be delivered to all contacted restaurants;
- a pair of posters representing in a schematic and immediate way the non-compostable single-use plastic products banned or subject to reduction by the SUP Directive and their alternatives, such as compostable plastic or pulp products, to be handed out during the engagement phase and used as support for the explanation.

The participation of UniMi

The Department of Languages, Literatures, Cultures and Mediations of the University of Milan joined the project in the dual perspective of doing research on the potential of linguistic and cultural mediation and in that of seizing an important opportunity for the Third Mission, which “flanks the two main functions of the university, scientific research and education, with the precise mandate of disseminating culture, knowledge and transferring research results outside the academic context, contributing to the social growth and cultural direction of the territory.”

Within Really Eth(n)ic, the Department’s role has been central in defining the project’s framework of meaning, setting up the tools for interaction, identifying mediation figures and training them on a number of specific issues, including environmental history. In particular, it was an occasion explicitly dedicated to putting into historical perspective both the topic of urban waste collection and the production, consumption, and disposal of plastics.

Indeed, the preparatory phase of Really Eth(n)ic was intended to ensure that the mediators, who would later work in the field in the three Lombardy cities under consideration, would have a deeper understanding of the discontinuities and accelerations of both dynamics involved in the project, namely those of waste and plastics.

It was judged that this understanding should include some knowledge about the transformations of urban metabolism in the long run. A first module therefore summarized the history of urban waste in the transition between the first and second industrial revolutions in the context of some city economies and in the transit from the nineteenth-century forms of circular economy to the linear dynamics of the twentieth century, to the new push towards the circular economy in this century of ours. A second module provided a brief review of the history of plastics and major synthetic polymers, with a focus on the development of mass consumption between the 1950s and 1960s and the explosion of plastics waste globally in recent decades.

This choice rests on two reasons: on the one hand, the consideration that linguistic and cultural mediation also has history among its disciplines of reference and the long duration among the dimensions that contribute to its effective deployment; on the other hand, the recognition that including the perspective of time had a strictly functional importance for communication and dialogue with restaurateurs relative to the project’s objectives.

Roberta Garruccio

Researcher of economic history at the Department of Languages, Literatures, Cultures and Mediations, University of Milan

SINGLE USE PLASTIC PRODUCTS BANNED

From December 2021, Italy is prohibiting the use of some single use non-compostable plastic products. These include some products that are used for food delivery and take-away services, which are thrown away soon after their use and are rarely recycled, thus becoming waste.



Not all plastic products will be banned

CONTAINERS:
The law does not prohibit the use of food containers made of plastic or of paper with a plastic lining or coating, but it calls for a reduction in their consumption.



CUPS AND GLASSES:
The directive also calls for a reduction in the consumption of glasses and cups made of plastic or of paper with a plastic lining or coating. These products must be marked with a label that indicates that they are completely or partially made of plastic.



WHERE SHOULD I THROW IT?



If you have any doubts, check the environmental label on the product, which provides information about its correct disposal

Reusing is better than recycling

The law promotes the replacement of single use plastic items with reusable products. However, when this is not possible, it allows the use of products made of compostable material, which can be disposed of together with organic waste.



COMPOSTABLE ALTERNATIVES TO SINGLE USE PLASTIC PRODUCTS

From July 2021, Italy is banning some single use plastic products for which reusable alternatives are available, with the aim of reducing plastic waste in the environment. When the replacement of these products with reusable ones is impossible, they should be replaced with single use compostable products that comply with the European standard UNI EN 13432. These products can be disposed of as organic waste and transformed into compost, a natural fertilizer, through an industrial process. The compostability certification also guarantees that the product doesn't contain any heavy metals or potentially toxic substances. Compostable products for food service can be made of different materials, which have different characteristics such as heat and water resistance. For this reason, it's important to ask specific information to suppliers to choose the right product for your needs.

COMPOSTABLE BIOPLASTICS:
Compostable bioplastics can be thrown in the organic waste bin. Products made of bioplastic look similar to those made of plastic and it's not easy to distinguish them. You can recognize compostable products thanks to the compostability certification UNI EN 13432. Transparent bioplastics (currently, PLA is the most used) have low heat resistance, while non-transparent ones can be used for hot food. Bioplastic films are also used as a coating for paper products, to make them more resistant to oil, fat, water and wet food.
What products are available in bioplastic?
Food containers, glasses, plates, cutlery, sauce boxes and straws.
WHERE SHOULD I THROW IT? → ORGANIC WASTE

CELLULOSE PULP:
cellulose pulp is made by processing various types of plants, such as sugar cane. Products made of cellulose pulp can be disposed of in the organic waste bin when they have a compostability certification.
What products are available in cellulose pulp?
Food containers, plates, lids.
WHERE SHOULD I THROW IT? → ORGANIC WASTE

PAPER AND CARDBOARD:
Products made of paper or cardboard, including napkins, can be thrown in the organic waste bin if they haven't been treated with chemical additives or inks. They still need to have a compostability certification to be disposed of as organic waste. These products may also be made of cardboard with a bioplastic film coating, which makes them more robust and resistant to water while remaining compostable.
What products are available in paper and cardboard?
containers for food, including fried food, glasses, plates
WHERE SHOULD I THROW IT?
Is it clean? → PAPER
Is it dirty? → ORGANIC WASTE

GREASE-RESISTANT PAPER:
Compostable alternatives for grease resistant paper also exist, such as straw paper for fried food or coupled paper for sandwiches and hamburgers.
WHERE SHOULD I THROW IT?
ORGANIC WASTE

WOOD:
Cutlery and chopsticks may also be made of wood. If they have a compostability certification, they can be disposed of as organic waste, together with food residues.
WHERE SHOULD I THROW IT?
ORGANIC WASTE

How to recognize a compostable product?

Compostable products are certified according to the European standard UNI EN 13432 by certification bodies. As well as this code, the product must display the logo of one of the certification bodies (one of the three images), the word "compostable" and the manufacturer's license number. The manufacturer must be able to provide a compostability certification of each product.

The Consorzio Italiano Compostatori (CIC) (Italian Composting Consortium) identifies compostable products through its logo "Compostabile CIC".

"OK Compost" is TÜV Austria's certification logo. In December 2017, TÜV Austria acquired the Belgian composting organization, Vinçotte nv.

DIN CERTCO is a certification body recognized by TÜV Rheinland and it provides the logo "DIN Geprüft Industrial Compostable".



Results

After the first information phase (pre-engagement), in which more than 300 restaurants were contacted, the project actively engaged 58 restaurants corresponding to 13 types of ethnic cuisine [infographic 3]. For these restaurants, detailed results are shown in the following paragraphs. It is important to emphasize that comparisons are not possible neither between municipalities (in Milan the number of restaurants involved is definitely higher, given the size of the city) nor between types of cuisines (Chinese and Peruvian restaurants are highly represented, other types of cuisine see the presence of only one restaurant). Thus, in the infographics that follow, the indication of geographic affiliation (Milan, Bergamo, Brescia) and types of cuisine is present for informational purposes only; in no case are rankings of merit possible.

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that, for different reasons, some restaurants (9 of which 5 in Milan, 2 in Bergamo and 2 in Brescia) that had participated in the engagement phase did not complete the monitoring phase: therefore, data from the two phases are not directly comparable.

Single-use plastics

During the engagement phase, various information, summarized in [infographic 4], was collected regarding single-use products (in non-compostable plastic or compostable material) used in restaurants. We found that almost all restaurants (56 out of 58) use at least one single-use product (only 2 restaurants stated already in the engagement phase that they did not use any of the products considered, either in non-compostable plastic or compostable material). In general, the most used type of product at this stage was found to be food and/or beverage containers, followed by cutlery, glasses/cups, straws, plates, and coffee stirrers (the latter are rarely found). [infographic 4] shows that the majority of single-use products detected at this stage (both those banned by the SUP and those for which a reduction in consumption is planned) are made of non-compostable plastic. Among the few instances of compostable material, cutlery is the predominant product.

The same information was collected during the monitoring phase to assess whether the training provided yielded positive results. The responses are summarized in infographic 5, where a general improvement can be seen, particularly when noting the percentage of compostable products out of the total number of single-use products that were surveyed during the monitoring phase: for all products considered, there has been a shift to a prevalence of compostable products, except for containers; these are not banned by the SUP, and compostable alternatives do not always ensure the performance required by different cuisines (particularly for the presence of brothy or sauce-rich foods).

Infographic 6 shows that, without considering the 9 restaurants



that did not participate in the monitoring phase, nearly 70% of the restaurants (34 out of 49) made at least one improvement related to the single-use plastic issue. For this calculation, 4 types of improvement were considered, shown below from most practiced to least practiced: replacing at least one single-use non-compostable plastic product with a single-use compostable product, eliminating at least one single-use product (both non-compostable plastic and compostable material), replacing at least one traditional single-use plastic product with a durable product, and replacing at least one single-use compostable product with a durable product.

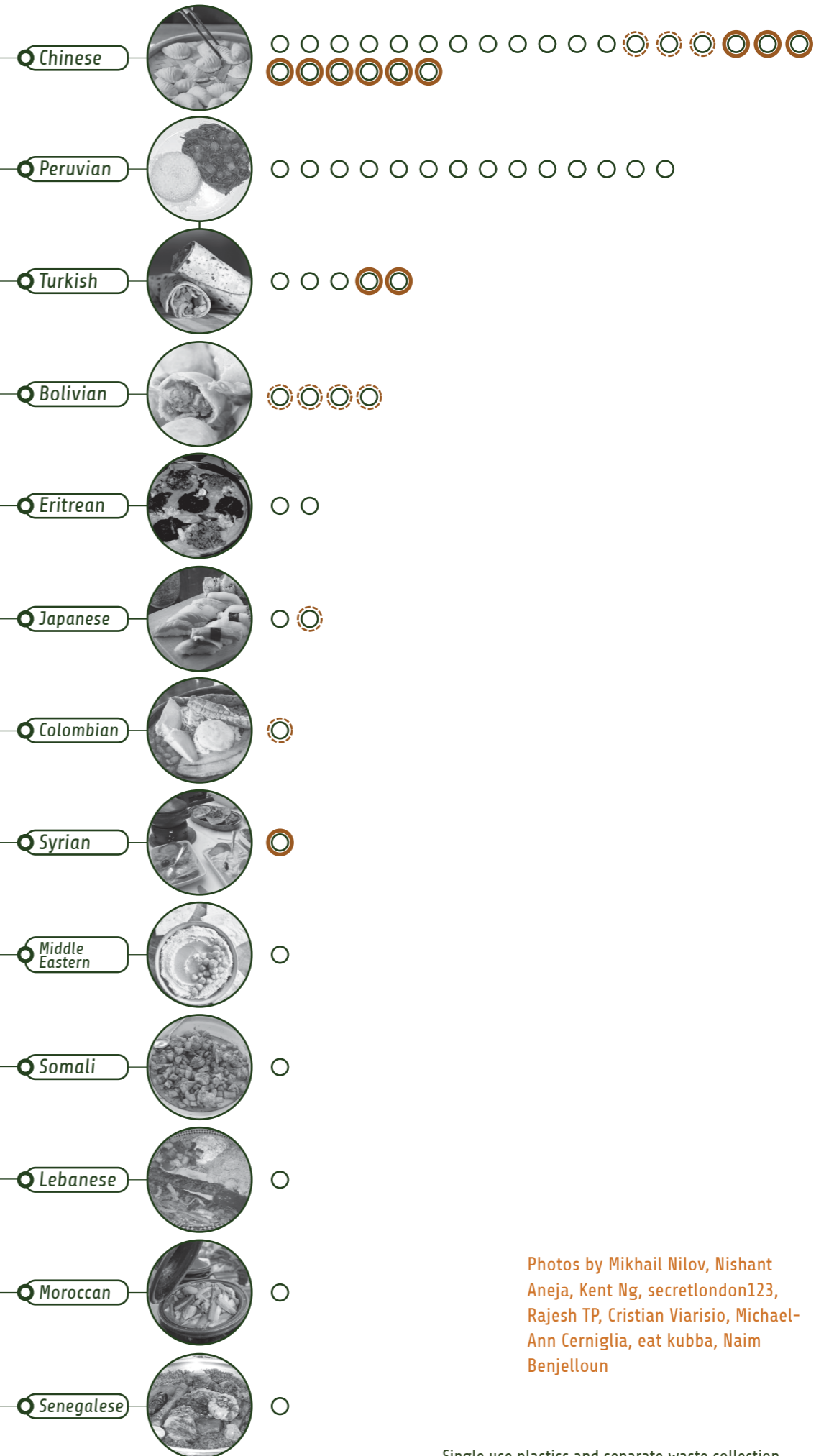
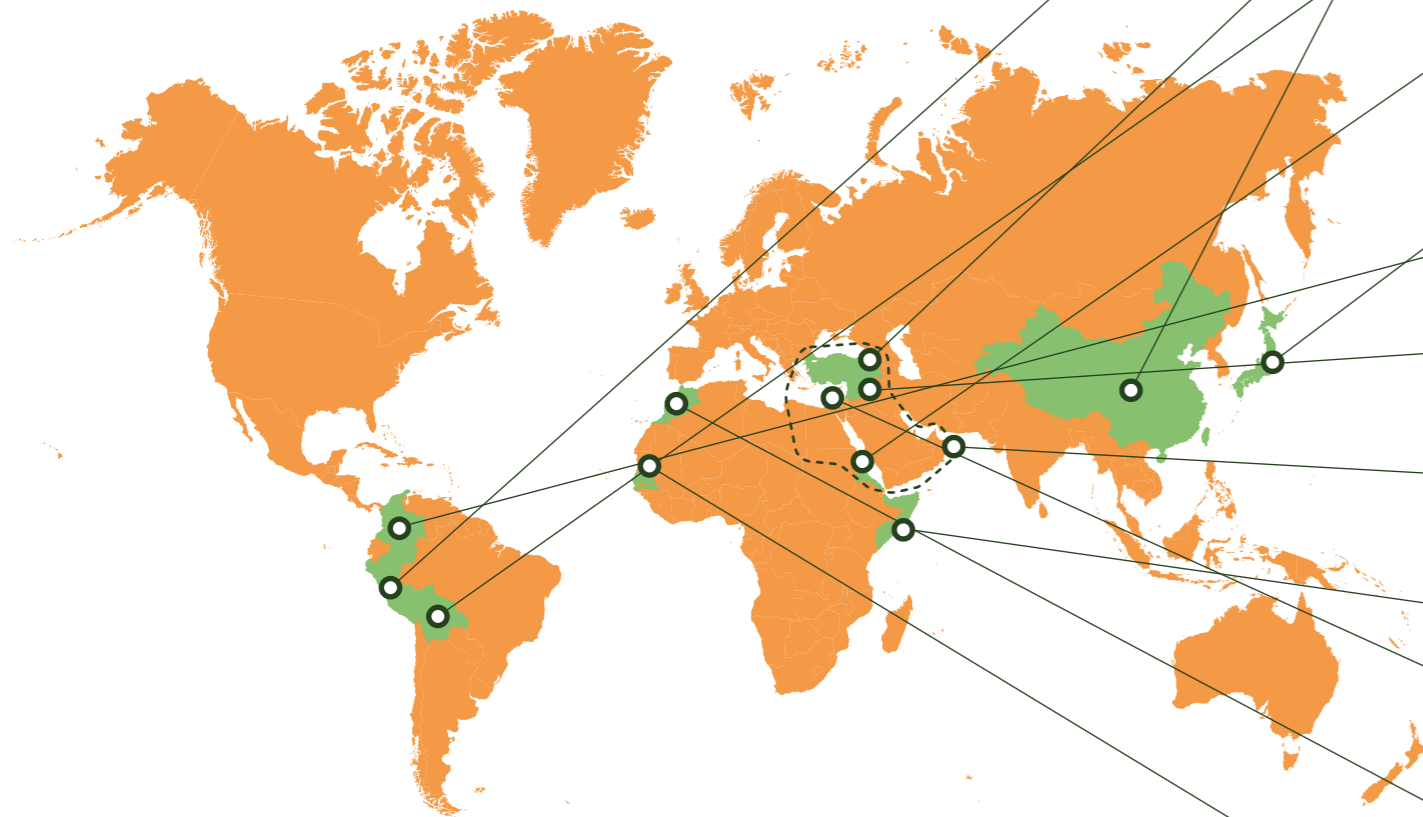
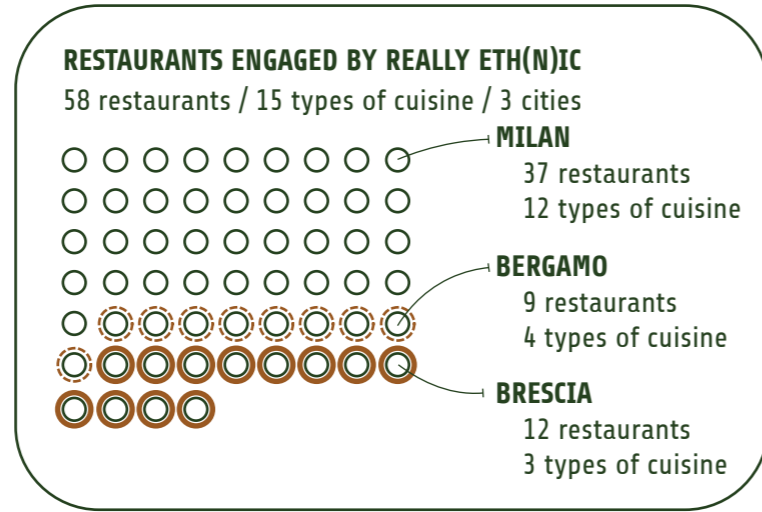
Worth mentioning is the very poor knowledge on the part of restaurateurs of the need to have a certification to ensure the compostability of products: even among those who were already using compostable products, only 3 restaurants had the necessary certification during the engagement phase (2 in Milan, 1 in Bergamo). Thanks to the training provided by mediators and Amsa/Aprica staff, this figure improved slightly in the monitoring phase to 10 restaurants (9 in Milan, 1 in Brescia), but it remains a minority among all those using compostable products: it is clear, therefore, that the issue of certifications is a critical point.

Another piece of information that was collected during the engagement phase and represented in [infographic 7] concerns takeout and home delivery services, both of which are typically more difficult to perform using durable products. Statements made during the interviews indicated that a large majority of restaurants perform at least one of the takeout and home delivery services, making clear the difficulty in quickly replacing disposable products with similar reusable products; such replacement would be difficult and costly for most restaurants, not only in terms of money but also in terms of time to be spent training staff and customers. Among the 55 restaurants offering takeout and home delivery services, only 5 stated that this type of service is their predominant activity (>50%). Interestingly, 19 restaurants (33% of the total) did not offer these services before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and introduced them specifically to address it. In addition, many of those offering the home delivery service use multiple platforms at the same time, and it is not uncommon for the service to be operated both directly by the restaurant and via platform.

Finally, [infographic 8] shows that most restaurants learned about the SUP Directive during the pre-engagement phase when the project was presented to them.

ENGAGED TYPES OF CUISINE

This infographic shows the number of restaurants that have joined the project, divided by geographical location (Milan, Bergamo and Bergamo) and – in descending order – by type of cuisine. The number of participants reflects the different sizes of the three cities involved. The map helps to place the types of cuisine "around the world".

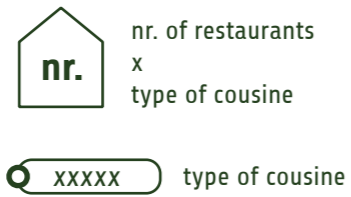


Photos by Mikhail Nilov, Nishant Aneja, Kent Ng, secretlondon123, Rajesh TP, Cristian Viariso, Michael-Ann Cerniglia, eat kubba, Naim Benjelloun

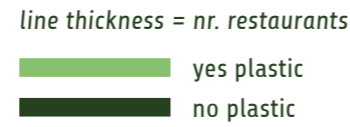
SINGLE-USE PLASTIC PRODUCTS

This infographic represents the restaurants that have joined the project, showing them in descending order by number of participants by type of cuisine, and breaking them down by those who say they use at least one single-use product (non-compostable plastic or compostable material) and those who use none. Those who use at least one product are then subdivided according to what products they use. The circles show, through dots, how many restaurants also use products made of compostable materials. Finally, for each type of product, how many types of cuisine involved use it is indicated. In this part of the infographic, each cuisine type is associated with a different color line, the thickness of which indicates the number of restaurants that use a given single-use plastic product. Obviously, highly represented cuisine types have thicker lines, so this should not be interpreted as a ranking of merit.

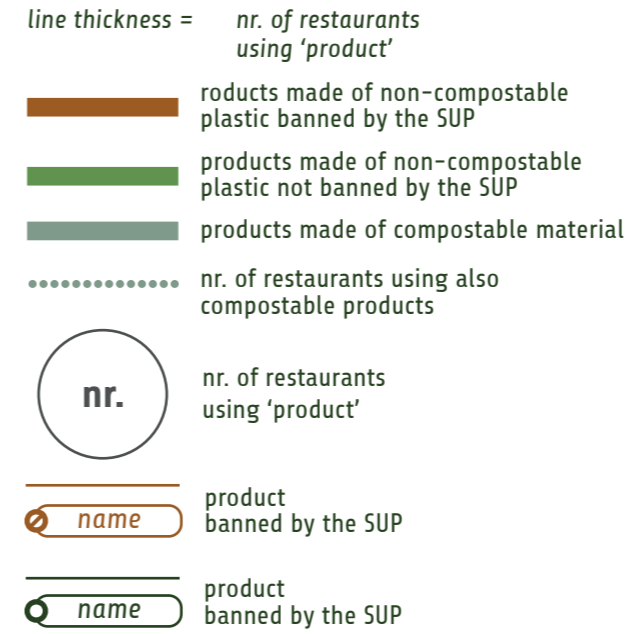
RESTAURANTS PER TYPE OF CUISINE



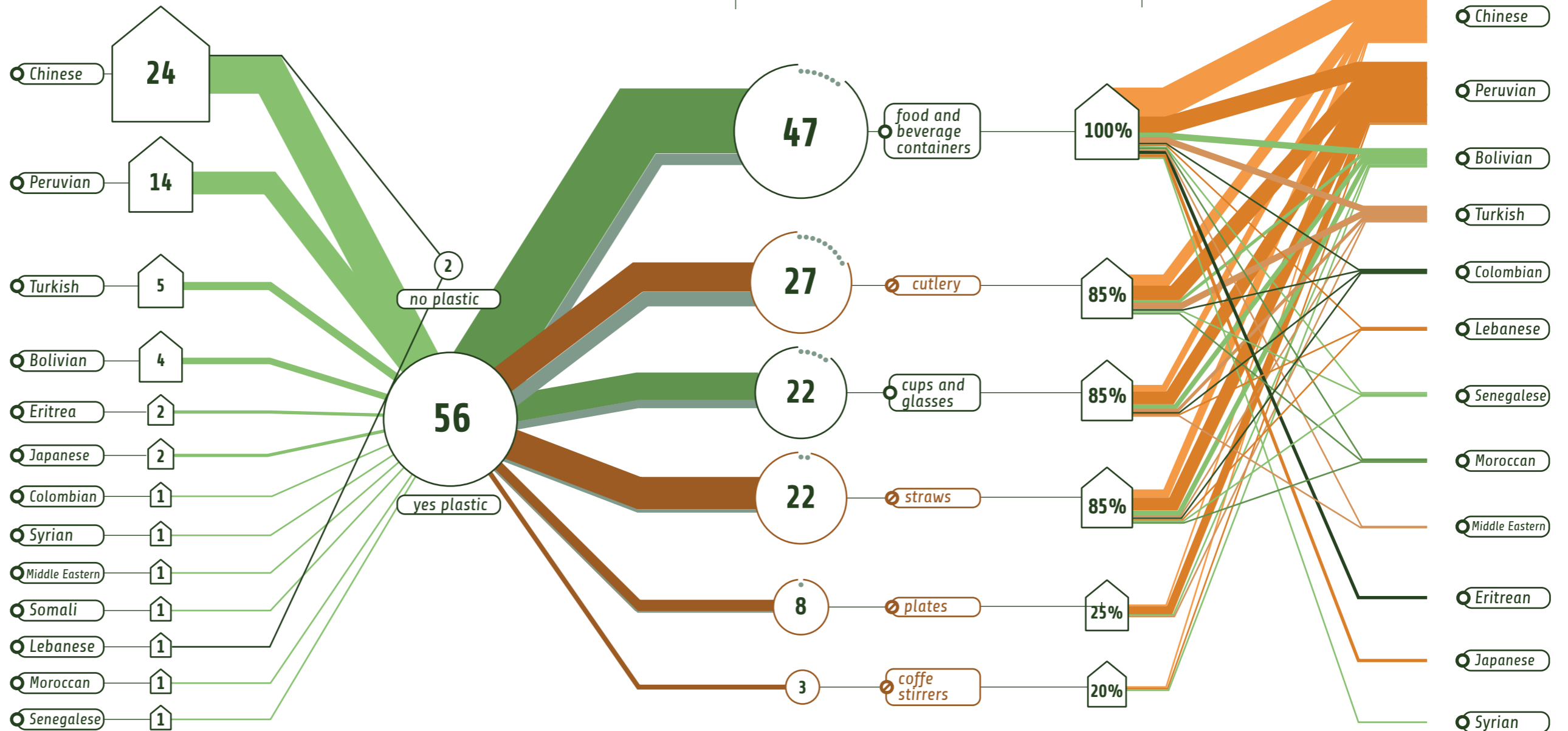
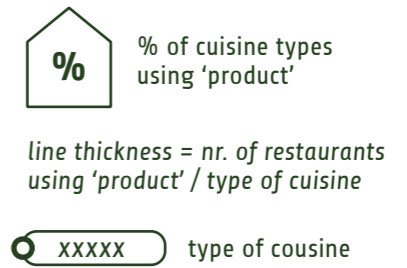
USE OF PLASTIC PRODUCTS



TYPE OF PLASTIC PRODUCT USED



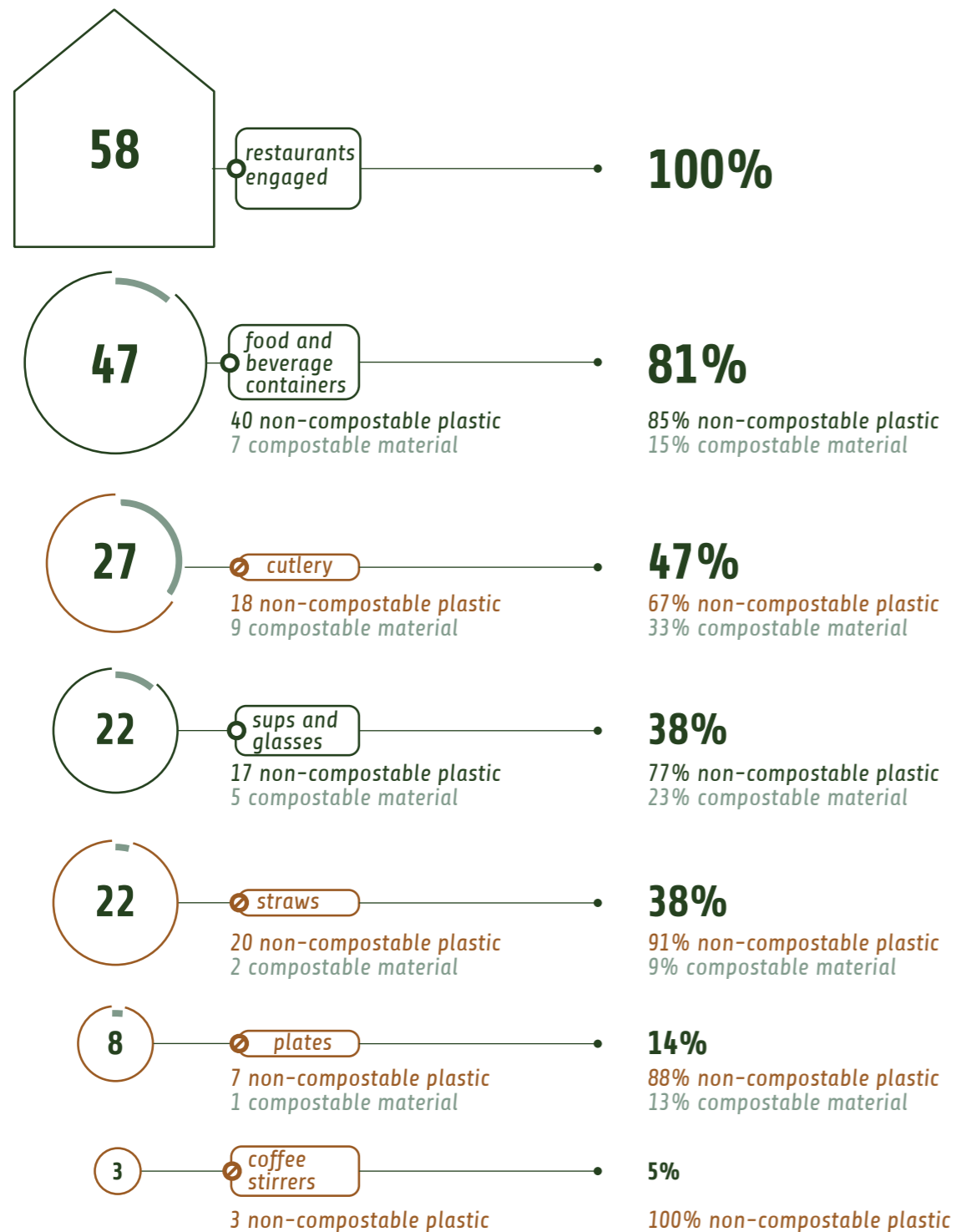
PLASTIC PRODUCT USED PER TYPE OF CUISINE USING IT



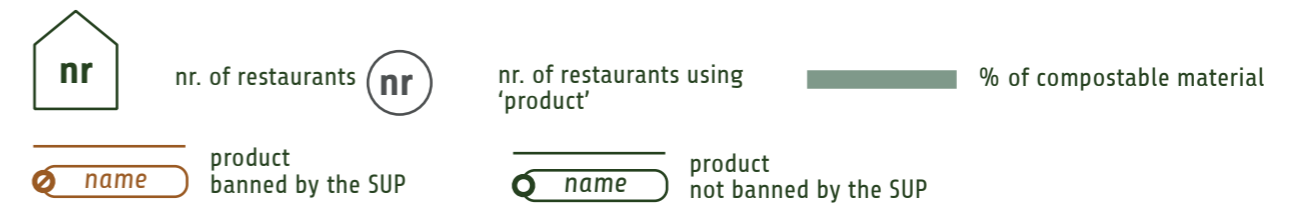
IMPROVEMENTS FOUND DURING THE MONITORING PHASE

This infographic shows a comparison of single-use products (made of non-compostable plastic or compostable materials) surveyed in the engagement and monitoring phases, accounting in the circles for the number of restaurants using each product and, to the right, for the percentage of restaurants by which each product is used. The two phases are not directly comparable since, as shown above in the representation of the number of restaurants, 9 did not participate in the monitoring phase. However, the increase in the incidence of compostable materials on the total number of single-use products used is clearly visible: the part of the circle marked in gray with a thicker line represents the percentage of compostable materials in the total single-use products surveyed, also reported in the text.

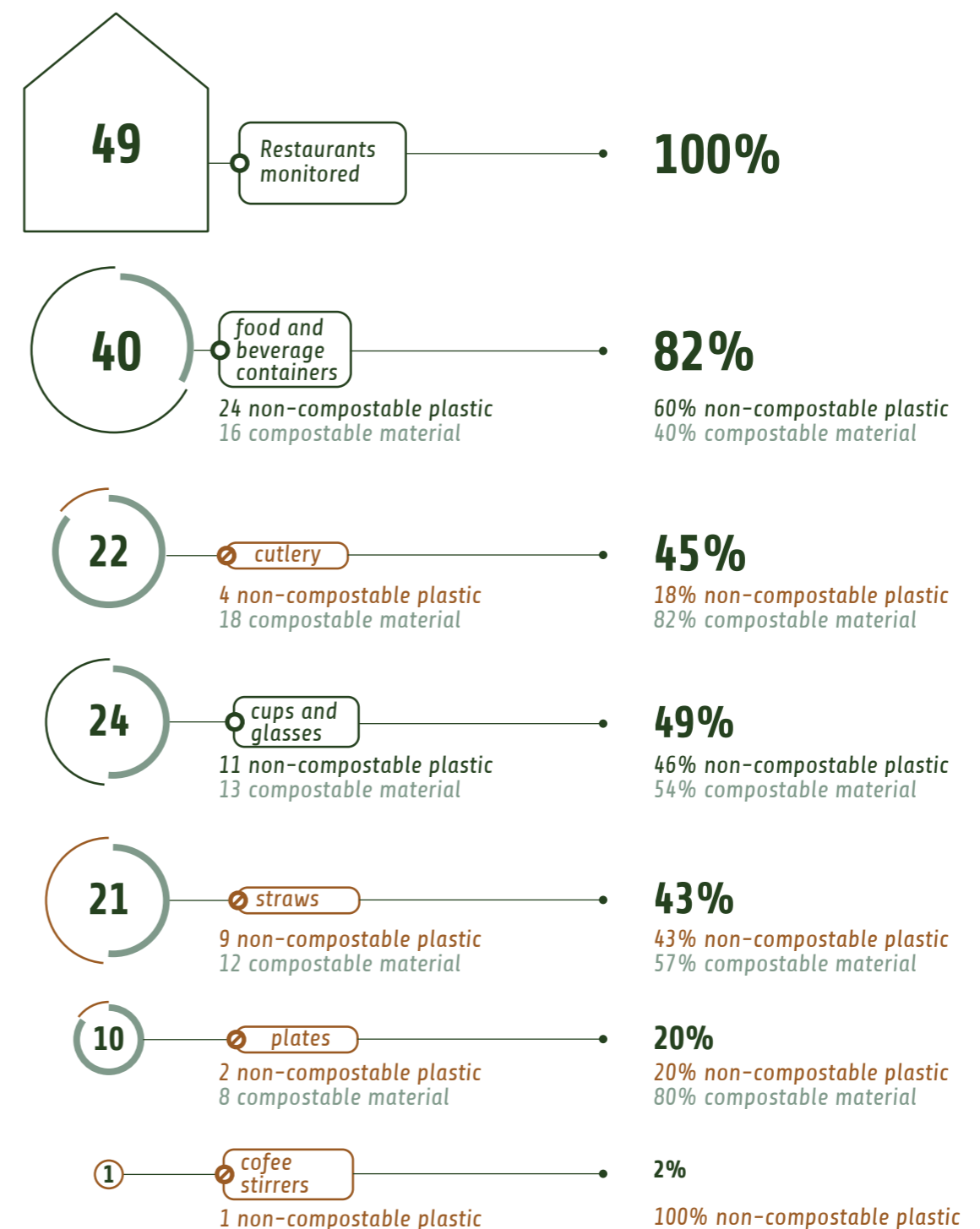
ENGAGEMENT PHASE



SWITCHING FROM NON-COMPOSTABLE PLASTIC TO COMPOSTABLE MATERIALS



MONITORING PHASE



IMPROVEMENTS FOUND DURING THE MONITORING PHASE

The infographic represents the presence of bins for the different fractions for the separate waste collection: on the left is the situation found during the analysis carried out in the engagement phase and on the right is the situation found during the monitoring phase. For both phases, the percentage of restaurants that had bins for each fraction is shown. Consider that the number of participating restaurants decreased between one phase and the next.

RESTAURANTS AND IMPROVEMENT CATEGORIES

nr. nr. restaurants
 line thickness = nr. restaurants

yes improvements
 no improvements unchanged (because it didn't use any plastic during the engagement phase)

nr. nr. of restaurants x nr. of improvement categories
 line thickness = nr. of restaurants x nr. of improvements categories

the restaurants made improvements in

in 1 category
 in 2 categories
 in 3 categories

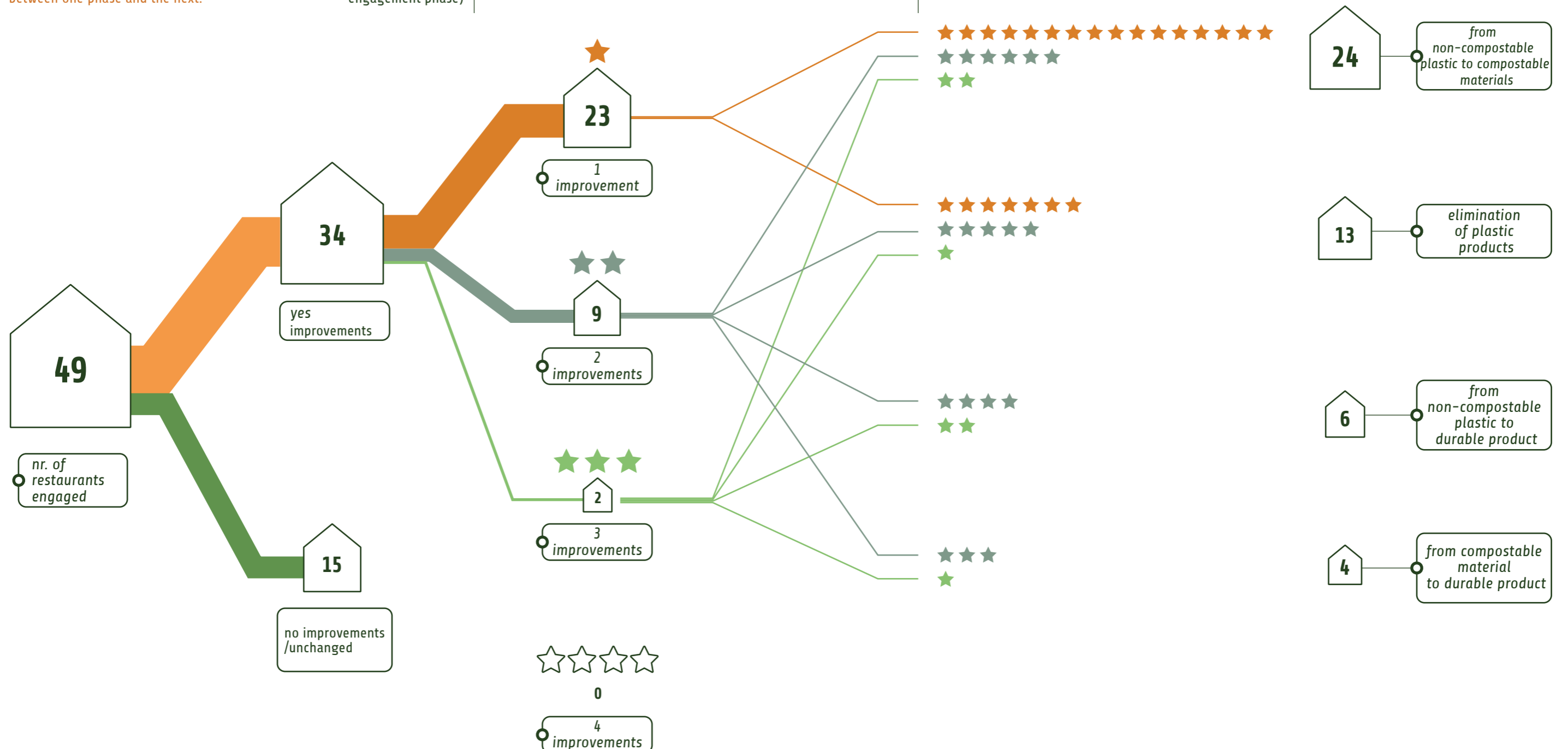
REPLACEMENT OR ELIMINATION OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC PRODUCTS

IMPROVEMENT CATEGORIES

☆ nr. improvement categories
 the color represents whether the restaurant made improvements in one or more categories

n* total of restaurants x improvement category

XXXX improvement category



INCIDENCE OF TAKEOUT AND HOME DELIVERY

RESTAURANTS PER TYPE OF CUISINE

nr. restaurants x tipo of cuisine

TAKEOUT and/or HOME DELIVERY

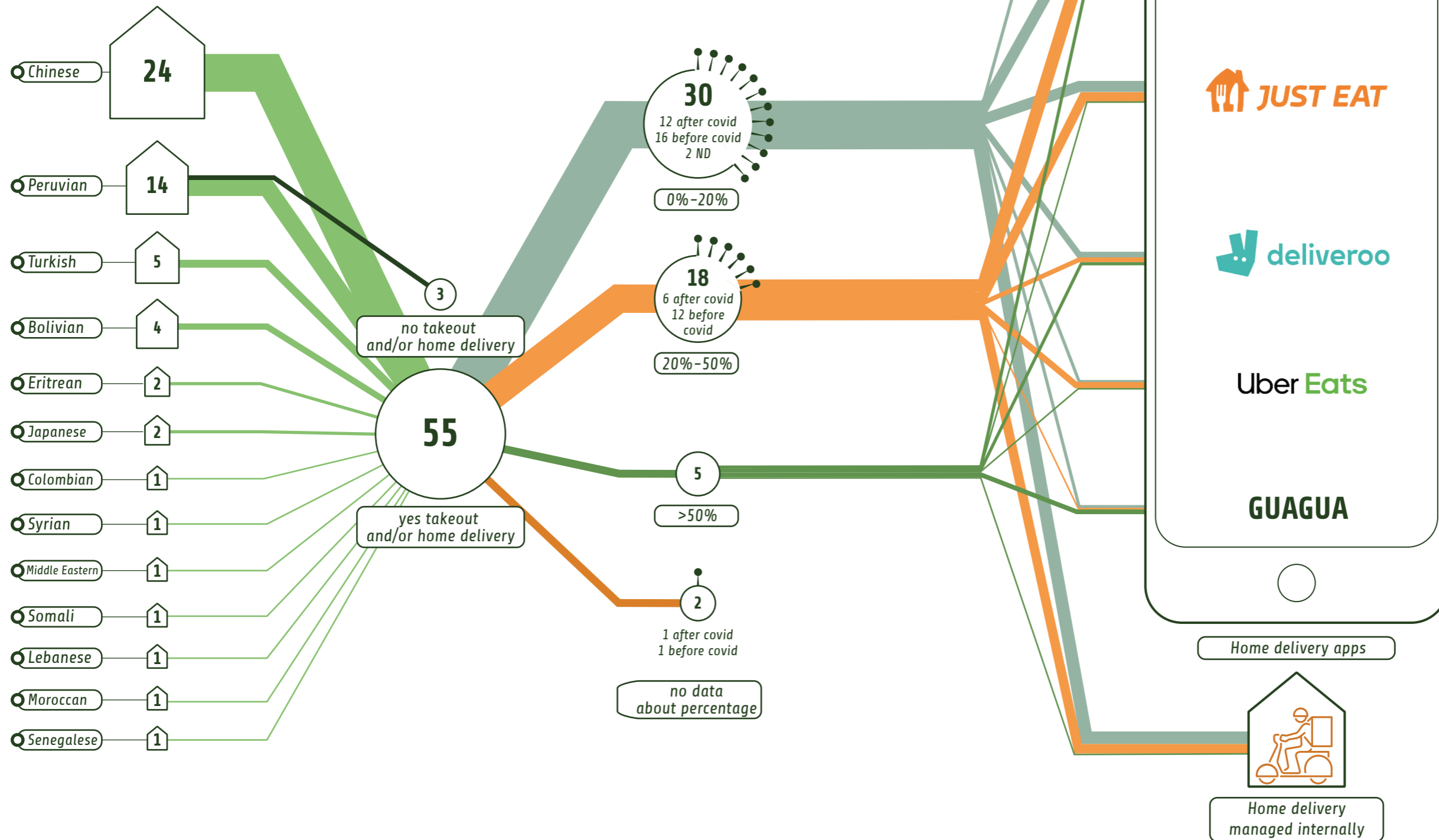
line thickness = nr. of restaurants
 yes takeout and/or home delivery
 no takeout and/or home delivery

% OF TAKEOUT and/or HOME DELIVERY

circle size = nr. of restaurants x % of service

SERVICE BEGAN BECAUSE OF COVID-19

nr. of restaurants that began offering this service because of Covid-19

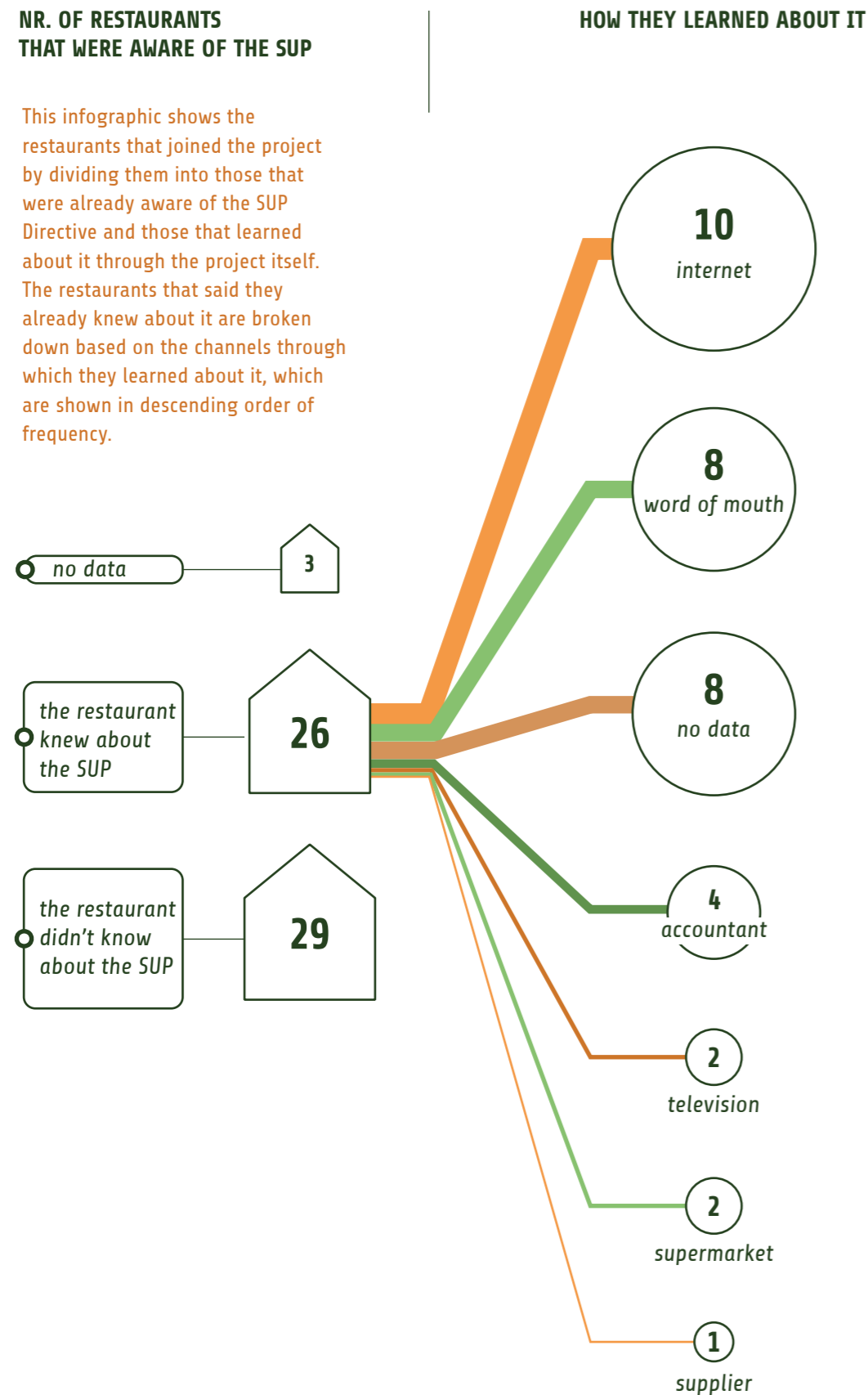


This infographic represents the restaurants that have joined the project, showing them in descending order by number of participants by type of cuisine, and dividing them into those that provide takeout and/or home delivery services and those that do not. Next, the restaurants that perform these services are broken down according to the incidence the services have on the restaurant's total business. The number of restaurants that have introduced these services because of the Covid-19 pandemic is also represented. Finally, the infographic accounts for the variety of channels through which the home delivery service is carried out. The apps are listed in descending order of frequency of use.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUP DIRECTIVE

NR. OF RESTAURANTS THAT WERE AWARE OF THE SUP

This infographic shows the restaurants that joined the project by dividing them into those that were already aware of the SUP Directive and those that learned about it through the project itself. The restaurants that said they already knew about it are broken down based on the channels through which they learned about it, which are shown in descending order of frequency.



The participation of ADL a Zavidovici

The Association ADL a Zavidovici is a social enterprise established in the 1990s in response to the war in the former Yugoslavia to support post-conflict reconstruction, interethnic dialogue, and community cooperation. Since 2005 it has been involved in the reception and integration of refugees, international protection holders or asylum seekers in the territory of Brescia.

There are numerous projects that the Association has supported over the years especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the issues of environmental protection and ecological education, and over time ADL a Zavidovici has had the opportunity to get to know and come into contact with different cultures, religions, customs and traditions. Communication, relationship, and interaction with people from different countries has always been facilitated using linguistic and cultural mediation, which has enabled communication and the finding of a common denominator between different visions, approaches, worlds and cultural systems.

The issue of environmental sustainability and waste collection is very important and urgent, so within the hosting projects that the Association runs, operators and caregivers do all they can to raise awareness and bring these topics to light, albeit within the limited circle of the home environment, soliciting among the users critical thinking about what is the role of each of us. There were not a few difficulties encountered in talking about these issues with the migrants received in ADL's facilities, who often come from realities where these issues are still dealt with in an unsystematic and unstructured way.

In constructing the Really Eth(n)ic project, the Association found it interesting to give the opportunity to empower restaurateurs with migrant backgrounds as new citizens who can and must contribute to the construction of societies and communities that are increasingly respectful of environmental issues. The acknowledged role of mediation was also another reason to believe in this project, knowing how training among compatriots can always be more effective than that done by operators and workers born and raised on our territories, valuing the richness that each language code brings.

ADL a Zavidovici, thanks also to this project, reaffirms that the more migrant citizens are involved in virtuous processes of empowerment and active citizenship, the more the communities of the future will know how to be truly inclusive and respectful of the Other and of the environment, in which we are all guests.

Maddalena Alberti
Director, Association ADL a Zavidovici

Separate waste collection

In addition to the SUP Directive, the second central theme in the project is separate waste collection. Training and data collection on this topic took place in the engagement and monitoring phases during the visual inspection carried out by Amsa/Aprica staff on the recycling bins in the restaurants. It should be recalled that these are quick inspections, surveying the situation at a specific time: therefore, they cannot be considered a general view of the separation capabilities of the restaurants involved, but they are a good starting point to reflect on the need to provide training on separate waste collection as well, despite the fact that restaurateurs often claimed to already be experts. It should also be pointed out that of the restaurants that participated in the monitoring phase, 2 did not agree to do the visual inspection again at this stage.

During both phases, operators verified the presence or absence of recycling bins, a prerequisite for good waste sorting: during the engagement phase, a lack of bins is noted in all cities particularly for the fractions of paper and glass, while during the monitoring phase the presence of bins improved strongly, reaching 100% for almost all fractions in all cities.

The number and type of mistakes found in the various fractions is addressed in infographics from 9 to 11. In general, during the engagement phase, glass was found to be the fraction least affected by mistakes; general waste, on the contrary, was found to be the most critical fraction, as it often contained materials that could have been recycled if placed in the right bins. For the plastic and organic fractions, which are central to the project, mistakes attributable to difficulties in distinguishing non-compostable from compostable plastics were found during the engagement phase, particularly in Milan and Bergamo.

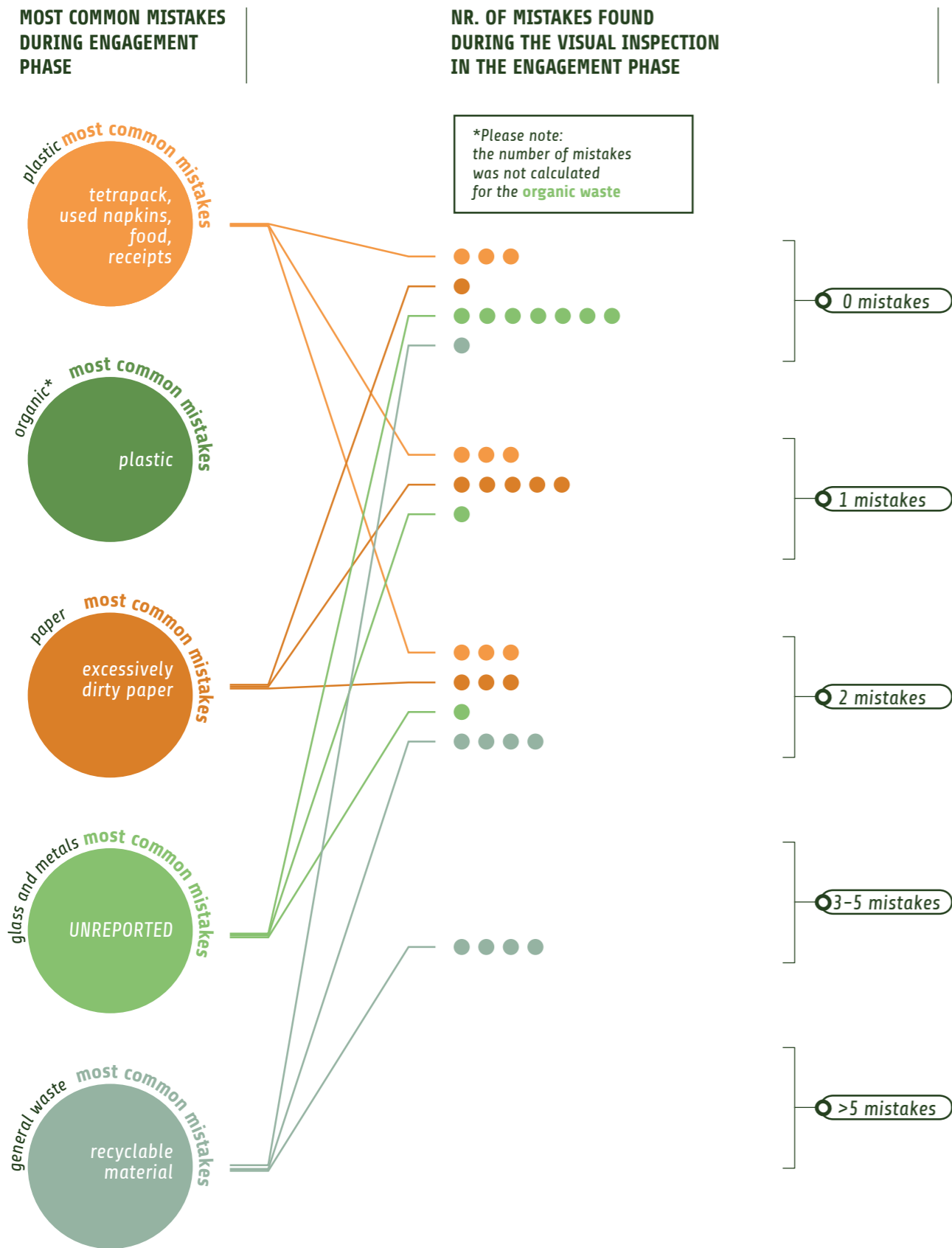
Again, the monitoring phase is not directly comparable to the engagement phase as the number of restaurants that took part is smaller. However, the strong improvement in terms of mistakes detected during the second visual inspection is immediately visible from the infographics. In fact, in all three cities the number of restaurants making between 3 and 5 mistakes, or more than 5 mistakes decreased in all fractions considered. It should also be noted that glass often already recorded very good results in the engagement phase, despite being one of the fractions for which the bin was most often not present: it can mean that restaurants sometimes also adopt different techniques to separate glass from the rest of their waste, such as grouping it in a designated area and then throwing it directly into the common bins at the apartment building. So, the presence or absence of the bin, while indicative, is not always directly related to the good quality of recycling.

In addition to this visual inspection, a small number of restaurants were also offered an in-depth material analysis (weighing of certain components present in a waste fraction, carried out by a specialized lab). Ten restaurants in Milan and four in Bergamo have joined. This was an additional commitment for restaurateurs, who had to collect a certain amount of waste and deliver it

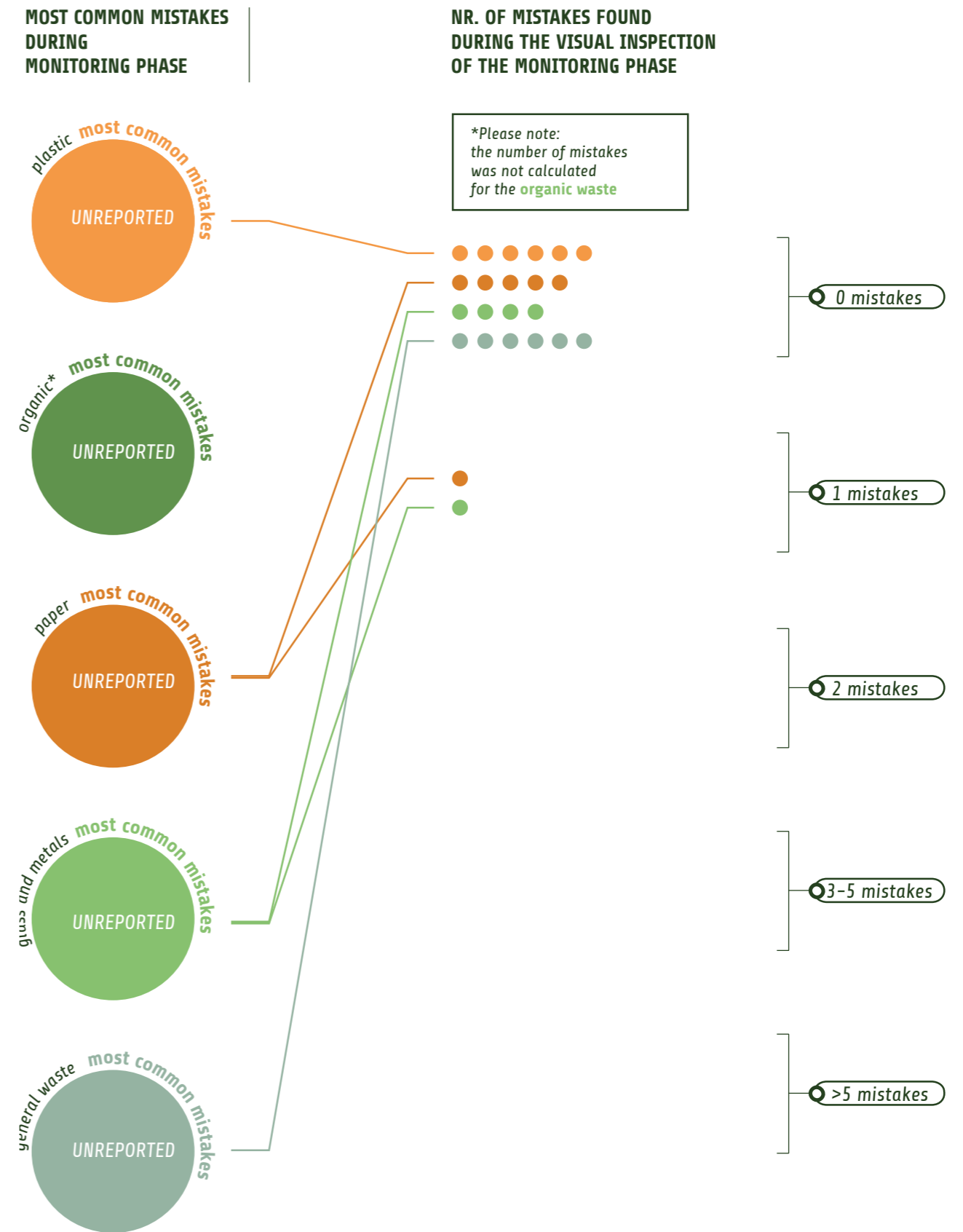
during an appointment agreed upon with Amsa and Aprica, but this allowed them to receive much more detailed feedback on the type and percentage of non-compliant material found in their plastic, organic and general waste fractions. As depicted in the infographics 12 and 13 (it should be recalled that in Milan plastic is collected together with metals, while in Bergamo it is not, as metals are collected with glass), in both cities the most critical fraction turned out to be the general waste: in particular, in Bergamo the percentage of non-compliant material was calculated to average 49% and in Milan 51%. Mistakes in this fraction typically represent materials that could have been recycled if thrown in the correct fraction. In Bergamo, the fraction with the lowest presence of noncompliant material is organic waste, while in Milan it is plastic. In all cases, the averages hide very different situations among individual restaurants, whose individual data are shown in the infographics. These analyses cannot be taken as an overview of the situation found in the project, as they refer to a very small number of restaurants, but they are certainly more representative of the situation of these precise restaurants than the visual analyses, which as mentioned could not guarantee the same accuracy.



VISUAL INSPECTION OF SORTED WASTE IN BERGAMO MOST COMMON MISTAKES



This infographic shows the mistakes found during visual inspections conducted in Bergamo during engagement (left) and monitoring (right) phases. The various fractions are shown and, within the circle, the most common mistakes found are reported. For all fractions except the organic waste, the number of mistakes is represented: the number of dots of the color corresponding to each fraction indicates how many restaurants were making that number of mistakes (increasing from 0 to >5) in that fraction. It should be noted that in some cases the bins of some fraction were empty during the inspection, so the total number of dots for each fraction does not always correspond to the total number of restaurants engaged in Bergamo. On the right the same data is represented but related to the inspection carried out during the monitoring phase.



VISUAL INSPECTION OF SORTED WASTE IN BRESCIA MOST COMMON MISTAKES

MOST COMMON MISTAKES DURING ENGAGEMENT PHASE

NR. OF MISTAKES FOUND DURING THE VISUAL INSPECTION IN THE ENGAGEMENT PHASE



This infographic shows the mistakes found during visual inspections conducted in Brescia during engagement (left) and monitoring (right) phases. The various fractions are shown and, within the circle, the most common mistakes found are reported. For all fractions except the organic waste, the number of mistakes is represented: the number of dots of the color corresponding to each fraction indicates how many restaurants were making that number of mistakes (increasing from 0 to >5) in that fraction. It should be noted that in some cases the bins of some fraction were empty during the inspection, so the total number of dots for each fraction does not always correspond to the total number of restaurants engaged in Brescia. On the right the same data is represented but related to the inspection carried out during the monitoring phase.

MOST COMMON MISTAKES DURING MONITORING PHASE

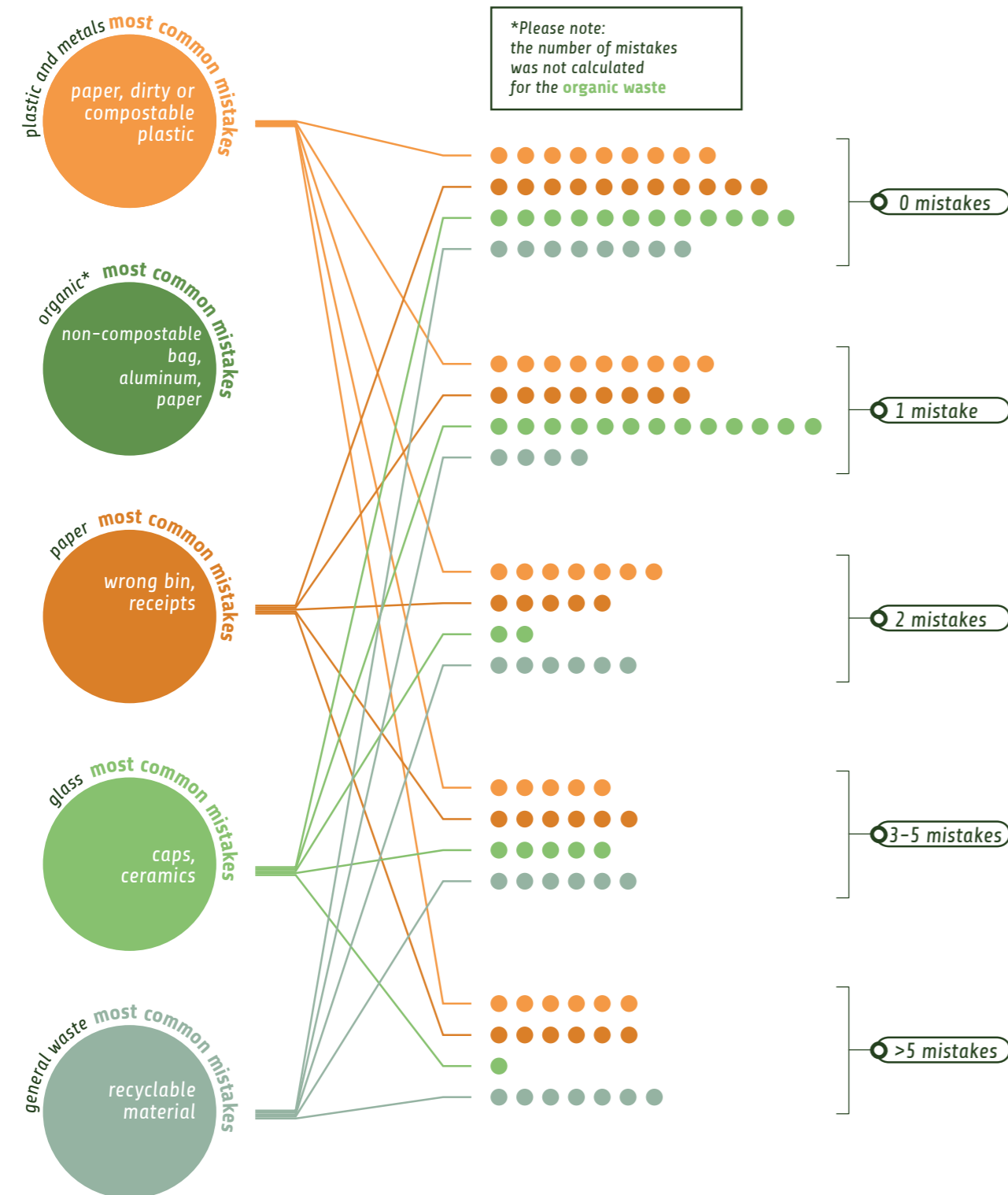
NR. OF MISTAKES FOUND DURING THE VISUAL INSPECTION OF THE MONITORING PHASE



VISUAL INSPECTION OF SORTED WASTE IN MILAN MOST COMMON MISTAKES

MOST COMMON MISTAKES DURING ENGAGEMENT PHASE

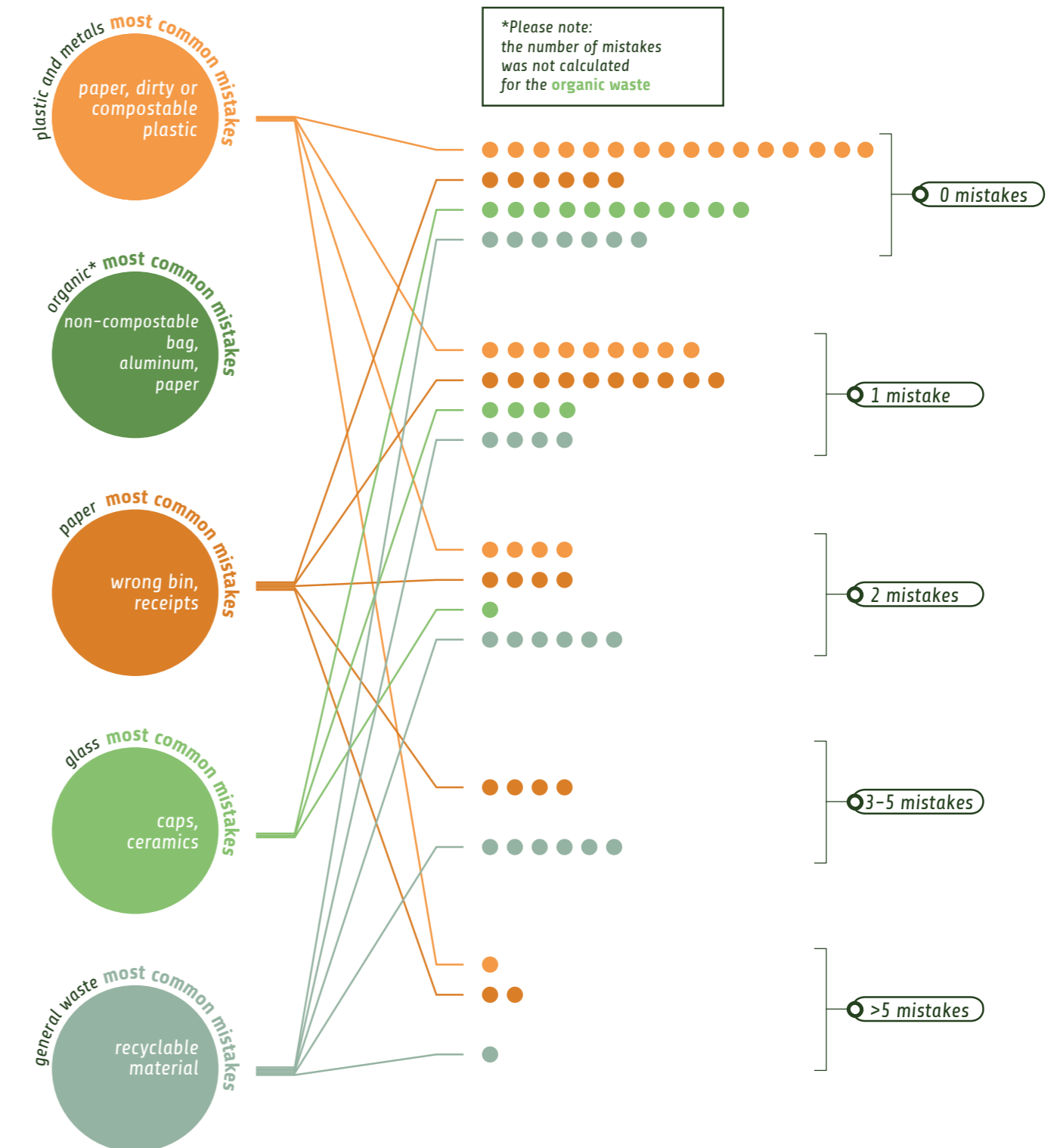
NR. OF MISTAKES FOUND DURING THE VISUAL INSPECTION IN THE ENGAGEMENT PHASE



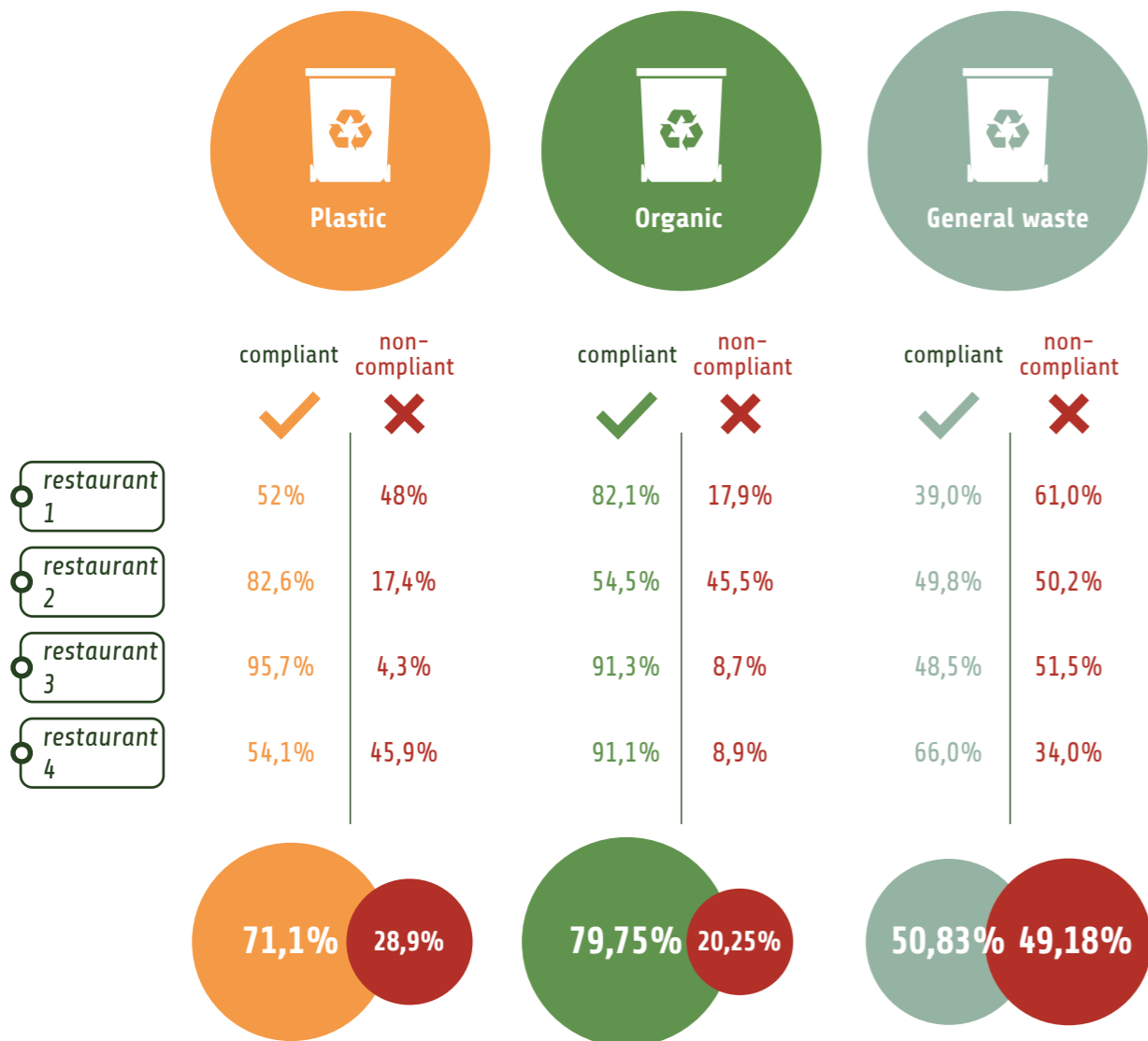
This infographic shows the mistakes found during visual inspections conducted in Milan during engagement (left) and monitoring (right) phases. The various fractions are shown and, within the circle, the most common mistakes found are reported. For all fractions except the organic waste, the number of mistakes is represented: the number of dots of the color corresponding to each fraction indicates how many restaurants were making that number of mistakes (increasing from 0 to >5) in that fraction. It should be noted that in some cases the bins of some fraction were empty during the inspection, so the total number of dots for each fraction does not always correspond to the total number of restaurants engaged in Milan. On the right the same data is represented but related to the inspection carried out during the monitoring phase.

MOST COMMON MISTAKES DURING MONITORING PHASE

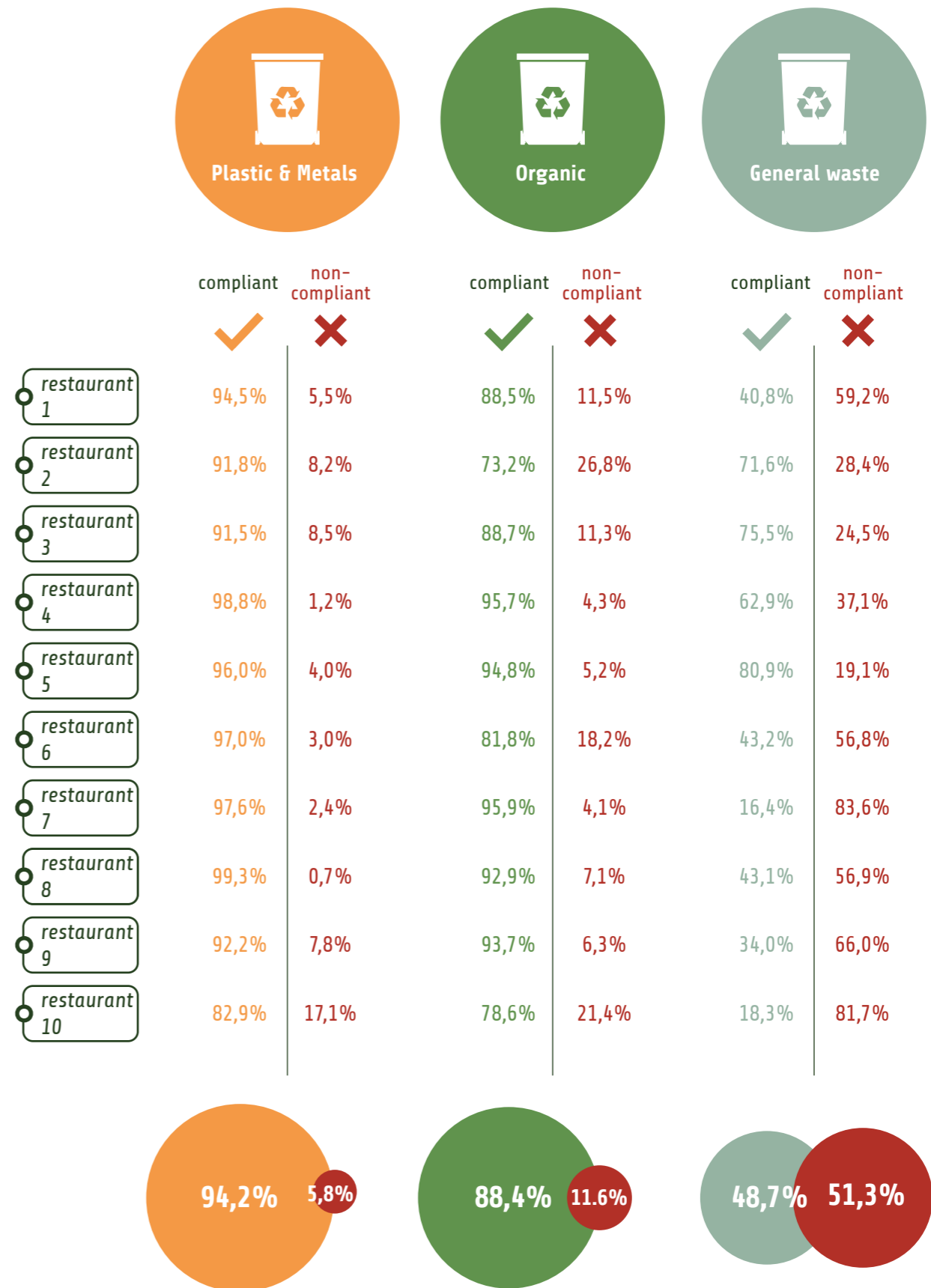
NR. OF MISTAKES FOUND DURING THE VISUAL INSPECTION OF THE MONITORING PHASE



RESULTS OF IN-DEPTH MATERIAL ANALYSIS IN BERGAMO



RESULTS OF IN-DEPTH MATERIAL ANALYSIS IN MILAN



Conclusions

This project represents an experiment in applying intercultural and linguistic mediation to the field of sustainability, starting from the understanding that the latter is not a self-evident concept, nor an obvious practice, but rather it is always situated in contexts that are also linguistic and cultural. In particular, it is proposed as a model of action to guide the behavior of restaurateurs, creating situations of mutual acquaintance between different subjects outside of any sanctioning context.

The relevance of the project is demonstrated not only by the results obtained but also by the numbers of restaurants involved: more than 300 restaurants were contacted and informed about the project's themes (200 in Milan, 60 in Bergamo, 70 in Brescia); 58 restaurants were trained in detail (37 in Milan, 9 in Bergamo, 12 in Brescia); 49 restaurants were checked to verify the results of the training (32 in Milan, 7 in Bergamo and 10 in Brescia).

Evidence gathered during the engagement phase shows that the selected target audience needed to receive detailed information on the two specific project issues: In fact, 95 percent of the restaurants perform take-out or home delivery services (thus necessarily making use of single-use products); at the time of engagement, 97 percent of the interviews restaurants were using at least one single-use product made of non-compostable plastic and only 26 percent were using at least one compostable single-use product (and among these, most were not informed about the necessary compostability certification); 50 percent of the restaurants were not aware of the SUP Directive; and in relation to separate waste collection, several issues were found (absence of dedicated bins for waste sorting, mistakes in different fractions).

The results of the project show that the approach of mediation worked. The use of non-compostable single-use plastic products for food service has decreased, in particular 69% of restaurants have adopted a more sustainable practice (eliminated a single-use plastic product or replaced it with a compostable or reusable product), 49% of restaurants have replaced at least one single-use non-compostable plastic product with a compostable one. The quality of waste sorting has improved; in particular, the number of restaurants that do not have dedicated bins for the different fractions (a prerequisite for good waste sorting) has decreased, and the number of mistakes made in all fractions has decreased.

Intercultural and linguistic mediation proves to be an excellent nudging tool, useful for building increasingly environmentally friendly communities. Through this approach, trusting, collaborative and fruitful relationships were created for all parties involved and complex issues were addressed in a simple and practical way. The impact of the project on the communities of the restaurateurs has not been verified, but since many members of the staff were also involved in several meetings, it is believed that the project worked on this aspect as well.

The approach used is applicable to other environmental sustainability issues and other economic actors, including Italian-speaking ones.

9

Infographic n. 14

Relevance of the project

+ 300 restaurants
contacted and briefed
on the project topics
(about 200 in Milan, 60 in Bergamo, 70 in Brescia)

58 restaurants
engaged and trained
(37 in Milan, 9 in Bergamo, 12 in Brescia)

49 restaurants
monitored on the results
of the training
(32 in Milan, 7 in Bergamo, and 10 in Brescia)

Evidence from the engagement phase

97% restaurants
using at least one
non-compostable
plastic product

Evidence from the engagement phase

26% restaurants
using at least one
compostable
material product

Evidence from the engagement phase

50% restaurants
that are not
familiar with
the SUP Directive

Evidence from the engagement phase

95% restaurants
offer take-out
and/or
home delivery

Evidence from the engagement phase

Many issues
persist
with correct
waste sorting



The use of products for food service in non-compostable single-use plastic has decreased

- **69% restaurants** that have done some improvements (replacement with compostable or reusable products)
- **49% restaurants** that have replaced at least one non-compostable single-use plastic product with a compostable product



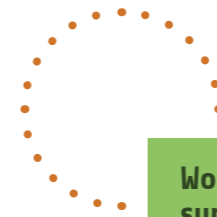
Waste sorting quality has improved

- **Decrease in restaurant that do not have dedicated bins** for separate waste collection
- **Decrease in mistakes in all fractions** of waste



Intercultural and linguistic mediation is a good tool to raise community awareness about environmental issues:

- **Trusting, collaborative relationships** for all parties involved
- **Complex themes** faced in a simple and practical way
- **Excellent potential** to reach and engage different communities



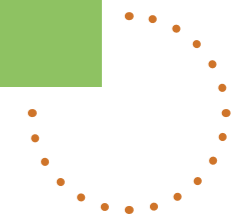
Would you like to replicate the project in your area? EStà can support you

This is the second edition of the Really Eth(n)ic project: the initial pilot action focused on the topic of separate waste collection was done in 2019 in two Milan neighborhoods and the current edition expanded to include the topic of single-use plastic and the cities of Bergamo and Brescia.

We believe that the value of the project lies in talking about environmental sustainability, in a simple and concrete way, to subjects (in this case, non-Italian speaking restaurateurs) who have very different languages and sensibilities, not only in comparison to the same Italian-speaking subjects, but also among themselves. We also believe that the relationship established during the training and monitoring meetings, if cultivated, can improve the dialogue between these subjects, their clientele, local institutions, and the operators who offer services of various kinds in the city – in this specific case, the companies that take care of waste sorting and collection. The approach can be applied to other environmental sustainability issues (renewable energy, circular economy, waste, responsible purchasing...) and to other economic actors (traders, small entrepreneurs...). We also believe that training on environmental sustainability issues is very useful for the same actors listed, but Italian-speaking.

To facilitate the replicability of the experience in other territories, we have written operational guidelines that you can find at www.assesta.it and www.unsaccoetnico.it. In the guidelines, you can read detailed descriptions of the project phases and the lessons we learned along the way. However, EStà makes its experience available and can help you with different intensity: design support, training of project partners, involvement in operational phases, project coordination.

Francesca Federici
Really Eth(n)ic project coordinator, EStà





EStà is an independent and nonprofit centre for research, education and consulting which promotes innovation in environmental, socioeconomical and cultural systems. It works with public institutions, the third sector, universities and research centres, foundations, trade unions and companies and it connects their themes to sustainability, while providing them with useful elements to understand the context in which they operate, to make decisions and to promote active citizenship.