

# ECOffee

## Sustainability in every sip!

Fancy a cup of Joe? Discover how ECOffee is creating conscious coffee consumers with ethical habits to enhance the sustainable coffee industry.

**WORDS** Saor-Ide Dolan



Sofia Mexia is the proud co-owner of Diplomático, a French/Mediterranean-style restaurant in the heart of quaint Quarteira, which she owns with her sister. She is also a project manager for Tropicastral, Lda, which has partnered with ECOffee for the Consumers Project to pave the way for a greener future.

Sofia has been in this role for three years now and has described the experience as “fantastic”. The project is funded by the Erasmus+ program. Its aim is to encourage sustainable coffee consumption and contribute to a carbon-neutral planet through research, educational material, and an innovative mobile application. Sofia believes that “if three in four people will change their habits because of our developments, it’s already a victory for us.”

### An overview of ECOffee

ECOffee Algarve is an initiative in the Algarve region of Portugal that focuses on sustainability by repurposing spent coffee grounds (the final product after the preparation of coffee). The project is part of a growing trend in reducing waste and promoting eco-friendly practices, particularly within the hospitality and agricultural sectors. ECOffee collects used coffee grounds from local cafés, restaurants and hotels across the Algarve. Instead of these grounds being discarded as waste, they are repurposed for various sustainable uses. The initiative highlights the environmental benefits of reusing coffee grounds, contributing to the circular economy in the region. Key activities and impact:



### Collection and distribution

**Waste collection:** ECOffee Algarve partners with local businesses to collect spent coffee grounds regularly. This reduces the amount of organic waste sent to landfills, decreasing the region’s overall carbon footprint.

**Community engagement:** The initiative engages with the local community by educating businesses and individuals on the environmental impact of coffee waste and how it can be turned into a valuable resource.

### Repurposing Spent Coffee Grounds

**Fertilisers and soil amendments:** ECOffee Algarve distributes processed coffee grounds to local farmers and gardeners as a natural fertiliser. The nitrogen-rich content of coffee grounds benefits soil health and improves plant growth.

**Composting:** The initiative encourages the use of coffee grounds in composting, providing workshops and guidance on incorporating them into home compost systems.

### Product development

**Eco-friendly products:** ECOffee Algarve is exploring ways to create eco-friendly products from coffee grounds, such as biodegradable garden pots, logs for fireplaces, or even beauty products like exfoliating scrubs.

**Innovation and research:** The project is researching new applications for spent coffee grounds, contributing to innovation in sustainable materials.

### Development and recording of tutorials

The ECOffee project has successfully produced five educational video tutorials, which have been uploaded to the project’s YouTube channel. These tutorials aim to inform and raise awareness about sustainable coffee consumption. The guides and audio texts have been translated into multiple languages, and corresponding videos in these languages have been created. You can view these videos on their ECOffee YouTube Channel. In addition to the videos, the project has also created a detailed e-guide, accompanied by an evaluation questionnaire, offering valuable insights for those interested in sustainable coffee practices.

### Next steps: Training App

The next major focus for the ECOffee project is their app where each partner will conduct sessions in their respective countries. These sessions will provide participants with hands-on experience using the ECOffee app, demonstrating how it works and its benefits. During these events, participants will test the developed materials, and their feedback will be collected to help further improve the resources. The ECOffee app is designed to encourage sustainable coffee consumption and support environmental sustainability. This app can also be used through the BlueStacks Android emulator on Windows platforms, ensuring broader accessibility and integration into virtual environments.

### Features of the ECOffee app

The ECOffee App is a comprehensive tool for coffee enthusiasts and café owners, designed to support eco-friendly coffee practices. It offers various features such as finding partner cafés, tracking rewards points, and accessing educational resources about sustainable coffee consumption. Users can also stay updated with blog posts, verify purchases with a QR code scanner, and redeem points for rewards.

### Commitment to a sustainable Future

The ECOffee project is dedicated to enhancing sustainability in the coffee industry, reflecting their broader mission to protect the environment and promote a greener planet. The project’s recent accomplishments mark significant progress toward this vision, underscoring the importance of adopting sustainable practices for a better future.

*To keep up with their efforts in sustainable coffee consumption, visit their website and follow them on social media. Together, we can build a greener future through sustainable coffee practices.*



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