

REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE REU WORK PROGRAMME 2020-2021

RI 2: FOOD LOSS AND WASTE

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Review of the REU Work Programme

Food loss and waste (FLW) constitute a complex problem for global food security and sustainable food systems, because the losses are difficult to measure, the causes are multiple and solutions have varying impacts on the economics of the food systems and its actors, the environment and natural resources, the social conditions of people and communities including health, income and food security. Due to the magnitude and complexity of the problem, a global, multi-disciplinary response is required to address it, involving all actors and stakeholders affected by FLW.

In the recent years, a great number of FLW-targeted initiatives have been developed worldwide. With an objective to improve the general impact through joint planning and implementation and efficient use of resources, FAO designed the Global Initiative on Food Loss and Waste Reduction – [SAVE FOOD](#) – to guide and facilitate collaboration among all involved in the FLW reduction. SAVE FOOD takes a multi-disciplinary holistic, integrated food supply chain and food systems approach, to ensure that FLW reduction is technically, economically, environmentally and socially acceptable, feasible and cost-effective.

Under the umbrella of the Global SAVE FOOD Initiative on Food Loss and Waste Reduction, FAO in Europe and Central Asia (FAO REU) is implementing a comprehensive FLW reduction programme in the region. FLW reduction is at the core of sustainable food systems.

FAO REU supports countries in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia in the development of national strategies for FLW reduction and the implementation of the main pillars of the strategies, in close collaboration with national authorities, non-governmental organizations, private sector actors, and other partners. The accomplished activities include:

- Research on FLW (scale, critical loss points, causes, impacts, solutions) in the selected value chains from farmers to consumers, including a 6-month field research in North Macedonia and field surveys (Albania, Armenia, Georgia, and Republic of Moldova);
- Analysis of legislation and policies related to FLW management; revision and development of new legislation (Georgia, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine);
- Strengthening and establishment of food donation systems (Georgia and Ukraine);
- Training on the FAO case study methodology for FLW analysis and the EX-ACT tool for value chains (North Macedonia);
- Studies on the collection and management of municipal waste, determination of the volumes and characteristics of waste (Ukraine).
- FAO REU developed a practical guide for the establishment of effective and sustainable food recovery and redistribution systems. This guide offers recommendations to policy-makers regarding implementation of a favourable regulatory and legal framework that facilitates food recovery and redistribution activities in their countries. Concrete examples are presented of what is being done in other countries (particularly in the European Union) in terms of policy measures and legislative adjustments. The recommendations proposed are based on these examples.

- Raising awareness of the FLW issue, including the organization of a series of technical workshops (Turkey);
- Implementation of educational programs on food waste for children in schools of Albania, Belgium, Croatia, France, Hungary, Romania, Ukraine and UK.
- A regional Community of Practice on FLW reduction has also been created to improve the sharing of information and resources, as well as to facilitate collaboration and partnerships in the region.

In 2020, the FAO Regional Save Food Program launched a two-year FLW project in the Central Asia subregion (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan), under the FAO-Turkey Partnership Program on Food and Agriculture. A series of activities is planned as part of a comprehensive FLW prevention and reduction program for the subregion, including the development of regional and national FLW reduction strategies, strengthening of legal and policy frameworks and processes, organization of training programs, preparation of technical guidelines, conducting field research on FLW using statistical and non-statistical methodologies, implementation of an educational program on FLW targeting children in primary and secondary schools, launch of communication and awareness campaigns, strengthening of regional cooperation and organization of a regional SAVE FOOD conference on FLW in Istanbul in September 2020.

National strategic priorities for FLW reduction

The national strategies on FLW reduction that we develop in cooperation with the countries propose an approach that closes the loop on FLW occurring during the production, processing, distribution and consumption of food, and supports the shift to a circular value chain. In this approach, FLW is prevented first, then rescued and recovered, and finally recycled/composted, so that resources invested in food production are secured and optimized.

Create an enabling policy and regulatory environment

The creation of a favourable policy and institutional environment and climate, conducive to investment in the food and agriculture and sector, is one of the pillars of efforts to prevent and reduce FLW at the national level.

Improve the performance and professionalism of value chains

Improving the performance of value chains, making them more inclusive, better organized and more profitable, generating safe and quality products, is one of the levers for reducing FLW.

Support research and knowledge dissemination

Exchange of information and knowledge for the benefit of all actors in the value chains (from farmers to consumers), agricultural extension agents and university and technical training centres, must be placed at the heart of actions.

Raise awareness

Create awareness and improve understanding of causes and impacts of food losses and waste by all sectors and target groups and drive behaviour change in individuals and communities.

Develop partnership

Promote and facilitate collaboration among public, private and civil society actors, thereby enabling them to identify and create synergies and work together in a more effective and better-coordinated manner.

Promote and enhance food recovery and redistribution systems

The recovery and redistribution of safe and nutritious food for direct human consumption is, after prevention at the source, the preferred option for reducing FLW at the level of food businesses.

Divert food loss and waste to an economically productive non-food use

Food waste represents a significant fraction of municipal solid waste. Industrial alternatives and efficient recycling methods are needed to reduce the environmental burden of FLW and minimize risks to human health, in collaboration with national waste management efforts. In addition, foods diverted from the food supply chain to productive non-food use retain some of their value.