

CONCEPT NOTE

LIFE FOOD WASTE PLATFORM MEETING – Effective solutions for prevention and treatment 8-9th October 2018, BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

Background

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation about a **third of all food produced globally for human consumption is lost or wasted** – this amounts to 1.3 billion tonnes per year. Food loss and waste in **industrialised countries are as high as in developing countries, but their distribution is different:**

- In developing countries, over 40% of food losses happen after harvest and during processing;
- In industrialised countries, over 40% occurs at retail and consumer level.

Around 88 million tonnes of food are wasted annually in the EU, with associated costs estimated at 143 billion euros (FUSIONS, 2016).¹ Within the framework of its Seventh Environment Action Programme (EAP 2020), the EU aims to turn the region into a resource-efficient, green and low-carbon economy. This necessarily should affect sectorial policies on EU and Member State levels. The Roadmap to a resource-efficient Europe programme has identified food production and consumption as key sectors where resource efficiency should be improved. This initiative aims at the whole food supply chain with the purpose to significantly reduce the disposal of edible food waste in the EU by 2020.

The EU and Member States are also committed to meeting the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**, adopted in September 2015, including a **target to halve per capita food waste at the retail and consumer level by 2030, and reduce food losses along the food production and supply chains.**

Food waste prevention is an **integral part of the Commission's new Circular Economy Package** as well, to stimulate Europe's transition towards a circular economy which will boost global competitiveness, foster sustainable growth and generate new jobs. The transition to a more **circular economy**, where the value of products, materials and resources is maintained in the economy for as long as possible, and the generation of waste minimised, is an essential contribution to the EU's efforts to develop a sustainable, low carbon, resource efficient and competitive economy. Economic actors, such as business and consumers, are key in driving this process. Local, regional and national authorities are enabling the transition, but the EU also has a fundamental role to play in supporting it. The aim is to ensure that the right regulatory framework is in place for the development of the circular economy in the single market, and to give clear signals to economic operators and society at large on the way forward with long term waste targets as well as a concrete, broad and ambitious set of actions, to be carried out before 2020².

The Commission also **created a platform dedicated to food waste³ bringing together Member States and all actors in the food chain.** That platform will support the achievement of the food waste reduction target under the Sustainable Development Goals through appropriate steps, the involvement of stakeholders, the sharing of valuable and successful innovation and relevant benchmarking.⁴

¹ (https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food_waste/stop_en)

² (https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food_waste/eu_actions_en)

³ (https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food_waste/eu_actions/eu-platform_en),

⁴ Brussels, 2.12.2015 COM(2015) 614 final COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Closing the loop - An EU action plan for the Circular Economy (p: 14-15)

The food waste chain



Picture1: <http://www.fooddrinkeurope.eu/our-actions/foodwaste-toolkit/what-is-food-wastage/>

Food waste takes place all along the value chain: during production and distribution, in shops, restaurants, catering facilities, and at home. This makes it particularly **hard to quantify**: today, there is **no harmonised, reliable method to measure food waste in the EU**, which makes it more difficult for public authorities to assess its scale, origins, and trends over time.

Addressing the measurement issue is an important step towards a better understanding of the problem, **a coherent monitoring and reporting as well as effective exchange of good practices across the EU**. The Commission will **elaborate a common EU methodology to measure food waste** in close cooperation with Member States and stakeholders.

Discarding food that is still edible increases these impacts and causes financial loss for consumers and the economy. Food waste also has an important **social angle: donation of food** that is still edible but that for logistic or marketing reasons cannot be commercialised should be facilitated. **Awareness campaigns are needed to change behaviour**. The Commission supports awareness raising at national, regional and local levels and the **dissemination of good practices in food waste prevention**.

EU action is also important in areas where **food waste can result from the way EU legislation is interpreted or implemented**. This is the case for **rules concerning food donation to food banks, and the use of safe unsold food as a resource in animal feed – the Commission will take measures in these two areas**.

Another area where action might be needed concerns **date marking, in particular the "best before" date**. This can be wrongly interpreted as an expiry date and lead to the discarding of safe, edible food.⁴

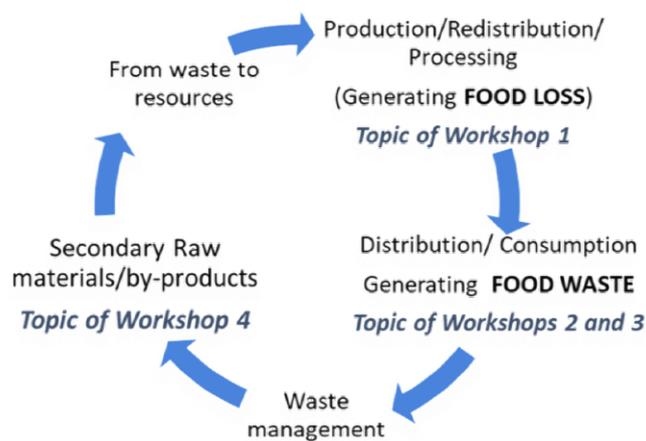
The European Union has been supporting a variety of projects aiming to reduce or reuse food waste according to the activities of LIFE, INTERREG, FP7, H2020 framework and transnational programmes. Different approaches can be identified in this field, beginning from prevention through valorisation to environmentally friendly termination.

The LIFE FOODWASTE Platform meeting

The **LIFE PROGRAMME** is the EU's financial instrument supporting environmental, nature conservation and climate action - is playing an important role in supporting the transition to a circular economy. **The objective of the current LIFE FOODWASTE platform meeting is to enumerate and summarize the experience of the most relevant programmes, to provide practical solutions for stakeholders in the Member States and raise the awareness of the policy makers in its plenary session.**

Particularly, it would address how LIFE can contribute to policy development and implementation in very different national and regional contexts. What framework should EU provide to facilitate food waste prevention? What works and what does not work (impact of existing policies, projects, grass-route initiatives) what challenges and how they can be addressed?

Based on the experiences of the ongoing and closed projects the afternoon workshops are organized in line with the circular economy chain:



Picture 2: Circular Economy Modell

The interactive workshops should give feedback to the following questions:

- What kind of measures can be considered effective and valuable to avoid food losses and the generation of food waste?
- How EU legislation influence the reduction of food waste and feed losses and facilitate food donation and the use of former foodstuffs and by-products from the food chain for feed production, without compromising food and feed safety?
- What kind of experiences are gained in relation to date marking by the various actors of the food chain?
- What kind of results of awareness raising were shown?

Main topics to focus on during the platform meeting:

- **Workshop 1:** Challenges and lessons learnt/best practices in relation to food loss reduction during catering.
- **Workshop 2:** Challenges and solutions in the retail sector and logistics sector towards reducing food waste
- **Workshop 3.** Challenges and solutions in the field of waste management (by-product transformation)
- **Workshop 4.** Challenges and solutions in the households towards reducing food waste

The expected outcomes

The outcomes of the meeting will be shared with policy makers, will be published in the LIFE newsletter and will allow creating new partnerships to identify and implement new ideas for the future.

The participants of the **LIFE FOODWASTE platform** meeting will include representatives of the food supply chain (producers, processors, retail, catering), and also the non-governmental organizations and academic institutions.

The principal messages of the lectures are structured along the lessons to be learnt: experience of accomplishing food waste related projects and stakeholder involvement. Besides the positive effects and advantages of the programmes, the difficulties and challenges will be also addressed by the speakers.