

# Ambitions towards food waste prevention in the EU-27 Member States

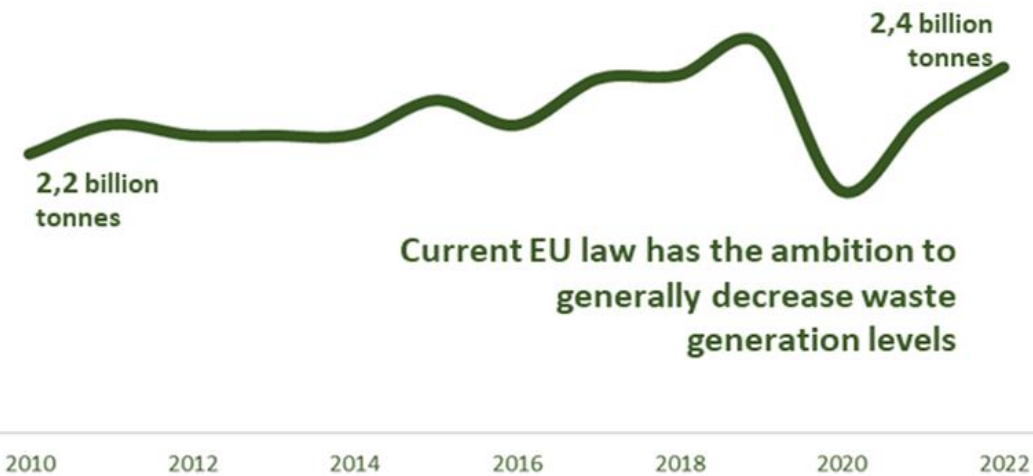
– findings from a mapping by the European Topic Centre



Sanna Due / EU Platform on Food Waste and Food Losses Meeting / 19 June 2024

# Food waste generation

## Generation of waste, EU27



- > Over **58 million** tonnes of food waste (131 kg/inhabitant) are generated in the EU each year (Eurostat).



# EEA's mandate on Waste prevention (WFD)

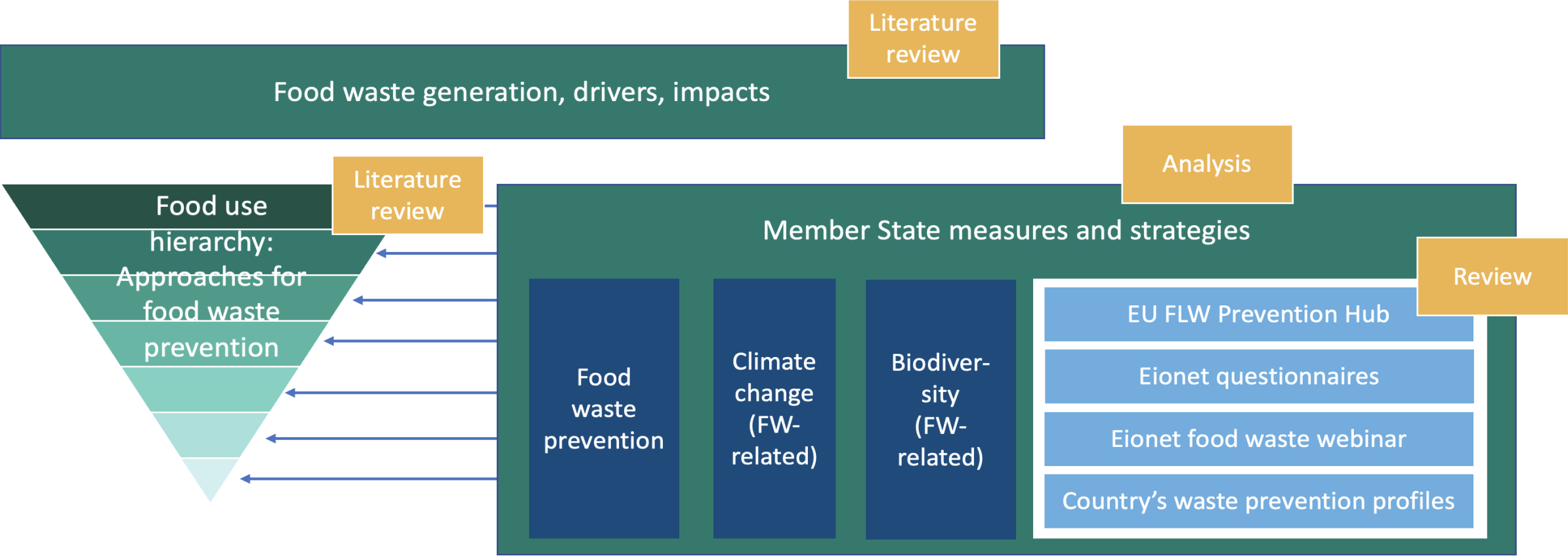


## To publish, every two years, a report containing:

- assessment of the progress made in the completion and implementation of waste prevention programmes;
- evolution of prevention of waste generation for each Member State and for the Union as a whole;
- an assessment of decoupling of waste generation from economic growth and the transition towards a circular economy.

# Ambitions towards food waste prevention in the EU-27 Member States

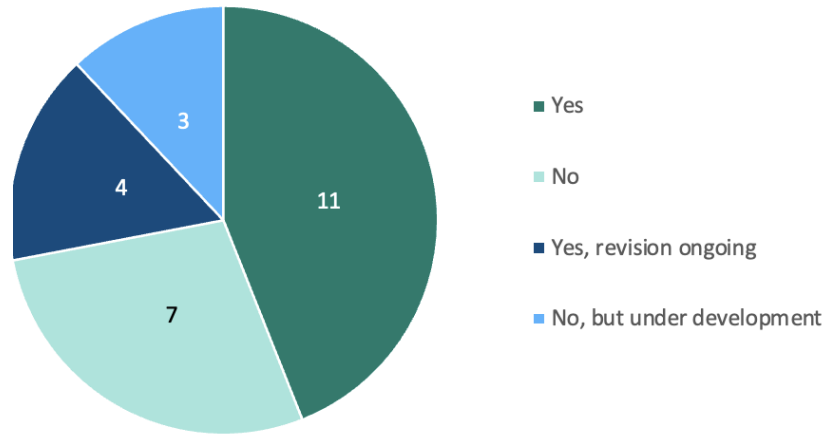
- Methodology used by the European Topic Center for Circular Economy and Resource Use



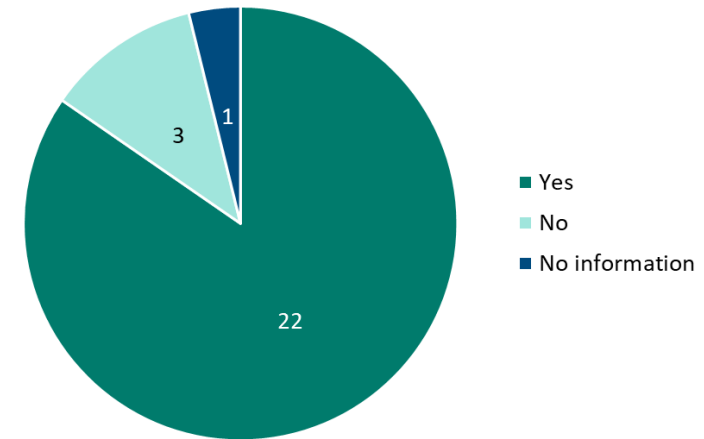


# Mapping Food Waste Strategies: Targets, SDG 12.3 Commitments, and Food use hierarchy

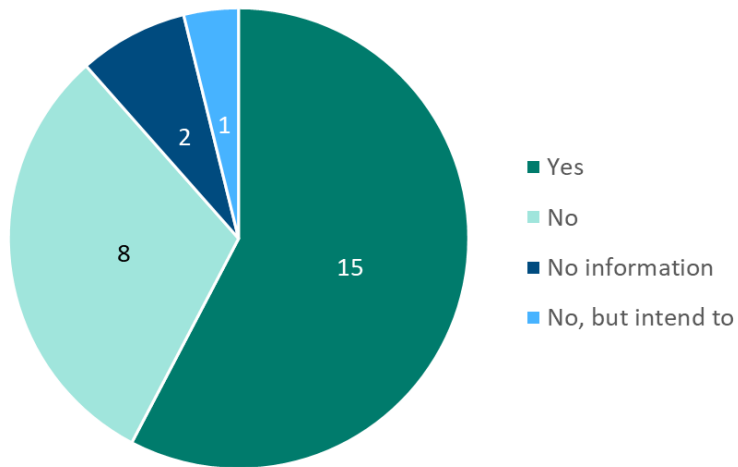
Food waste strategy / act / action place in place?



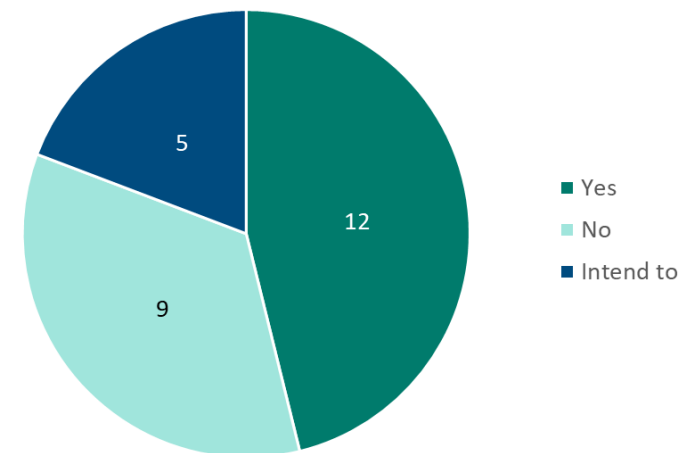
National food waste reduction target?



Commitment to SDG 12.3?



Food use hierarchy reference?



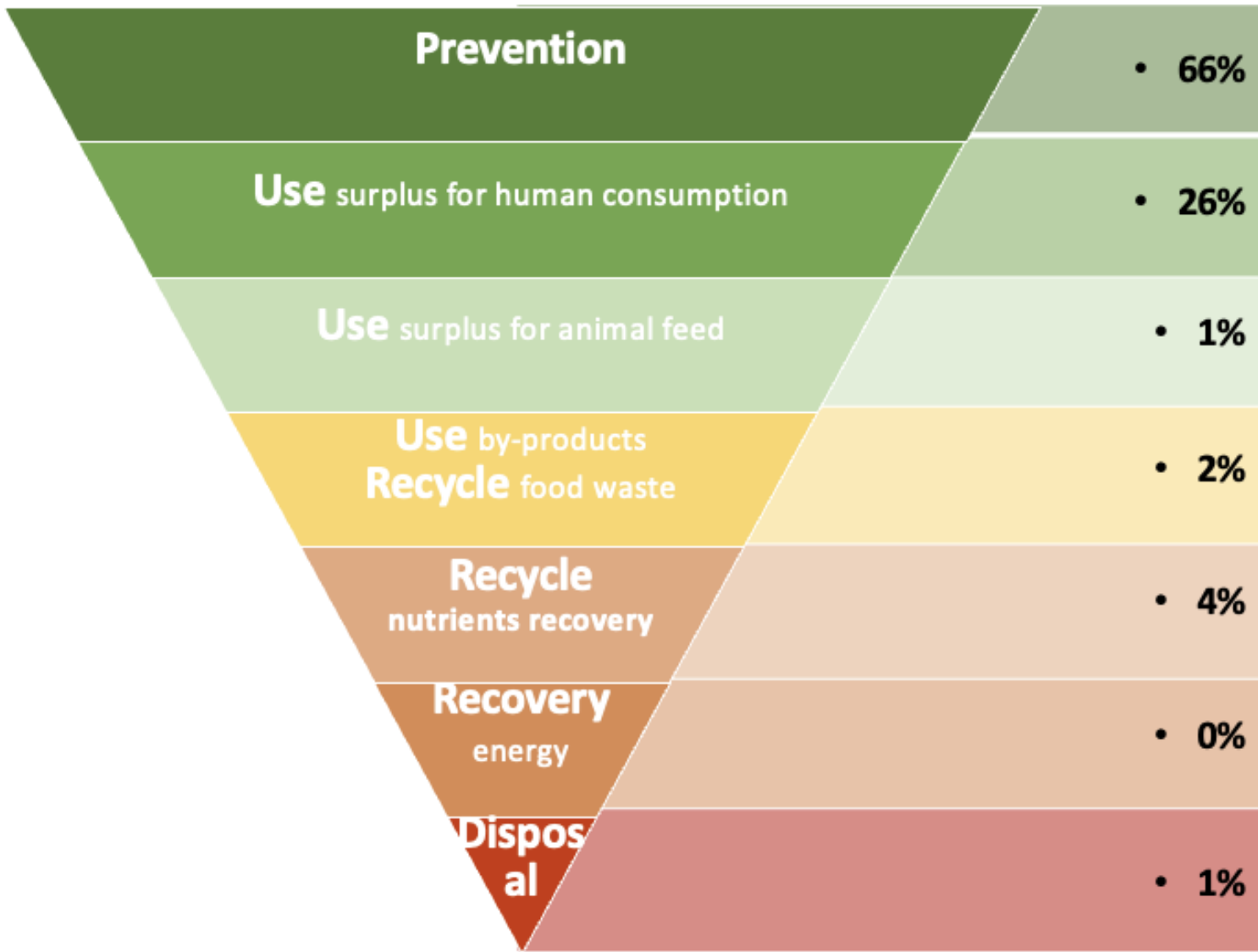
# Mapping of Actions in the EU-27

## Definition of an Action:

- › An initiative or policy aimed at concretely preventing, reducing or managing **food waste** within an EU-27 Member State.
- › Focus on actions supporting **concrete implementation** rather than setting targets or overarching policies.



# Actions implemented in MS, by level of the (adapted) food use hierarchy



# Classification of actions



## Regulatory Interventions

Bans, restrictions, or mandatory requirements.



## Market-Based Measures

Economic incentives for sustainability (e.g., taxes, subsidies, fees). Often need regulatory support.



## Voluntary Initiatives

Non-binding actions by stakeholders. Based on negotiation, not formal decisions.



## Informative & Educational Measures

Campaigns, training, awareness materials. Aim to influence behavior and/or save costs.



## Research & Innovation

Funding for studies on consumer behavior, surplus food, and new solutions



## Other Projects

Various actions on food waste (e.g., digital platforms, discussions).





# Findings



## Implementation

All countries have taken actions to prevent food waste.

92 % at the highest levels of the food waste hierarchy

## Focus on Soft Policies

**Countries prefer “soft” policy measures:**

- › Informative and educational (**62%**)
- › Voluntary initiatives or agreements (**11%**)
- › Initiating/supporting specific research or other projects (**21%**).

Only 1% of actions classified as “**Regulatory interventions**”.

# Evaluation of effectiveness is lacking



Real action to prevent and reduce food waste is underway, but **evaluating the effectiveness** of these efforts **remains challenging** for authorities and stakeholders.

Especially prevention efforts are by their nature difficult to evaluate.

› **Recommendation:**  
Guidance on how to integrate evaluation and monitoring into food waste prevention programs and strategies





# Interconnectedness of actions at different levels of the food use hierarchy



## Targets set by the Waste Framework Directive

**Recycling Target:** Achieve 55% recycling of MSW by 2025 (and 65 % by 2035).

**Potential conflict or synergies:** This target could conflict with higher hierarchy actions like food donation and/or be an opportunity to raise awareness about waste prevention among households.



## Energy Recovery from Food Waste

**Biogas Production:** Emphasis on biogas production and renewable, carbon neutral energy sources in combination with increased market prices might divert surplus food from human consumption.

**Influences:** Subsidies and energy policies can affect this diversion.

# Clearer Communication Needed on the 'Food Use Hierarchy' and 'Food Waste Prevention'

## Diverse Interpretations:

Different interpretation of '**prevention**' across MS.

- › Some consider food donations as prevention, while others do not etc.
- › Compost is both considered waste prevention and recycling

## Recommendations:

- › Develop the food use hierarchy and align understanding across Member States. (Also asked for by the MS in the questionnaire).



# Potential to Integrate Food Waste, Biodiversity, and Climate Change Policies to achieve synergies



- › Some EU-27 Member States are linking measures around food waste, biodiversity, and climate change, but most don't. *Detailed analysis is pending due to limited information.*

## Potential benefits integrating strategies

- There is an opportunity to combine policies targeting these three areas in a way that they complement and reinforce each other, leading to greater overall benefits.

## Recommendations:

- Identify effective ways to integrate measures and link policies.
- Coordinate evaluation and monitoring efforts across climate, biodiversity, and food waste policies to identify cross-cutting benefits.





# EEA Waste prevention report to be published during the spring 2025

- › Assessments of ambitions to prevent food waste in the EU-27
- › Overview of food waste monitoring efforts in the EU- 27
- › Insights on improving the food waste data reporting process to better evaluate future progress towards a food reduction target





# Thank you for your attention!



[sanna.due@eea.europa.eu](mailto:sanna.due@eea.europa.eu)



European  
Environment  
Agency