



## SUMMARY REPORT

### EU PLATFORM ON FOOD LOSSES AND FOOD WASTE: SUB-GROUP ON ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

#### DG HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY (SANTE)

##### 4<sup>th</sup> meeting

*Brussels, 36 Rue Froissart (Albert Borschette building), Room AB-5B*

*18 March 2019 – From 10:00 to 17:00*

**Chair:** Anne-Laure Gassin, *Policy officer, Food information and composition, food waste, DG SANTE*

**Commission:** DG SANTE; JRC

**Member States represented:**

DE, ES, HR, IE, NL, PT and SE.

**Public entities:**

Committee of the Regions (CoR), FAO.

**Private sector organisations:**

BEUC; BOROUME; EUROCOMMERCE; European Food Banks Federation (FEBA); FOODDRINKEUROPE (FDE); HOTREC; OSTFOLD RESEARCH, Nofima and Matvett Consortium; WAGENINGEN University and Research; WRAP; ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND.

## 1. WELCOME AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Chair, welcomed members and offered an overview of the sub-group's work to establish key recommendations for action in food waste prevention at each stage of the food supply chain. Following the adoption of the agenda, she opened the floor for the first speaker.

## 2. THE RESULTS OF THE PILOT EXERCISE 'COLLECTION AND EVALUATION OF FOOD WASTE PREVENTION ACTIONS' - PRESENTATION BY THE JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE (JRC)

The presentation offered an overview of the evaluation exercise of food waste prevention actions carried out by the JRC, with a focus on the development of the evaluation framework, as well as the assessment of the submitted actions.

The main points of discussion are summarised below.

## a) Evaluation framework

The criteria to evaluate food waste prevention initiatives defined under this exercise are the quality of the action design, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability over time, transferability and scalability, and inter-sectorial cooperation. In terms of effectiveness, JRC explained that the focus of the evaluation was on outcomes and impact objectives, rather than input objectives. As for efficiency, the following aspects have been taken into consideration, together with their related Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): food waste prevented (total amount), economic (net economic benefit), environmental (net environmental savings), social (social benefits), outreach/behaviour change (*e.g.* number of people reached by a campaign). Further, JRC explained the methodology used to carry out the assessment, that is to quantify the economic and environmental efficiencies of an action, according to its type (*e.g.* supply chain efficiency action). Environmental impacts have been quantified using the life cycle assessment (LCA) methodology and a digital calculator has been developed in order to calculate the net environmental savings and net economic benefits of the initiatives.

Comments on the cost/economic efficiency of actions:

- In reply to a question by NL, JRC explained that tax reductions were not considered, as the focus of the evaluation was rather on generation of benefits/savings through the action itself (and not taking into account any fiscal incentives as such).
- Answering a question from BOROUME, JRC confirmed that the evaluation framework distinguished between those actors bearing costs and beneficiaries.
- FAO asked for clarifications concerning the formula utilised to calculate economic efficiency; JRC explained that it reflected the net economic benefits of each euro invested in an action.
- BOROUME indicated that charity redistribution organisations might have difficulties to assess the cost savings related to food received (and food waste prevented).

Comments on the calculator for costs/environmental impacts of actions:

- PT asked about the nature of the numbers (absolute vs. relative) used to calculate the impacts of an action. JRC explained that the calculator used averages to assess impacts, thus results should be interpreted in comparison with those of other actions evaluated within the same framework, rather than in absolute terms.

Comments on the environmental efficiency of actions:

- FAO asked for clarifications regarding the environmental efficiency formula and the unit of measure. JRC explained that the units of measure for the net environmental savings differed according to the 16 environmental impact categories (*e.g.* climate change was measured in kg of CO<sub>2</sub>), while the cost of the action was calculated in Euros.

Comments on the social impact of actions:

- CoR highlighted that the evaluation framework should take into account the food use hierarchy and called for more focus on the social impacts of actions, rather than financial ones. In reply to the first question, the Commission referred to the context of the evaluation exercise and the overall aim of work, which concentrated on prevention actions carried out at each stage of the food supply chain. JRC explained that the social aspects were part of the evaluation framework, data were often missing and those

included were referenced in the actions' factsheets; their assessment was based strictly on information submitted through the questionnaire.

- The Commission indicated that the social aspect and related impact of food waste prevention initiatives could be captured further in the key recommendations for action developed by the sub-group.
- FAO suggested that from a food security perspective, surplus food not consumed by humans is considered lost/wasted – thus in respect to the food use hierarchy, food going to animal feed should not be part of the prevention options. The Commission clarified that the evaluation exercise followed a resource-efficiency approach, in accordance with the food use hierarchy provided in the Waste Framework Directive, and that food not fit for human consumption and valorised as animal feed is not quantified as food waste in the EU.

#### b) Assessment of the submitted prevention actions

JRC presented an overview of the evaluation process and the actions collected; highlighting for each type of action: the quality of data received, examples of factsheets, results and suggestions to improve the evaluation. The conclusions of the assessment exercise reflected a lack of data available on: SMART objectives and related KPIs, baseline and amount of food waste prevented, monitoring systems to track progress, as well as total costs and benefits of the actions' implementation. JRC also reported a high variability of data, according to the different types of actions. Among the challenges identified, JRC indicated difficulties in accounting for voluntary work, comparing between actions, assessing effective reduction of waste linked to behavioural change actions etc.

Sub-group members were presented with a template for comments on the evaluation report produced by the JRC. The presentation concluded with a practical example of how to calculate the effectiveness and efficiency of a food waste prevention action.

Comments on “redistribution” actions:

- BOROUME asked for clarifications regarding the net economic benefit of redistribution actions; JRC explained it is an indicator of economic efficiency.
- The Commission indicated the limitations related to calculating the implementation costs of such actions, due to lack of data on the cost of volunteers etc.
- BOROUME confirmed that the criteria employed by JRC (*e.g.* cost savings from food received) correspond to the internal KPIs of the organisation.
- BOROUME also highlighted that redistribution actions also have a favourable nutritional impact, as food redistributed is often of higher quality than that usually available to beneficiaries. JRC confirmed that the nutritional contribution of food redistribution was not taken into account in the evaluation framework.
- WRAP noted a wide range in the results of the analysis of actions submitted. JRC explained that, given lack of data, the evaluation did not intend to provide a ranking of actions per se. In terms of economic efficiency, JRC indicated that actions with higher structural costs scored worse. BOROUME also pointed to the impact of an organisation's operational model on food redistribution costs.
- WRAP also stated that production does not significantly change during interventions and asked whether one could expect a systemic change in production linked to food waste reduction efforts. JRC explained that a systemic change would be expected only in a long-term perspective; JRC's modelling assumed that the reduction of food waste implies the reduction of food produced.

- NL reported that not all fact sheets stated the country where the action was implemented; the JRC agreed to integrate this information in the finalisation of the fact sheets.

Comments on “consumer behaviour change” actions:

- BOROUME highlighted that more scientific research is needed in order to assess impact of food waste prevention interventions on behavioural change.
- In reply to a question by WRAP on the measurement methods employed by actors who reported on food waste prevented, JRC indicated the use of direct measurement.
- ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND pointed to the influence that external factors might have on consumer behaviour and emphasised the need to improve the reliability of data collection methods (*e.g.* surveys). IE highlighted the challenges of gathering data on food waste from households.
- WRAP raised the issue of quantifying the effects of certain kind of interventions (*e.g.* packaging and date marking) designed to address consumer food waste.
- JRC highlighted the importance of considering contextual elements, even for similar actions; as well as the need to distinguish between impact and outcome objectives.

Comments on “supply chain efficiency” actions:

- The Commission explained that data on “avoided purchase of raw materials” only covers that stage of the supply chain where the action is implemented (*e.g.* a restaurant purchasing less food due to an increase in the efficiency), while data on the “avoided food waste disposal” always refers to the end of life stage..

Comments on food waste prevention “governance” actions:

- WRAP questioned whether it is necessary to consider the administrative costs of regulatory actions in detail, rather than see it as ‘business as usual’. The Commission indicated the need to capture all costs related to the implementation of regulatory action (*e.g.* consideration of economic costs for actors concerned when carrying out an impact assessment for new legislation).
- WRAP advised that further consideration should be given to the selection of the questionnaire respondents and the impact this has on the nature of data submitted (*e.g.* depending on the knowledge of the respondent, s/he might report the costs of an isolated action or costs of the overall programme).

WAGENINGEN UR noted that the purpose of the evaluation exercise carried out by JRC is to support actors in choosing to implement an action over another, according to their budget and other considerations (social, environmental) as opposed to the structured monitoring of food waste levels, at each stage of the supply chain, to be carried out by Member States in order to inform national food waste prevention programmes (and for further EU reporting). The Commission confirmed that the exercise is not meant to provide a comparative analysis of actions, but to provide actors with the necessary tools to design effective food waste prevention initiatives. It was explained that for the purpose of the exercise, the actions’ factsheets included a descriptive analysis of their economic and environmental impacts instead of calculations. NO emphasised that the evaluation should make actors aware of the impacts of food waste (*e.g.* on climate change).

WRAP inquired whether a comparative analysis of actions is envisioned for a future evaluation exercise; JRC emphasised that the shape of such an exercise relies heavily on the quality and

quantity of data received. The Commission suggested subsequent assessments could be carried out through its website, on a regular basis.

The Commission proposed members to submit their comments on the JRC report by 12 April 2019. The Commission presented the indicative timeline of the work on the key recommendations for actions. According to this, the rapporteurs will work on the key recommendations between May and September 2019, which could be presented to the members of the sub-group on action and implementation by the end of September 2019. It could be considered to invite the members of the sub-group on food donation to this meeting, too. By mid-October 2019, the draft key recommendations for actions shall be finalised and submitted to the Platform for further input and validation. The adopted version is to be presented in the context of a public event to be organised under the auspices of the Finnish Presidency in December 2019.

### **3. DIGITAL NETWORK OF THE EU PLATFORM ON FOOD LOSSES AND FOOD WASTE, PRESENTATION BY THE COMMISSION**

The presentation provided an overview of the [Digital Network](#)'s main functionalities and the ways in which it supports the work of Platform members. The Commission brought to members' attention a post published under the Agora network, offering information on EIT Food programmes and deadlines for their calls for applications.

### **4. INFORMATION SHARING ON FOOD WASTE PREVENTION INITIATIVES IN MEMBER STATES/BY SECTORIAL ORGANISATIONS**

#### **4.1 GERMAN NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR FOOD WASTE REDUCTION**

DE presented the National Strategy for Food Waste Reduction, adopted in February 2019. The strategy introduces a political framework for cooperation (between public authorities and private stakeholders), economic process optimisation (improving existent business processes), achieving behavioural change among all actors and exploring the potential to prevent food waste through research and digitisation. DE also provided a roadmap for future actions including sector-related dialogue forums, international workshops etc.

#### **4.2 INFLUENCING BEHAVIOUR TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE – A DESIGN-APPROACH IN IRELAND**

IE offered an overview of the national food waste prevention campaign, focussed on consumers and households, available on the [StopFoodWaste.ie website](#). The campaign aims to trigger changes in food waste discarding behaviours for five personae with different behavioural patterns (aging family, housemates, elderly household, couples and young family), proposing innovative solutions to address their needs. The design of the communication materials was created in collaboration with students in art and design.

#### **4.3 FOOD WASTE REDUCTION IN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR, PRESENTATION BY THE MALTA HOTELS AND RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION/HOTREC**

The presentation offered information about the EU-funded FOSTER project (LIFE Programme) that aims to deliver training, education and communications in order to reduce food waste in the food services industry. Its objectives are to raise awareness about the issue within the industry, but also among policy makers; train trainers, students and professionals to adopt more sustainable practices. The project strategy was also highlighted, in connection to the identified target groups.

Both NL and HOTREC agreed that all actions taken to prevent food waste should be designed while keeping in mind the needs and requests of the clients.

OSTFOLD RESEARCH, Nofima and Matvett Consortium inquired about the means of collecting data. HOTREC confirmed that a system was being put in place for such purpose and a sample of five businesses with different characteristics would provide information on their food waste levels.

#### **4.4 UPDATE BY FAO ON IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATION MATERIAL PACKAGE ON FOOD WASTE REDUCTION IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

The presentation offered more information on FAO's DO GOOD: SAVE FOOD! education materials package, which covers a diverse range of activities to raise awareness about food waste among pupils 5 years of age and older. The program has been tested in 18 schools across different EU countries. A more comprehensive approach, to educate both children and school kitchen staff, has also been carried out in 13 school kitchens, with results indicating a 15% average reduction of food waste.

FAO also revealed the dissemination strategy for the education materials, to be carried out with the help of local/regional/national public institutions, assigned/recruited agents and schools. The strategy involves (1) identifying countries and mapping existing actors/projects, (2) mobilising relevant actors, developing a network of agents and (3) implementing the materials (*e.g.* translation into other languages, monitoring and assessment of results etc.). FAO encouraged all sub-group members to get involved in the initiative and disseminate the materials within their own countries.

#### **4.5 THE SWEDISH ACTION PLAN ON FOOD WASTE PREVENTION**

The National Food Waste Strategy for Sweden sets out the direction of governmental food policies towards 2030; proposing objectives, actions and measures to be achieved in collaboration with actors across the food supply chain in order to reduce food waste. The strategy identified four focus areas: national goal and development of monitoring methods, active collaboration with industry, research and innovation, consumer behaviour. SE planned to start an awareness campaign on social media in 2019.

NL asked about the ways in which SE identified regulatory barriers leading to food waste. Both SE and DK explained such information was collected during meetings with representatives of specific sectors of the food supply chain.

The Commission encouraged other Member States to share information about their national strategies against food waste and expressed the availability to organise a specific discussion on the matter, should members be interested. According to the obligations laid down under the Waste Framework Directive, all EU countries need to set food waste prevention programmes as part of their national waste prevention programmes. In this regard, PT explained that the national waste plan covers most aspects of the national food waste strategy; the DE national strategy was developed in collaboration with other ministries (environment); HR was in the final stages of drafting the national food waste prevention as a separate legal act from the waste plan.

#### **4.6 UPDATES FROM NORWAY, PRESENTATION BY OSTFOLD RESEARCH, NOFIMA AND MATVETT CONSORTIUM**

The presentation offered an overview of further date marking initiatives and the results of a study assessing their impact upon consumers, the latter revealing a positive shift in consumers' behaviour due to extra information present on the label adjacent to "best before" labelling (ie "best before...often good after"). Further, OSTFOLD RESEARCH, Nofima and Matvett Consortium presented the preliminary results of a campaign aimed at the Horeca sector involving over 1850 food service facilities. The results indicated that food waste per guest was the highest in hotels and 2/3 of food waste came from buffets and plates. The campaign increased both staffs and consumers' awareness about the issue.

As both initiatives presented have been submitted for evaluation under the collection and assessment exercise carried out by the Commission, JRC requested to receive the new data presented in order to integrate the results in the report.

PT asked about the main challenge regarding the additional date marking initiative, OSTFOLD RESEARCH, Nofima and Matvett Consortium indicated the need to find an agreement on a common terminology. The Commission explained that the terminology utilised for date marking is harmonised by the Food Information to Consumers Regulation and further informed regarding on-going work to develop technical/scientific guidance to support food business operators in making decisions related to date marking (eg choosing between 'Use by' and 'Best before' dates).

HOTREC inquired about the main obstacles faced by food services in terms of food waste measurement. OSTFOLD RESEARCH, Nofima and Matvett Consortium explained that obstacles identified were common across various sectors of the food supply chain; all participating establishments kept track of the quantities of food wasted and number of guests served. National guidance on monitoring food waste in the Horeca sector has also been launched.

#### **4.7 FOOD WASTE CHALLENGE – JOINT INITIATIVE OF EUROCOMMERCE AND EFFICIENT CONSUMER RESPONSE COMMUNITY (ECR)**

The initiative challenges start-ups to find innovative solutions to help retailers reduce food waste. The winners will be selected by a jury of five retailers, following a 'speed dating' session and a 'shark tank'-style presentation. The solutions will focus on five different areas: supply chain visibility, store and warehouse operations, extending shelf life, clearance and reductions, repurpose and reuse. The initiative is sponsored by ECR.

OSTFOLD RESEARCH, Nofima and Matvett Consortium indicated that ECR had introduced information in product bar codes containing information on the shelf-life of a product, using similar technology employed by the pharmaceutical sector. The Commission suggested ECR could be invited to take part in a future meeting of the sub-group ('Action and implementation' and/or 'Date marking') to contribute to the discussion on digital solutions for date marking.

The Chair reminded participants of agreed follow-up actions regarding finalisation of the JRC report and elaboration of "recommendations for action in food waste prevention" and closed the meeting.