



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Food sustainability, international relations
Farm to fork strategy

SUMMARY REPORT

EU PLATFORM ON FOOD LOSSES AND FOOD WASTE

SUB-GROUP ON ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

DG HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY (SANTE)

Microsoft Teams

4 October 2022 – From 10:30 to 16:00

Co-chairs: Ms. Anne-Laure-Gassin, DG SANTE; Mr. Richard Swannell, WRAP

Commission (5): DGs AGRI, CLIMA, RTD, SANTE and JRC

Member States represented (13): DE, DK, EE, EL, FR, IE, IT, NL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK

Private sector organisations (21): BOROUME, CONSORZIO BESTACK, DUH - Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V., ECSLA - European Cold Storage and Logistics Association, EFFPA - European Former Foodstuff Processors Association, EUROCOMMERCE, EURO COOP - European Community of Consumer Co-operatives, FEBA - European Food Banks Federation, FOODDRINKEUROPE, FOODWIN - Food Waste Innovation Network, FRUTA FEIA, FUNDACIÓN AZTI – AZTI Foundation, HAROKOPIO UNIVERSITY, HFBA - Hungarian Food Bank Association, HOTREC - Hospitality Europe, MATVETT-NORSUS-NOFIMA CONSORTIUM, RISE RESEARCH INSTITUTES OF SWEDEN AB, SLOW FOOD, THÜNEN-INSTITUT - Federal Research Institute for Rural Areas, Forestry and Fisheries, TOO GOOD TO GO, VENTURIS HORECA, WRAP - Waste and Resources Action Programme, WUR - Wageningen University & Research

Public entities (2): European Committee of the Regions, UN Environment Programme

Observers: NO

Invited: Unilever

The SANTE co-chair opened the meeting by introducing the co-chair from WRAP and presenting the main points on the agenda focusing on reducing food waste to reduce climate impacts. She expressed the apologies of the other co-chair, Rabobank, who was unable to attend the meeting due to other commitments.

1. Introduction: the link between food loss and waste and climate change; a global perspective, by Richard Swannell, WRAP

WRAP highlighted the importance of addressing the impacts of food systems on climate and benefits to be gained from reducing food losses and waste. WRAP has worked with VERRA (an international organisation issuing carbon credits on the voluntary market) on a [methodology](#) for avoiding GHG emissions by keeping food in the human supply chain. WRAP indicated that while food loss and waste is becoming more prominent on the global agenda and its link to climate change is increasingly recognized, only a few countries have made this link in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and that further work should be carried out to support governments and businesses to include food loss and waste prevention as part of their climate strategies. In order to mobilise further action, a pledge will be launched at COP 27 calling for new commitments by organisations (public and private) to reduce food waste as a means of reaching climate targets.

HFBA investigated the option of using carbon credits for food waste reduction-related investments and to cover operational costs of their activities and has considered a methodology for avoiding GHG emissions by keeping food in the supply chain, developed by WRAP. HFBA found two issues with the methodology: it does not support any ongoing activities and it only counts methane emissions, which represent only a small part of the total food waste-related emissions. WRAP explained that while the methodology does not cover historical food loss and waste reductions, it does take into account any increase in the amount of redistributed food for human consumption, animal feed or other uses. Due to difficulties in quantifying the reduction in GHG emissions associated with food waste reduction across the food supply chain (while avoiding possible double counting), it was decided for the methodology to initially focus only on landfill emissions, while an update of the methodology is foreseen. Following a query from **DUH** regarding modalities for subscribing to the pledge, WRAP indicated that further details would be provided ahead of launch, which will be shared by the Commission with all Platform members.

The Commission reiterated the importance of developing integrated strategies in order to enhance and accelerate food loss and waste reduction, including climate neutrality.

2. Overview of EU climate action, by Sandro Nieto Silleras, DG CLIMA

DG CLIMA outlined the EU climate policy framework towards achieving climate neutrality and related legislation (see presentation). These include the Climate Law and updates to existing legislation, among which the Effort Sharing Regulation and the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) Regulation and Taxonomy are the most relevant for the food sector, notably on waste and agriculture. Depending on the decided plans by Member States, the Effort Sharing Regulation and its binding targets can incentivise food waste prevention and reuse of food waste for bioenergy production, for instance. The Commission also welcomes private sector approaches (e.g. Verra methodology) that – by enabling the quantification of GHG emissions reductions from activities that avoid food waste – can provide further incentive and support for food waste prevention actions. The Commission is also preparing a proposal on binding food waste prevention targets. DG CLIMA explained that to achieve climate neutrality at the latest by 2050 and negative emissions thereafter, the EU has to, above all, drastically reduce its greenhouse emissions at the source, and, in order to neutralise the unavoidable remaining emissions, increase carbon removals (e.g. through carbon farming) and establish sustainable carbon cycles. The Commission is

proposing a framework for the certification of carbon removals; however, emissions avoided thanks to food waste prevention would not be considered as carbon removals and would therefore not be eligible for carbon credits under this framework¹. DG CLIMA explained the importance of the EU Climate Pact in supporting behavioural change by a wide range of actors and the opportunity of including food loss and waste prevention as part of their climate actions. Finally, DG CLIMA also introduced the financial tools to support climate actions in the EU and offered a quick insight into the global climate agenda.

Following the presentation, **WRAP** asked about the extent to which the EU advocates for the transformation of food systems at international level and encourages countries to prioritize food loss and waste prevention as part of their contribution to GHG emissions reduction. DG CLIMA replied that during international negotiations, the EU aims to showcase its climate actions and encourages other partners to take action as well. The Commission is part of several coalitions emerging from the UN Food Systems Summit, including the [Food is Never Waste Coalition](#) and is part of the global Champions 12.3 network. WRAP suggested to share EU actions internationally through the Food is Never Waste Coalition and proposed a follow up discussion with DG CLIMA on the VERRA carbon methodology to explore possible synergies between public and private carbon credit schemes as regards emission savings related to food loss and waste prevention.

HOTREC inquired about the type of support that could help small food business operators, in particular from the food services and hospitality sector, take action against food waste and reduce their climate impacts. WRAP suggested setting up local networks of “in-kitchen” specialists who could help businesses reduce food waste in their operations, emphasized the importance of measuring food waste and setting reduction targets and gave as an example its food waste reduction campaign [Guardians of Grub](#). The Commission will through the subgroup of the monitoring sub-group reach out to all Platform members for their input to a mapping of the challenges and solutions to reduce food waste in the hospitality sector.

3. Integrating food loss and waste prevention with climate action, by Per Hallvard Eliassen, Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Norway presented its experience with integrating food loss and waste prevention and reduction measures as part of climate policies (see presentation). The Norwegian government includes food waste prevention in its *Climate Plan 2021-2030* and other strategic documents, including an agreement between the government and the agricultural sector to reduce GHG emissions in agriculture. Matvett and NORSUS have also measured GHG emissions from food waste in the food industry, public sector and households.

WRAP inquired as to any barriers encountered by Norway in integrating food-waste related actions in their national climate plan and how food waste-related impacts were quantified. The representative from Norway was not aware of any such barriers. Norway further explained that the food industry, public sector and households are calculating their emissions according to the negotiated agreement between the government and the food industry, which was established in 2017. However, the national climate plan focuses only on reducing emissions in the agricultural sector.

WRAP asked about the difference between the 14% reduction of edible food waste achieved by the industry from 2015 to 2020 and the 21% reduction of the carbon footprint. Norway explained that the difference

¹ “Avoided emissions offsets” are not sufficient to get to the net zero emissions on a global scale that we need to reach the objective of the Paris Agreement and of the European Climate Law: they help to support cost-effective emission reduction elsewhere, but they simply do not remove carbon from the atmosphere in order to neutralise the unavoidable remaining emissions.

was due to reducing waste of products with a high carbon footprint such as red meat. **Matvett** explained that the quantification of food waste and its related impacts depends on the knowledge and measurement systems in place by food business operators and suggested that if a simpler methodology for quantifying climate-related impacts were available, this would be used more widely across the food supply chain. The **Commission** suggested to have a discussion with Member State experts about the quantification of food waste impacts, including on climate, following the publication of the first EU-wide monitoring of food waste levels expected to be published later this month.

4. Integrating food loss and waste prevention measures into climate policies and actions – the perspective of the private sector

4.1. The implications of food waste generation on climate change: A case study from Greece, by Prof. Konstadinos Abeliotis, Harokopio University of Athens

Harokopio University was among the first actors in Greece to work on a methodology for measuring GHG emissions related to food waste. Their research considered the whole life cycle of food and focused on three key areas: agriculture, energy and waste. The research calculated GHG emissions for avoidable food waste in the households (7.7% of total GHG emissions associated with food waste), for food wasted across other stages of the food supply chain (15.7% of total GHG emissions associated with food waste) and for waste management (76.6% of total GHG emissions associated with food waste).

The Norwegian Environmental Agency collaborated with several research organisations and consultants to carry out a cost-benefit analysis of various climate actions for agriculture (and other sectors) in Norway. NORSUS conducted an assessment of halving food waste according to the negotiated agreement² together with the Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research. One of the most effective climate measures for the agriculture sector, from both a cost and environmental perspective, would be to reduce food waste³. The assessment did not include emissions related to food waste management and landfilling, the latter being illegal in Norway. NORSUS asked for a clarification as to whether the definition of “avoidable/unavoidable” food waste was the same as “edible/non-edible” and how to correctly allocate emissions to each category. Harokopio University confirmed that, as regards their research, the terms were equivalent and explained that they used mass allocation to estimate the carbon impacts of each fraction, considering certain food categories.

DUH asked why the quantity of unavoidable food waste is 3 times higher than the amount of avoidable food waste. Harokopio University explained that a high share of food waste is due to fruit and vegetable scraps, considered as unavoidable. Harokopio University emphasised the importance of considering the cultural context when carrying out food waste prevention programmes (e.g. people following a Mediterranean diet tend to cook more fresh produce and consume less pre-prepared food).

4.2. Sustainability assessment of food waste reduction measures. Case study in the food processing and manufacturing sector, by Dr. Yanne Goosens, Thünen-Institute of Market Analysis

The Thünen-Institute carries out sustainability assessments of food waste reduction measures at different stages of the food supply chain. This is done by applying the methodology developed by the Commission in 2019 to determine the potential to reduce food waste and associated impacts (economic, environmental

² <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/historical-archive/solbergs-government/Ministries/kld/news/2017/agreement-to-reduce-food-waste/id2558931/>

³ Original study: <https://www.miljodirektoratet.no/globalassets/publikasjoner/m1625/m1625.pdf> English version: https://www.ssb.no/natur-og-miljo/artikler-og-publikasjoner/_attachment/425097?_ts=172e09c8e80

and social) of food waste prevention measures. The presentation focussed on two case studies: one from the meat processing sector (assessing the benefits of re-processing non-conforming sausages into a new batch) and a case study from the food services sector, which evaluated the efficiency and effectiveness of digital food waste-tracking tools.

Harokopio University asked about the amount of non-conforming sausages and the destination of these products. Thünen-Institute explained the potential for food waste prevention as about 3% of all sausages produced are non-conforming and currently disposed of as waste.

WRAP referred to a similar assessment carried out in the UK, which revealed that annually 86 million chickens end up as waste. WRAP further inquired about the cost of the equipment to reprocess the sausages and the payback time for the manufacturer. **Thünen-Institute** explained that the only equipment considered was the peeling machine to remove casing from the sausages and related maintenance costs for 10 years, without taking into account other costs (e.g. time needed to carry out the processing or to adjust the recipe for reprocessing the meat). The savings indicated that it would be possible to achieve a return on investment within a month. In the light of these results, the **Commission** inquired as to why the company had not started the pilot project earlier. Thünen-Institute explained that the practice was not in line with the official meat processing guidelines and there could be a potential marketing issue as consumers might hesitate to purchase re-processed sausages labelled as such. WRAP commended the Thünen-Institute for making a very clear case for the meat processing industry.

FoodDrinkEurope raised a question about the potential amounts of food waste that the company could avoid in its operations due to the re-processing of non-conforming meat. Thünen-Institute explained that the study only examined the amount of food waste generated from one specific product line (sausages) and did not have access to the overall food waste data of the company.

4.3. Fighting climate change through preventing and reducing food losses and food waste, by Thea Koning, Unilever

Unilever has set out its climate goals in a Climate Transition Action Plan, which includes a range of targets and actions that aim to reduce emissions and the footprint of their products. In order to achieve the target of halving food waste in their operations by 2025, the company is working across the food supply chain with their suppliers and within their manufacturing operations and logistics. Unilever highlighted the importance of applying a Target-Measure-Act approach to measure food waste, understand the hotspots and take appropriate actions to prevent it and of engaging staff and other collaborators in the cause.

Venturis Horeca pointed out that one of the key reasons for food waste was overbuying by consumers and inquired whether Unilever would be willing to lower their sales and revenue to cut food waste. Unilever replied that food waste reduction in households was one of their goals and they would encourage different buying behaviours if these would reduce food waste.

Thünen-Institute asked how Unilever organised its 'Food waste warriors' staff programme. Unilever explained that a global task force is responsible for setting the direction of actions and monitoring progress across the company as well as dedicated task forces in place at country and factory levels. Unilever is searching for the best ways to motivate behaviour change by their staff.

5. Report on Voluntary Agreements, by Rikke Karlsson, DG SANTE

The Commission presented the on-going work on a new deliverable of the Platform: a report with key learnings from members' implementation of Voluntary Agreements (VAs) to drive food waste reduction at country level. Information on VAs carried out at national level will be collected through a questionnaire, to which Platform members will be invited to contribute in November. The report will be presented to the Platform in 2023.

6. Conclusions and wrap-up

Reflecting on the discussions during the meeting, the **WRAP** co-chair noted the clear link between food waste and GHG emissions and the strong associated social, business and environmental case for prevention and reduction initiatives. The EU and Member States were encouraged to take a lead role in linking their food loss and waste prevention actions to reducing GHG emissions in order to help and inspire other countries around the world.

The **Commission** co-chair thanked all members for contributing to the discussions and the WRAP and Rabobank co-chairs for leading the work of the sub-group in 2022. The Commission encouraged all members to focus on finding the most effective solutions to tackling food losses and waste and sharing these with the group to learn from each other. This is also the purpose of the different information collection exercises carried out by the Platform secretariat. The Commission reminded Platform members to fill out the survey on food waste prevention initiatives circulated by the Joint Research Centre (deadline 10 October) in order to identify those delivering the best results and informed members that these initiatives will be showcased in a dedicated event in 2023. The Commission will share further information on the food loss and waste prevention pledge that will be launched at COP 27.