

TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE, LOW-CARBON FOOD SURPLUS SECTOR: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS IN THE EU, FRANCE, AND BELGIUM

INTRODUCTION

This summary highlights policy recommendations for an inclusive food surplus sector based on the work of FLAVOUR, an innovative regional project with 10 partners in the UK, France, and Belgium (the '2 seas' region). FLAVOUR seeks to systematise the redistribution and revalorisation of food surplus while creating inclusive jobs in food surplus organisations for people who are socially or economically vulnerable.

KEY MESSAGES

- Tackling food waste can provide benefits for the climate and for society. The priority action for all governments should be to prevent surplus food from being produced in the first place. The second priority should then be supporting the food surplus sector to effectively redistribute food waste that cannot be prevented, in order to help the EU reach its objectives of halving food waste by 2030, cutting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by at least 55% by 2030 and reaching climate neutrality by 2050.
- Momentum to tackle the issue of food waste at the level of the EU is increasing. Forthcoming legislation on mandatory food waste reduction targets should account for food waste across the whole supply chain. This will be an essential building block of ambitious national action by Member States (MS). The impact of existing national laws in some MS (such as in France) that require supermarkets to donate surplus food and reward them accordingly should be adequately documented, analysed, and shared in order to inform potential policy in other MS.
- Better policymaking in support of a circular economy, waste management, and employment can create opportunities to make use of surplus food while creating employment for people who are far from the labour market. To power up circular economies and inclusive employment, the European Commission's General Block Exemption Regulation, which strictly limits state support for social enterprises and disadvantaged workers, should be urgently revised to capitalise on opportunities to tackle food waste through work integration social enterprises (WISEs). National or regional laws related to the status of social enterprise or hiring of people far from the labour market should also be reviewed and streamlined to promote the most enabling regulatory environment possible for WISEs.

FIGURE 1: TRIPLE-LAYER BENEFITS OF A THRIVING FOOD SURPLUS SECTOR



Credit: Feedback, 2022

SUMMARY OF POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR THE EU	
1. Implement legally binding food waste targets that account for all stages of the food supply chain and require a uniform kg per capita target for all MS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In line with SDG 12.3, put forward a legislative proposal (ideally by Q4 of 2022) for all a target that requires all member states to meet a uniform kg per capita FLW (food loss and waste) reduction target that ensures an EU-wide 50% reduction, from farm to fork, by 2030.
2. Explore complementary and additional regulations and fiscal incentives to enforce the food use hierarchy and enforce the 'polluter pays' principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore regulations that can deliver more ambitious faster-paced FLW reduction, such as mandatory FLW public reporting and reduction targets for food businesses over a certain size, strengthened Unfair Trading Practices regulation, and increased taxes or bans on sending FLW to incineration and landfill (to what degree these practices still occur).
3. Revise the General Block Exemption Regulation to better support social enterprises and aid/training for disadvantaged workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)^a to better enable state support for work integration social enterprises by allowing for state-supported employment contracts that are long enough to truly integrate employees into the workforce and provide adequate training.
FOR FRANCE	
1. Clarify and strengthen enforcement of current Garot and Egalim food waste donation laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify the enforcement mechanisms for the Garot and Egalim laws to ensure that mandatory food waste donation policies and the fines for not making good on them are properly enacted, in order to better support the food surplus sector.
2. Install a steering committee to ensure a balanced relationship between food surplus organisations and food surplus donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up an independent steering committee to monitor the quality of and compliance with conventions made between food businesses and social enterprises, in order to ensure that food surplus organisations have adequate recourse if agreements are not being fulfilled.
3. Establish a joint fund between government and food businesses to help cover the costs of food redistribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a joint fund designed to support food surplus organisations to scale up infrastructure and capacities, and reduce overreliance on volunteers, in order to deal with the increasing volume of food waste donations.
4. Collect and publish more and better data on the impact of food waste policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The monitoring and evaluation arm of the 'Pacte national de lutte contre le gaspillage alimentaire 2017-2020' must collect and publish more and better data on the impact of food waste action in France in order to facilitate further action and knowledge sharing across the EU.
FOR BELGIUM	
1. Introduce a tax deduction scheme for food donations to incentivise the food use hierarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sign into law a proposed bill^b that would allow for 60% of the value of food donations to be subtracted from businesses' income tax. Consider creating a joint fund for government and business to help social enterprises cover the cost of redistributing higher levels of surplus.
2. Reduce barriers for social enterprises to employing people far from the labour market	<p>2.1 Clarify and capitalise on changes to the "customised work" label to provide the strongest support possible for food surplus organisations employing people far from the labour market, including through public procurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify upcoming changes to the status of social enterprises that provide "customised work" opportunities in Belgium to ensure that social enterprises are prioritised in public procurement, an important driver of financial sustainability for WISEs in the food surplus sector. <p>2.2 Introduce a collaborative component into state-led hiring processes for WISEs to improve worker-job match, and gender equity and diversity efforts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with WISEs on state-supported hiring processes for vulnerable workers, in order to ensure that hires are the right fit for the organisations in which they are placed and to give WISEs autonomy over diversity and inclusion efforts in their organisations.

a Commission Regulation (EC) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the common market in application of Article 107 and 108 of the Treaty (General block exemption Regulation).

b 'Proposition de loi modifiant le Code des impôts sur les revenus 1992 en ce qui concerne la remise à titre gratuit d'aliments et de biens non alimentaires de première nécessité (déposée par Mme Anneleen Van Bossuyt et consorts)'

Feedback regenerates nature by transforming the food system. To do this we challenge power, catalyse action and empower people to achieve positive change.

Feedback observes the greatest possible care in collecting information and drafting publications but cannot guarantee that this report is complete. It relies heavily on secondary sources reproduced here in good faith. Feedback assumes no responsibility for errors in the sources used and makes no claim that any named organisation knowingly is guilty of any breach in policy, or that any named business committed any wrongdoing.

Published March 2022

Author: Isabela Vera

Design: Garth Stewart

Illustration: Simon Barroo

Acknowledgements: Many thanks to FLAVOUR partners at HERWIN, Panier de La Mer, the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership, the Alchemic Kitchen, Sussex Surplus, and more for their input on this report.

Citation: Feedback. 2022. *Towards an inclusive, low-carbon food surplus sector: Recommendations for policymakers in the EU, France, and Belgium.* London: Feedback.

www.feedbackglobal.org

@feedbackorg

Registered in England and Wales,
charity number 1155064

**FEED
BACK**

HERWIN
sociale
circulaire
ondernemers

Interreg 
2 Seas Mers Zeeën
FLAVOUR
European Regional Development Fund