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Strengthening EU Energy and Climate Policies Through Integration of Food Waste Using Multi-Stakeholder Engagement

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Abstract

Food waste (FW) has emerged as a major challenge for sustainability and the efficient use of resources requiring coordinated action across governance levels. FW impacts all stages and actors of the agri-food chain and it also links to the energy and waste management sectors, particularly through resource consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, energy use in food production and distribution, and the potential recovery of waste within circular bioeconomy systems. Therefore, effective FW prevention and reduction policies require a multi-stakeholder approach (MAA) involving key public and private actors. Instead, existing research has paid limited attention to the role of multi-stakeholder networks in shaping FW governance, policy learning, and innovation.

This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the perspective for multi-actor platforms (MAPs) to harmonize policies to advance food waste and investigates the role of MAA within the FW environment in order to understand the barriers and the development of effective framework policy. MAA is a co-creation process to develop solutions and idea to improve the framework policy for food waste. In this study of the WASTEWISE Horizon Europe project, five MAPs were established with representatives from 6 European countries: Italy, Spain, Romania and Switzerland and one MAP for Finland and Sweden (Nordic MAP). The MAPs involve different types of stakeholders belonging to the agri-food supply chains and energy sectors such as: representative from governments and public administrations, consumers' representatives, civil society organizations including NGOs, researchers, farmers and farmers' representatives, food businesses and their representatives. The 5 MAPs have a total of 78 entities and 83 representatives.

To facilitate the multi-stakeholder engagement for integrating FW into climate and energy policies, a questionnaire was sent to all MAP members and national meetings with a common structure across all MAPs were organized. The questionnaire was structured into three main

parts: I. respondent profile with 7 questions single or multiple answers; II. knowledge and perception on FW and its environmental impacts with 11 rating and single answer questions; III. national policies, governance and integration with energy and climate with 14 items containing rating, multiple choice and open-ended questions. During the MAP meetings, data on 12 questions regarding multi-stakeholder processes and FW–climate and energy integration were collected by online tool Mentimeter and other tools.

The results suggest that multi-stakeholder engagement may support the development of more integrated approaches to FW prevention and reduction and facilitate dialogue and knowledge exchange across sectors.

Keywords: energy and climate policies, food waste policies, governance, multi-stakeholder approach, stakeholder engagement

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