

Best Practices in Food Waste Prevention Sector Implemented in EU

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Abstract

According to Article 4 of the Waste Framework Directive (WFD; Directive 2008/98/EC on waste and repealing certain Directives), waste prevention has the highest priority in waste hierarchy, so tackling foodwaste is a main goal in the context of circular economy and Sustainable Development.

The aim of this work was to collect and assess the existing foodwaste prevention programs and initiatives at European level. A classification system was put in place to categorize the actions reported, based on the stages of the food supply chain that the waste is originated from, while in parallel, the programs were also grouped in five classes according to their goal and the means to achieve each of them. As for the evaluation process of sub-actions, the following key performance indicators were adopted, based on the recommendations of the European Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste: Quality; Effectiveness; Efficiency; Sustainability; Transferability and scalability and Intersectoral cooperation. Although 209 actions were listed in Europe, the main barrier that was evident is that there exists lack of means of their assessment. Just 12 have been thoroughly evaluated. Some programs could not be assessed due to a lack of data, as the projects reported are still ongoing. Another case scenario is that the information reported described a research project, which for example could show the potential of a change in the production of animal feed that has not yet been put in practice by the industry. Conclusively, this analysis revealed important information gaps that hinder the systematic impact assessment of food waste prevention interventions. A key outcome is that future programs should be designed and implemented ensuring the provision of the data required for their evaluation. Several success stories were identified from which a few were considered as potential replication studies for other countries. In this context, this holistic approach may lead to engrossing outcomes that can lead to a more efficient planning methodology.

Keywords: Cyprus, food supply chain, foodwaste prevention, Municipal Waste Management Strategy

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