

Best Practice 04 CE



Food waste reduction: Local actions & education

In 2022, the **United Nations (UN)** reported that food loss and waste reached an astounding 1 billion tonnes globally, worth an estimated **USD 1 trillion dollars**¹. Along with these values we must account for the associated waste of resources (e.g., land, water, energy, labour and capital), greenhouse gas emissions and impact of these losses on food insecurity worldwide. Progressing towards the **UN SDG target 12.3** of **halving food waste by 2030** and building a sustainable food system will require collaboration across the whole chain of activities. Investments in reducing food loss and waste, as well as promoting low-carbon diets, are emerging, but many opportunities remain untapped.

Every year, one third of all food produced globally is **lost or wasted**

- Around **13.2 percent** is lost between harvest and retail.
- About **19 percent** is wasted by households, the food service and retail sectors.

United Nations Food Loss and Waste Reduction

Many cities are already actively engaged in initiatives aimed at engaging residents and improving practices in areas where local governments hold unique influence -such as public procurement for schools and hospitals, operators' agreements, awareness campaigns, and training programmes. These efforts are often driven by commitments to reduce waste, lower GHG emissions, improve public health outcomes and address food inequities within their communities. Some cities have gone further, launching ambitious agendas that demonstrate how they are shaping the future of food systems to deliver tangible benefits: enhancing people's well living, protecting the environment and fostering economic prosperity. Food Councils, multi-stakeholder collaboratives, and other governance mechanisms are helping to identify challenges across the entire food chain, mobilise resources to develop solutions, and support stakeholders in taking meaningful action.

We showcase the outstanding work of cities with bold goals and highlight the resources they are using to innovate and lead by example.

C40 Good Food Cities Accelerator

16 cities have committed to tackling emissions from food by implementing these measures by 2030.

Planetary Health Diet for all by 2030



In 2014, the **Mayor of Milan launched** an international protocol aimed at tackling food-related issues at the urban level.

The declaration is accompanied by a concrete **Framework for Action** with **37 actions across 6 categories**, including indicators to monitor progress.

Today, there are **280 cities worldwide** that have adopted the Pact. The Milan Pact Awards recognised actions that cities are implementing in each of the **6 Pact categories**.

Copenhagen: Reducing food waste to achieve climate neutrality

Copenhagen is a signatory to the **C40 Good Food Cities Declaration**, setting ambitious targets for achieving a Planetary Health Diet for all by 2030, and working to be the first carbon neutral city by 2025. With ambitious plans supporting these goals, notably the **Copenhagen 2025 climate plan** and Circular Copenhagen as the city's Resource and Waste Management Plan (2019-2024), efforts to reduce food waste and loss are directed by a comprehensive **Food Strategy (2019)**.

Best Practice 04 CE

Since 2017, most Copenhagen residents have benefitted from residential organics collection in dedicated containers and, **in 2019, roughly 25% of biodegradable waste was collected** for treatment at a biogas facility producing electricity and heat, used locally.²

Under the **Food Strategy**, Copenhagen has been a hub of initiatives. ***The EAT – Shifting Urban Diets***³ project also helped the city establish a science-based target for Copenhagen's **GHG footprint from food**, reflecting food consumption in the city as a whole. Other recent actions include:

- **Training kitchen staff in shifting to nutritious, organic, and more climate friendly meals in over 546 public kitchens, out of approximately 1,000.**
- Launching **over 900 climate friendly recipes** (publicly available) for kitchens (**from 20–100 servings**), tailored to three different groups – children, adults, and the elderly.
- Launching a strategy requiring large events hosted or supported by **the city to provide a vegetarian meal option**, a higher percentage of organic food, and present measures to reduce food waste.
- Introducing innovative procurement criteria, **opening its food tenders to small and medium-sized enterprises** and farmers, linking food supply to education.

COPENHAGEN AS A FOOD CITY

A vision to transform a food culture and a strategy to drive systemic change and reduce food waste

"With this strategy, we plan a new and ambitious direction for how food and meals of high culinary quality can contribute to a healthier and more climate-responsible city for all Copenhageners."

- **Between 2018 and 2022, it reduced CO₂ emissions associated with public meals by 17.6%.**
- **In 2022, City Council approved a new goal to reduce food waste from public kitchens by 50% by 2030, with an interim target of a 15% reduction by 2025.**
- **A 2022 report established the food waste baseline followed by pilot projects to test various ways of reducing food waste in its institutions.**



To further boost its efforts, Copenhagen joined the **Food Trails Project** and established a Living Lab, developing pilot actions aligned with the **EU Food 2030 Strategy**, aiming to leverage the potential of the public food procurement process to implement food policy goals and drive sustainability within food systems.

Pilot 1 – Public Food Procurement Roadmap for procurement policy development.

Pilot 2 – The Price of a Meal - A financial model to ensure that sustainable meals can be provided within the budget of the municipality.

3. **Pilot 3** – Food Education Kit for pupils aged from 10 to 12 on sustainable farming.

4. **Pilot 4** – Kitchen App to support communication between kitchen staff and procurement officers



Stop Wasting Food is a co-founder of the **REFOOD** label, a **national certification for foodservice sector**, such as canteens and restaurants, to highlight their work towards less food waste and more recycling.

Copenhagen's efforts are now further supported by the Danish Strategy on Food Waste 2024-2027, which will serve to implement the provisional EU targets agreed to in February 2025.

These include the setting of national food waste reduction targets by 31 December 2030: 10% in food processing and manufacturing, and 30% per capita in retail, restaurants, food services, and households.

Best Practice 04 CE

IURC-NA Member Halifax in action!

The province of Nova Scotia (Canada) has been a forerunner in the diversion of waste, with mandated source separation of recyclables and organics since 1995, including a ban on organics in landfills. The robust provincial measures created an ideal backdrop for further innovations from the municipality of Halifax (HRM).

Since 2023, HRM has worked to develop a comprehensive **JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region** (Parts A and B) in consultation with stakeholders, and became a signatory to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact.

The Plan is accompanied by a practical implementation document (Part B) that is being used to advance the priority recommendations, including milestones, roles, partners, outcomes, performance measures, and resourcing requirements. The first status report was issued in February 2025. **This plan, along with the development of the Halifax Regional Food Hub aim to increase the region's food security and economic resiliency.** The hub initiative was developed based on a business plan to identify the opportunities for greater efficiency, collaboration and scale of impact to connect and support producers, buyers and food hubs throughout mainland Nova Scotia. Products produced in rural regions will be transported to one central location in the Halifax region, where they can be aggregated, stored and distributed to wholesale buyers. Both are initiatives to watch!

JustFOOD Action Plan for the Halifax Region

PART B - DECEMBER 2023



Cincinnati: Comprehensive Plan and creation of a Food Council

Also a member of the Milan Food Policy Pact, Cincinnati (USA) has been working to address food waste through policy initiatives, programmes, and partnerships in a comprehensive, interdisciplinary and inter-institutional manner since 2016. The Green Cincinnati Plan, adopted in 2023, now guides the city's sustainability efforts, and includes goals of access to healthy food, diversion of organics from landfills, and reduction of food waste.

Utilizing the USEPA Wasted Food Scale, Cincinnati Food Waste has created partnerships and solutions to maximise impact while promoting inclusivity and regional cooperation. Examples of their accomplishments to date:

1. **PLANNING/POLICY:** Food waste summits, a regional food waste plan, data analysis, creation of the Food Policy Council, Table Guidance for schools and local implementation support, Mayor's endorsement of the Conference of Mayors Food Waste Resolution.
2. **PREVENTION:** Partner funding, awareness campaigns on buses, business waste audits, and the residential food waste prevention campaign Food Waste Stops With Us.
3. **RECOVERY:** Stakeholder analysis, City/County funding to partners, Health Department Inspector training, educational materials to support restaurant donations, and collaboration with non-profit organisations to transport and repurpose donated food to the food insecure.
4. **RECYCLING:** Anaerobic digester exploration, revision of Municipal Code to promote composting, creation of the Cincinnati Community Composting Collaborative, USDA award to create food waste drop-off points and medium-scale composting sites, and a food waste composting pilot at a city recreation facility.



Greater Cincinnati Regional
Food Policy Council

Lesson Learned

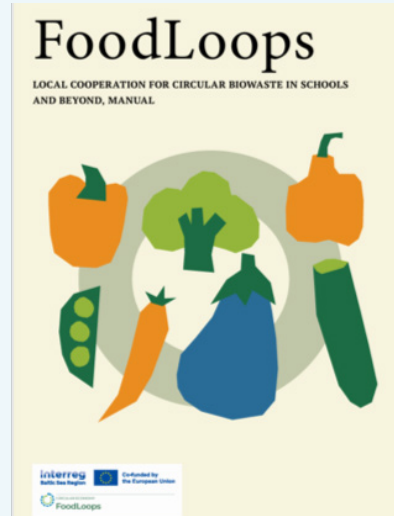
"Often the best innovation and most nimble responses occur with community stakeholders. La Soupe, an organization started in 2015 with a mission of Rescue-Transform-Share, has used a chef-based model, multiple innovative programs and a variety of in-person & virtual culinary education opportunities to rescue 3M lbs. of food & provide close to 2M restaurant quality meals".

Cincinnati Food Waste

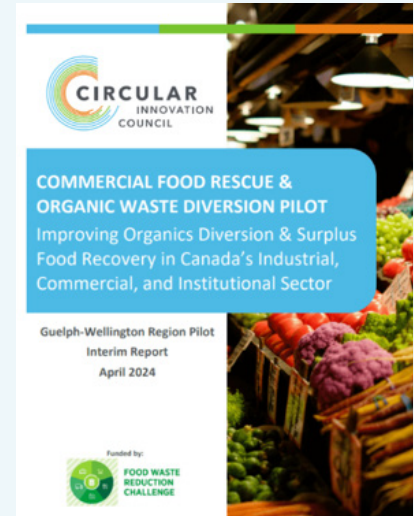
Best Practice 04 CE



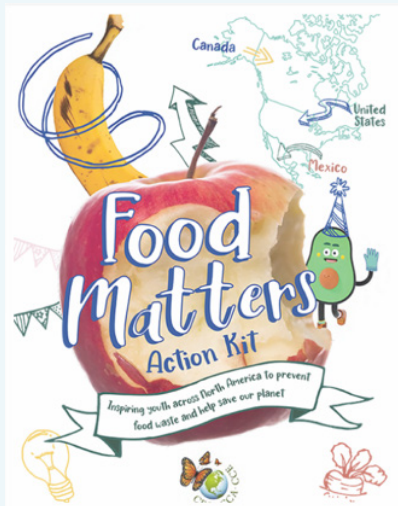
<https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/>



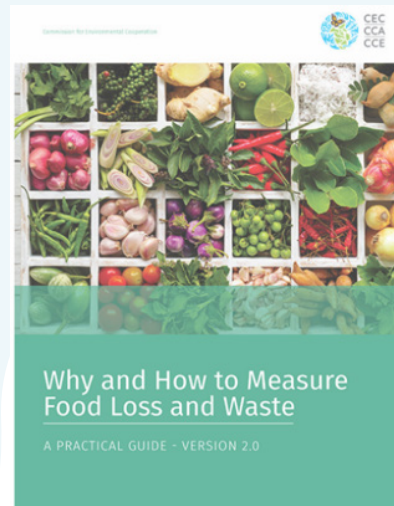
FoodLoops – Local Cooperation for
circular biowaste in schools and beyond, Manual



<https://circularinnovation.ca/foodwastepilots/>



Commission for Environmental Cooperation:
Preventing and Reducing Food Loss and Waste (FLW)
<https://www.cec.org/flwy/>



Why and how to measure food loss and waste
<https://www.cec.org/flwy/>



Love Food Hate Waste / Preventing food waste: <https://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/>

1 Food Waste Index Report 2024. Think Eat Save: Tracking Progress to Halve Global Food Waste

2 cph-2025-climate-plan-roadmap-2021-2025- 2062.pdf

3 EAT_Shifting-Urban-Diets_Project_Report.pdf

