



Food Circle policy recommendations

Supported by the Circular Economy Fund



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Food redistribution in Ireland

Global best practice by 2030

Ireland's first National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap (2023–2025) is a key delivery mechanism for Ireland's food waste prevention goals and is designed to accelerate implementation of food waste prevention measures.

The Food Circle project is a two-year research and engagement project supported by the Circular Economy Fund through the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment. Its primary purpose is to address the donation actions in the roadmap, identifying and promoting best practice and potential policy interventions in food redistribution and food waste reduction in Ireland. The five reports addressing the food donation actions in the Roadmap are:

1. Policy levers for food redistribution
2. Supporting a voluntary target for surplus food redistribution
3. Building community sector capacity for surplus food redistribution
4. Supporting the infrastructure of food redistribution
5. Farm-level food loss in Ireland: causes and solutions

A targeted revision of the Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC (the WFD) was published in 2025.¹ The WFD includes binding national food waste reduction targets to be met by 31 December 2030:

- 10% reduction in food waste at the processing and manufacturing level; and
- 30% per capita reduction in food waste at retail and consumption stages (target applies to retail, food services, and households combined).

Food donation is specifically highlighted within the WFD as one means to help achieve the waste reduction targets. Member States are required to take measures to ensure that economic operators having a significant role in the prevention and generation of food waste propose donation agreements to facilitate the donation of unsold food (at reasonable costs for the economic operators).

Ireland is required to transpose the revised WFD by June 2027. Thanks to the Food Circle project, FoodCloud has produced a suite of policy recommendations that can help Ireland meet its food waste reduction targets and deliver a practical, evidence-informed approach to surplus food redistribution, strengthening food security, building community capacity for surplus

food redistribution, and responding to emerging legal requirements on food waste reduction.

The full list of 42 policy recommendations is included in the Appendix and summarised here as three strategic opportunities with the potential not only to tackle food waste and climate breakdown, but also to benefit our health, food security, rural resilience and food sovereignty, and alleviate food poverty.

Surplus food is perfectly good, just extra

The EU Commission's Guidelines on Food Donation² define surplus food as 'finished food products (including fresh meat, fruit and vegetables), partly formulated products or food ingredients that may arise at any stage of the food production and distribution chain for a variety of reasons'.

The guidelines outline that food can be redistributed provided it is fit for human consumption and compliant with all food safety requirements.

Surplus food is food that has become surplus because costs, systems, processes, regulations and/or laws make supplying it to consumers too complex and inefficient.

The Irish Environmental Protection Agency's food waste measurement protocol refers to 'food surplus' as 'food that was destined for sale but due to different reasons (e.g. product returns, off spec, packaging issues) didn't reach the intended customer'.

¹ Directive (EU) 2025/1892 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 September 2025 amending Directive 2008/98/EC on waste.

² European Commission, DG SANTE, n.d.

Ireland can be a leader in the circular economy for food

Getting perfectly good food to people strengthens communities and saves emissions from going to waste

Food redistribution, part of the wider ecosystem of food sharing, reduces food waste and is a win against food insecurity.

Ireland has a rich heritage in food and agriculture and a deep understanding of hunger given our national story, history, and experience. We have a connected business and charity community, and an established infrastructure for food redistribution.

If Ireland adopts a whole-of-government approach to food redistribution, one that recognises the cross-cutting benefits for agriculture, health, social protection, the alleviation of food poverty, climate action, and local communities, then FoodCloud believes Ireland could redistribute 3% of food that's currently wasted and become a leader in the circular economy for food. This would save 21,240 tonnes of food from going to waste, save 49,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent emissions (as a result of food being redistributed instead of going to waste) and, provide more than 50.6 million meals annually to food-insecure individuals.

Opportunities

- **Opportunity 1:** Make surplus food donation easier and more consistent - use transposition of the revised Waste Framework Directive to create a strong national food donation programme, encourage business level voluntary targets for donation, require measurement and planning, promote food safety in donation guidance, strengthen liability protection, provide technical assistance, grants and fiscal incentives.
- **Opportunity 2:** Build community sector capacity and strengthen redistribution infrastructure - build capacity to use surplus food by supporting community organisations, local coordination, redistribution infrastructure, regional food hubs and a centre of excellence for circular food systems.
- **Opportunity 3:** Turn farm-level food loss into food security and rural resilience - establish a national compensated agricultural recovery programme, alongside better farm-level prevention, loss data, valorisation and secondary-market solutions, so that more edible surplus is kept in the human food chain.

The challenge and the opportunity: a 3% redistribution rate by 2030

Issue



708,000

tonnes of food
annually wasted
in Ireland³

If 3% of food that's currently wasted was redistributed



21,240

tonnes of food
could be saved



50.6M

meals equivalent
would go to people
that need it



49,000

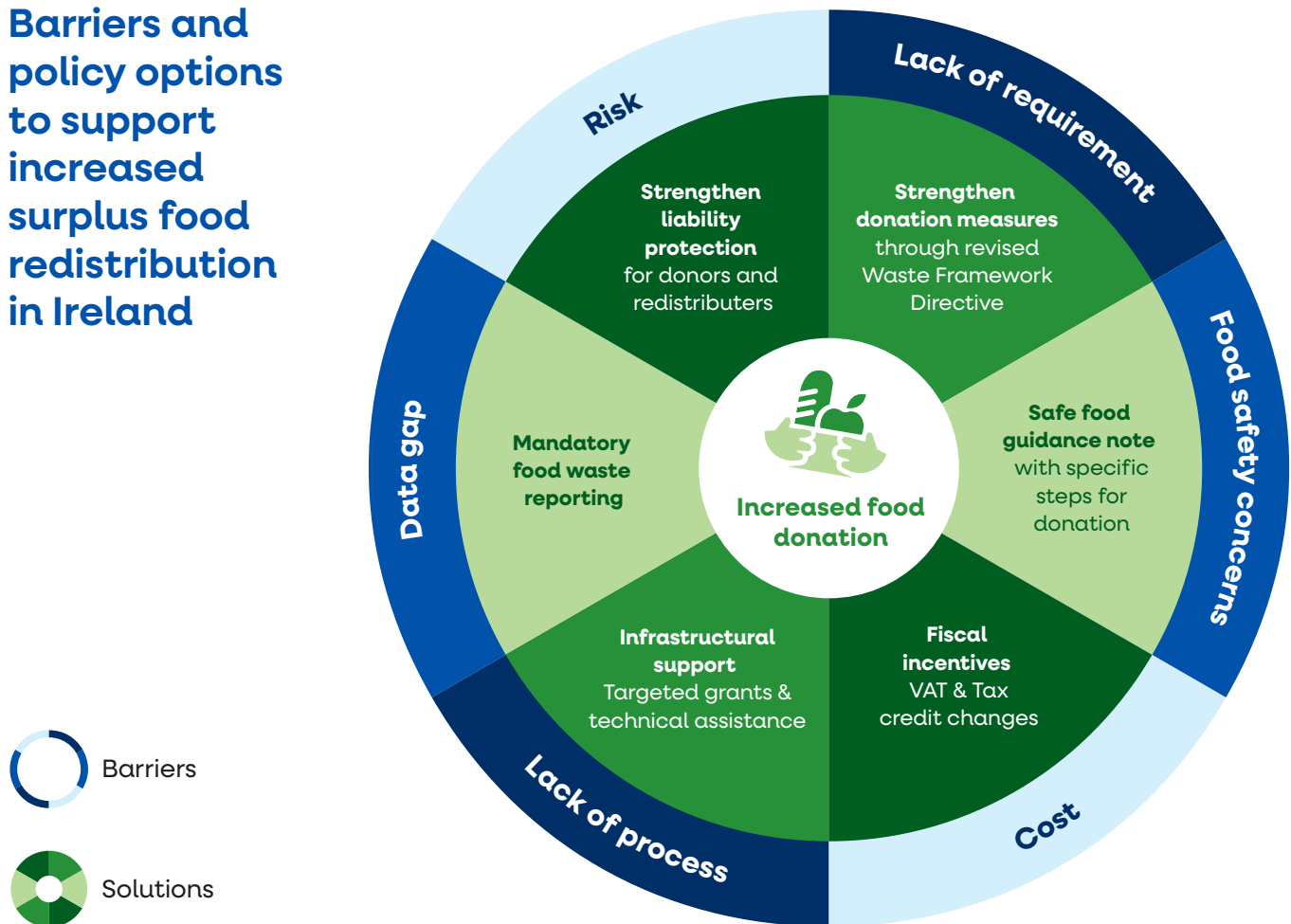
tonnes CO₂ equivalent
emissions saved from
going to waste

³ Source: EPA food waste statistics 2024.

Opportunity 1: Make surplus food donation easier and more consistent

A clear picture has emerged of the barriers to surplus food donation in Ireland and the policy levers that can help access perfectly good food and prevent waste.

Barriers and policy options to support increased surplus food redistribution in Ireland



In Ireland there is strong support for food redistribution as a circular economy solution from Government, food businesses, community organisations, non-governmental and research bodies. But many food businesses have yet to engage and the amount of food currently being redistributed by FoodCloud is less than 1% of total food waste.

The Food Circle project team undertook engagement with Irish retailers and food businesses to understand the barriers they face in relation to donation. Combined with operational and international research based insights on best practice to address these barriers, the policy recommendations will move donation from 'nice to have' to a core solution that reduces wasted food, while addressing food security and strengthening communities.

This wheel illustrates barriers (outer circle) and policy options (inner circle) to support increased surplus food redistribution in Ireland.

Donation takes staff time, storage, packaging, transport, food safety management, and coordination. Those practicalities can be enough to stop good food from being donated. If Ireland wants more food to move to people rather than lower-value routes, businesses need the right guidance, support and incentives.

The recommendations centre around 6 main themes:

- Lack of requirement to donate surplus food
- Food safety concerns
- Costs involved in food donation
- Lack of process
- Data gaps and lack of granular data on sources of edible surplus and food waste
- Risk, reputational and liability concerns

Recommended actions

Introduce a national donation programme

Use the parameters in the revised WFD and experience from other countries that have ‘mandatory donation’ to develop a robust national programme for surplus food donation, designed in collaboration with food businesses, redistribution organisations and community groups.

Develop a voluntary donation target through the Food Waste Charter

A percentage-based target for edible surplus donated would help businesses prepare for future requirements, improve measurement and build good practice before regulation takes full effect.

Require business-level food waste measurement and reduction plans

Continue to support food businesses to measure food waste and prepare reduction plans, using established Food Waste Charter protocols where possible.

Publish and promote official safe food donation guidance

Publish an official food safety guidance note for food donation, supported by relevant government organisations and agencies, and promote it to food businesses so donors and redistribution organisations have clear, accessible information on how to maintain food safety throughout the donation process. Strengthen and promote the EU Food Donation Guidelines to address barriers to surplus food donation and support a common interpretation of EU rules in Ireland.

Introduce a ‘Good Samaritan’ law

To strengthen liability protection, provide clear, statutory reassurance to food donors and redistribution organisations acting in good faith and in compliance with food safety requirements.

Provide targeted grants and technical assistance

Help businesses measure food waste, change processes, identify redistributable surplus, and manage the practical costs of storage, packaging, and logistics for redistribution.

Introduce fiscal incentives for donation

Provide tax or VAT measures that help reduce the cost of donation and make redistribution the more economically viable option than lower-value routes such as disposal, animal feed or anaerobic digestion.

Opportunity 2: Build community sector capacity and strengthen redistribution infrastructure

Ireland’s food redistribution infrastructure operates across three separate but connected levels.

National

FoodCloud operates nationally with all the major retailers in Ireland and around 200 food businesses nationally. To play its part in Ireland meeting its food waste prevention targets, and the 3% redistribution target outlined above, FoodCloud has set an organisational target to redistribute just over 16,000 tonnes of good surplus food annually by 2030. An assumption is made that the remaining volume would be delivered by other organisations across the sector. To develop greater capacity to manage surplus food and enable this scale, FoodCloud is working to establish a new headquarters. FoodCloud will invest in its warehousing and storage infrastructure, its kitchen capacity and innovation, education and event spaces. This will also illustrate what can be achieved if all of the mechanisms to unlock surplus food are fully engaged. It will serve as a national living lab for surplus food redistribution and circular food systems, supporting innovation, policy development, and cross-sector collaboration with retailers, producers, community organisations, and local and national government.

Regional

Regional food hubs could take in larger volumes of food, store it safely, break it down into smaller quantities and redistribute it to smaller local groups. They can also support food pantries, social supermarkets, community kitchens and wraparound services. This would reduce the pressure on smaller groups and help get food to harder-to-reach communities. It would also allow FoodCloud to accept more food and manage its warehouse capacity more effectively.

Funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine and the Golden Jubilee Trust, FoodCloud is currently working with 3 regional partners to scope and design a Hub and Host partnership model, where the partners would act as a hub for their region. Regional hubs receive food from FoodCloud and are supported with food safety training, educational resources, and funding to cover the onward transportation of food to smaller community groups in the area.

By providing the local logistical infrastructure and volunteer capacity to ensure the safe, efficient redistribution of this food out into their surrounding communities, these partner hub organisations are helping to get more food into less well serviced, rural or hard-to-reach areas. Donegal Food Response Network, FoodShare Kerry and Kilkenny Leader Food Hub are all taking part in this pilot project.

The emergence of these mid-level organisations presents an opportunity to promote localisation of food redistribution around the country.

The Donegal Food Response Network (DFRN)

An example of a mid-level redistribution organisation

A network of 21 community and voluntary organisations working together to address food poverty and reduce food waste in County Donegal, DFRN is led by a voluntary steering committee. The network is facilitated by the Donegal Local Development Company which helps with coordination of activities, capacity-building, and provides administrative and governance support.

With aspirations to support more community groups, DFRN recently devised a strategic plan for the network, key to which is the establishment of a central hub for network members to help them store and redistribute more food, but also to provide more wrap-around services for members of the network.

Local

The charity network of 674 charities that FoodCloud works with includes approximately 23% food sharing or food bank initiatives, 15% homeless and housing services, 15% community services, 10% meals on wheels or adult day services and 9% youth services among others. This broad community network offers a strong foundation which needs to be harnessed in efforts to scale surplus food redistribution nationwide.

Mapping community food redistribution

As part of Food Circle, FoodCloud mapped the network of actors engaged in and enabling surplus food redistribution in Ireland. This helped identify the ecosystem of food redistribution, classifying actors according to the following categories: infrastructure, resourcing, education and network organisations. The network is broad and highly interdependent. At the heart of the network are the community groups and organisations that get food and essential services. The mapping shows that food redistribution is dependent on multiple systems and enabling it requires a holistic, coordinated and well-resourced approach.

Surplus food redistribution only works if there is enough capacity to manage acceptance and redistribution of food to where it is needed. The ability to get more food to people depends on strengthening the local and regional networks that move food in ways that work for communities.

While dealing with rising demand for their services and for food due to cost of living pressures, community groups often have limited storage, unsuitable premises, stretched volunteers, transport gaps and only short-term, ad hoc funding.

Organisations getting food to people therefore need practical support: fridges, freezers, vehicles, storage space, insurance, energy costs, staff time and volunteer coordination. Capital funding alone is not enough. Equipment must be maintained, vans must be fuelled, and food must be handled safely. Without running costs, infrastructure funding will not achieve its full impact.

Infrastructural network



Recommended actions

Large-scale redistribution can unlock more surplus food, but local and regional organisations need the resources to handle it. This means investing in regional food hubs, local food coordinators and community organisations, as well as basic infrastructure such as cold storage, vehicles and fit-for-purpose buildings.

Support the establishment of a headquarters for FoodCloud to enable scale and establish Ireland as a centre of excellence for surplus food redistribution and circular food systems

FoodCloud's HQ will create the required capacity to manage surplus food. It will also be a national living lab for circular food systems, supporting innovation, policy development, and cross-sector collaboration with retailers, producers, community organisations, local and national government.

Invest in capital and running costs for community food organisations

Funding should cover equipment such as fridges, freezers, vehicles and storage, as well as the day-to-day costs needed to use that infrastructure safely and consistently.

Fund Local Food Coordinator roles

Embed these roles in sustained funding streams such as Healthy Ireland or SICAP, so local areas have the

coordination needed to build relationships and keep services connected.

Support regional food hubs

To broaden the reach of FoodCloud's three existing Hubs, develop a network of regional hubs that can provide storage, transport, redistribution capacity, social supermarket models, community kitchens and wraparound supports.

Create flexible annual funding for smaller community groups

A dedicated fund should help local organisations meet practical needs such as small infrastructure upgrades, food safety requirements, volunteer support, transport and running costs.

Support food sharing models that offer choice and dignity

Provide targeted grants for social supermarkets, food pantries, community meals and wraparound service pilots.

Recognise food redistribution as part of wider social support

Include food sharing in relevant health, social protection, community development and rural development policies.

Empowering localisation

The landscape of food redistribution



Opportunity 3: Turn farm-level food loss into food security and rural resilience

Ireland has a significant opportunity to turn edible farm-level surplus into a national food security asset. Report 5 estimates that there is between 44,000 and 95,000 tonnes of edible surplus available at farm level each year. Much of this food is safe and nutritious, but does not reach people because of market fluctuations, product specifications, harvesting challenges, storage issues and limited secondary routes.

A national, medium-term, compensated agricultural recovery programme would reduce food loss and waste at primary producer level, support the horticulture sector, and increase access to nutritious produce for communities. By 2030, such a programme could divert 5,000 tonnes of surplus fruit and vegetables annually into redistribution.

This should build on the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's support for FoodCloud since 2021 through the Rural Innovation and Development Fund, and on FoodCloud's work piloting different agricultural recovery models (FoodCloud's Growers' Project). This includes the Hub and Host project, which is scaling capacity by enabling larger community partners to act as local redistribution points for smaller community groups in Donegal, Kerry and Kilkenny.

“The fresh vegetables we have received have been without a doubt keeping us afloat here for the last year. We send out over 700 meals a week here and are open 7 days a week 365 days a year. The seasonal increase in the cost of potatoes this year would have actually crippled us and we were very fortunate to receive a huge amount from FoodCloud.

“We operate in a very rural area in Mayo so our transport costs are high... We really feel that we cannot increase the price of the meals any more as we will be pricing the most vulnerable in our community out. The need to make the meals affordable to all our elderly is our utmost priority.”

Brickens Meals on Wheels, Mayo

The case for action is already reflected across national policy. Food Vision 2030 and the National Strategy for Horticulture 2023–2027 recognise that reducing farm-level food waste can bring social, economic, and environmental benefits, while supporting growers. The National Horticulture Strategy 2023–2027 also highlights the pressures facing the sector, including the risk of growers leaving the industry. A compensated recovery

programme would help by recognising the cost to growers of making surplus produce available.

This also aligns with the Programme for Government commitment to strengthen farm incomes for family farms, the Circular Economy Strategy 2026–2028 focus on preventing avoidable waste, and the National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap, specifically Action 21 on food waste caused by product specification-related issues.

The opportunity is practical and immediate: reduce avoidable food loss, support growers, improve access to fresh produce, and help Ireland deliver on SDG 12.3 on food loss and waste and SDG 2 on hunger, food security and nutrition.

Recommended actions

Establish a national compensated agricultural recovery programme

Create a medium-term national programme, building on the Growers' Project, to redistribute 5,000 tonnes of farm-level surplus fruit and vegetables each year by 2030.

Provide multi-annual Government funding

Give growers, redistribution partners and community organisations the certainty needed to plan and scale.

Embed agricultural recovery in national strategies

Include agricultural recovery and surplus prevention and redistribution in successor strategies to the National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap, Healthy Ireland and the Roadmap for Social Inclusion, and in the implementation of the National Strategy for Horticulture.

Improve data on farm-level food loss

Invest in better measurement of farm-level losses, including tools such as the WWF Global Farm Loss Tool, to understand the volume, causes and destinations of edible surplus.

Support prevention, secondary markets and valorisation

Help growers and food businesses prevent surplus at source and keep edible surplus in the human food chain through secondary markets, processing and valorised products.

Prioritise feeding people first

Where safe edible surplus remains, redistribution for people should come before lower-value routes such as animal feed, anaerobic digestion, composting or disposal.

About FoodCloud

Since 2013, FoodCloud has redistributed 423 million meals⁴, saving more than 506,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions and 178,000 tonnes of food from going to waste⁵. FoodCloud offers two core services to redistribute surplus food:

- Foodiverse, a technology platform that directly connects food businesses with surplus food to charities that can use it.
- Three Hubs located in Dublin, Cork and Galway, which redistribute large quantities of surplus food from across the food supply chain to a network of community groups in Ireland.

In addition, FoodCloud Kitchen showcases how surplus food can be spectacular, preparing a delicious food experience for the public, community organisations and corporate partners, as well as a community meals programme that provides nutritious meals for community partners. FoodCloud is also the partner organisation for the ESF+ Food Support programme in Ireland, partnering with the Department of Social Protection and Department of Further, Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to deliver a reliable supply of food support to the charity sector in Ireland (using Exchequer and EU funding).

Project partners

Clean Technology Centre (CTC) is an independent, not for profit, research organisation within Munster Technological University (MTU), first established in 1992. CTC and its staff have a long and distinguished record in sustainability, environmental protection and resource efficiency and has become an important contributor to the national response to the issue of food waste. CTC has carried out over 300 dedicated food waste surveys as well as working with community organisations and local authorities on a variety of food focused projects. CTC has published numerous food waste related materials to promote waste prevention including: the Savour Food e-tool and e-Training assets, 'Less Food Waste More Profit', food industry fact sheets and numerous case studies and videos. CTC has, through managing national programmes such as the EPA's Stop Food Waste and Green Business programmes, Savour Food (DAFM), Green Seafood Business programme (BIM) and LAPN (EPA), supported householders and businesses alike in the area of food waste. CTC has been involved in the development of the Food Waste Charter, its branding and the development of its resources and currently supports the EPA in its management of the programme. Through this work CTC has developed the national reporting standards for food service, food and drink manufacturing, public sector offices and food retail.

Kai Robertson has researched, written, and provided advice about food loss and waste across the food supply chain for a decade. This includes having written

Sustainable Materials Management of Food in the APEC Region: A Review of Public Policies That Support Reducing Food Loss and Waste, co-authored Reducing Food Loss and Waste: Setting a Global Action Agenda as well as the Verra VM0046 Methodology for Reducing Food Loss and Waste. Since 2013 she has been Lead Advisor of the Food Loss and Waste Protocol supporting the World Resources Institute as well as others on the FLW Protocol Steering Committee, including WRAP, the Consumer Goods Forum, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization, and the United Nations Environment Programme.

Acknowledgements

This project is supported by the Circular Economy Fund through the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (DCEE). FoodCloud would like to thank the DCEE for sponsoring the Food Circle project, and for its continued leadership on food waste prevention and the circular economy.

FoodCloud is also grateful to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine for its support for agricultural recovery through the Rural Innovation and Development Fund, and for its engagement on the role of surplus food redistribution in supporting growers, rural communities and food security.

FoodCloud would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Environmental Protection Agency, including its role in national food waste prevention, measurement and the Food Waste Charter; and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland for its role in supporting safe food systems and clear food safety practice.

FoodCloud would like to thank Food Circle project partners, Clean Technology Centre and Kai Robertson, whose research, analysis and expertise helped shape the evidence base and recommendations set out in this work.

FoodCloud also thanks the European Food Banks Federation for its partnership, shared learning and European perspective on food banking and surplus food redistribution.

FoodCloud is grateful to the Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic for its guidance and expertise on food donation law and policy, including its work on best practice for food donation agreements and wider legal frameworks for food recovery.

FoodCloud also acknowledges Tracey O'Connor of Munster Technological University and Jenny Attard for their contributions to the research on farm-level food loss and surplus food redistribution.

Finally, FoodCloud is deeply grateful to the food businesses, growers, community organisations and redistribution partners who contributed their time, experience and practical insight to this project, and whose work every day makes surplus food redistribution possible.

⁴ To year end 2025.

⁵ To year end 2025.

Appendix

Policy recommendations

Report 1: Policy levers for food redistribution

A: Donation of surplus food

A	To substantially increase access to surplus food, the Government can require that food businesses across the supply chain offer to donate their surplus food, using as a framework the provision on donation in the revised Waste Framework Directive. In determining which food businesses, the Government will need to consider which food businesses have a significant role in the prevention and generation of food waste and what would be a reasonable cost for the businesses required to offer food for donation. A validation requirement could also be introduced where appropriate to ensure that edible surplus is assessed for donation before it is sent for recovery or disposal.
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B. Enhance and promote safe food donation guidelines

B.1	Publish an official guidance note on food safety specifically for food donation for food donors and food redistribution organisations, which is supported by relevant government organisations and agencies.
B.2	Promote the content of the guidance through a communications campaign directed at food businesses.
B.3	Strengthen and promote the EU Food Donation Guidelines to include additional information further addressing barriers to surplus food donation and to promote a common interpretation of EU rules applying to the redistribution of surplus food, and promote the use of these guidelines in Ireland.

C. Liability protection for ‘Good Samaritan’ acts of donation

C	Revise the Liability for Defective Products Act or otherwise provide a specific indemnity to food donors and food redistributors in respect of donated food, protecting donors and intermediary organisations who have acted in compliance with food safety regulations.
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D. Supporting food donation infrastructure and technical assistance to food businesses

D.1	Offer dedicated grants that: • enable economic operators to invest in changing processes to prevent food waste; and • provide technical assistance to food businesses to measure food waste, and identify and donate surplus food.
D.2	Highlight general grants that could be used to prevent food waste, or valorise or redistribute surplus food.

E. Fiscal incentives to enable food donation

E.1	Amend VAT so that any VAT reimbursed to a business on food inputs that are subsequently donated can be retained.
E.2	Create a tax credit or deduction for donated food and the logistical costs of donating food.
E.3	Extend the relief available under the Charitable Donation Scheme to in-kind donations of food products.
E.4	Extend the relief available to incorporated entities to individual monetary donors for monetary donations under the Charitable Donation Scheme, in order to make it more attractive for individual donors to donate to all registered charitable organisations including food banks.

F. Mandatory reporting

F.1	Require food businesses in all sectors to measure their food waste using the already established mechanism and protocols in the Food Waste Charter, and to prepare a food loss and waste reduction plan.
F.2	Encourage food businesses to adopt a voluntary target for a percentage of edible food to be donated.
F.3	Scale up technical assistance to businesses to measure food waste.
F.4	Ensure that this information gathering is coordinated nationally and the data gathered is used to inform sectoral intervention approaches.

Report 2: Supporting a voluntary target for surplus food redistribution

A. Recommendation

A.1	Create a voluntary target for the percentage of edible food to be donated using the Food Waste Charter.
A.2	Use a percentage-based metric as the headline target, focusing on edible surplus to link donations to waste reduction.
A.3	Ensure measurement and disclosure protocols are harmonised with existing reporting mechanisms, with clear definitions of 'waste', 'edible' and 'surplus' food outlined in national policy.
A.4	Set differentiated baselines and trajectories for differing sectors, with phased implementation to support smaller businesses.

Report 3: Building community sector capacity for surplus food redistribution

A. Infrastructure

A.1	Invest in capital and operational funding to cover not only equipment (e.g., fridges, freezers, vehicles) but also ongoing running costs.
A.2	Fund the development of local food hubs.
A.3	Support acquisition or upgrade of fit-for-purpose buildings.
A.4	Enable shared infrastructure models to allow multiple groups to access cold storage and transport.

B. Local networks

B.1	Fund Local Food Coordinator positions to build and maintain community networks between organisations, donors and local food systems.
B.2	Facilitate a national network of food coordinators to enable knowledge exchange, peer learning, shared resources and input at a strategic level.
B.3	Support the development of local, place-based food partnerships.
B.4	Provide seed funding for collaborative pilot projects, encouraging organisations to test and evaluate cooperative working models.

C. Donor and community partner relationships

C.1	Establish strengthened national guidelines and standards for food donations to improve the consistency and quality of surplus food.
C.2	Create incentives or support initiatives that enable local retailers, food producers, and growers to donate high-quality, nutritious food locally.
C.3	Support initiatives that connect local growers with community groups.
C.4	Fund capacity-building and network building initiatives between community groups and donors.

D. Resourcing and capacity

D.1	Provide multi-annual core funding for community food organisations engaging in SFR to reduce reliance on short-term grants and voluntary labour.
D.2	Embed the Local Food Coordinator role within formal and sustained funding streams, such as Sláintecare Healthy Communities or the Healthy Ireland fund, to support operational coordination and enable long-term continuity in SFR.

E. Education and capacity building

E.1	Fund hands-on, practical training programmes on food waste prevention, and using surplus food safely, creatively, and effectively.
E.2	Invest in 'train-the-trainer' models to build local capacity and allow knowledge to be shared more widely within communities. Include food waste prevention, including interventions from sector leaders. ⁷
E.3	Provide targeted grants and support for the establishment of innovative food sharing models, such as social supermarkets or wrap-around service pilots, leveraging the unique leadership of Local Development Companies and their access to SICAP funding.
E.4	In wider policy, recognise community food provision and surplus food redistribution as an engagement gateway and fund programmes that build bridges from food to wider social services and supports.

Report 4: Supporting food redistribution infrastructure

A. Support national surplus food redistribution excellence and infrastructure

A.1	Support the establishment of a headquarters for FoodCloud to enable scale and establish Ireland as a Centre of Excellence for surplus food redistribution and circular food systems, supporting innovation, policy development, and cross-sector collaboration.
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⁷ Examples include CTC and Grow It Yourself Ireland.

B. Support for mid-level redistribution organisations – regional hubs

B.1	Support the creation of a network of regional food hubs that would provide a range of services from food redistribution, to wraparound social service, social supermarket, café and community kitchen.
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C. Support for local level community groups - meeting ongoing running costs

C.1	Creation of a dedicated annual fund (€350,000) providing flexibility for small community groups to support infrastructural upgrades and/or ongoing running costs.
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Report 5: Farm level food loss in Ireland

A. Support for a national compensated agricultural recovery programme

A.1	Establish a medium-term national compensated agricultural recovery programme, building on the FoodCloud Growers' Project, enabling redistribution of 5,000 tonnes of surplus each year by 2030.
A.2	Embed agricultural recovery and surplus prevention in successor strategies to the National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap, Healthy Ireland and the Roadmap for Social Inclusion, and in implementation of the National Strategy for Horticulture, so that farm-level surplus redistribution is recognised as cross-cutting policy tools.
A.3	Provide multi-annual direct Government funding as the core short term funding mechanism for the programme, while also pursuing alternative options for EU funding.

B. Invest in and support food waste prevention in the order established in the Food Use and Waste Hierarchy

B.1	Invest in prevention at source by improving data on farm-level losses, supporting the use of structured tools such as the WWF Global Farm Loss Tool, progressing mandatory food loss and waste reporting (while recognising any burden this places on growers), and promoting collaborative work on specifications, contracts, labour and logistics that will reduce surplus.
B.2	Support market-oriented waste prevention initiatives that keep surplus in the human food chain, particularly valorisation activities that create marketable and / or shelf-stable produce, promoting avenues to use these valorised products as part of socially or nutritionally beneficial initiatives (such as for use in institutional settings such as school meals, hospitals, social supermarkets, Meals on Wheels and other types of community food sharing).
B.3	Prioritise prevention of food waste by redirecting food for human consumption ahead of lower-value outlets such as animal feed, industrial uses (rendering or biorefining), anaerobic digestion, composting, or disposal.

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