



**URBAN
WASTE**
URBAN STRATEGIES FOR
WASTE MANAGEMENT
IN TOURIST CITIES



Food donation from restaurants and hotels to charities

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What is the measure about?

Description and scope of the measure

More than 40% of the waste generated at tourist establishments such as restaurants, bars and hotels with buffet is considered as food waste. This issue requires special attention as it greatly contributes to the total municipal solid waste generation in many tourist cities in Europe.

Food waste refers to food intended for human consumption which is discarded, whether it has reached its expiry date or not. Usually, this happens whenever food has spoiled but it can be for other reasons such as oversupply in the restaurant or hotel, rigorous aesthetic standards for sale, or individual consumer purchasing/eating habits. Moreover, food can be considered as waste due to regulations on durability, date marketing or hygiene standards.

Restaurants, bars, hotels, etc. can adopt a series of measures to reduce food waste, as it is described in *“Measure nº 2: Food prevention at buffets and restaurants”*, such as the adjustment of dishes size or the implementation of just in time ordering.

However, whenever there is still leftover food, this can still be donated to food banks and charities for further consumption. In this respect, food donation from restaurants and buffets to food banks and non-profit organisations can do a lot to reduce and minimize the amount of food waste generated, otherwise mixed with residual waste and thrown away (as in most cases selective organic waste collection is not provided).

There is a great number of non-profit and social organisations in Europe that will collect excess and leftover food (including prepared food) to provide for the needy. Depending on the country, however, there may be various legal and health/safety requirements to consider. Many hotels and restaurants have already adopted this measure.

Moreover, the European Commission is taking this issue very seriously, as reducing food waste has an enormous potential for reducing resources necessary for food production. For instance, food waste prevention is an integral part of the Commission’s new Circular Economy Package to stimulate Europe’s transition towards a circular economy. More specifically, the EC is taking measures to clarify EU legislation related to waste and food and facilitate donations without compromising food safety.¹ In this sense, the Commission is developing a series of EU-wide food donation guidelines for donors and receivers of food surplus, including national guidelines, recent studies and reports, online register of EU rules on food hygiene, etc. The EU food

¹ EU actions against food waste (EC) (https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food_waste/eu_actions_en)

donation guidelines are expected to be finalized and adopted by the Commission by the end of 2017.²

Strong legal and financial support from the EC and the respective state/local governments is of great importance here, as one of the main problems why restaurants and hotels do not donate leftover food is because they are scared of being sued.³ In this sense, restaurants, bars, buffets, etc. should be better protected, as it is the case of the “Good Samaritan Law” (*see section with examples of good practices*), which protects restaurants from civil and criminal liability if a recipient would get ill or hurt as a result of consumed donated food. Donors are only culpable in cases of gross negligence or intentional misconduct (such as donating food from which others have already become sick). In order to be protected by the Good Samaritan Law, food donors have to comply with state and local food sanitation and label regulations, which vary widely. That is why guidelines around donation procedures need to be more uniform, so as to streamline the process.

Consequently, food donation from restaurants and buffets to food banks and non-profit organisations can do a lot to reduce and minimize the amount of food waste generated, otherwise mixed with residual waste and thrown away (as in most cases selective organic waste collection is not provided).

Integration in a waste management plan

The proposed measure can be adopted and included in the waste management plan of the restaurant, hotel or buffet. Every Environmental Management Systems, such as ISO 14001 or EMAS, which tourist establishments of this type can be certified against include waste management plans and strategies where food waste prevention measures can be integrated.

² *EU action to facilitate food donation and prevent food waste* (Anne-Laure Gassin, EC, DG Health & Food Safety) (https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/safety/docs/fw_eu-platform_20161129_pres-eu-food-donation-guidelines.pdf)

³ *Restaurants Officially Have No Excuse Not To Donate Leftover Food* (Eleanor Goldberg, 2016, Huffingtonpost) (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/restaurants-that-dont-donate-because-of-liability-are-just-making-excuses-experts-say_us_577d6f92e4b0344d514dd20f)

How to implement this measure?

Economic aspects to consider and potential solutions for the financing of the measure

Costs

- Transportation and distribution from the restaurant/hotel to food banks or charities. However, this expense could be covered by the receiving part, depending on their capabilities.

Cost savings

- Some EU countries have implemented a tax credit system or deductions for donated food in order to encourage restaurants and hotels to donate more food instead of throwing it away. For example, in France and Spain, 60% and 35% accordingly, of the value of food donated can be claimed as tax credit⁴.
- Moreover, the amount of food waste that would be incinerated or landfilled would decrease, avoiding the costs of these alternatives. In EU, the average costs are⁵:
 - Incineration of residual waste: 64€/ton
 - Landfilling residual waste: 56€/ton

Funding options

- With the tax credit or deductions from the donated food, the restaurant or hotel could if not fully finance, at least reduce the costs of transportation and distribution to food banks and charities.

Type of stakeholders to involve

For the effective introduction, implementation and continuous operation of the proposed measure, a number of key stakeholders should be involved. These include (*whenever applicable*):

- Hotel or restaurant managers
- Health, safety and environment responsible within the hotel, restaurant, etc.
- Catering service providers
- Kitchen staff (i.e. chef, kitchen assistants, waiters/waitresses, etc.)
- Customers

⁴ Comparative Study on EU Member States' legislation and practices on food donation Executive summary (2014) European Economic and Social Committee. pp 5, retrieved from <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/executive-summary-comparative-study-on-eu-member-states-legislation-and-practices-on-food-donation.pdf>

⁵ Source : IPCC (https://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg3/en/ch10s10-4-7.html)

- Receiving organisations (food banks, charities and other non-profit social organizations working on food waste prevention and donations - recovering food from donors and redistributing it to charity organisations, or directly receiving food from donors)
- Homeless shelters, orphanages, homes for the elderly, drug rehabilitation centres, etc.

Other possible stakeholders to involve:

- Waste management department of local authorities
- Waste management company/local authority in charge of municipal waste collection
- Trade and hoteliers associations
- Local sanitary agencies with a role on food safety surveillance

Description of the operational steps to follow

At municipal level

- Mapping of restaurants, hotels, canteens, etc. within the municipal boundaries willing to participate as potential food donors.
- Mapping of food banks, charities and non-profit organizations involved in food donation activities within the municipal boundaries, as potential food receivers.
- Confirmation that identified and considered food donors/receivers meet all health and safety regulations.
- Organization of informative meetings and training sessions for identified establishments and charities (a brochure could be created and delivered to restaurants and hotels providing a list and contact details of food banks and relevant social organisations, as well as the list of formal conditions to be met)
- Facilitation and support in the subscription of voluntary agreements and collaboration partnerships with participating establishments and charities (as there are many aspects to be considered)⁶
- Realization of communication campaigns at local level to engage participants.
- Regulative support and financial incentives to encourage restaurants, hotels, etc. to implement this measure so that donating food is more attractive than discarding it (e.g. tax reduction for food donors – they may be able to deduct a certain percentage of the value of donated food from their income corporate tax)

⁶ European Hospitality Industry Guidelines to Reduce Food Waste and Recommendations to Manage Food Donations (HOTREC, Hospitality Europe) (http://www.hotrec.eu/Documents/Document/20170119161052-HOTREC_guidelines_on_food_waste_reduction_and_recommendations_to_manage_donations_-_Final.pdf)

At restaurant/hotel level

- Appointment of the owner/manager or specific employee to be in charge of food donations (this will avoid mismanagement of food surplus, pick-ups and schedule for collection, etc. and therefore prevent avoidable losses)
- Monitoring and identification of potential food to be donated so as to define the scope of the action plan (consider where, how much and which type of food waste is being generated in the kitchen, canteen, etc.).
- Before the initial donation is made, the establishment should contact its local health department and find out what laws exist (if any) that regulate donated “prepared-and-perishable” food, and then operators should make sure they can comply with them.
- A presentation and introduction of the measure should be provided to hotels and restaurant personnel, at all levels. Including them in the decision-making process can translate into a higher commitment and better morale of involved staff.
- Communication campaign materials and continuous support/training should be distributed to all involved stakeholders to ensure participation and a proper understanding and uptake of the measure.
- Examples of actions to adopt when donating fresh products include:⁷
 - Keep refrigerated items cold all the time; examine the items for any signs of decay, spoilage, mould or odours; store food products separately to prevent cross contamination; discard any cut items that have not been kept refrigerated, etc.
- Examples of actions to adopt when donating prepared food include:
 - Avoid dishes containing potentially hazardous foods that have been heated, chilled and reheated; store dishes in shallow, one-use recyclable aluminium pans or clear-plastic food-grade bags; package donations in smaller containers, such as shallow pans, rather than larger ones so that recipients can maintain the food’s temperature and prepare only the amounts that will be consumed at once, etc.
- The responsible person in the restaurant or hotel should also be aware of where the food is destined and how it will be stored and handled until it is consumed (even if the food was perfectly safe when it left the restaurant, it could be mistakenly allowed to cool or thaw somewhere in transit, which could be harmful).
- Along with the implementation of the measure, it is very important to promote the new activity to customers. Clients will not only appreciate the efforts and concerns from the restaurant or hotel, but they may potentially increase their support too (which would be translated into economic benefits). The participating establishment could place a specific sticker/label on its front door to promote the measure.
- The last step should consist and conclude with measuring the efficiency of the actions adopted when comparing the results obtained after a trial period.

⁷ *Food Donation: A Restaurateur’s Guide* (National Restaurant Association, U.S. Department of Agriculture) (<http://infohouse.p2ric.org/ref/12/11907.pdf>)

On top of it, new trusted employees should be periodically designated to be the “eyes and ears” for supervision and management of the measure as well as to identify areas where participation/cooperation is somehow not taking place (either by specific areas of the kitchen or certain staff members). Keep a conversation with those not participating so as to determine if they understand the importance of the measure and the reasons behind their low interest.

Gender aspects to consider

Who decides which charities benefit? Do the charities benefit women at least as much as men? If women hotel staff are involved in identifying charities, then this could empower them.

Examples of good practices

- In France, fiscal instruments have been introduced so that it is more expensive for companies to send unmarketable food to anaerobic digestion than to donate it to food banks, sending appropriate financial signals in relation to the EU waste hierarchy. Therefore, food donors in France qualify for a tax credit equal to 60% of the value of the food donated, to a limit of 0.5% of revenue of companies that are subject to corporate income tax (i.e. taxes against profits earned by businesses during a given taxable period). The 60% tax credit on the net book value of the donated food and on its transportation and storage incentivizes food businesses operators to donate rather than send food surplus to the landfill. For example, if a buffet has in its possession one ton of surplus food estimated at 1000€ and the landfill taxes are 100€ the owner will lose 1100€ in order to discard the food. However, if the establishment donates the surplus food, not only will it save landfill costs, but it will also benefit from a tax credit of 600€. In this case, the owner will only lose 400€ instead of 1100€. ⁸
- In Italy, the “Good Samaritan Law” (*Legge 25 giugno 2003, n. 155*) identifies the food bank as the final consumer of donated products. Food donors (e.g. restaurants, hotels, etc.) are thus liable for food safety and hygiene conditions only to food banks, rather than to individual consumers of food bank provisions. Given that the proper safety and hygiene framework is ensured by food banks upon receipt of donations, many stakeholders consider that this legislation provides an extra level of reassurance to donors that stimulates food donation without compromising necessary safeguards. ⁶
- The “Food Bank against hunger” is an initiative of the “Portuguese Federation of Food Banks Against Hunger” which aims to fight against waste by recovering food surpluses and lead to those who have food shortages, mobilizing people and companies which, on a voluntary basis, have associated with this cause. ⁹
- The properties within Carlson Hotels Worldwide, Radisson Hotels & Resorts, Marriott International and Fairmont Hotels and Resorts donate untouched food from catering displays and trolleys to community projects such as homeless shelters, orphanages, homes for the elderly and drug rehabilitation centres, sometimes working through charitable organisations. ¹⁰

⁸ *Comparative Study on EU Member States’ legislation and practices on food donation. Final report* (Deloitte, 2014) (http://www.eesc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/resources/docs/comparative-study-on-eu-member-states-legislation-and-practices-on-food-donation_finalreport_010714.pdf)

⁹ *Federação Europeia de Bancos Alimentares* (<http://www.bancoalimentar.pt/>)

¹⁰ *A welcome sign: Hotels adopt reuse and recycling* (Waste Management World) (<https://waste-management-world.com/a/a-welcome-sign-hotels-adopt-reuse-and-recycling>)

- The “*Union Belge du Catering*”, which represents contract catering in Belgium, launched in 2012 a project called “*Excédents alimentaires*” (Food surpluses) with representatives of Ministries, regional authorities, industries and social institutions. The objective was to encourage food donation to reduce food waste by diverting unavoidable food surplus while fighting against poverty. In this project, industry and local authorities joined forces and called on companies to increase efforts to avoid food waste and promote structural donations. Any food that can still be eaten, but no longer sold, may be distributed (provided it meets safety conditions such as not exceeding expiry date, cold chain compliance, etc.). Such food can be donated to food banks and social organisations.¹¹
- The Hilton Worldwide hotels announced in 2012 a multi-year partnership with Feeding America and the Global FoodBanking Network to secure food and reduce hunger in communities where it operates around the globe. This enabled hotels to collect safe, surplus food from conferences and daily food and beverage operations that would otherwise be thrown away and made it available for those in need. On the other hand, Feeding America and The Global FoodBanking Network connected Hilton Worldwide hotels with local food banks and their networks of local community agencies to facilitate food delivery to school feeding programs, food pantries, hospices, after-school programs and other community projects.¹²

¹¹ *Food Waste Reduction, Case studies from the contract catering industry* (FoodService EUROPE, 2014)

(<http://www.foodserviceeurope.org/gallery/60/FoodServiceEurope%20database%20Food%20Waste%20-%20FINAL.pdf>)

¹² *Hilton takes steps forward to minimise food waste* (Holly Tuppen, 2012 - Green Hotelier) (<http://www.greenhotelier.org/our-themes/waste/hilton-takes-steps-forward-to-minimise-food-waste/>)

Guidance for setting up monitoring indicators

Data to be collected:

Monitoring of actions, items, stakeholders and people involved etc.		total
Restaurants involved	[number]	
frequency of pick-ups and collection of food	[n. days per week]	
Total number of restaurants in the pilot area	[number]	
Percentage of restaurants involved	[%]	
Hotels involved	[number]	
frequency of pick-ups and collection of food	[n. days per week]	
Total number of hotels in the pilot area	[number]	
Percentage of hotels involved	[%]	
Canteens involved	[number]	
frequency of pick-ups and collection of food	[n. days per week]	
Total number of canteens in the pilot area	[number]	
Percentage of canteens involved	[%]	
Events with catering and buffets involved	[number]	
other: please specify.....	[number]	
Estimated composition of food donated		
Vegetables	[%]	
Bread/pasta	[%]	
Beef/lamb	[%]	
Chicken/pork	[%]	
Fish	[%]	
Other: please specify.....	[%]	
Communication and promotion campaigns and activities organised		

Following data aims at monitoring quantity of food donated and the performance of the measure:

- quantity of food donated **[kg]** or **[number of boxes/trays]**: the number of boxes or trays can be chosen as a unit of measurement if it is not possible to weight waste produced, the average weight of a fulfilled boxes or trays will have to be estimated beforehand for further calculation
- Number of customers **[number]**

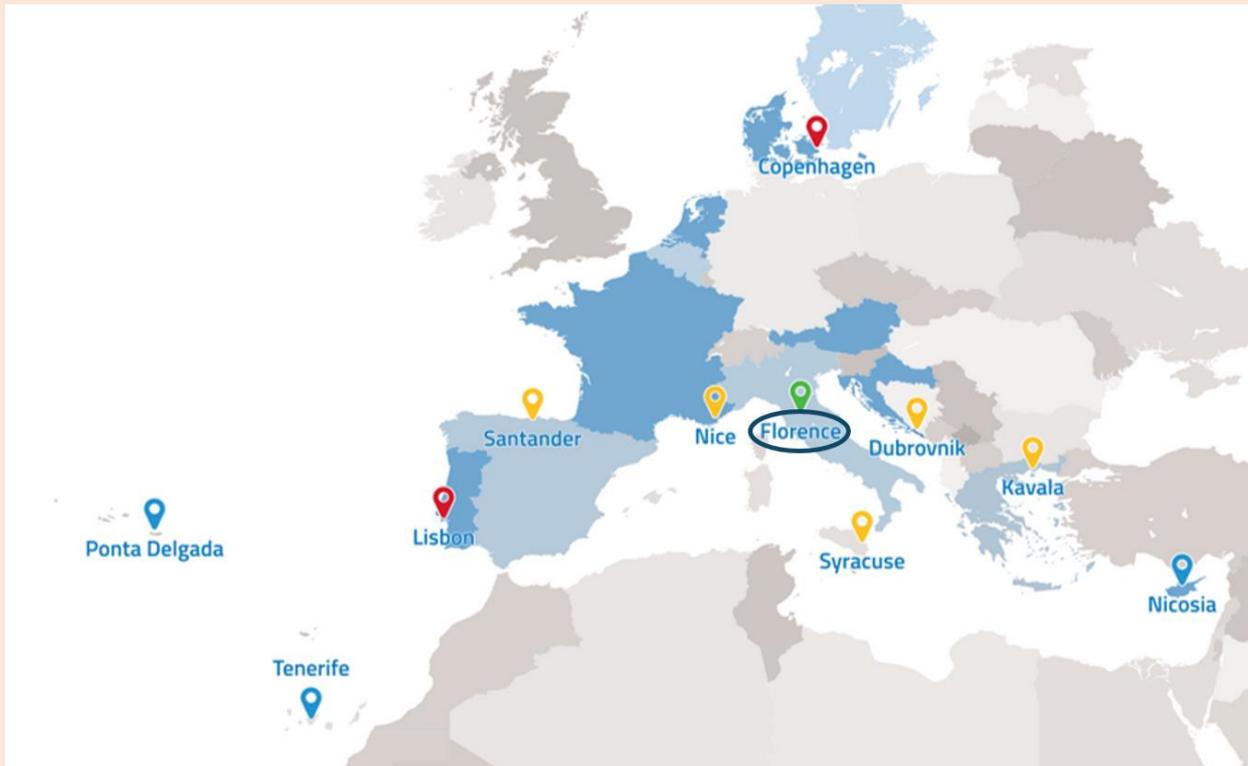
Time frame

It is recommended to start the monitoring at least one week before food donation from restaurants and hotels to charities to assess the effect of the measure. Quantity of food donated and number of customers can be registered **continuously** (every day every week) or **randomly** (one day per week or every day one week per month).

Gender considerations:

- Who makes ultimate decisions in establishment? **[male-female]**
- Who in the restaurant is involved in food collection? **[%female]**
- Approximate gender distribution of extra work involved? **[% female]**
- Who, or which organisations, does the food go to? Equally between women/men, or to organisations catering for women as well as men? **[Equally-more men-more women-more]**

Lessons learnt from the implementation phase and fine tuning



Pilot implementing food donation from restaurants and hotels to charities within URBAN-WASTE

In **Florence**, 4 hotels and 2 charities were involved in food donation. 1 charity managing a canteen hosting about 114 poor people including adults and children. 50 table tabs promoting the initiative were distributed in the involved hotels.

The daily collection of the exceeding food prepared by the hotels were carried out by volunteers from charities.