

## PRACTICE ABSTRACT

### Addressing Food Waste via redistribution of surplus food

The CHORIZO project identified a total of 395 interventions across the EU that address food loss and food waste. Of these interventions there were 84 which pertained to the redistribution supply chain stage, meaning redistributing surplus food fit for human consumption. These interventions involve a range of actors across the supply chain – such as in retail and food services - in order to successfully redistribute surplus food. Most often, this surplus food is either redistributed to charities which make the food available to the needy, or in other cases the surplus food is sold at a discounted rate to consumers. This abstract focuses on those interventions highlighting the scientific, societal, and economic impacts that were found evident, in addition to addressing food waste.

**1. Socio-economic: Increased collaboration and knowledge-sharing** among food redistribution actors is paramount to allow for more effective food saving activities. This was particularly evident for those interventions which were operating in isolated and different cities/countries, and which covered the entire supply chain from production to consumer. Due to the large scope of such interventions, a **multitude of laws, regulations, and different types of governance** have to be adhered to in order to redistribute surplus food.

**2. Socio-economic:** Consistent financial support is essential for sustaining redistribution operations; by leveraging local resources and infrastructure, public-private collaboration promoting **specific skills, knowledge, and jobs in sustainability**, play a crucial role in **developing innovative models for food surplus redistribution** and creating a cohesive and interconnected network.

**3. Socio-economic:** The redistribution of surplus food – in particular that which is sold to the average consumer at a discounted rate - is making it socially more acceptable (i.e. **less stigmatized**) to eat surplus food, including food that might not be aesthetically pleasing, but still safe to eat. In addition, redistribution allows retailers and those in the food services industry to reach more consumers; there is an economic benefit. Rather than having the food go to waste and spending money on disposal costs, selling at a discounted price provides **another revenue source**.

**4. Scientific – Research and Innovation:** Ensuring that donated food meets stringent **safety standards** is essential for building trust among both donors and recipients. **Preserving the freshness of donated food** during storage and transportation is becoming a key factor, requiring research and innovation on issues such as temperature management and packaging for example.

**5. Scientific – Research and Innovation:** Several **electronic tools** (apps, online platforms) have been developed in relation to the redistribution sector. This digital approach not only enables the more effective identification, collection, and distribution of surplus food, but also allows for a more precise matching of supply and demand. A good example is the ZERO DESPERDÍCIO app (Portugal), a digital platform entirely dedicated to the management and implementation of production and

distribution models, according to the Circular Economy concept, with the aim of recovering network surpluses. It facilitates the connection and collaboration of entities on a national scale, collecting data on donations made, while measuring social, economic, and environmental impacts, and scalability to other territories at the international level. Such technology is also evident in the retail and food services sectors. One such example is the Foodsi app (Poland) which allows customers to buy surplus food from food retailers and thereby save it from going to waste. Or the “Komefy” app (Spain), which addresses waste in the food services sectors, by allowing consumers to locate restaurants that are offering reduced prices for surplus food due to various reasons such as overstocking, close to expiry date, or appearance.

**6. Societal:** The electronic tools do not only help to address food waste by providing options for redistribution of surplus food. These tools often also have an **educational component** for the average consumer – in the form of tips on planning & shopping, storage & cooking, composting, and highlighting the environmental aspect - such as the effect on greenhouse gas emissions due to food waste reduction.

**7. Societal:** In addition to addressing food waste, redistribution efforts allow the food to be directed to charities, which then provide the food to those **members of society most in need of food, such as lower-income families**. Meanwhile, in the retail and food services sector, while surplus food can also be directed towards charities as donations, certain interventions sell the surplus food at a discounted rate to consumers. This in effect also helps those segments of society that are in need and unable to pay higher prices. One such example is Foodie Save (Ireland), which sells surplus food at a discounted rate, with its main customer base being lower-income families and single mothers.

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