

# OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

<b>DIALOGUE DATE</b>	Wednesday, 14 July 2021 16:00 GMT +02:00
<b>DIALOGUE TITLE</b>	Food Waste in the DACH region and beyond - connecting academic's and practitioner's views
<b>CONVENED BY</b>	Kristina V. Heilinger (Waste's End   Zero Waste Austria   oikos St. Gallen)
<b>DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE</b>	<a href="https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/23560/">https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/23560/</a>
<b>DIALOGUE TYPE</b>	Independent
<b>GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS</b>	Austria, Germany, No borders, Switzerland

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

# 1. PARTICIPATION

## TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

14

## PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

9

19-30

3

31-50

2

51-65

66-80

80+

## PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

2 Male

12 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

1 Agriculture/crops  
Fish and aquaculture  
Livestock  
Agro-forestry  
Environment and ecology  
Trade and commerce

8 Education  
3 Communication  
Food processing  
1 Food retail, markets  
Food industry  
Financial Services

Health care  
Nutrition  
National or local government  
Utilities  
Industrial  
1 Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

2 Small/medium enterprise/artisan  
Large national business  
Multi-national corporation  
Small-scale farmer  
Medium-scale farmer  
Large-scale farmer  
1 Local Non-Governmental Organization  
International Non-Governmental Organization  
Indigenous People  
7 Science and academia

Workers and trade union  
Member of Parliament  
Local authority  
Government and national institution  
Regional economic community  
United Nations  
International financial institution  
2 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance  
1 Consumer group  
1 Other

## 2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

### HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE THE DIALOGUE SO THAT THE PRINCIPLES WERE INCORPORATED, REINFORCED AND ENHANCED?

The dialogue was organized in an online format so that everyone could participate. In the beginning, the organizer highlighted the main questions that participants should keep in mind throughout the dialogue: "How should our food systems look in ten years from now?" and "How can we get there?" This contributes to the development of solutions and should encourage participants not just to mention solutions, but also to consider their implementation, feasibility, and potential side effects in different geographical and social contexts. The dialogue convenor invited different stakeholders from local farmers, students, researchers, and supermarket managers to NGOs, entrepreneurs, and chefs. The number of participants was a bit lower than expected in the end, and I saw much more participants from academia than from other sectors. The dialogue focused on food waste, still, participants took different other issues into account, e.g. current food trends in different countries, food loss and food waste definitions, social impacts of food waste, and the cultural meaning of food and food waste. The focus on food waste, nevertheless, helped to narrow down the complexity of the topic. Existing initiatives, e.g. the French law against food waste, as well as best practices from the business were actively mentioned and incorporated in the dialogue as well. The geographical focus of the dialogue on the DACH region was enhanced by "beyond", so also international participants e.g. from Turkey and Singapore had their say. Participants discovered different eating customs throughout the dialogue, and they respectfully listened to other standpoints of views. Lastly, this report here aggregates findings of the participants, and single participants' names have not been mentioned. Throughout the dialogue, the atmosphere was very respectful and open, so everyone was invited to clearly state his/her opinion also if it was controversial.

### HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

As the dialogue was centered in the DACH region, dialogue groups were offered in two languages: English and German. This was intended to enable everyone to contribute, even if they did not speak English respectively did not feel comfortable in the language. This as well as the organization of the dialogue in a zoom format guaranteed inclusivity. The event was not just advertised on the Food Systems Summit 2021 website, but also via social media, on LinkedIn and per private email invitations as well as informal invitations per phone or in person. This aimed to contribute more stakeholder inclusivity. The Convenor also invited participants in the beginning to ask questions any time they wished to do so, and hands were frequently raised throughout the interactions. Thus, participants did not need to interrupt each other.

### DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENORS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT?

My advice is to organize dialogue groups in different languages for maximum inclusivity, and also to choose hybrid and/or online formats to enable participants from various areas all around the globe to participate in the summit. Moreover, I think a certain focus in the area of food systems, or in the geographical area is very valuable to enable a more structured discussion and more concrete outcomes. For inspiration, I recommend looking at the titles of other dialogues too. I also encourage dialogue convenors to make a list of potential attendees in the beginning, and to invite them not just via email but also via telephone. The Convenor of this dialogue sent a lot of invitations per mail but she did not call back if she did not receive a reply or sign up. During these days, mailboxes are frequently full and therefore, it is advisable that you also use other means of communication. In general, not just marketing but also lobbying is key to guarantee maximum stakeholder inclusivity: Build relations with farmer associations, consumer associations, and SMEs and invite them to share the message of the dialogue well in advance.

# 3. METHOD

---

The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

**DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?**

Yes

No

In the beginning, the facilitator intended to create eight dialogue groups with different topics. Some of these groups would be in German and others in English. As the number of signups was a bit lower than expected, she decided to only create one German and one English group in the end, and both groups would discuss the same topics. This was deemed more suitable so participants also did not need to decide on which topics would be more interesting for them, but they could freely choose a group according to their language capabilities. At the event, it then turned out that the number of German participants was very low, and so the Curator spontaneously decided not to split the groups. All German participants also spoke English very well, and this made the decision easier.

# 4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

## MAJOR FOCUS

The focus of this dialogue was on the issue of food waste. This topic is mainly related to Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns and Action track 3: Boost nature-positive production. The geographical focus area was the DACH region, but participants beyond the three countries could participate and contribute with their own experiences as well. As especially topic 4 showed, food waste is not just an issue for consumers, even though in developed countries like DACH the largest amount of food waste is created by them. Supply chain inefficiencies, overproduction, marketing, and logistics all contribute to more food waste and therefore, consumption and production are closely intertwined and stakeholders at all levels of the food supply chain can contribute to active food waste reduction. This is why in the beginning, the Convenor encouraged the participants to consider all the steps of the supply chains and to think about avenues for improvement in terms of holistic sustainability: From social, ecologic, and economic perspectives.

### ACTION TRACKS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

### KEYWORDS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data & Evidence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Governance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Women & Youth Empowerment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Trade-offs
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

## MAIN FINDINGS

1. An adaptation of the legal framework is necessary to make food donations easier and riskless for businesses so they are not liable if they donate food and someone falls ill accidentally. On the other hand, people need the education to distinguish good, edible food from food that has gone bad without looking at a best before date, but by using their own senses. Usually, this starts in families already. Educational institutions, e.g. schools can contribute here. The adaptation of the legal framework should also include the legalization of dumpster diving.

2. It is not a single solution that can resolve the issue of food waste, but many different solutions and stakeholders. Businesses cannot only reduce food waste by taking it as their main business case and purpose, but also if they raise efficiency in general. (For example, if a restaurant decides to omit cherry tomatoes as a garnish as 60% of the consumers did not eat it.) Different business models reduce food waste at different levels of the supply chain. Successful businesses are existing on all these levels, and they do not just provide value for food waste reduction but also general value for their consumers – be it an upscale menu in a restaurant (from ugly vegetables, with innards) or bread sold at a discount. Zero Waste Austria already developed a manual with best practices for waste reduction in hotels, and this idea could also be further developed for food waste reduction. This helps every business to reduce food waste.

3. Plant-based diets have the potential to reduced food waste, directly and indirectly. If people stop eating animals, they also avoid wastage of one a perishable commodity, that needs to be transported chilled and thus uses a lot of energy. At least in Austria, meat accounts for ca. 11% of all food waste. Indirectly, if people decide to eat more plant-based they change their cooking habits. They become more aware of the ingredients they use and also may decide to use more local and seasonal ingredients. This is synergetic: Plantbased diets are healthier for people, reduce food waste and raise awareness for food. Therefore, we encourage the promotion of plant-based diets at every level and advocate for a phasing out of subsidies for meat, eggs, and dairy products as well as dairy campaigns. We also encourage farmer education that takes into account needs of future consumers, educating them about vegetable cultivation and cultivation of pulses, lentils, chickpeas etc.

4. The nose to tail trend contributes to food waste reduction. By changing the definition of what people regard as inedible food loss vs. food waste that they could have saved, we can feed more people with less food. In this area, cultural exchange is extremely valuable. A participant mentioned that in South East Asia for example, it is much more common to consume all parts of the animal, including the feet of chicken for example. Other participants mentioned that they started to use the green of carrots or the stem of broccoli for example. This is holistically sustainable, as it contributes to healthier nutrition with more fibers and vitamins, helps people to save money and also creates more business opportunities: If people in the DACH region get more accustomed to eating “more” parts of vegetables again, restaurants can design new, creative dishes and also startups find creative opportunities to market food that has been regarded as food loss in former times. Cooking classes, also in schools, can greatly support everyone in their journey to become a more reflective cook and not to regard a broccoli stem as “waste” because it has always been done that way in the past.

5. Smaller structures and shorter supply chains help to avoid food waste. Smaller stores have better possibilities to manage their food supply and create less food waste overall. Moreover, shorter supply chains lead to less waste creation. In that sense, it is not only important to watch out for regional but also for seasonal food. Food grown in the season is also tastier and provides people with additional health benefits. Zero Waste stores, farmers' markets and small organic stores, but also other alternative forms of purchasing food e.g. SOLAWI and growing own food in gardens are found to have beneficial effects for food waste reduction. Every consumer can do his/her part here: Informing themselves about local fruits and vegetables and establishing alternative purchasing habits.

=> A lot of the findings are synergetic and policies that reduce food waste are not just found to benefit the environment, but also people and companies. Food waste reduction strategies often need creativity, and there is no one actor that can fix our food systems so food waste is gone. We need each and every actor on every level of the supply chain to be involved. In this regard, it is not just important to organize dialogues like this, but also to get more people to participate. At the dialogue as well as at university events related to the food waste issue, the Convenor observed many engaged people, but frequently they remained in a bubble. Therefore, sound marketing is important not just to reach the target groups, but also consumers and producers that did not consciously think about the food waste issue before. For business leaders that want to reduce food waste, we recommend introducing changes in cooperation with all employees: Frequently, they know better where large amounts of food waste can be reduced only by changing small habits in the daily workflow.

### ACTION TRACKS

	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
✓	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
✓	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

### KEYWORDS

	Finance		Policy
✓	Innovation	✓	Data & Evidence
	Human rights	✓	Governance
	Women & Youth Empowerment		Trade-offs
		✓	Environment and Climate

## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/4

Entrepreneurial experiences – food waste as a business case

- exchange business model, it only works in bigger cities; connection between households and/or businesses.
  - Mostly just a marketing topic, but is not a real business practice
  - German initiative “foodsharing” where individuals can share their food surplus, also works via app
  - The Tafel cannot handle the German food waste alone in Germany, not even with 60.000 volunteers working daily for this german-wide daily.
  - Need policy to restrain food waste?
  - Group: consumers who need cheap food as they do not have enough financial resources to buy qualitative food
  - Cutting down food waste can be beneficial for every company from a financial point-of-view
  - Retailers can create campaigns together with the government in order to change the consumer behavior and way of thinking: just because the food does not look nice from the outside anymore, it does not mean that it does not taste good anymore.
  - NGOs alone cannot handle the surplus of food; we need more legislation: not only for big supermarkets, but also for smaller food markets! But it does not make sense to make food surplus as a mandatory donation if the NGOs do not have the capacity to handle all the donations. Hence, a law is not directly problem-solving.
  - Smaller businesses are not willing to donate their food, especially in Singapore. They rather need to find a core solution on how to reduce over-production.
  - Legalizing dumpster diving?
1. 2 different business models: 1) taking produce from other companies and selling it to consumers e.g. a startup that collects bread from bakeries and resells it at a discount the next day; from a business perspective, this is “downgrading” i.e. selling the food items at a lower price
- 2) using “ugly” or discarded food (e.g. vegetables that do not fit the standards set by supermarkets) and preparing food with them, e.g. new dishes in a restaurant, or chutneys, jam etc.; from a business perspective, this is “upgrading” i.e. selling the food items at a higher price.; Both business models are valuable for reducing food waste at different stations of the supply chain.
- Problem: How can we support smaller businesses that create food waste?
- The legal framework needs to be adapted accordingly

### ACTION TRACKS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

### KEYWORDS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data & Evidence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Governance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Women & Youth Empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade-offs
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/4

### Current food trends and food waste

- Different eating trends such as vegetarian, flexitarian, etc. influence the food consumption. People that live more plant-based contribute to reducing food waste directly and indirectly. Also by cooking for yourself, you become more conscious about how much you need, eat and throw away
- Issue: The government and businesses try to push people to overconsumption of dairy and meat (campaigns such as “drink xx l milk daily for your health” => agricultural policies
- In the EU there is a huge overproduction of meat. The overproduction is re-sold for dumping prices to Africa, making it for smaller businesses more difficult to compete on the market. At least, export subsidies have been phased out already. Still, the amount of subsidies for practices that neither benefit the environment nor the people is massive, and inhibits adjustments of the market.
- Cultural differences can influence the reduction of food waste; need a better cultural exchange on that topic
- Issue: People living in cities who do not experience agricultural life/work often are not aware of how much work a farmer put e.g. into grains of rice. They treat food differently and tend to leave more on their plate. However, it is also observed that in rural regions and suburbs, people frequently do not value qualitatively high produce and just go for a higher price. This is especially an issue in Germany.

### ACTION TRACKS

- Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
- Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
- Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

### KEYWORDS

- Finance
- Innovation
- Human rights
- Women & Youth Empowerment
- Policy
- Data & Evidence
- Governance
- Trade-offs
- Environment and Climate



## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/4

### Social perspectives on food waste

- Tradition: You should finish your dish; not everyone has this habit. It is common in the DACH region still, but especially young people that never experienced drastic events of food scarcity e.g. a war frequently leave more leftovers on their plates
- Problem: How to communicate with friends and family members about food waste
- Religion can help you treat food differently. e.g. Christian view: Throwing away bread is a sin.
- Many consumers are not well informed about the issue of food waste; education about that topic needs to be reinforced!
- Expiration date is a big matter: people throw food away, because the expiration date is over. They do not even double-check if the food is still good or not.
- Dumpster diving = containering = saving food (it's about how you define your action) If you communicate it differently and show people how good food "from the bins" tastes can change cultural perceptions.
- Better food campaigns could change our way of behaving and thinking

### ACTION TRACKS

- ✓ Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- ✓ Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
- ✓ Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
- Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

### KEYWORDS

- Finance
- Innovation
- Human rights
- Women & Youth Empowerment
- Policy
- Data & Evidence
- Governance
- Trade-offs
- Environment and Climate

## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/4

Role of consumers vs. supermarkets - who has the responsibility for the largest amount of food waste?

- How important is local and seasonal food for the consumers? It is important, local is advertised very much. Shorter supply chains lead to more efficiency, less food waste and less waste overall.
  - Not just food waste avoidance and environmental consciousness, but also healthy nutrition is an important aspect for the customers
  - Many consumers are socialized in that way that as soon as you perceive the food not being in good shape, you do not buy or eat it.; in some cultures we have too many choices. How can we handle this?
- Supermarkets have a vast range of products, also in the area of fruits and vegetables. A focus on local and seasonal produce adds quality and lowers quantity.
- Reducing food exports? On the other hand, people are living the export. This is a difficult topic to discuss also from an economical point of view.
  - Farmer's markets and refill stores enhance the reduction of food waste because you can buy the right amount of food. Usually, larger supermarkets do not offer this personalized packaging option.
- Hence, smaller business structures are needed to help fighting food waste; it also easier for a better management overall. A small organic supermarket was observed to offer less fresh fruits and vegetables, but also to have less food waste overall.

### ACTION TRACKS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

### KEYWORDS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data & Evidence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	Governance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Women & Youth Empowerment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Trade-offs
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

## AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

1. The role of the government: In general, the food waste reduction law introduced in France has been hailed as a major success by many food waste activists. However, participants in the dialogue also pointed out that this did not lead to systematic change. Only supermarkets/hypermarkets of a certain size are obliged to donate food that would otherwise go to waste. The offer remains the same, and voluntary workers from social organizations like "Die Tafel" then need to collect the food. But the workload has become higher and higher, and volunteers cannot even collect and distribute the food to needy people in a reasonable time! Thus, the law makes it a bit too easy for supermarkets. A suggestion for a solution: The law should maybe also oblige supermarkets to leave "food waste" that they cannot donate outside so people can come and get it. This would ease the pressure from benevolent NGOs and also encourage supermarkets to waste less – as otherwise, people would just take their food for free.
2. Some people argued that the impact of "using more", e.g. a broccoli stem in the own kitchen, does not markedly contribute to food waste reduction. This is the debate of small changes at a consumer level vs. larger changes in the legal framework and on the producer level (bottom-up vs. top-down). In the end, changes in the mindset and actions of both levels are important, as all actors bear a certain responsibility for their food and their handling of food waste.
3. Some participants argued that people living in cities value food less as they are not densely connected to food production. People from rural regions would value food more. This however rather holds true for people working in the agricultural sector. In city regions, people are frequently more educated and aware about the food waste issue. Also, people in rural or poorer regions are frequently not ready to pay more in order to support shorter supply chains. Instead of saving on food quantity, they might just save on food quality in their own household, rather than consuming cheap food that went through a long supply chain, including convenience products. As they can be stored longer, this might even lead to less food waste. The influence of individual living habits and shopping preferences, as well as general life situations on food waste, might need more studies and reports.
4. Participants also advocated for more educational campaigns on the food waste issue. We arrive at the gap between knowing and doing here. There is already a lot of information out there, even on social media, food waste reduction tips are readily available. But how can we efficiently convince people that knowing is not enough? This is an issue that we may need to explore in more detail.
5. Do we need a lower choice of food in order to support food waste reduction? It was not an easy question. Some people argue that supermarkets just offer too much and that a reduction of the offer would be needed. But how should we realize that in a free society? A potential solution here could be that we internalize negative external effects, e.g. that mangos imported by airfreight need to pay more CO2 compensation, thus, fewer people will buy it and fewer mangos will be offered. However, this theory also presupposes that people only care about prices and are not able to see the giant environmental (and food waste) footprint of a perfect-looking, chilled airfreight mango. We could agree that we should all go out and communicate about food waste positively in our communities, and also show with our own actions how we reduce food waste (e.g. order a dish without French fries if we know that we do not eat them).

### ACTION TRACKS

	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
✓	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
✓	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

### KEYWORDS

	Finance	✓	Policy
✓	Innovation	✓	Data & Evidence
	Human rights	✓	Governance
	Women & Youth Empowerment	✓	Trade-offs
		✓	Environment and Climate

# ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

---

## ATTACHMENTS

- <https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Powerpoint-FW-Summit.pdf>

## RELEVANT LINKS

- **Blog on zero food waste and conscious consumption**  
<https://wastesend.com/>
- **Zero Waste Austria**  
<https://www.zerowasteaustria.at/>