South Africa’s Food Loss and Waste Voluntary Agreement: Implementation plan
This implementation plan provides the foundation for the delivery of South Africa’s food loss and waste agreement. It has been developed in consultation with over 400 stakeholders from government, industry, academia and civil society.

The South African food loss and waste agreement is co-led by the Consumer Goods Council of South African (CGCSA), the National Department of Trade, Industry & Competition (DTIC) and the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF).

The initiative has been co-funded by the European Union.

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Agreement ambition = for South Africa’s food sector, supporters and consumers to reduce food loss and waste by 50% by 2030 [UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.3].

In October 2018, with financial support from the SA-EU Dialogue Facility, the Consumer Goods Council of South Africa (CGCSA) and the Department of Trade, Industry & Competition (DTIC) initiated the development of a food loss and waste agreement and roadmap for South Africa.

To date a gap analysis on the status of food loss and waste in South Africa has been compiled. This informed a practical set of recommendations and workplan to guide a roadmap towards the launch and implementation of a food loss and waste agreement.

In April 2019, dialogues were held with over 100 government, retail, food manufacturer and civil society representatives to garner feedback on the findings to date and propose solutions. The outcomes from this workshop, in conjunction with the reports developed under the SA-EU Dialogue Facility have informed this business plan. Most notably, an alignment with the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) Operation Phakisa Chemicals & Waste food loss and waste targets and activities.

July 2019 saw three dialogues held, the first in Johannesburg with the CGCSA’s retail technical committee to discuss the governance and funding of the agreement. This was followed by two stakeholder workshops (Pretoria and Cape Town), which focused on providing an update on progress and to gather feedback on the proposed business plan.

With extension funding secured from SA-EU Dialogue Dec 2019-Mar 2020, a final version of the business plan will be presented, information for signatory sign up developed and proposal for Government funding, and World Resources Institute Food Loss & Waste protocol workshops held [Retail, Nov 2019; Pretoria and Cape Town, Mar 2020].

The food loss and waste agreement will cover a variety of activities associated with food production, manufacture, retail, consumption and waste management. It will move beyond a solely food redistribution focus and will require new thinking about sustainable food supply and overall resource efficiency.
Vision

To collectively commit to:

1. Reducing food loss and waste in South Africa by 50% by 2030.

2. Adopting the food utilisation hierarchy, which prioritises improved food utilisation and food loss and waste reduction in the first instance, and secondly the redistribution of edible, nutritious surplus food for human consumption, and to enable secondary markets for surplus food.

3. Identifying food surplus and waste management solutions that respond to a circular economy and sustainable food systems agenda.

Purpose

To respond to the current food loss and waste and food security dilemma in South Africa:

1. South Africa generates an estimated 12.6 million tonnes of food loss and waste per annum (a third of the food available).

2. 30% of South Africa’s households are at risk of hunger, while 31% experience hunger (approximately 7.4 million people) with 13 million children living in poverty.

3. Every tonne of edible surplus food could make an estimated 4,000 meals.

4. Waste food equals wasted water and energy, increased methane emissions and impact on biodiversity.

Sources:
1. De Lange & Nahman 2015: 10.2mt edible and 2.4mt non-edible
2. South African National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey
4. Statistics South Africa 2015
5. FoodForward SA 2019
**Core Signatory**

**To collectively commit to:**

1. To identify food loss and waste arisings in our operations and underlying causes
2. To develop a strategy or plan to reduce food loss and waste in our operations
3. To partner with a charity to redistribute edible surplus food to those in need
4. To use non-edible food waste to generate energy, compost etc.
5. To ensure that food safety is maintained at every level

**Associate Signatory**

**To collectively commit to:**

1. To identify how we can work with our partners / clients to reduce food waste in areas of research/legislation
2. To work with retailers or brands to identify and minimise food waste
3. To provide services to redistribute surplus food
4. To transform non-edible food to generate energy, compost or through other

**Call for Initiative Financial Support:**

1. Campaign
2. Reporting Platform (ITC)
3. Knowledge Hub development & maintenance (Information)
4. Researchers (Value Chains/Facilities Hot Spots Analysis)
What are the advantages of an agreement approach compared with regulation and legal alternatives?

• A major advantage of using a food loss and waste agreement (FLWA) approach is that change can be faster and more flexible to implement compared with ‘command and control’ interventions. The drafting of specific regulations can take years and once implemented may not reflect changed circumstances nor produce the intended outcomes.

• VA’s can be better designed than legislation, since they are normally produced by those with an in-depth knowledge of the sector in question and can also deal with more holistic issues, such as collaborative working along food supply chains, that cannot be easily formulated through more prescriptive measures.

• The co-design aspect of VA’s, through dialogues and working groups, has the potential to encourage continuous improvement, innovation and a sense of ownership of a collaborative project. A narrower regulatory approach linked to achieving a particular target may restrict further improvements and result in a less efficient solution. This allows parties to the agreement greater choice over how to achieve the overall objective.

• The main danger with a VA occurs when the governance is not tightly enough defined and signatories are not bound by a common set of objectives, an agreed level of engagement and collective reporting requirements. The most successful VA’s have tightly defined governance, working practices and signatories have a clear idea of their role and purpose through a common set of objectives, an agreed level of engagement and collective reporting requirements.

• The use of VAs to address food loss and waste is now widespread, including initiatives being implemented or under development in Australia, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Mexico, Norway, The Netherlands, Spain and the UK.

What is an agreement?

The OECD definition is: “a collaboratively agreed, self-determined ‘pact’ to take action, on [food loss and waste generated at the relevant stages of the food system].” (source: OECD, Voluntary Approaches for Environmental Policy, An Assessment, OECD 11 Jan 2000, ISBN 978926418026)

An agreement may sometimes be referred to as a charter, declaration, roadmap, pact or a framework for action. These are all terms for the same concept that involves delivery of desired change through collaborative working.
Accurate estimates of food loss and waste by sector are not currently available for South Africa. The provisional trajectory that would be required to meet the SDG 12.3 target is based on indicative data (see Appendix B) with 2022 is set as the baseline year (estimated at 11.7 Mt, although with significant uncertainty). Estimates for each sector will be modified once better data become available and food service/hospitality sector has not yet been included (see section 14).

The scale of reductions required to meet the 2030 target would equate to an approximate annual reduction of **5.8 million tonnes/year** compared with the 2022 baseline.

From experience with established food loss and waste reduction programmes in Europe, some guiding principles have been used to inform this trajectory:

a) It is easier to achieve greater food loss and waste reductions in the earlier stages of a VA, whereas during the later stages the easier opportunities have already been exhausted. The purpose of the ‘hotspot’ analysis (see section 16) is to prioritise the low-hanging fruit to deliver maximum diversion during the implementation period.

b) Sustained funding at an appropriate level and a fully functioning governance structure (see section 9) must be in place to enable the VA to follow such a challenging trajectory, taking full account of the WRI’s 10 scaling interventions.
Data sources used to inform the trajectory for the scale of national food loss and waste reduction include those listed in the gap analysis report (e.g. Nahman and De Lange 2013) and South Africa – State of Waste Report (SoWR 2018). The trajectory includes a higher consumer food loss and waste estimate than found in published sources (equivalent to 34 kg per capita). This was based on the assumption that South Africa is atypical of Sub-Saharan African countries, for which consumer food loss and waste has been estimated by UN FAO to be of the order of 10kg per capita/year (Guustavsson et al., 2011). Arisings are likely to be lower than in Europe and North America (95-115 kg per capita/year), so an interim value of 34 kg per capita was chosen in the absence of more robust evidence, based on estimates from countries with similar GDP per capita as South Africa. This is supported by the food loss and waste estimate contained in the SoWR 2018 for total municipal waste (which is likely to contain a mix of waste from both household and non-household sources). Some sectors that are significant sources of food loss and waste, such as the hospitality and food service sector, are missing from the estimates.

The trajectory illustrates the scale of reductions required for South Africa to meet SDG 12.3 by 2030, and has projected different rates of food loss and waste reduction across the sectors, with lower rates of reduction in early and late stages of the delivery decade. This is consistent with the performance profile of established food loss and waste VAs elsewhere.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Baseline (million tonnes)</th>
<th>2023 (million tonnes)</th>
<th>2020 to 2023 % reduction per year</th>
<th>2026 (million tonnes)</th>
<th>2023 to 2026 % reduction per year</th>
<th>2029 (million tonnes)</th>
<th>2026 to 2029 % reduction per year</th>
<th>2030 (million tonnes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer food loss and waste</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution/ retail</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing/ packing</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling / storage</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11.70</td>
<td>9.61</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>7.51</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>5.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Commitment: Food utilisation hierarchy

Prevention/Source Reduction
Reduce the volume of the surplus food generated

Feed Hungry People
Donate extra food to food banks, soup kitchens, and shelters

Feed Animals
Divert food scraps to animal feed

Industrial Uses
Provide waste oils for rendering and fuel conversion and food scraps for digestion to recover energy

Composting
Create a nutrient-rich soil amendment

Landfill/Incineration/Sewer
Last resort to disposal

Source: Adapted from US EPA
The overarching timeline is based on the outcomes of the April and July 2019 dialogues, with preliminary thinking focused on the mantra ‘Target, Measure, Report, Act’.

While the main agreement target is to reduce food loss and waste by 50% by 2030, a 3-year business plan period which contains specific targets and activities over this period is deemed most effective and feasible. The general split of activities are presented below:

### Year 1: 2019/2020

- Signatories to measure their food loss and waste / surplus and identify ‘hot spots’ to develop a baseline for 2022
- Signatories to be supported with methodology and training on how to measure and report
- Address gaps in VA recruitment to improve VA’s overall coverage
- Address uncertainties in consumer food loss and waste and plug gap in hospitality and food service estimates
- Support delivery of Project Phakisa
- Identify and connect with other key stakeholders e.g. farmers

### Years 2-3: 2021-2022

- Signatories to work towards achieving agreed percentage reduction in food loss and waste / surplus
- Signatories to set annual targets based on evidence gathered
- Continuous review of data quality from signatory annual reporting
- Working groups are set up with a task-implementation focus
- 2022 signatory baseline synchronises with South Africa’s national food loss and waste baseline

### Years 4-11: 2023-2030

- Review of progress at 2026 mid-point, possible adjustments to delivery elements and challenge fund priorities, depending on collective progress in relation to VA target.
- Major conference to coincide with mid-point review – refresh buy-in from signatories and promote wider adoption of best practice.
- Signatories re-assess their commitments and potential for further reductions in run-up to 2030
What is a baseline and why is it needed?

In order to monitor progress towards the SDG 12.3 target it is necessary to set a formal baseline.

The baseline quantifies national food loss and waste arisings over a specified calendar year, expressed as a weight, ideally for all sources of food loss and waste in South Africa using data and to a high degree of accuracy.

However, it may not be practicable to include all key sectors generating food loss and waste as it is difficult to obtain estimates for all within a single calendar year. For some of the gaps it may be necessary to use proxy estimates in place of direct measurement. However, it is better to use existing data to set a baseline rather than delay programme implementation. There are many instances of food loss and waste baselines being set using initial estimates that have been later modified when better data become available.

What is the Food Loss & Waste (FLW) Protocol?

A multi-stakeholder effort that has developed the global accounting and reporting standard (known as the FLW Standard) for quantifying food and associated inedible parts removed from the food supply chain. The FLW Standard enables a wide range of entities – countries, companies and other organisations – to account for and report in a credible, practical and internationally consistent manner how much food loss and waste is created and to identify where it occurs, enabling the targeting efforts to reduce it.

Further information on the FLW Protocol can be found here.

AIM:

To establish a 2022 food loss and waste baseline for South Africa against which progress towards SDG 12.3 can be monitored

To establish a 2022 baseline for signatories to the agreement, in order to monitor progress

KEY ACTIVITIES:

1. Develop draft monitoring and reporting methodology in conjunction with Stats South Africa and CSIR, taking account UN SDG12.3 indicators and relevant metadata.

2. Run a dialogue/workshop to cover agreed data collection methodologies, assumptions and analysis of current situation; present baseline options and reach agreement.

3. Taking outputs from workshop, produce agreed baseline for 2022, following World Resources Institute FLW Accounting and Reporting Standard and taking account of the FUSIONS food loss and waste Quantification Manual.

4. Agree frequency of rolling programme of measurement and progress reports: with 2023 and 2026 suggested as key milestones prior to final report in 2029/30.

5. An additional two WRI reporting workshops to be held in March 2020
There is now a considerable international track-record in running agreements to reduce food loss and waste. The most well developed relate to VAs run in different Member States of the EU. There are also cases from Australia, Argentina, Indonesia, Norway, Mexico and United States. Critical success factors identified by international experience relevant to VA development in South Africa include:

1. The need for firm VA targets: it is very important that a VA has a collective target owned by its signatories, otherwise there is a danger that a VA will be just another ‘talking shop’, rather than an agency that drives lasting change.

2. Dedicated staff within an independent delivery body: a VA requires dedicated staff within a strong lead organization that is trusted as an independent body. The staffing is a key to determining the success of a VA’s working groups and dialogues, particularly as these require inputs from signatories and other involved parties.

3. Although not run by government, a VA needs a main sponsor within government. As working on food loss and waste crosses different government domains, there also needs to be strong cross departmental links coordinated by the main government sponsoring department.

4. Secure and long-term funding: as working on food loss and waste is a battle on many fronts, the success of a VA depends on having a level of funding that matches the ambition set by the SDG 12.3 goal (see next slide on trajectory). At a minimum, a 3-year tranche of money is sufficient to get a VA underway.

5. Local knowledge and expertise is required to make a VA successful: the design of a VA has to match priorities within the country and work with existing institutions. The VA must be designed by South Africans for South Africa, using local in-country expertise, whilst also building on experience from elsewhere and adapting best practice to the specific circumstances of South Africa.

6. Whole chain approaches: as food is wasted at all supply chain stages, a VA needs to engage all stakeholders from farm to fork through joint actions between food businesses, NGOs, government and consumers. An effective VA provides a pre-competitive space where peers and competitors can come together to share solutions and have an open discussion about collective challenges posed by food loss and waste, which require joined-up approaches to solve.
Task-focused working groups presented in order of establishment priority – based on stakeholder consultation during July 2019 stakeholder dialogues.

Top priority

1. Reporting, evaluation & evaluation
2. Policy, standards & legislation
3. Formal food retail & manufacturing / processing (incl. food service)
4. Circular economy / Organics waste management
5. Food surplus, nutrition & redistribution
6. Informal food sector*
7. Agriculture, export market & whole chain
8. Public sector, hospitality, & tourism (incl. consumers)

Second priority

* The informal food sector includes, for example, subsistence small-holder farmers / small-holder farmers not supplying the formal retail or food chain, spaza shops, hawkers and unregulated vendors.
SIGNATORY SIGN-UP

CORE SIGNATORIES
Visit our Website for more details


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