



Food Loss in Austria

Policies

As part of the FOLOU project, a policy analysis was done, identifying what is already established in terms of objectives, targets and financial aid for food loss, as well as the current gaps in the regulatory and policy overview.

Table 1: Highlights and gaps in the national/regional policy framework of Austria

Highlights	- High commitment to strengthen primary producers' roles in the food value chain - Apparent good involvement and cooperation of stakeholders in the development of action programs and decision-making processes
Gaps	- No definition of "food loss" (no distinction between food loss and food waste) although it is being addressed in the documents - Overabundance of (partly very similar) action programmes and strategies - Lack of legally binding targets and of consequences for non-compliance

Table 2: Policy analysis in Austria

1. Territory	Austria		
2. Level	Country		
3. Is a specific law / regulation for food loss in place?			
☐ Laws and regulations on food loss		☐ Under development	
☒ Other laws / regulations containing provisions on food loss		☐ Under development	
Federal law on sustainable waste management (Abfallwirtschaftsgesetz)			
☒ Soft law policies on food loss		☐ Under development	
Federal Waste Management Plan (Bundesabfallwirtschaftsplan) 2023			
Food waste reduction strategy (Strategie zur Vermeidung von Lebensmittelabfällen) 2021			
4. Governance			
Law formulation and adoption	Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology		
Law implementation and enforcement	Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology		
Monitoring of compliance	Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (directly and through notified bodies like AGES) European Commission		
5. Definitions (tick if available)			
☐ Food loss		☐ Under development	
☒ Food waste		☐ Under development	
☐ Food loss and food waste jointly		☐ Under development	
6. Objectives, targets and obligations for food loss <u>prevention and reduction</u> in laws / regulations and governmental soft law policies			
☐ Quantitative objectives			
	Ambition		
	Timeline	☐ Under development	
☒ Qualitative objectives			
AWG 2002 FWRS 2021 BAWP 2023	Ambition	Reduce food losses along production and supply chains (SDG12.3) ¹	
	Timeline	2030	☐ Under development
FWRS 2021	Ambition	Need-based, sustainable food production	
	Timeline	None	☐ Under development



BAWP 2023	Ambition	Encourage food donation and other redistribution for human consumption, prioritising human use over animal feed and the reprocessing into non-food products		
	Timeline	None		☐ Under development
Reporting and verification		Yes	No	Under development
Are reporting obligations on the progress towards reaching the objectives in place?		☒	☐	☐
Have indicators to evaluate progress towards reaching the objectives been specified?		☒	☐	☐
7. Measures and actions on food loss prevention and reduction in governmental policies				
Type of measures		Yes	No	Under development
Measuring and reporting obligations		☐	☒	☐
Obligations to create food loss prevention and reduction plans				
By companies (PP businesses, food processing companies, etc.)		☐	☒	☐
By public actors (municipalities, provinces, regions, etc.)		☐	☒	☐
Fiscal incentives for food loss prevention and reduction		☐	☒	☐
Grants for food loss prevention and reduction		☒	☐	☐
Grants for improved food loss measuring (precision farming, earth observation, digitalisation, etc.)		☒	☐	☐
Non-financial incentives for food loss prevention and reduction		☐	☐	☒
8. Steps in the value chain targeted by objectives and measures for food loss prevention and reduction				
☒ Primary production, pre-harvest				
☒ Primary production, post-harvest (including on-farm storage)				
☒ Food processing				
☒ Wholesale and retail				
☒ Household consumption				
Are any of the following primary production sectors targeted by specific objectives/measures for food loss prevention and reduction?				
☐ Grains and pulses		☐ Fruit and vegetables		☐ Roots and tubers
☐ Meat and dairy		☐ Fish		☒ No objectives/measures by specific commodities, but for all of them in general.
9. Measurement and reporting of food loss in legislation and governmental soft law policies				
☐ Measurement and reporting system for food loss in place				☐ Under development
☐ With specified quantification methods		☐ Without specified quantification methods		
☐ Measuring food loss in primary production, pre-harvest		☐ Measuring food loss in primary production, post-harvest (including on-farm storage)		
☒ No measurement and reporting system for food loss				
Are there any specific measurement/reporting obligations or quantification methods for any of the following primary production sectors?				
☐ Grains and pulses		☐ Fruit and vegetables		☐ Roots and tubers
☐ Meat and dairy		☐ Fish		☐ No objectives/measures by specific commodities, but for all of them in general.
10. Budget for food loss prevention and reduction				
☐ Dedicated budget for food loss prevention and reduction defined				☐ Under development
☐ No dedicated budget for food loss prevention and reduction				
☒ Do not know				
Comments		1) These are food losses in the meaning of the FAO, but may encompass FOLOU FL (e.g. harvested food that is composted on-site as it cannot be sold)		

Table 3: Public objectives related to food loss



Overall objective / target	Source
The AWG 2002 largely follows the EU Waste Framework Directive (WFD)¹ with an obligation to draw up a programme on reduction of food waste (RPFW) every six years (see “Obligations” below) and the following goals with regards to food loss and waste: - Reducing wastage of food in primary production, processing and manufacture, retail and other forms of sale, restaurants and catering services and private households to contribute to SDG 12.3. (AWG 2002, §9(10)) - Promoting donation and other forms of redistribution of food for human consumption, so that it is prioritised over use as feed and processing to non-food products Several programmes tackling food waste co-exist alongside each other: - The RPFW as demanded by the WFD (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (3)). - The Action Programme “Lebensmittel sind kostbar!” (“Food is precious!”; BAWP 2023, Part 3(8)) developed in cooperation with Austrian retailers, producers and caritative organisations as foreseen in the GP 2020 (p.99f). - The FWRS 2021 focussing on the structure and porcesses of cooperation to increase efficiency and transperency of activities by different actors. These partly overlapping programmes mainly re-emphasises and detail the goals of the AWG 2002 (see “Sub-objectives/targets” below) For instance, the FWRS 2021 sets out the following vision (p.7): - Provision of healthy, nutritious food for the whole Austrian population - Need-based, sustainable food production - Raised awareness of the value of high quality, sustainably produced food, to be reflected in food pricing and in redistributing and processing of edible food instead of throwing it away - Closed data gaps on food waste generation along the value chain Food waste should be minimised along the whole value chain in order to conserve natural resources and save CO₂ (p.23). Although the definition of food waste in Austrian legislation is equivalent to the one on EU level (see Table 4), i.e., excludes food losses in the meaning of the FOLU project, several of the provisions and measures in the programme have impacts on food loss, as described below.	AWG 2002 GP 2020 FWRS 2021 BAWP 2023
Obligations	
As prescribed by the WFD, AWG 2002 (§9a) obliges the Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology to develop a waste reduction programme, including a special programme on reduction of food waste every six years. This is realised in the BAWP, the latest update stemming from 2023.	Actors – compliance
	Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology
	Actors – enforcement
Means of verification	
An evaluation of the RPWF and the Action Plan will take place in 2026. The Action Plan will also undergo an intermediate evaluation in 2024 (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (3; 8.8), FWRS 2021 (p.26)). Evaluation of the previous Waste Reduction Programme 2017 revealed that of 26 measures in the action field “food waste reduction” 14 have been achieved, 10 mostly achieved and two partly achieved. All but three measures (which have already been achieved) are recommended for continuation. However, merely the implementation of the measures has been assessed, not their	European Commission
	Actors
	Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology



contribution towards a specific target. This may change in the future, as the FWRS 2021 (p.26) contains a provision to determine the achievement of objectives in 2030.	
Sub-objective / target	
Description	Source
<u>Need-based food production:</u> Notably, the BAWP stresses that measures to prevent food waste must ultimately lead to a reduction of food production (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (3.3.2)). One aim of the Action Plan is therefore to shift to a need-based food production (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (8.5.1). To achieve this, data availability in primary production should be improved to better depict dependencies on external influences like weather conditions and their impacts on fluctuations in annual production. Furthermore, the topic should be anchored in the training of relevant educational institutions (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (8.5.1). As need-based food production can only be realised under conditions of a need-based food demand, several aims set for other sectors along the value chain can be seen as associated to this objective: - Examining the causes for the systematic oversupply and to optimise processes with regard to ordering procedures and logistics in the retail sector (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (8.5.3)) - Shading light on the role of unfair trading practices (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (8.5.1)) - Overcoming behavioural barriers towards a needs-oriented food consumption (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (3.3.1; 8.5.5)) - Changing consumer expectations regarding the permanent availability of the full product ranges (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (3.3.2)) - Reduction of returned products (FWRS 2021, p.25)	BAWP 2023 FWRS 2021
Timeline to reach sub-objective / target	Adapting concept of retour products: 2023 Studies in the retail sector: 2023 Studies in the hospitality sector: 2024 Pilot projects: 2024 Other measures: ongoing²
Obligations	
None specific to this sub-objective	Actors – compliance
	Actors – enforcement
Measures	
Improving knowledge, through: - Conducting studies on the reduction potential of food waste and food loss in agriculture (including harvest and post-harvest losses, B-products and intervention cereals) (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (8.6)) - Supporting research and pilot projects on - o Food waste reducing production methods (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (8.6)) - o The role of quality labels on food waste (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (8.6)) For that purpose, existing funding schemes should be continued (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (3.3.4))	Actors – provision
	Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management; Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology; Ministry for Labour and Economy
Training programmes for employees on farms and integration of the topic in sector-specific training, especially in agricultural schools (BAWP 2023, Part 3(8.6)) – it is not clear though whether this is only targeted to food waste reduction or also includes food losses	Actors – use
	Academia
	Actors – provision
	Ministry for Education, Science and Research; Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management



	Actors – use Primary producers, companies, Austrian Agricultural Chamber
Strengthening alternative, regional marketing opportunities for agricultural products such as direct marketing and processing by farmers and/or within the framework of inter-farm cooperations, especially of B-products (BAWP 2023, Part 3, (8.6))	Actors – provision Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management; Federal States; Municipalities; Austrian Agricultural Chamber Actors – use Primary producers, companies, inter-farm cooperations
Promoting post-harvesting on agricultural lands, e.g. through technological innovation (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (8.6))	Actors – provision Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management; Federal States; Municipalities; Austrian Agricultural Chamber; Academia Actors – use Primary producers
Promoting buying of class B products in public procurement, especially when food is going to be processed (BAWP 2023, Part 3, (8.6))	Actors – provision State, Federal States, Municipalities Actors – use State, Federal States, Municipalities
Continuing voluntary agreements like the cooperation “Vereinbarung 2017-2030 zur Vermeidung von Lebensmittelabfällen bei Lebensmittelunternehmen“ (see Section 7) in the retail sector and extending them to the food processing sector (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (3.3.4, 8.6))	Actors – provision Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology; Ministry for Labour and Economy; Austrian Economic Chamber; Food processing industry; Retailers Actors – use Food processing industry; Retailers
Means of verification	Actors
None specific to this sub-objective	
Other aspects	Actors
None	
Sub-objective / target	
Description	Source
<u>Promoting food redistribution</u> The promotion of food redistribution has been pursued for several years. For instance, the “Verband österreichischer Tafeln” ³ , a platform for joint planning of social institutions has been realised in 2016. Guidelines for food redistribution to social institutions are available and activities to establish food redistribution organisations at regional level, support social institutions in the expansion of storage and cooling infrastructure and staff trainings are ongoing (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (5.1.4)). The focus of the current food waste prevention programme is therefore on the coordination of supply and demand and the extension of infrastructure for buffering between the two	BAWP 2023 FWRS 2021



(BAWP 2023, Part 3 (3.3.1)). The FWRS 2021 remains more generic with an objective to further develop the cooperation with social institutions (p.25).	
Timeline to reach sub-objective / target	Ongoing ²
Obligations	
None specific to this sub-objective	Actors – compliance
	Actors – enforcement
Measures	
Promotion of redistribution of harvest surplus from agriculture to households and social and caritative institutions (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (8.6))	Actors – provision Federal States; Municipalities, NGOs/civil society/associations
	Actors – use Primary producers; NGOs/civil society/associations
Promotion of redistribution of harvest surplus from private gardens (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (8.6))	Actors – provision Municipalities, NGOs/civil society/associations
	Actors – use Private households; NGOs/civil society/associations
Support social organisations in expanding their storage and cooling infrastructure (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (8.6)) While this is mentioned as a measure in the retail sector, improved storage and cooling infrastructure could also enable increased food donation by primary producers	Actors – provision Federal States; Retailers
	Actors – use NGOs/civil society/associations
Means of verification	Actors
None specific to this sub-objective	
Other aspects	Actors
None	
Sub-objective / target	
Description	Source
<u>Horizontal objectives</u> Both the RPFW (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (3.3.1)) and the Action Plan (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (8.5.5; 8.5.6)) stress the importance of raising awareness about impacts on food wastage, increasing competences to avoid it and fostering stakeholder cooperation. The latter is also part of the objectives of the FWRS 2021 (p.23). It is unclear though, to what extent this objective also covers food losses. In addition, the FWRS 2021 also aims at identifying and eliminating barriers for food waste prevention (p.23). For that purpose, existing regulations and funding schemes should be evaluated (GP 2020 (p.100), FWRS 2021 (p.25). However, neither the RPFW nor the Action Plan contain measures related to this objective. Both the GP 2020 (p.100) and the FWRS 2021 (p.23) see a need for improving the data basis on food waste along the whole value chain and to increase transparency. The FWRS 2021 points out that attention must be paid to necessity and proportionality in additional data collection. Again, it is unclear, whether food losses are considered here.	BAWP 2023 FWRS 2021 GP 2020
Timeline to reach sub-objective / target	Viktualia award call: 2024 Other measures: ongoing ²
Obligations	
None specific to this sub-objective	Actors – compliance
	Actors – enforcement



Measures	
As foreseen in the GP 2020 (p.100) and the FWRS 2021, a national coordination point for the avoidance of food waste was established in September 2021 as a collaboration platform between ministries. It should meet twice a year as a rule and steer the development and implementation process of the FWRS 2021 by identifying topics and initiating working groups on them. These discuss and develop solutions in relation to their topic and involve representatives of science, economy, social partnership, the Association of Towns and Municipalities, federal ministries, NGOs, associations and social institutions (FWRS 2021 (p.24)). The first two working groups on the topic of liability concerning food redistribution and on education and awareness raising have been established in 2022. (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (8.7)). In addition, the national coordination point organises a yearly stakeholder dialogue to promote networking between the different actors and discuss the solutions developed in the working groups (FWRS 2021 (p.24), BAWP 2023, Part 3 (3.3.4)).	Actors – provision
	Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology
Continuation of the Viktualia Award, a prize for responsible and conscious food handling (BAWP 2023, Part 3 (8.6)) The prize has been awarded between 2013 and 2019 in different categories, including primary production. Another call for entries is planned for 2024.	Actors – use
	Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology; Ministry for Labour and Economy; Ministry for Education, Science and Research; Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management; Ministry for Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection; all value chain actors
Means of verification None specific to this sub-objective	Actors – provision
	Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology
Other aspects None	Actors – use
	Primary producers; Food processing industry; Retailers; Hospitality; Civil society
Comments	
In addition to national regulations, each of the nine provinces has its own law and action plan on waste management. However, only the waste management laws of Carinthia⁴ and Upper Austria⁵ make specific reference to food loss and waste: In Carinthia, the waste management plan has to include measures on food waste reduction (§4(2j)) and the province and funds established under provincial must provide particular support and funding for measures on the reduction of food wastage and its redistribution (§6(1)). In Upper Austria, a food waste prevention programme can be developed on a voluntary basis (§19a). Among the waste management plans of the provinces, the Viennese one⁶ is of particular interest, as it is accompanied by a detailed assessment of the appropriateness (waste prevention potential, costs, implementability, contribution to sustainable development) and suggestions for monitoring indicators for each measure. Two measures with particular relevance for food loss have been evaluated: conducting a pilot project on post harvesting in agriculture and establishing a platform for exchanging class B products among producers and the hospitality sector. The later was rejected, mainly due to its low waste reduction potential and challenges regarding implementation. 1) Directive 2008/98/EC https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02008L0098-20180705 2) Timeframe for the implementation of measures rather than for achieving the target 3) https://dietafeln.at/ 4) Kärntner Abfallwirtschaftsordnung 2004 https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=LrK&Gesetzesnummer=20000168 5) Oö. Abfallwirtschaftsgesetz 2009 https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=LrOO&Gesetzesnummer=20000574 6) Wiener Abfallwirtschaftsplan und Wiener Abfallvermeidungsprogramm 2019-2024 https://www.wien.gv.at/umwelt/ma48/service/publikationen/index.html#plaene	



Table 4: Budget and financing of activities on food loss in Austria

Budget allocated to the implementation of the law / regulation			
Amount	Timing	Provided by	Purpose / description
Max. EUR 16.000	Bi-annually since 2007	Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology; Ministry for Education, Science and Research	Sustainability Award (see below)
Not specified	2021 one-time	Austria Wirtschaftsservice GmbH on behalf of the Ministry for Labour and Economy	Competition “Teller statt Tonne” (see below)
Financial incentives			
Type of incentive		Competition / Award	
Purpose / description		Sustainability Award ¹ : Recognizes projects at universities promoting the transformation to a sustainable society in line with the UN Sustainable development goals. As of 2024, the award is granted in four categories: learning, research, university governance and cooperation. Among the laureates since 2014 were four projects related to food loss and waste prevention and reduction.	
Beneficiaries		Academia	
Eligibility criteria		University members, regardless of their function (e.g. students, academic staff, administrative staff, etc.)	
Amount - total		Max. 16.000 EUR (total amount in 2024 – fraction attributed to projects with food loss relation unknown)	
Timing - total		Bi-annually	
Amount per beneficiary		In each category: EUR 3000 (Gold) and EUR 1000 (Silver)	
Timing - beneficiary		One-time	
Financial incentives			
Type of incentive		Competition / Award	
Purpose / description		“Teller statt Tonne” ² : Award for concept and enterprises engaging in the avoidance and reduction of food loss and waste	
Beneficiaries		Companies and associations all along the value chain	
Eligibility criteria		Category 1: Natural and legal persons/associations with an idea for food loss and waste reduction with economic potential that has not yet been introduced to the market Category 2: Start-ups and SMEs whose business concept is building on food loss and waste reduction	
Amount - total		Not specified – up to now, none of the winning projects was related to food loss	
Timing - total		One-time	
Amount per beneficiary		In each category: 1 st prize: EUR 10.000, 2 nd and 3 rd prize: vouchers for consultancy services (value not specified)	
Timing - beneficiary		One-time	
Comments			
FWRS 2021 (p.15) and BAWP 2023 (Part 3, 8.6) mention a funding programme (“Impact”) of the Ministry for Labour and Economy with an annual volume of 6.9 million euro that should have started in 2022. However, this seems not to have been implemented.			
1) https://www.umweltbildung.at/unsere-angebote/sustainability-award/			
2) https://www.oewav.at/phoenix2024 ; https://www.oewav.at/Page.aspx?target=378732&mark=ph%2c3%2b6nix#show_378732 ; https://www.oewav.at/%C3%96WAV/%C3%96WAV-Veranstaltungen/Ph%C3%B6nix-2018			