



Food Loss in Flanders

Policies

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

Highlights	- Comprehensive Action Plan involving all FSC stakeholders - FL included in FLW definition
Gaps	- No differentiation between FL and FW - No legally binding targets

Table 2: Policy analysis in Flanders

1. Territory	Flanders		
2. Level	Region		
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	
Material Degree			
☒ Soft law policies on food loss		☐ Under development	
Action Plan Circular Food Loss And Biomass (Residual) Flows 2021-2025 (APCFL 2021)			
4. Governance			
Law formulation and adoption	Flemish government department for agriculture and fisheries		
Law implementation and enforcement	Flemish government department for agriculture and fisheries Flemish Public Waste Agency Non-governmental stakeholders		
Monitoring of compliance	Flemish government department for agriculture and fisheries Flemish Public Waste Agency		
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 prevention and reduction in laws / regulations and governmental soft law policies			
☒ Quantitative objectives			
APCFL 2021	Ambition	Contribution to SDG 12.3 with actions to reduce food waste in primary production and horticultural cooperatives	
	Timeline	2030	☐ Under development
APCFL 2021	Ambition	Avoid, re-process and valorise at a higher level 30% of food losses and waste compared to 2015 across the entire chain	
	Timeline	2025	☐ Under development
APCFL 2021	Ambition	Increasing donations from primary prodction to retail by at least 18 000 tonnes compared to 2015	
	Timeline	2025	☐ Under development
APCFL 2021	Ambition	Implementing actions and strategies to prevent food loss by half of local authorities	
	Timeline	2025	☐ Under development
☒ Qualitative objectives			
APCFL 2021	Ambition	Increase the cascade index compared to 2015 across the chain	
	Timeline	2025	☐ Under development
APCFL 2021	Ambition	Composting/fermentation of comostable/fermentable food loss and waste flows that are not yet collected separately and/or currently incinerated	



	Timeline	2025	☐ Under development
Reporting and verification		Yes	No
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
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	Regarding the objective on composting/fermentation it is assumed that it is intended to increase the amount of suitable FLW, not to achieve a full composting/fermentation of these waste flows. While APCFL 2021 encourages using of grants from other entities, it does not provide specific budget for own grants.		

Table 3: Public objectives related to food loss



Overall objective / target		Source
Flanders commits to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 and the targets of the Waste Framework Directive 851/2018 ¹ (§9 and §11). Concretely, APCFL 2021 (4.3) states that by 2030 <i>"Flanders contributes to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 12.3) with actions to reduce food waste in primary production, horticultural cooperatives, the food industry, food retail and distribution, restaurants, catering and households"</i> For the period covered by the current Action Plan (2021-2025) several intermediate targets are set as described below.		APCFL 2021
Sub-objective / target		
Description		Source
The entire chain aims to avoid, re-process or valorise at a higher value 30% of food losses compared to 2015 (APCFL 2021 4.4.1)² This is further detailed as: - Increasing donations from the primary sector, horticultural cooperatives, food industry and retail by at least 18 000 tonnes compared to 2015 (APCFL 2021, 4.4.3) - Increasing valorisation as food, feed or bio-based materials for food losses and food (waste) flows from the primary sector, horticultural cooperatives, food industry and retail, provided they meet the legal requirements, increasing the cascade index compared to 2015 (APCFL 2021, 4.4.3, 4.6.2) - Implementing actions or strategies to prevent food loss as part of the local climate plan, waste policy or food policy by half of local authorities (APCFL 2021, 4.4.3) Composting/fermentation of compostable/fermentable food (waste) flows that are not yet collected separately and/or that are currently incinerated (e.g. seasonal surpluses or batches in crisis situations, food that must be "destroyed" due to food safety reasons at the request of the Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain, etc.) (APCFL 2021, 4.6.1)		MD 2011 APCFL 2021
Timeline to reach sub-objective / target		End of 2025
Obligations		
Flanders implements the requirements of the Waste Framework Directive ¹ related to the development of a food waste prevention programme and the promotion of food donations over use as animal feed in MD 2011, Article 17. The Flemish Public Waste Agency (OVAM) is responsible for the coordination of design and review of the prevention programme, while the Government of Flanders selects public institutions and sets up a (stakeholder) consultation platform to be involved in its design and implementation. Drafts of the food waste prevention programme have to undergo public consultation, review by the Environment and Nature Council of Flanders, who gives a non-binding advice) and submission to the Flemish Parliament. The aims of the food waste prevention programme are binding if not stated otherwise. As APCFL 2021 does not contain any such statement, one can assume the aims contained therein are binding. However, the consequences of not fulfilling the aims of the Action Plan remain unclear.	Actors – compliance	
	Government of Flanders OVAM	
	Actors – enforcement	
	European Commission	
MD 2011 Article 15 requires the Government of Flanders to <i>"lay down more specific rules regarding the granting of subsidies to: (1) natural or legal persons who take measures and initiatives [...] to stimulate: (a) the prevention of waste, the reuse and the more efficient use of materials which is less taxing on the environment via adapted production and</i>	Actors – compliance	
	Government of Flanders	
	Actors – enforcement	



consumption patterns; (b) the cooperation between different actors within one or more material cycles with a view to reducing the environmental impacts of those material cycles; (c) the separate collection of waste, recycling and the use of materials in closed material cycles; (d) the market for products and raw materials obtained from waste; (e) an optimisation of the management of material cycles and waste; (f) research and development towards achieving cleaner and less wasteful technologies, products and services, as well as the dissemination and use of the results of research and development in this area; [...]The subsidies shall always be granted within the bounds of the credits included in the budget."	
"The tender specifications of authorities of the Flemish Region and of local authorities must include provisions aimed at promoting the purchase of: (1) products or services which, taking into account the entire life cycle, contribute to a better closure of material cycles or have a lower environmental impact than similar alternatives; (2) raw materials obtained from waste or products made therefrom. These provisions can be further specified by the Government of Flanders." (MD 2011, Article 16)	Actors – compliance
	Authorities of the Flemish Region Local authorities
	Actors – enforcement
	Government of Flanders
Measures	
Cooperation projects within product chains to deal with priority food losses. Fruit and vegetables, dairy, bread, potatoes, meat and fish have been selected as priority commodities, however, the choice of product may be adjusted over the course of the prevention plan (APCFL 4.4.3)	Actors – provision
	Research (Flanders Research Institute for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food – ILVO, Hogeschool Gent, Gent University) Food industry (Fevia Vlaanderen i.s.m., Comeos Vlaanderen, Belgische Confederatie van de Zuivelindustrie)
	Actors – use
	All value chain actors except consumers
Sector specific programmes supporting companies in measuring their food losses, developing preventive actions and sharing their knowledge as a sector. A sector programme comprises (APCFL 4.4.3): • Development of a measurement system and support for companies for its application • Promoting a sector-wide measurement campaign where participating businesses implement actions based on the results of a baseline measurement and assess their impact in a follow-up measurement • Encouraging and facilitating sharing of measurement results and actions taken between participants • Annual report on the number of participating companies, actions taken and achieved reductions in food loss Agriculture (with a focus on horticulture) is one of five sectors for which a programme is to be developed.	Actors – provision
	Government of Flanders, sector organisations, experts, relevant authorities, knowledge institutions, pioneer companies
	Actors – use
	Businesses (primarily those that have not been active yet)
Expanding existing distribution networks of food banks and regional distribution platforms, starting up and testing food hubs for processing food surpluses and strengthening cooperation with the suppliers and processors of food surpluses. For that purpose, among others, digital tools for donations and redistribution should be aligned and an enabling policy framework for donations explored (APCFL 4.4.3)	Actors – provision
	Social organisations (Herw!n/Foodsavers, Belgian Federation of Food Banks) Public actors (Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries,



	Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain - FAVV) Research (Short Chain Center of Expertise, ILVO) Food industry (Association of Belgian Horticultural Auctions, Comeos Vlaanderen, Flemish Food Industry Federation) Agricultural organisations Flanders Institute for Logistics, FAVV
	Actors – use
	All value chain actors
Supporting the start-up and impact of food waste innovators through (APCFL 2021, 4.4.3)	Actors – provision
• A Food Waste Incubator providing guidance and support • Fostering cooperation between food waste innovators and existing industry • Strengthening the Food Waste Alliance³, a partnership of the most important current entrepreneurs tackling food loss in Belgium • Food Waste Awards⁴	Social organisations (FoodWIN, Rikolto, Herw!n/Foodsavers) Research (Flanders' FOOD, EIT FOOD, ILVO, Serendipity, Businesses (Coduco, Level IT, Rekub, WOWfood, Eatmosphere, TooGoodToGo)
	Actors – use
	Start-ups and entrepreneurs all along the value chain
Supporting local administrations to adopt a local steering role through (APCFL 2021, 4.4.3):	Actors – provision
• Tailor-made support and provision of information, tools, expertise, best practice examples, indicators and a communication framework to help local authorities in setting up actions • Continuation of the local food loss network where local authorities share good practices and organise targeted sections • Promoting the integration of social and circular entrepreneurship in local food (loss) strategies	Public actors (Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities, Flemish Land Agency, OVAM, Department of Environmental and Spatial Development, local authorities, intermunicipal associations) Civil society organisations (FoodWIN, Belgian Federation of Food Banks) Expert organisations (Flemish compost organisation)
	Actors – use
	Local authorities, local entrepreneurs, Herw!n/Foodsavers
Further developing the Symbiosis platform facilitating the matching of supply and demand of organic biological waste flows (APCFL 2021, 4.6.3)	Actors – provision
	Research (Flanders Biobased Valley, ILVO, Flanders' Food, Inagro) Farmer associations (Boerenbond-Innovatiesteunpunt, Belgian Farmers' Union) OVAM
	Actors – use
	All value chain actors
Research projects regarding (APCFL 2021, 4.6.3):	Actors – provision
• New technologies leading to more high-value applications of biomass (e.g. extraction of dietary fibre, natural antioxidants, natural dyes, etc)	Research (ILVO, Flanders' Food, Inagro, academia) Farmer associations (Boerenbond-Innovatiesteunpunt, Belgian



- Deriving biopesticides and biostimulants from underutilised vegetable waste flows - Bioconversion of underutilised heterogeneous food waste flows with insects	Farmers' Union, Belgian Association of Horticultural Auctions)
	Actors – use
	All value chain actors
Means of verification	Actors
The APCFL 2021 is monitored by its steering group, consisting of the initiators of each action programme as stated in the plan and coordinated by OVAM. At an annual meeting, initiators of action programmes report their progress on results based on pre-defined indicators to the steering group, which can then decide to add additional participating organisations and actions to the plan (APCFL 2021 8.1). The indicators against which the targets and measures described above are assessed are as follows (APCFL 2021, 4.4.3): - Number of cooperation projects per product chain implemented with positive impact on pure prevention, redistribution/processing, valorisation - Number of participating businesses and % of food loss reduction per sector programme - Quantity of surplus food distributed and/or processed - Number of (start-up) projects with impact - Number of local authorities setting up actions or developing/implementing food strategies In addition, stakeholder consultation takes place twice a year (APCFL 2021, 8.1.3). Halfway through and at the end of the planning period OVAM together with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries will evaluate the plan and adjust actions or introduce new actions if necessary (APCFL 2021, 8.2).	OVAM, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, initiators of each action, stakeholders
Other aspects	Actors
Regarding reuse of unused agricultural and horticultural crop (waste)flows, APCFL 2021 (4.6.3) stresses the importance of keeping sufficient organic matter in the soil.	Primary producers
Comments	
1) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02008L0098-20180705 2) A footnote in APCFL 2021 states that this is an indicative target applying for the entire EU (meaning food waste as defined by the EU) - however, the action plan also states that there is room for flexibility and interpretation of the target based on the local context and that Flanders is focusing on food loss (meaning inclusion of non-waste destinations such as animal feed) due to it being already further ahead in food waste reduction 3) No further information on the Food Waste Alliance could be found. However, on 29.09.2022 the Flemish government, together with other organisations making efforts in the fight against food loss, launched De Kostwinners, a collaboration platform to implement the action plan against food loss, increase awareness and activate communication on food loss and waste 4) No further information on the implementation of Food Waste Awards could be found.	

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

Budget allocated to the implementation of the law / regulation			
Amount	Timing	Provided by	Purpose / description
Not reported	Annual (2017-2019) / one time (since 2020)	Flanders innovation & entrepreneurship (VLAIO)	Circular Flanders Calls (see below)
Financial incentives			
Type of incentive		Grant	
Purpose / description		Circular Flanders Calls: From the Open Calls launched annually between 2017-2019, 6 projects with relevance to food loss prevention and reduction received funding. Since 2020, annual targeted calls have been launched, one of them (in 2021) on "Circular Food Chain". 4 out of 9 projects that received funding from this call address FL prevention and reduction ¹ .	
Beneficiaries		Companies, NPOs, local authorities, research or educational institutions	



Eligibility criteria	Not reported
Amount - total	2017-2018: EUR 11 million for 135 projects (total volume of the open calls) Since 2019: no information available
Timing - total	Annual (2017-2019: Open calls; Since 2020: Targeted calls)
Amount per beneficiary	Max. EUR 100.000 for a maximum of 80% of the project budget (Open call)
Timing - beneficiary	One time
Financial incentives	
Type of incentive	Grant
Purpose / description	Go4Food call initiated by the FFS 2023. Five projects received start-up grants, 12 projects support in the form of expertise and network from the food coalition members. Among the latter, six projects had a direct connection to FL (promoting field share marketing models, processing of surplus food to value added products, connecting actors along the supply chain, research in (climate-resilient) new varieties, etc.)
Beneficiaries	Food innovators with a promising idea for the future
Eligibility criteria	
Amount - total	
Timing - total	One time in 2021
Amount per beneficiary	
Timing - beneficiary	One-time
Comments	
No specific funds are allocated to the APCFL 2021. Flemish authorities, initiators and partners of the actions are expected to seek and make maximum use of available European, Belgian, Flemish and local funding channels. It is stressed that the degree of elaboration of actions will partly depend on the final resources available (APCFL 2021, 7.3).	
1) Information from https://vlaanderen-circulair.be/src/Frontend/Files/userfiles/files/OVAM-23-002_OVAM-F_v03_240320-FINAL.pdf and https://vlaanderen-circulair.be/en/cases?form=casesIndexForm&q=&provincies=#casesIndexForm	

One of FOLOU's main contributions is to establish a definitional framework for what should be considered food loss. However, so far the definitions vary. Table 7 lists the identified definitions of food loss in the data sources.

Table 7: List of Food Loss Definitions and their Sources

Definition	Source / URL
FOLOU Food Loss Definitional Framework: Food loss is any harvest-mature plant, animal or living being that is not successfully harvested as well as food removed from the supply chain during post-harvest phase that does not become animal feed, by-product or food waste.	Scientific
In the BREADCRUMB project, the EC's definition of FW, which is considered broader and takes into all food supply chain (FSC) stages is adopted. Specifically, Directive 2008/98/EC3 defines FW as all food that has become waste.	Scientific
- When food is consumed by people (FOOD CONSUMPTION), it has achieved its original purpose. If food is ultimately not consumed by people, we refer to this as FOOD LOSS. This is the Flemish concept and the definition that is used in the declaration of commitment and the Food supply chain roadmap. The term 'loss' merely indicates a loss of food for human consumption. It does not mean that this flow is not given a useful destination or valorisation. There is a loss of food for human consumption,	Governmental



but the material can still be given a useful, even high-quality valorisation.	
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