

THE FUTURE OF FOOD BANKS IN EUROPE

# Quantifying the Impact of European Food Banks

**From Farm to Fork**

## REPORT Kick-off Meeting

2 MARCH 2020  
/ BRUSSELS



Let's start!



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# Let's start!

## Quantifying the impact of European Food Banks – From Farm to Fork

On 2 March 2020 the European Food Banks Federation organized the kick-off Meeting of the project “Quantifying the impact of European Food Banks – From Farm to Fork”.

Nine Food Banks representatives from different European countries participated in person. Moreover, for those who were unable to be physically present at the meeting due to the COVID-19 outbreak and to facilitate participation as much as possible, the meeting was broadcasted in live streaming with the possibility of interacting via e-mail.

Following the launch of the project “The future of Food Banks in Europe: preparing the ‘20s” and the activities that FEBA implemented in 2018 and 2019, this year the project will focus on quantifying and qualifying the impact of European Food Banks.

The main objective is to identify common KPIs, share a standardized and consistent methodology for data collection across Food Banks, and define how to make sense of the information of impact management and measurement.





# Introduction

The kick-off meeting started with an introduction made by Angela Frigo, FEBA Secretary General. She gave participants an overview of the project and the importance of collecting data for several reasons.

First of all, to increase the expertise of FEBA members and ensuring they are effective and professional food redistribution partners to the food supply chain industry, it is important to collect data and to focus on the economic, environmental, nutritional and social benefits generated by the daily activities of European Food Banks. The most important challenges of this transformation will be to share standardised and consistent methodology for data collection across Food Banks, defining how to make sense of the information of impact management and measurement, encouraging digital transformation within FEBA membership.

FEBA will guide the project that for the first year will see a Pilot Phase with the support of external experts: Laura Gavinelli – management consultant and trainer – and Frabio Fraticelli and Chiara Grassi from TechSoup Italy.



## Project Milestones

1.



**Definition of common KPIs, dataset structure and data collection strategies**

2.



**Development of the Observatory on food donation**

3.



**Promotion and dissemination of the Observatory on food donation**



## Part 1

# Measuring performance: from goals to delivery

During the panel *measuring performance: from goals to indicators*, Laura Gavinelli made a clear presentation to participants on how to take the main steps:



### 1. Why measure performance

Having the right data and information allows the Food Banks to obtain both internal advantages (governance, strategy, organization and operations, internal communication and relationships with their collaborators) and external advantages (relations with the market, communication and fundraising, reputation and visibility).

### 2. What to measure

Data is the minimum unit to work on. The effort of data collection and processing leads to the construction of information and knowledge as necessary support to strategy and vision. The ultimate goal is to make the right decisions, and to take the right actions. In this second moment, a taxonomy of the principal concepts on data was provided: data, information, indicator, KPI, goal, objective, mission and vision. Qualitative and quantitative data were also mentioned, which are equally important for producing knowledge on a given phenomenon.

### 3. How to produce data and useful information

If on the one hand data are essential, but not sufficient, on the other hand the setting of goals and objectives represents the starting point on the basis of which to identify the necessary metrics. Through examples of specific goals, relative KPIs have been analysed that might be useful to reach these goals (e.g. to boost collaboration on CSR and zero emissions, to raise funding on projects dedicated to aging society, or child poverty). Moreover, the difference between data flows, data sets, reports and dashboards are also important.

### 4. For whom to measure

The last moment of the presentation indicated that data and KPIs collected are also for external use. To make effective use of them, it is necessary to remember that stakeholders are different, just as their information needs are different. It follows that Food Banks must be able to provide different and ad hoc data and tell personalised stories about their work.



## Part 2

# Digital transformation and data collection

During this second part, Fabio Fraticelli, COO of TechSoup Italy, made a presentation on the digital aspects of the project.



### Introduction: the importance of simplicity

Talking about “visualizing information” means talking about both dashboards and visual data storytelling. Beside the output, it is important to think about what lies in the backstage: where all data are stored, how query this data, who can or cannot access to them, what is the level of security to storage and manage data.

The idea for this project is to create an **online observatory**, a place where people would access data in a beautiful form. The goal is to gather and display data about what is going on in the Food Banks network all over Europe to communicate inside and outside what Food Banks are doing and what is the impact created.



### How to get there?

In order to reach this goal, it is important to face both technological and cultural challenges. The latter are probably harder than the first. People from Food Banks will be probably scared about the new system for two reasons, at least. First, Food Bankers will be required to adopt a new system. Second, they will be challenged about the feeling of producing data “for” FEBA instead of “with FEBA”.

Food Bankers will be asked to take some time during the daily operations to upload data in a new software in order to populate the dataset behind the online observatory. We are asking to the network to make several changes at several levels. Especially at this time, when Food Banks are systematically understaffed it’s hard to ask them to focus on “side” activities.

For these (and many other) reasons, it is fundamental to focus on “simplicity” during the development of the software behind the online observatory.





## How to foster ICT-acceptance

In order to face the technical and cultural challenges mentioned above, the framework of action will be the popular model about innovation: the “*Technology Acceptance Model*”. According to the model, people will adopt technology if they perceive that it is useful and easy to be used from a technological point of view.

### A. Usefulness

The concept of “usefulness” is mainly referred to cultural and psychological issues. In terms of outcomes, people should have a clear answer to the question:



What utility do I get from using this platform?

Volunteers and employees all over the network will be not just “data-entry people”, but people using the platform with a real understanding of its scopes and needs.

Currently, all over the network, partners complete excel sheets for FEBA to have aggregated figures at European level once a year. The process should be more efficient (and therefore, useful for everybody). Moreover, since every Food Bank of the network creates reports to produce some evidence of the daily work, through the platform they could eventually have a visual tool. Starting from their own data, it allows them to create and share reports with internal and externals stakeholders.

### B. Ease of use

When we talk about ease of use, we are talking about the question users have in their mind:



How much effort will be required for this platform to be used?

The platform should be a zero-training platform for its intuitiveness.

1. **Clean and friendly design:** based on a very simple and intuitive interface and with the so-called “inline help”
2. **Fully-responsive:** a responsive interface to visualise on every kind of device
3. **(NEXT to COME) Integration:** After a pilot period (probably with manual entry), an integration with existing systems (through APIs) can be evaluated. The platform will be developed with an “API-first” approach in mind (API is a system to exchange data with third party services)

An interoperable platform will be created with the possibility to exchange data with other services included personal software (Excels files). In the first version, the platform will not be integrated with all partners’ software, but it will be integrable with third part services. Furthermore, the API method will be documented and published on FEBA web services, so developers in Food Banks will be capable to interact with the platform. If necessary, the “Upload Excel” function can be implemented.



The platform will be developed using an Agile Approach, which implies the release of incremental versions of the software. New features will be frequently released in order to get feedback from the users.



## Part 3

# Focus group on KPIs

The discussion was stimulated on the definition of common KPIs, dataset structure and data collection strategies. In particular, participants discussed three aspects: KPIs used to date, pros and cons of measuring performance and the four areas of impact (economic, environmental, social and nutritional).

### Which KPIs are used to date

**In addition to those required by the annual FEBA survey: a rather uneven situation has emerged that deserves further investigation.**

### What are the pros and cons of measuring performance

**Alignment on the definition of KPIs (e.g. meal, beneficiary) is strongly recommended and required.**



### Four areas of impact (economic, environmental, social and nutritional)

**Some of these areas are not yet sufficiently covered by KPIs: especially the environmental and nutritional impacts deserve further discussion. These two areas are considered key, even though there is still no agreement on which are the right KPIs to measure the impact of Food Banks.**



# Acknowledgement

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A grateful acknowledgement to Laura Gavinelli for driving us to the discovery of the value of measuring and the importance of KPIs.

A deep appreciation to Fabio Fraticelli and Chiara Grassi for giving an added value to the discussion thanks to their competence and expertise.

Last but not least, many thanks to all the participants who actively contributed to the success of the kick-off session.







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