



Partners Toolkit for Food Donation

Collaborate with FEBA for
the planet and the people!

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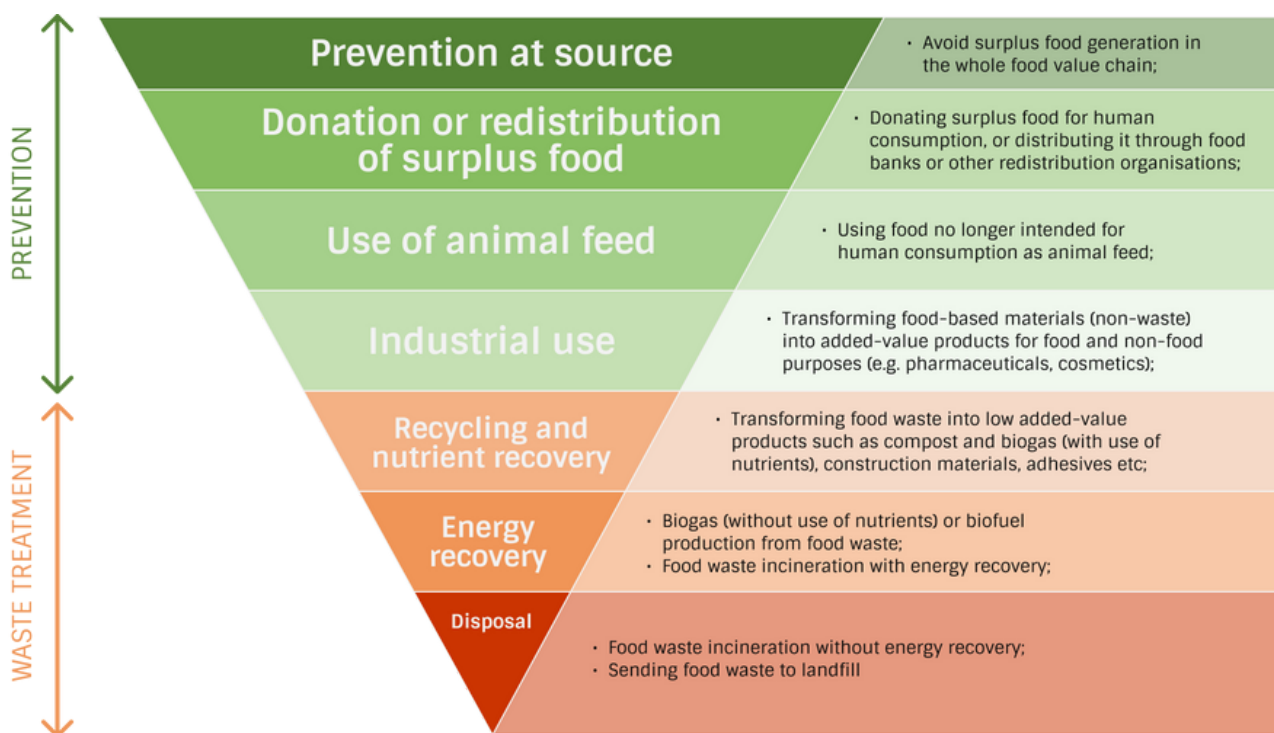


1. Legislative framework in Europe

1.1. EU Food Donation Guidelines

In 2017, the European Commission adopted [EU Food Donation Guidelines](#) in order to facilitate the recovery and redistribution of safe, edible food to those in need.

Moreover, the waste hierarchy gives clear indications as to the different steps to be taken to reduce food waste, stating the second option after prevention, donation or redistribution of surplus. The hierarchy prioritizes human use over animal feed and the reprocessing into non-food products as part of measures taken to prevent waste generation.



Source: European Commission Joint Research Centre, 2024

1.2. Key Recommendations for Action in Food Waste Prevention

The “[Key Recommendations for Action in Food Waste Prevention](#)” of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste were published in December 2019.

The recommendations call for action on food donation, such as promoting the uptake of the EU guidelines on food donation and, where needed, adopting national guidelines and/or legislation to further facilitate food donation as well as promoting the use of surplus food for food donation both in quantity and quality. Innovative ideas on food donation should be supported.

1.3. Amendments to EU Food Hygiene Legislation in 2021:

Regulation (EU) 2021/382:

- Amending Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs as regards food allergen management, redistribution of food, and food safety culture;
- Food business operators may donate food also after the BBD but shall assess if it is fit for human consumption considering e.g. the integrity of packaging and the organoleptic conditions.
- A new chapter on food redistribution addresses how the “use by” and “best before” dates shall be applied.

[Read regulation](#)



Regulation (EU) 2021/1374:

- Amending the Annexes to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 on specific hygiene requirements for food of animal origin.
- If a ‘use by’ date is applied: before the expiry of that date;
- Ensuring that the date of freezing is documented and provided either on the label or by other means.
- In accordance with any condition laid down by the competent authorities for freezing and further use as food.
- Allows freezing of meat at retail under certain conditions;
- Without undue delay to a temperature of -18 C or lower.
- Excluding meat that has been frozen before (defrosted meat);

[Read regulation](#)



On 5 July 2023, the European Commission published a proposal for a [directive amending Directive 2008/98/EC](#) on waste introducing legally binding food waste reduction targets.

In May 2022 FEBA dedicated a specific webinar and [report](#) on the topic and in July 2023 published a [special edition](#) which highlights the position of FEBA and its members, as well as summarizes the position of external stakeholders.

VAT

Even though the EU VAT Directive gives Member States the possibility to define VAT relief conditions for donations to charitable organizations, only a handful of countries make use of this VAT neutralization option. FEBA together with Eurocommerce published a [joint statement](#) to call for action on VAT neutralizations in Member States.



2. How can Food Banks be part of the process?

Food Banks indeed play a crucial role in the food supply chain, serving as natural partners to various stakeholders within the system. Food Banks serve as a critical link in the chain, transforming potential food waste into valuable resources for those in need. By fostering strong partnerships across the supply chain, Food Banks help create a more sustainable, efficient, and equitable food system.

2.1. Food Processors challenges and Food Banks:

Handling By-products:

Food processors often generate by-products or secondary products that are perfectly edible but not suitable for sale. Food banks can redistribute these products to those in need.

Excess Inventory:

Processors sometimes have excess inventory due to overproduction or changes in demand. Food banks can help manage this excess, preventing waste and aiding those who are food insecure.

2.2. Benefits Across the Supply Chain

Reduction in Food Waste:

By integrating food banks into the supply chain, stakeholders can significantly reduce food waste, contributing to environmental sustainability.

Enhanced Food Security:

Food Banks help bridge the gap between surplus food and those in need, enhancing food security and supporting vulnerable populations.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):

Companies involved in the agri-food supply chain can enhance their CSR profiles by partnering with Food Banks, demonstrating their commitment to social and environmental causes.

Economic Efficiency:

Reducing waste can also lead to economic savings for businesses, as costs associated with waste disposal and unsold inventory are minimized.

2.3. Food Donations

Food donations are beneficial to food and drink manufacturers because they contribute to:

- making environmental improvements and tackling food poverty;
- cooperative action in a context of increasing food poverty;
- fostering community engagement;
- food waste prevention;
- optimising the production process and the management of inventories;
- potential for reducing disposal costs;
- improving the reputation with customers and stakeholders;
- tax deductions and fiscal incentives, where applicable.





3. How to donate food?

3.1. What is surplus food?

As a first step it is important to define what is 'surplus food' within your organisation. Surplus food can consist of **finished food products, partly finished products or surplus ingredients** and can include **ambient, chilled and frozen foods**. Surpluses can arise for several reasons. .

For example, products might be over-ordered, over-supplied part of a cancelled order, quality rejects that do not meet customer specifications (e.g. date, product mix, production and labelling errors) or obsolete seasonal stock. In order to be suitable for donation, however, all surplus food must be fit for human consumption and compliant with all relevant food hygiene and safety legislation.

Surplus food is material that:

- *Complies with relevant current food hygiene, safety, and Food Information to Consumer legislation;*
- *Is contained in packaging that is intact or if damaged, food safety has not been compromised;*
- *Has sufficient remaining product life to allow it to be donated and consumed (i.e. food or foodstuffs that will still be safe to eat by the time they are received by the final beneficiaries);*



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The following are indicative lists of what FEBA members can and cannot accept. For more precise information please contact a [FEBA member](#) or other food donation partners directly.

YES!

FEBA members can possibly accept these types of food ensuring that temperatures are kept under control, including past their 'best before' date:

- ✓ Chilled perishable packaged food (e.g. juice, cheese);
- ✓ Fresh and frozen meat and fish;
- ✓ Bakery products;
- ✓ Cold beverages;
- ✓ Other ambient foods including those packaged in jars or tins.
- ✓ Fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables;
- ✓ Dairy products;
- ✓ Fresh sandwiches;
- ✓ Frozen food products;

NO!

FEBA members are unable to accept food products that:

- ✗ Are in a condition which could pose a risk to health;
- ✗ Have not been kept at the appropriate temperature according to their category;
- ✗ Have damaged or compromised packaging including where the product is exposed while at the same time food safety and food information to consumers cannot be insured.
- ✗ Have an expired 'use by' date;
- ✗ Have advanced spoilage;
- ✗ Have a severe freezer burn;



Did you know?

Food can be donated after the 'best before' date!

The EU regulation allows for donations after the 'best before date'. The food must be fit for human consumption. However, it is important to check locally before donating such products, including whether the FEBA Food Bank member or food donation partner can accept these.

3.2. Identifying where surplus food occurs

Now that you have defined what is surplus in relation to your business you need to consider where surpluses could arise in your operations.

Where surplus food may arise:

- ☐ *Perishable food products nearing the 'use-by' date;*
- ☐ *Non-perishable food products nearing and possibly beyond the 'best before' date;*
- ☐ *Perishable food products nearing and possibly beyond the best before date;*
- ☐ *Incorrectly weighed or measured food products that cannot be sold;*
- ☐ *Incorrectly labelled food products – as long as all mandatory information including allergens and ingredients can be provided;*
- ☐ *Damaged, imperfect items and bulk ends where food safety and food information to consumer have not been compromised;*
- ☐ *Unopened, oversupplied items, food product returns or shipping errors;*
- ☐ *Out-dated promotional or seasonal items, discontinued products and other inventory to be cleared out.*



Once you have identified where in your operations surpluses can arise these need to be characterised in terms of likely quantity and frequency along with handling and storage requirements.



Top tip!

Sometimes food labelled in a “foreign language” can still be donated!

There will be instances where a food produced and stored in one country is intended for consumption in another country. This can mean that the food is labelled in a “foreign language” and therefore essential information like the ingredients and allergens cannot be read locally. Under some circumstances this food can still be donated – often with some kind of “over-labelling”. However, this is not always possible or practical, so it is important to seek advice from the FEBA Food Bank member and other food donation partner, and regulatory authority on local practice.

3.3. Handling surplus food

Once identified, the surplus food needs to be stored at an appropriate temperature and prepared for collection and delivery. It must be kept separate from any waste materials and clearly marked in order to be redirected to the new intended recipient.

For suppliers of own-brand and branded products it is advisable to check with the brand owner at this stage whether and under what conditions surplus food can be donated. A general (written) clearance to donate might be worth considering.



Top tip!

Prepare internal operating procedures covering:



What can be donated (e.g. dated, end-of-line, seasonal, quality rejections, etc.);



What are the collection / redistribution requirements (traceability requirements);



What are the hygiene, food safety and storage requirements (e.g. segregation);



What are the authorisation requirements (e.g. own brand products).

3.4. Transferring food to a FEBA Food Bank member or food donation partner

Agree efficient transport and logistics

It is necessary for you and your FEBA Food Bank member or food donation partner to agree on an efficient system to deliver the donated food. For instance, it is possible to use logistics providers already involved in food donations or to integrate the delivery into other customer deliveries.

Questions to ask about transportation and pick-up:

☐ Question №1:

How and when will the transfer of food from your business to the food donation partner happen?



☐ Question №2:

Does the food donation partner have its own trucks, or will it be picked up by another method?



☐ Question №3:

What size load can the food donation partner handle?



☐ Question №4:

If the food for pick-up is frozen or refrigerated, does the food donation partner have refrigeration trucks and refrigerated storage to maintain the cold chain?



☐ Question №5:

If we have to deliver the surplus food ourselves, where are the donation depots located? Is there a minimum pallet number?



☐ Question №6:

If surplus food is identified at night, will products need to be stored for pickup or delivery to the food donation partner the next day?



3.5. How to select a FEBA Food Bank or food donation partner?

The FEBA Team in Brussels or the respective FEBA Members in each country can help you in identifying a suitable FEBA Food Bank or food donation partner.

Surplus food for human consumption can be donated to charitable organisations, such as FEBA Food Bank members, which in turn donate food for free to people in need.

Once the surplus/ tools or grants have been identified within the business it then needs to be allocated to a FEBA Food Bank member or food donation partner.

This can be done on an ad-hoc basis (i.e. whenever it arises), or as part of a more formal partnership between the partner and the FEBA Food Bank member or the food donation partner. Such a partnership helps to clarify expectations for both organisations and eases the process of donation whenever surplus food arises. Partnerships can also entail a commitment to donate a certain minimum volume of products per year.

Checklist for selecting a FEBA Food Bank member or food donation partner:

☐ Question №1:

What is the partner's scale of operation?

☐ Question №2:

What quantity and types of foods are they able to handle, store (e.g. do they have refrigerated storage facilities) and redistribute?

☐ Question №3:

Do they have the ability to handle intermediate products (e.g. flour, rice, spices, etc.)?

☐ Question №4:

Does their responsiveness to shorter shelf-life products fit with our daily operations?

3.6. How does FEBA keep track of donated food?

In 2020, FEBA initiated the project [“Quantifying the Impact of European Food Banks – From Farm to Fork”](#) aiming to implement an efficient method for data collection and analysis by strengthening the capability of FEBA and its members.

The goal of the project is to foster an accurate impact assessment and, if possible, gather information about the intended and unintended long-term effects produced by the activities of Food Banks at the European level.



In light of this, the online Observatory on Food Donation was launched in October 2020 and since then, FEBA has supported its members in using the entailed data collection platform and continuously improves its technical features.

This tool therefore tracks through different KPI's the amounts of food were donated surplus redistributed by the different FEBA Members.



4. Other ways to support Food Banks

Supporting Food Banks can be done in various impactful ways. Here are detailed strategies for providing support through in-kind donations, equipment, and financial contributions:

In-Kind Donations

(storage space, donation of trucks, Forklifts etc.). Providing Food Banks with essential equipment helps improve their operational efficiency and capacity to serve the community.

Financial Donations

Monetary contributions provide Food Banks with the flexibility to address their most urgent needs and invest in long-term solutions.

Knowledge sharing

In 2023, 94% of the co-workers of the Food Banks in Europe were volunteers. This means that Food Banks do not have the financial or human resources to develop expertise in Logistics or warehouse management or technology or operational expertise.

This is where you can step in and offer help! Any expertise you might have that could be helpful for the Food Banks, could make a world of difference. If you have room for 1 hour to visit your local Food Bank and offer some training or skill-sharing session for volunteers of the Food Bank, this can already improve their activities a lot.

Conclusion

Partnering with Food banks through in-kind donations, equipment contributions, and financial aid is essential in addressing food insecurity and fostering community resilience. By understanding the needs and channels for support, individuals and organizations can make meaningful contributions to enhance the capacity and reach of Food Banks.



5. Best Practices



Good food, Good life

Tackle food insecurity by providing access to healthier foods

Nestlé strives to be a good neighbour and a trusted partner in the community by listening to the needs of the food banks and charities across Europe we support. A few recent examples:

In France, Nestlé makes voluntary donations to [Food Banks](#) via dedicated production time and the know-how of its factory employees, to meet identified priority needs such as breakfast and hot meals. For example, KUB OR aims to provide 4 million cubes for 130,000 beneficiaries.

In 2023, to celebrate the 100 years' anniversary of the company, Nestlé Portugal partnered with 7 companies to provide the ingredients, packaging materials and services needed to produce 10,000 packages of CERELAC, NESTUM and CHOCAPIC to donate to the [Food Emergency Network](#).

Nestlé UK has been working with [FareShare](#) since 2005 to redistribute quality surplus products and to date has contributed with the equivalent of more than six million meals. In 2024, Nestlé joined Arla to donate the equivalent of 1.25 million breakfasts to support families and communities in need across the UK.

6. Partnerships with FEBA at European level

Launching a partnership with FEBA is always an option to streamline your support and put in place a systematic cooperation with Food Banks across Europe. FEBA signs partnership agreements with many different organizations, companies and entities, tailored to the wishes and needs of the partner and implementing support in different forms across Europe.

It also gives you the opportunity to support FEBA itself, funding different activities such as the annual flagship event of the organization, research or innovations of Food Banks. Get in touch with the fundraising team at FEBA!

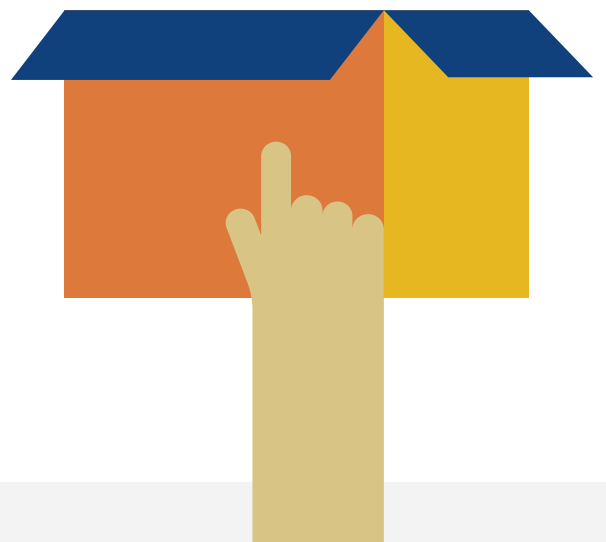
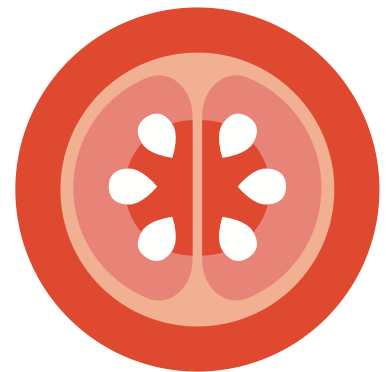
Contacts

European Food Banks Federation a.s.b.l. (FEBA)

Chaussée de Louvain 775,
1140 Brussels, Belgium

E info@eurofoodbank.org

T + 32 (0) 25 38 94 50



FoodDrinkEurope represents Europe's food and drink industry, Europe's largest manufacturing sector in terms of turnover, employment and value added. FoodDrinkEurope works with European and international institutions, in order to contribute to the development of a legislative and economic framework addressing the competitiveness of industry, food quality and safety, consumer protection and respect for the environment. FoodDrinkEurope's membership consists of 25 national federations, including 2 observers, 26 European sector associations and 19 major food and drink companies. For more information on FoodDrinkEurope and its activities, please visit:

www.fooddrinkeurope.eu

Founded in 1986, the European Federation of Food Banks (FEBA) is a non-profit organization representing Food Banks from 30 European countries. In 2023, the 352 Food Banks from the FEBA network redistributed over 839,942 tonnes of food through 44,374 charitable organisations assisting 12.8 million deprived people. All this was possible thanks to the professionalism of 98,662 co-workers, 94% of whom were volunteers. For more information on FEBA and its activities, please visit:

www.eurofoodbank.org

