

## FoodCloud's priorities for the next programme for government

Around the world, while 733 million people face hunger, over one billion meals go to waste every day.

In Ireland alone, 750,000 tonnes of food is wasted annually, equating to 146 kg per household, even as 1 in 11 people experience food insecurity. Simultaneously, food waste contributes 8–10% of global greenhouse gas emissions, exacerbating climate breakdown and threatening our planet's future.

Ireland's rich heritage in food and agriculture, paired with its national story of resilience, presents an opportunity to lead in combating food loss and waste (FLW). By adopting strategic policies and investing resources in redistribution efforts, we can address hunger, reduce environmental harm, and inspire global change. Ireland is committed to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), especially:

- **SDG 12.3:** Halving global food waste per capita by 2030.
- **SDG 2:** Ending hunger, achieving food security, and promoting sustainable agriculture.

Ireland has pledged to include food waste in climate action plans and align agriculture policies to bolster resilience, productivity, livelihoods, and nutrition. Binding food waste reduction targets proposed by the EU Waste Framework Directive are a critical step forward, but gaps remain, particularly in addressing primary production.

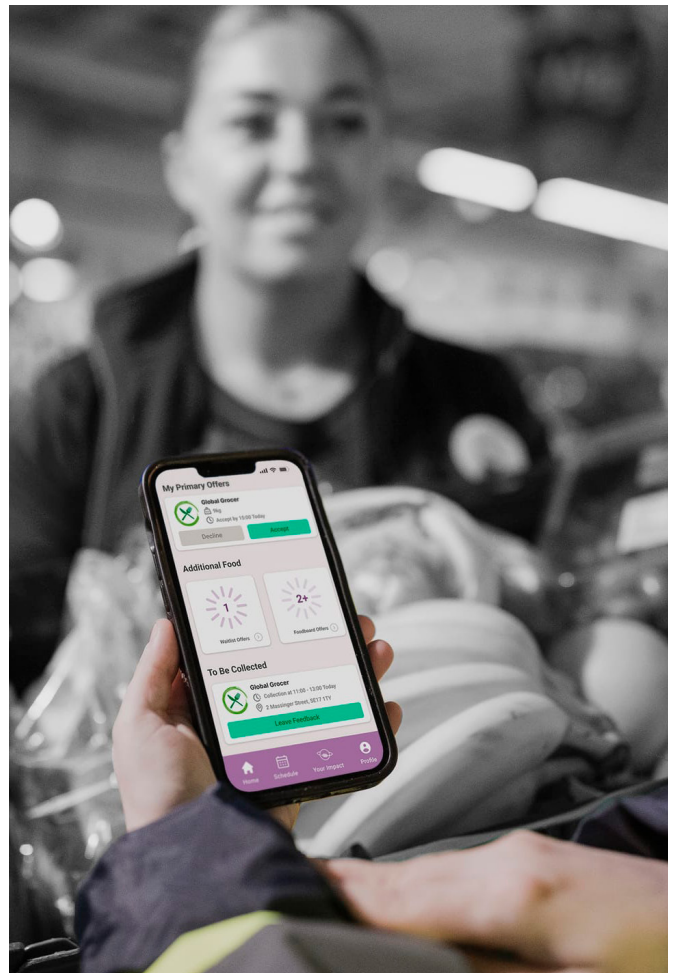
Domestically, the National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap identifies 38 priority actions, while Food Vision 2030 sets out Ireland's ambition to lead in sustainable food systems. These frameworks must be properly resourced to deliver meaningful change.

## FoodCloud's approach

As a leader in surplus food redistribution, FoodCloud has:

- Facilitated the redistribution of over 317 million meals across Ireland and internationally.
- Innovated with technology like Foodiverse which connects surplus food with those that need it.
- Launched initiatives such as the FoodCloud Kitchen and Thrive Together to combat food waste while fostering education and community.
- Partnered with Irish farmers to redistribute farm-level surplus and extended virtual food banking globally.

Our work demonstrates that reducing food waste is not just an environmental imperative—it's an opportunity to strengthen communities, foster equity, and build a sustainable future.



## FoodCloud's key recommendations for the next programme for government

There needs to be a greater allocation of resources for investment in the mechanics and logistics of surplus food redistribution and technology, reporting and collaboration on Food Loss and Waste (FLW) reduction.

### 1. Agricultural Recovery - supporting Irish growers and rural economies

- Introduce a national programme for multi-annual incentives to support agricultural recovery and promote farm level surplus produce redistribution.
- Align with international practices such as the UK's Surplus to Purpose Programme, US tax incentives for surplus food donations or EU producer organisations schemes.

#### Why?

- Agricultural recovery is a public good and this provision would remove a financial barrier that generally prevents growers from donating nutritionally beneficial surplus.
- Such a programme promotes rural economic resilience and aligns with Food Vision 2030 goals.

### 2. Investment in virtual food banking

Virtual food banking means directly connecting those with surplus food to those that need it using technology. It significantly reduces the time and cost of collecting surplus food, enabling more frequent collections, rescuing more food, feeding more people and allowing beneficiaries to create direct relationships with food donors. It can have a transformational impact on food systems resilience and food insecurity in low or middle income countries.

- Provision for investment in virtual food banking in countries that Ireland supports through our development aid budget.

#### Why?

- Virtual food banking aligns with Ireland's obligation under Agenda 2030 and A Better World, to support lower and middle income countries.
- It also supports Food Vision's 2030 aim to be a leader in sustainable food systems, with an innovative, competitive and resilient agrifood sector, driven by technology and talent.
- It strengthens food systems in countries facing acute food insecurity and climate breakdown.

### 3. Investment in food redistribution and FLW reduction measures

- Meaningfully resource the 38 actions outlined in the National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap.
- Support grants for transport, cold storage, and food redistribution infrastructure for charities and community groups.
- Support for the creation of a coalition of food businesses, researchers, solution providers and other food systems stakeholders for concerted action, with a platform that can harness the power of collaboration, knowledge sharing, technology and data to create efficiencies, synergies and solutions for FLW reduction.

#### Why?

- We must maximise all opportunities to reduce food waste and facilitate synergies and an amplification effect, to enable Ireland to deliver on its core obligation under UN SDG 12.3.

### 4. Policy support for food redistribution

- Drive amendments to EU and Irish tax law to permit VAT relief and tax relief on food donations. Recognise the social value of surplus food redistribution by allowing businesses to offset the cost of food donations and the associated logistics in a similar manner to how cash donations are treated.
- Accelerate EU reforms on date labelling and support an Irish campaign to clarify for households the meaning of best before dates.
- Provide for the Good Samaritan food donor, in addition to our existing food safety guidelines. Produce clear legal guidance to support businesses wishing to donate food they cannot sell.
- Amend procurement systems to mainstream the use of nutritious surplus food in poverty prevention and healthy eating programmes like school meals, early learning and care services and meals on wheels.

#### Why?

- These measures would remove some fiscal and legal barriers to food donation and redistribution while fostering a more sustainable food system.