

# A Stocktaking of Food Loss and Waste Policies: France

The analysis grid introduced in *A Stocktaking of Food Loss and Waste Policies* (OECD, 2025<sup>[1]</sup>) has been applied to describe and analyse the national policymaking process in France.

The French case study analysis is based on information provided by the French Government through the 2023 OECD questionnaire, as well as subsequent interviews with government focal points. Specifically, the Food Policy Bureau of the General Directorate for Food (DGAL) at the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty contributed France's input to this stocktaking exercise.

## France and FLW policymaking: Key insights

- France has committed to reduce food loss and waste (FLW) by 50% in retail and collective catering by 2025 (compared to year 2015) and by 50% in the remaining stages by 2030 (compared to year 2015).
- France integrates the primary sector in the scope of measurement and policy efforts to reduce FW. France evaluates the effectiveness of measures in the primary sector.
- France is actively engaged in numerous global initiatives and bilateral cooperation on FW reduction.
- Through time the elements of the National Pact to Fight Food Waste have been reviewed and revised through legislation to further their impact; the scope of the instruments has been widened to cover more stages and business types.
- France mobilises efforts to reduce FLW to also fight against food insecurity

## Context

France's approach to reducing FLW is characterised by the setting of ambitious sector-specific reduction targets that span across the entire food chain, with an expedited reduction trajectory in retail and collective catering. The French national policy to fight against food waste is based on a combination of several levers: incentives, legislative arsenal, and a territorial approach. The territorial approach is based on territorial networks dedicated to the fight against food waste (known as REGAL) and on Territorial Food Projects (*Projets Alimentaires Territoriaux* – PAT) that were set up in 2014. These projects aim to bring agricultural production closer to the consumer with an emphasis on the fight against food waste. <sup>1</sup> Other unique aspects of the French approach include the specific policy focus for FLW reduction on the fight against food insecurity and for improved diets. In that context, the French Government enacted a progressive broadening of existing policies to cover more stages and more business types.

Key basic elements of France's approach to FLW reduction are summarised in Table 1. France uses a Food Waste denomination defined by law (Legifrance, 2020<sup>[2]</sup>) and codified in the Environment Code (Legifrance, 2020<sup>[3]</sup>). It covers any part of food intended for human consumption that is lost, thrown away or degraded – irrespective of the stage of the food chain. Of the many global and regional FLW initiatives documented in this report, France takes part mainly in the FAO Voluntary Code of Conduct; participates and reports to the Technical Platform on the Measurement and Reduction of Food Loss and Waste (FLW Platform); the ISO Standardization Committee on Food Loss and Waste; and as a member of both the G20 MACS Initiative and relevant G7 working processes on the subject.

France further engages closely in relevant EU frameworks, alongside other EU Members, under the auspices of the EC: the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste, the EU Food Loss and Waste Prevention Hub, and the Citizens' Panel on Food Waste. France also exchanges on FLW aspects under various bilateral cooperation projects.

**Table 1. Key elements of France's approach to policymaking on FLW**

		Food supply chain stages							
		Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6	Stage 7	Stage 8
		Primary agricultural production (on farm)	Agricultural handling & storage	Food processing & packaging	Wholesale	Retail	Hospitality & food services (commercial catering)	Public food procurement (collective catering)	Private households
Denomination		Food Waste							
Measurement*		Food Waste							
National Targets by Law 2020-105**	Baseline 2015	50% by 2030	50% by 2030	50% by 2030	50% by 2030	50% by 2025	50% by 2030**	50% by 2025	50% by 2030
Evaluation	Effectiveness								
	Impact								

Note: Blue cells represent the stages covered by the FW denomination (Denomination) and by FW measurement obligations (Measurement) and by evaluation exercises in terms of actual FLW reduction (Effectiveness) \* Measurement covers all stages post-harvest. \*\*Applies to "collective eating".

Source: France's input to the OECD Stocktaking of Food Loss and Waste Reduction Policies, 2023-24.

## **Ambition, Commitment and Policy implementation: France has ambitious sector-specific reduction targets and mobilises FLW reduction to fight food insecurity**

As presented in Table 2, France's first approach to reduce FLW was set up in 2013 through the National Pact to Fight Food Waste (hereafter the Pact), an official body for voluntary commitment (Agriculture Ministry, 2017<sup>[4]</sup>). A first quantification of FW was published by ADEME in 2016 (Table 2). Since then, each year new measures are introduced or broadened, with ever more stringent enforcement, in the context of the European food waste level reporting exercise.<sup>1</sup> The Pact itself was renewed in 2017 and FW was also integrated in the 2018 Egalim Law (Legifrance, 2018<sup>[5]</sup>) and the 2020 national Anti-Waste and Circular Economy Law (AGEC) (Legifrance, 2020<sup>[2]</sup>) respectively. France has committed to reduce FLW by 50% in Retail and Collective catering by 2025 (compared to year 2015) and by 50% in the remaining stages by 2030 (compared to year 2015) (Table 3).

As mentioned above, efforts to mobilise FW reduction to overcome food insecurity (precarity) were initiated in 2016, with the Garot Law requiring targeted retail businesses to offer a partnership to food aid associations (Legifrance, 2016<sup>[6]</sup>) and extended to other targeted actors of the food chain (collective

catering, agri-food industries and wholesalers respectively) with the implementation of the Egalim and AGECE laws. France takes particular interest in the quality of donations by making it compulsory for donators to set up a donation quality management plan to ensure quality, involving staff training and awareness-raising and by introducing procedures for monitoring and controlling the quality of donations.

**Table 2. Timeline of France’s policy development on FLW**

2008	<i>Waste Framework Directive (WFD) (EU, 2008<sup>[7]</sup>)</i>
2013	1 <sup>st</sup> National Pact to Fight Food Waste (Voluntary Commitment), setting up Regional Networks (REGAL). Renewed in 2017.
2015	Requirement for public collective catering to plan food waste reduction <i>Circular Economy Action Plan</i>
2016 Garot Law	Hierarchy of actions to fight against food waste enshrined in Law Requirement to propose a donation partnership with food aid associations and ban of destruction of edible food in Retail, extended to collective catering and food processing (2018 Egalim Law) and to Wholesale (2020 AGECE law) 1 <sup>st</sup> Quantification of FW (ADEME)
2018 Egalim law	Requirement to apply a donation quality management plan in Retail. Reinforced (2020) by introducing quality monitoring and control procedures Requirement to carry out a FW diagnosis and to set up a prevention action plan. Extended to private collective catering. Extended to Food processing (2020 AGECE law) Requirement for Hospitality and Food services to offer recyclable or reusable “doggy bag” containers to take away uneaten food (entry into force in 2021). <i>Revised Waste Framework Directive (EU, 2018<sup>[8]</sup>)</i>
2019	<i>Delegated decision supplementing WFD (EU, 2019<sup>[9]</sup>)</i>
2020 AGECE law	Food Waste delineated by Law Reduction targets fixed by Law "Anti-Food Waste" label Announced Requirements on food donation quality plans strengthened Coordination Committee to Fight Food Precarity setup (COCOLUPA) <i>Farm to Fork Strategy</i>
2021	Entry into force of the obligation to offer a “doggy bag” for commercial catering. Revision of food donation requirements for Processing, Collective catering and Distribution industries
2022	Setting up a national experiment to assess the solutions for reserving meals in collective catering. Proposal for additional information to be added to the minimum durability dates of products marketed in France to clarify consumption dates
2023	Publication of the anti-waste label requirements for the Distribution sector. To be published for Catering (2024), Food industry (2025) and Primary industry (2025-26) Contribution to the revised European Waste Framework Directive, including legally binding targets for FW reduction Contribution to the revised European Regulation on provision of Food Informations to Consumers
Forthcoming	National Strategy for Food Nutrition and Climate (preparation underway) 2025: 50% reduction in Distribution and food services (collective catering)

Note: Key policy milestones in the European Union are represented in italic.

Source: France’s input to the OECD Stocktaking of Food Loss and Waste Reduction Policies, 2023-24.

**Table 3. Food waste baseline in France, 2016 data**

	Food supply chain stages				
	Stages 1 & 2	Stage 3	Stages 4 & 5	Stages 6 & 7	Stage 8
	Primary agriculture	Food processing & packaging	Distribution	Hospitality & food services	Private households
2016 estimates (Million tonnes)	3.2	2.1	1.4	1.4	1.9
2016 share of total wasted food (%)	32%	21%	14%	33%	

Source: ADEME (2016<sup>[10]</sup>).

As part of its commitment to overcome food precarity and to improve the quality of food aid (including fresh and healthy products), funds attributed to food aid associations under the “Better food for all” programme could then be mobilised for direct purchase on farms and hence include fresh products. (Solidarity Ministry, 2023<sup>[11]</sup>). Eleven public-led regional networks REGAL implement a FW reduction programme at the local level through knowledge-sharing and advocacy (Agriculture Ministry, 2024<sup>[12]</sup>). The Ministry of Labour, Health, and Solidarities monitors the reporting of food donation amounts through the information system on food aid setup by the national statistical office (Solidarity Ministry, 2021<sup>[13]</sup>).

## **Policy effectiveness: Mechanisms to improve the impact of FLW policy instruments through policy evaluation**

The National Pact to Fight Food Waste is the overarching FLW programme in place in France. It sets a framework for voluntary commitments to fight food waste. The governance of the Pact lies with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty (hereafter, Agriculture Ministry) with contributions from several other ministries, including education, solidarity, environment, and finance. Through time, the elements of the Pact have been reviewed to further their impact.

Evaluations and consultative processes have brought to light implementation flaws that have been addressed with instruments' revisions. For example, the requirement for targeted businesses to propose a donation partnership with food aid associations has been tailored to consider the territorial absence or lack of capacity of such associations. This requirement was also made more stringent to ensure donation quality with compulsory food donation's quality plans.

Elements of the Pact were revised and taken up in different legislations. The scope of instruments has been widened to cover more stages and business types (Legifrance, 2018<sup>[14]</sup>; Environment Ministry, 2024<sup>[15]</sup>). A new national strategy for food, nutrition and climate is currently being developed with all the ministries concerned. It aims to establish the roadmap for food policy up to 2030. The fight against food waste will play a key role in this new strategy.

As instruments become more stringent, labelling is mobilised to give visibility and promote business achievements. The National anti-food waste label was announced in 2020 and implemented for the Distribution sector in 2023 (Environment Ministry, 2023<sup>[16]</sup>). Three levels are foreseen, ranging from Aware (1 star), attributed to businesses that take holistic actions to reduce their food waste, to Exemplary (3 stars) attributed to businesses that have an action plan and have proven their lasting commitment in food waste reduction. In August 2024, 55 businesses had qualified for 3 stars with special distinction, 17 for 3 stars, ten had qualified for 2 stars, and three businesses were granted 1 star (Environment Ministry, 2024<sup>[17]</sup>).

France evaluates the effectiveness of measures in the primary agricultural sector. This requires the assessment of quantities of food wasted on farms. As is the case in other European Union member states, food waste levels in the primary production sector (post-harvest) are assessed as part of the mandatory European reporting of food waste levels. Different methods are used, and several actors mobilised to quantify on-farm food waste (Table 4).

**Table 4. Methodologies to quantify on farm food waste in France**

Lead	Scope	Method
Agriculture Ministry	Surveys of farming practices	Survey
INRAE	Production and Consumption	Use of food loss coefficients (INRAE, 2015), associated with 2020 production intended for human consumption
Agriculture Ministry	Estimating avoidable waste	Estimate based on coefficients from the Norden study (2016)
INRAE	Animal valorisation	
INRAE	Share of production intended for human consumption	Coefficient

Source: France's input to the OECD Stocktaking of Food Loss and Waste Reduction Policies, 2023-24.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> There are currently 449 PATs in France (Agriculture Ministry, 2024<sub>[18]</sub>).

<sup>1</sup> Commission Delegated Decision EU 2019/1597 of 3 May 2019 supplementing Directive 2008/98/EC.

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