



CONCEPT NOTE

Advancing Circular Food Systems through Actions on Reducing Food Waste

Webinar | 28 October 2026 | 04:00 PM – 05:00 PM IST

Food waste is one of the most pressing challenges in India's food system, undermining access to nutritious food, reducing economic efficiency and threatening environmental sustainability. Globally, around 30% of food produced (1.3 billion tonnes annually) is lost or wasted¹. Household food waste is estimated at 55 kg per capita per year, amounting to approximately 78.2 million tonnes annually, enough to feed 377 million people².

Beyond households, significant quantities of food waste are generated across food service, hospitality, retail and institutional settings. As cities expand and food consumption patterns evolve, addressing food waste requires action across the value chain, supported by effective measurement, enabling policies, appropriate infrastructure and innovative solutions.

A circular approach to food waste follows the waste hierarchy, prioritising the prevention and reduction of food waste at source, followed by the recovery and redistribution of surplus food, and the productive use of unavoidable food waste through appropriate circular pathways. Realising this approach requires coordinated action across businesses, city governments, solution providers, research organisations and civil society, the World Circular

¹ FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture 2019. Moving Forward on Food Loss and Waste Reduction*. Rome.

² UNEP, *Think Eat Save: Tracking Progress to Halve Global Food Waste. Food Waste Index Report 2024*.

Economy Forum (WCEF) has highlighted the importance of transforming food systems as part of the global transition to a circular economy.

Cities have a critical role to play in creating an enabling environment for this transition. City-level policies, targets, measurement systems, public-private partnerships, procurement approaches and waste management infrastructure can create the conditions for food waste prevention and resource recovery at scale. At the same time, businesses, particularly hotels and other food service establishments, can drive measurable reductions through better tracking of food waste, operational changes, staff engagement, procurement and menu planning, and improved management of surplus and unavoidable food waste.

The second webinar in the **Food Forward 2026** series, '*Advancing Circular Food Systems through Actions on Reducing Food Waste*', will contribute to the discussions advanced through the **World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF) 2026**. Organised by WRI India's **Friends of Champions 12.3 India Network**, in collaboration with **WRAP UK and C40 Cities**, the webinar will bring together perspectives from cities, the hospitality sector and innovators to explore practical approaches for reducing food waste and advancing circular food systems.

The discussion will focus on three interconnected areas:

- City-level policy and action: How cities can develop enabling policies, targets, measurement frameworks, partnerships and systems that support food waste prevention and circular management.
- Measurement and strategies for hotels: How hotels can measure and monitor food waste, identify key sources and hotspots, and translate data into operational strategies that reduce waste while improving resource efficiency and business performance.
- Innovation for circular food waste management: How innovative technologies, business models and partnerships can enable the recovery and productive use of unavoidable food waste, while strengthening linkages between food businesses, solution providers and city waste management systems.

The webinar will highlight emerging approaches and practical examples from India, while identifying opportunities to strengthen collaboration and accelerate implementation across cities and food businesses.