Preventing food waste: innovation and solution in the Arab region

Food Waste in West Asia – an Overview

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Background

- **One-third** of global food production is lost or wasted **every year** along the supply chain from farm to fork. It could feed more than 12% of the global population, lifting them out of hunger and malnutrition.

- Food loss and waste
  - Food waste exacerbates **food insecurity** and burdens waste management systems
  - Nearly a billion tonnes of food went into the waste bins of households, retailers, and food service outlets in 2019.

- Food security
  - Food loss and waste uses labour, capital, fertilizers, pesticides, water, land and energy resources in vain, generating **8%** of global greenhouse gas emissions, impacting biodiversity, costing governments, businesses and households nearly a trillion US dollars.

- Environmental, Social, and economic impacts
  - Growing population, water scarcity, dependence on food import, worsening of biodiversity indicators, political instability and conflicts must put **food security** in the very focus of Arab region agenda
  - Food waste in West Asia is alarming as it is estimated to be about **34%** of the food served.
  - Studies in the region show significant per capita amount of household food waste, with 100-150 kg/cap yearly generated

- Food security in Arab States
  - Arab countries has unique features from its culture, religion, history, generating significant amounts of food waste over short periods.
  - During Ramadan research shows that from **25%** to **50%** of the food prepared is wasted.
Reduce food waste in Arab States, minimizing the impacts on human health and environment, to achieve SDGs and generating inclusive green growth opportunities to build back better.
FAO and UNEP mandates are complementary along the food value chain, and synergies between the two organizations are key to achieve the ambitious targets set by the 2030 Agenda.
Tracking Progress on SDG 12.3

By 2030, ... reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses.

...halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels.

Custodians of 12.3 indicators:
FAO & UNEP

Food Loss Index - focus on supply

Food Waste Index - focus on demand

12.3.1 (a) Food Loss

12.3.1 (b) Food Waste
UNEP Food waste initiatives in West Asia

Raising awareness and education

Capacity building and knowledge exchange

Influence policy initiatives and trigger actions

The region is diverse in terms of national needs. UNEP supports the countries to tailor solutions and shape proper strategies inspired by sustainability and inclusiveness.
## Benefit for countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>• Alignment with UN agenda 2030 (SDG12.3), build back better, sustainable lifestyles</td>
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<td>Food security</td>
<td>• Social and economic access to safe and nutritious food to everyone, reduce food import needs</td>
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<td>Environmental protection</td>
<td>• Reduce climate change impact, biodiversity depletion, and pollution risks</td>
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<td>Waste management and circular economy</td>
<td>• Reduce landfill needs, reduce organic waste, reduce operational costs for waste management (collection, disposal), circular organic waste treatment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business opportunities</td>
<td>• Inclusive Green Innovation and sustainable opportunities for SMEs and start ups. The connection between rural and urban areas could also be key and circular models may play a major role.</td>
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State of Food Waste in West Asia

- The report will be launched in few weeks
- Following the publication of the Food Waste Index 2021 report (UNEP 2021), this report dives into the challenges of the West Asia region.

Food waste facts

17% of food is wasted at consumer level and an estimated 690 million people were hungry in 2019 - a number that is expected to rise sharply during and post COVID-19. (UNEP 2021)

Household food waste estimations in West Asia range from 75 to 163 kg/cap year. (UNEP 2021)

Regional insights

West Asia comprises 12 countries with income disparities.

The region has unique regional features related to its diverse culture, religion, history, and climate, impacting food waste generation over short periods. During Ramadan research shows that from 25%-50% of food prepared is wasted.

Saudi Arabia’s baseline study conducted by the Saudi Grains Organisation (SAGO 2019):
food loss and waste levels of around 33% throughout the food supply chain

- food loss estimated at 14.2%
- food waste estimated at 18.9%

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<tr>
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<th>Study area</th>
<th>Household food waste estimate (kg/capital)</th>
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<td>Lebanon</td>
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<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
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<td>SAGO 2019</td>
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State of Food Waste in West Asia

PERCEPTIONS OF FOOD WASTE GENERATION IN WEST ASIA: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

Based on what criteria do you decide to dispose of food items from your fridge or pantry at home?

How often did you use the leftovers in any way in your household each day?

How did COVID-19 pandemic affect your food waste generation?

I agree about the following statements:
State of Food Waste in West Asia

Recommendations:

• Measure baselines and report progress on SDG 12.3
• Improve knowledge and raise awareness to promote good practices
• Promote gender inclusive strategies across the food value chain
• Adopt appropriate policies and adopt an adequate regulatory framework
• Promote investments to adopt and transfer pertinent technologies
Sustainable Ramadan campaign

Stay tuned on our social media channels and website!
You can download and promote the campaign material at this link
Thank you

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