



Practice Abstract #3:

A Review of EU Food Waste Data, Methods and Transparency



WASTEWISE
Waste Avoidance Strategies for
Environmental Sustainability

Food waste reduction has become a strategic priority in the European Union, especially since the 2018 amendment of the EU Waste Framework Directive introduced a harmonised methodology for Member States to quantify food waste (Delegated Decision 2019/1957). The first full reporting cycle was completed in 2020–2021 and updated national data for 2022 are available on Eurostat. WASTEWISE run a comprehensive assessment of these 2022 submissions.

Official quality reports formed the starting point for the WASTEWISE analysis, supported by an extensive information-gathering effort. Because report quality varied considerably, an online questionnaire was circulated via the EU Platform on Food Loss and Waste and expanded through snowball sampling. Direct contacts with national ministries and statistical offices identified the experts responsible for food waste data collection, while 18 semi-structured interviews clarified aspects often missing from official submissions, including sampling and scaling-up strategies, data disaggregation, application of the Delegated Decision with regards to data collection methods and Annex selection. All information was compiled in a harmonised Excel matrix developed by the task partners, openly available on [Zenodo](#) and validated by Member States.

“Overall, special attention was given to sampling strategies and scaling approaches adopted by Member States, which remain among the most complex elements when applying Annex III methods”

Findings reveal that despite a shared methodological framework, implementation varied significantly across countries due to differences in the food supply chain, available resources, and interpretations of methodological details. These variations affected data quality and comparability, both among countries and (potentially) across time. Foremost, the results offer a concrete guidance for improving future monitoring efforts and refining the EU methodology: an essential step ahead of the introduction of binding EU food waste reduction targets in 2025.

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