

FOOD POLICY
Zero Food Waste Hub

KEY WORDS

Food waste, food aid, food access for all, circular economy

✓ **OBJECTIVES**

- To reduce food waste by engaging a diversity of local actors such as institutions, research centres, private sector, foundations and social actors.
- To offer innovative food assistance options for people in vulnerable situations by designing and experimenting a new model of collection and redistribution of food surpluses, based on local neighbourhood networks.

📄 **POLICY DESCRIPTION**

Reducing food waste is one of the priorities of the Milan Food Policy Area and that is being done through the engagement of a diversity of local actors and sectors, from institutions and research centres to the private and social sectors. In order to translate this priority into concrete actions, the City Council signed in 2016, an agreement for the initiative *Zero Sprechi* (Zero Food Waste Hub), with two partners: *Assolombarda* (a network of local businesses) and *Politecnico di Milano* (a public university) aiming at reducing food waste and innovating food assistance options for people in vulnerable situations, designing and testing a model for recovering and redistributing food surpluses based on local neighbourhood networks. In 2019 together with *Fondazione Cariplo* and *Programma QuBi* they launched the first Hub.

The Zero Food Waste Hub model allows to work with all types of collected food: fresh, dry, fruits, vegetables and bread. The hubs are equipped with a cellar for handling fresh food, shelves for dry and packaged food items and an administrative workstation. The use of vans equipped with a cold store allows surplus to be collected daily. Food from supermarkets is stored at the hubs to be prepared and redistributed, and food from company canteens (only done pre Covid) is directly distributed to non-profit organisations that offer a canteen service for people in vulnerable situations or can be collected directly at the hub. The project involves important large-scale distribution supermarkets and also companies canteens before Covid.

In addition, in 2021 the City Council and its partners launched "Foody Zero Sprechi": a replication of the food waste hubs at the Milan fruit and vegetable wholesale market. Currently, four hubs are operational at four different neighbourhoods: Isola (2019), Lambrate (2020), Gallarate (2021), Foody Zero Sprechi in the wholesale market (2022). A 5th will be opened in September 2022 in the city centre.

CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



The initial alliance was created in 2016 and the first pilot Hub was launched in 2019 in City Hall 9, Isola. Other three replications in other neighbourhoods (2020-2022), started with more partners involved. The initiative is still ongoing and a 5th Hub is planned for September 2022.

🏠 **DEPARTMENTS IN CHARGE**

Food Policy Area under the Education Department

Since 2022, the Food Policy Area is assigned to the Education Department. It covers many issues such as school canteens, agriculture and MUFPP (Milan Urban Food Policy Pact)

This is a transversal policy, involving several departments within the City Council.





KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Cariplo foundation

Milan Foundation

Programma QuBi

Assolombarda - Local companies network

SogeMI - Company managing wholesale food markets in Milan

Banca di Credito Cooperativo

University of Milan

Politecnico di Milano - Food sustainability observatory

Banco Alimentare della Lombardia - Food bank

Terre des Hommes Italia - NGO

Avis Milano - Association

Recup association

Italian red cross - milan committee

Other third sector entities that collect the food from the hubs

9 supermarkets with more than 20 collection points in the city

4 company canteens

ASPIRATIONAL QUANTITATIVE OBJECTIVES

9 Zero Food Waste Hubs in the 9 city neighbourhoods.

10 tonnes of food saved per month.

260,000 equivalent meals per year.

Overall aspiration of the food policies committed to The Barcelona Challenge:

<https://toolkit.thebcnchallenge.org/challenges/report/203>

€ BUDGET

There is no overall budget and every hub has its own, depending on its initial situation.

Initial support is needed to renovate the identified spaces for the hubs and to provide certain equipment such as the cellar, shelves, and a desk with a computer.

👤 BENEFICIARIES

3,800 people in vulnerable situations are reached every year.

CRITICAL POINTS

There is not a unique way to set up a hub and it needs to be adapted to local needs. Therefore, it is crucial to undertake an initial diagnosis to better understand the context of the action and to identify the involved actors. A continuous monitoring and follow-up of the project that integrates revisions and updates when needed is also key.

The identification of an appropriate place for the hub also appears to be critical, so all the organisations can easily access it and the collecting point is not too far away. Another important aspect is to maintain the process at the local level and to keep the hubs close to collection and distribution points.

OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

It is necessary to support partners to increase their capacity to manage the hubs. When problems arise, support is needed.

The City Council has to coordinate the whole process regularly and keep an updated programme, holding specific and frequent meetings for the partners.

STRENGTHS AND SUCCESS POINTS

A strength of the initiative is the creation of a network of diverse actors and also its effectiveness, thanks to the competencies and skills by the involved actors on methodology and technical issues regarding food waste management. Another positive aspect is the increased capacity of Milan City Council to involve new actors in each new hub and to maintain a cooperative environment in them. Also the visibility generated for the partners involved in the hubs.

A success point is the capacity to scale the initiative from a pilot project to four hubs and the ability to be aware of the districts' needs and adapting and improving the hubs through the years to better respond to them. Other aspects are the capacity to involve new services, such as education and social services, to work towards sustainable and healthy diets; the action in the wholesale market, transforming food waste into animal feed; and the fact that food hubs become places for innovation through good practices.



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FURTHER INFORMATION

Milan Food Waste Hubs

Video Arte: Italie, stop au gaspillage alimentaire

The earth shot prize: winner the city of Milan Food Waste Hubs