

A person wearing a black glove is holding a can of Campbell's soup. The background shows a food distribution area with many other cans and bags of food. The text "CHORIZO PROJECT" is overlaid on the image.

CHORIZO PROJECT

Deliverable 4.1

ACTOR SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

**FOOD REDISTRIBUTION AND
DONATION**

D4.1 Actor specific guidance – Food redistribution and donation

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Glossary of terms and acronyms

Acronym/Term	Description
FLW	Zero Food Loss & Waste
HFBA	Hungarian Food Bank Association
HoReCa	Hotels, restaurants and caterers (including institutional catering)
MOA	Motivation, Opportunity, Ability (framework)
SN	Social norm(s)

Table 1: Glossary of terms and acronyms

1. About this guidance: how to work with social norms to reduce FLW through food redistribution and donation

1.1. Background to the guidance

The idea of food banks is an important component of strategies to reduce food waste. In this document we summarise the findings from the CHORIZO project for this important sector and share suggestions of how food banks can work with social norms in their own context. CHORIZO (Changing practices and Habits through Open, Responsible, and social Innovation towards ZerO food waste) is a project co-funded by the Horizon Europe programme that aims to improve the understanding of the links between social norms, consumer behaviours, decisions of economic actors and food loss and waste (FLW) generation, and to use this knowledge to improve the effectiveness of decision-making and engagement of food chain actors, towards zero food waste. The project's main goal is to address existing research gaps and enable actors to use its outcomes to deliver and advance innovations helping a range of actors to engage more effectively in food waste prevention and reduction activities.

What are social norms?

In the CHORIZO project, we understand social norms as the unwritten rules and expectations which guide people's behaviour within a society or group. In the context of food waste and loss, social norms influence individual attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours related to food consumption, preservation and disposal.

Figure 1: What are social norms? Description from CHORIZO Deliverable 3.1 "Conceptual framework for behavioural change understanding" (2023), p15

This document is part of a series of actor-, context- and gender-specific guidance resources which have been developed from the research findings in the project. It is aimed at supporting actors in different contexts to be equipped with the knowledge to work with social norms to reduce food loss and waste generated by related target groups. Redistribution and donation systems, and in particular food banks, have been found to be important levers of change and as a result in this document we focus on the part of the findings from the CHORIZO project's research activities that can be used in this context. We have combined our findings with wider knowledge and the Academy of Change approach¹ to produce this guidance aimed at actors in European food banks.

1.2. The purpose of this guide and how to read it

Would you like to reduce food loss and waste (FLW) through your city's food redistribution system? Do you have the motivation and the opportunities to do so? Do you already have plans for activities in your food bank that focus on sustainable food practices? Then you are in the right place! This document aims to assist you in your food redistribution strategy and planning efforts and to increase your capability to take action effectively in food banks, by providing you with knowledge on *social norms* in your context and a how to include this knowledge in a step-by-step guide to implement a FW reduction intervention. Changing social norms, as you

¹ The Academy of Change (AoC) (<http://aochange.org/>) is a capacity building programme first created by the Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP) and Behaviour Change (<https://behaviourchange.org.uk/>), initially funded by the KR Foundation, to support organisations to develop behaviour change interventions.

will read also further in this document, is an impactful tool in reducing food waste. Using social norms in your planning and implementation of interventions makes them even more effective in reducing FLW.

This guide will equip you with practical knowledge on how to work with **social norms** - unwritten rules which influence people's everyday behaviour - to reduce FLW, in a knowledge process illustrated in **figure 2**.

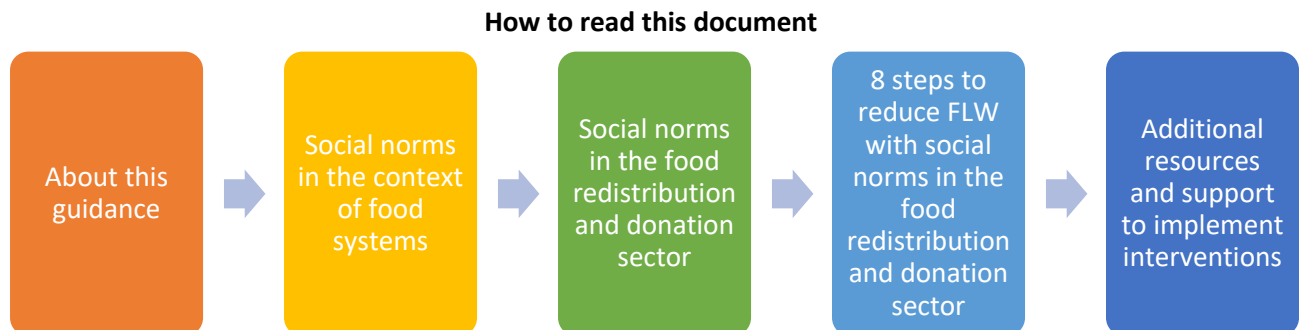


Figure 2: How to read this document - illustration of the structure of the guidance document.

Section 2 of this guide equips you with background information to **learn** about social norms (**section 2.1**) and how they affect FLW in the many different ways in the food redistribution system (**section 2.2**).

Section 3 provides tangible examples of how social norms affect FLW in the food redistribution and donation sector. Even better, you will learn how others have also designed interventions to change social norms and behaviour to save precious food. Then, you are ready to **identify** different kinds of social norms which are relevant to your context and start your own interventions!

Section 4 is designed to support you to easily **plan, design, implement and evaluate** your own interventions to reduce FLW. The presented 8 step guide to reduce food waste includes insights into social norms. This includes **evaluating** your own interventions to understand the impact and improvement potentials to continue to tackle FLW with social norms

Section 5 represents a resource library, sharing further insights on social norms and behaviour change approaches and interventions that might serve as an additional inspiration.

Where should I start reading?

- For those *new to how to conduct an intervention towards food waste reduction*, the whole document should be of high interest to you.
- For those *new to the concept of social norms* and how to use them in a FLW context, we also suggest following the guide from start to finish to understand how to enrich your current practice with new insights. (You might already work with 6-steps to implement your FW intervention, look out for the additional 2 steps we have added in **section 4!**)
- If you *already have experience in using social norms* in your context, but would like to hear more about the findings of the CHORIZO project in your field, we suggest to start with **sections 2.2 and 3**. Also check the two additional tips in the 8-step guide presented in **section 4**.

2. Social norms in the context of food systems

2.1. What are social norms?

Social norms are unwritten rules which influence people's everyday behaviour. They can do so in two ways.

On the one hand, people might behave a certain way because they see other people doing a certain thing. For instance, a child may not eat their vegetables in the school lunch break, because they see other children leaving their salad on the plate as well. This behaviour of copying what most people do in the same situation is called a descriptive social norm.

On the other hand, people might behave a certain way because they think that others expect them to act like this. For instance, a person might no longer be hungry but still finish their plate, since they think that otherwise they might be perceived as being rude. These people thereby react to what they think is a rule of what is acceptable - which is called an injunctive social norm.

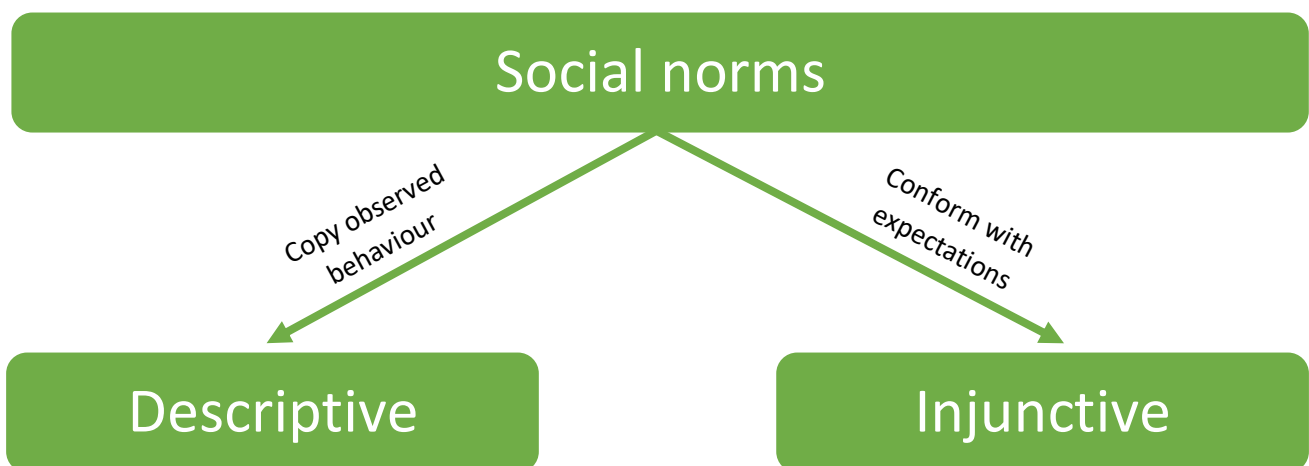


Figure 3: Descriptive and injunctive social norms

Norms can be static – based on a current situation – or dynamic – articulating a behavioural movement in one way or another.

Whichever type or combination - descriptive or injunctive, and static or dynamic - social norms can be seen as a powerful tool for change. The above examples - of a person eating more than they need to in order to finish their plate of food, and of a child not eating vegetables - show social norms that lead to more food waste. See **figure 4** for a range of different examples of social norms.

Now imagine the possible impact by changing behaviours of several people towards creating social norms which favour less FLW. Learning about social norms can support you in developing different interventions to achieve a more desirable behaviour.

This guidance will help you to design your own interventions to drive change using social norms.

Examples of different types of social norms

To illustrate different types of social forms, here are some examples of social norms communication about how to deal with leftovers in a household context:

- "75% of households reuse leftovers" is a **descriptive norm**.

- "Reusing leftovers for other dishes is regarded as good housekeeping" is an **injunctive norm**.
- "Most people reuse leftovers" is an example of **static framing**.
- "More people reuse leftovers every year" is an example of **dynamic framing**.

Figure 4: Examples of different types of social norms

How do social norms fit within human behaviour overall?

Besides social norms, there are many other aspects influencing human behaviour. To better understand the degree to which social norms influence our behaviour, the CHORIZO Project has combined an agent-based decision model (HUMAT) with a behavioural psychological model (MOA). The MOA framework, first designed for marketing purposes (Rothschild, 1999), was adapted to analyse Motivation, Opportunity and Ability (MOA) factors affecting food waste behaviour for the EU Refresh project². The HUMAT model is used for modelling actor decision making and so is not referred to in this document. If you would like to learn more about the model and how it is used in the CHORIZO research, this can be found in the project's Conceptual framework for behavioural change understanding³.

The MOA framework is used throughout the CHORIZO project and in this document to understand on the one hand what hinders behaviour change, and on the other hand how interventions to reduce FLW can overcome these barriers.

In the MOA framework, aspects of motivation, opportunity and ability combine to determine if and how a person behaves in any given situation. In line with behavioural change scientists, we believe, that behavioural change is based on an interplay of these three factors. In this model, social norms come under the motivations category, meaning that, combined with attitudes and awareness, the level of motivation of an individual will be developed. For example, in the case of using up leftover food, if someone is aware that leftovers can safely be eaten (awareness), believe that they should reuse leftovers in order to save food (attitude), and see others cooking with leftovers (social norm), overall they are likely to have a strong *motivation* component towards their behaviour. In order for the person to actually behave in this way, however, there will also need to be the *opportunity* for them to do so (e.g. time to prepare the leftovers, the right cooking/storage equipment) and the *ability* to enact the behaviour (e.g. knowledge of a recipe to re-use the leftovers they have and the appropriate cooking skills to successfully prepare the meal). **Figure 5** sets out a visualization of the model and its components.

² <https://www.eu-refresh.org/>

³ CHORIZO Deliverable 3.1, available at <https://chorizoproject.eu/deliverables-repository/>

Consumers Food Waste Model

Adapted from Van Geffen et al., 2016 and CHORIZO D3.1 Conceptual Framework for behavioural change understanding, (2023), p12

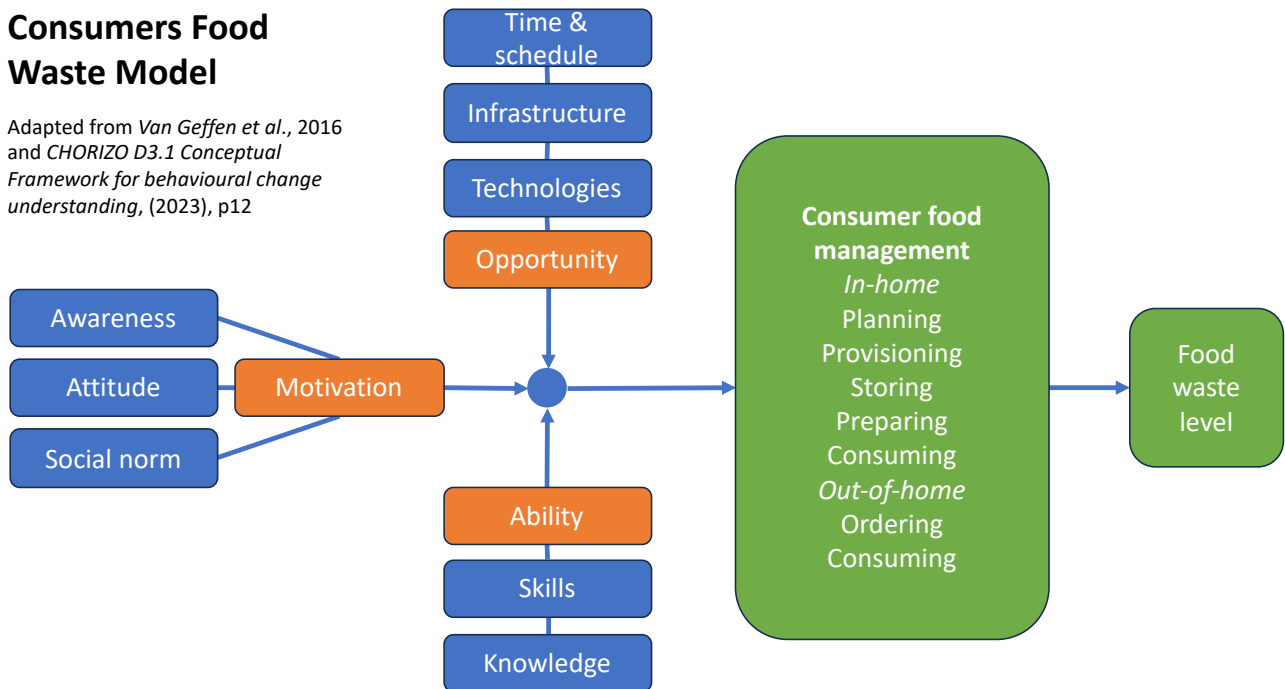


Figure 5: Consumers Food Waste Model, illustrating the MOA framework (including social norms) in the context of food waste behaviours (source: see figure)

Aspects of background, demographic or identity may affect the factors influencing behaviour of your target group members. In particular, gender may have an impact on the MOA. While CHORIZO research on FLW prevention actions did not find any existing interventions specifically designed to systematically incorporate the gender dimension (see Chapter 6 in Deliverable 1.2 *Evidence-based Analysis of Food Loss and Food Waste (FLW) Prevention Actions* for further information), we know that social norms can be differently developed or perceived by individuals depending on their gender. For example, there may be social norms in which gender affects who is expected to conduct food shopping, meal planning and cooking in the household. Additionally, CHORIZO case study research has identified some differences between genders in terms of perceived social norms and behaviours around food loss and waste. Relevant findings on gender are further discussed in **section 2.2**.

Of course, human behaviour is not deterministic. The existence of social norms does not necessarily mean that we also behave to conform with these norms. While some norms are helpful, others can lead to unhelpful outcomes (leading to negative societal, environmental or for other impacts).

If you would like to learn more about the models used in the CHORIZO project research, we suggest reading the Conceptual framework for behavioural change understanding⁴.

2.2. Why are social norms relevant to food loss and waste in the food redistribution and donation sector?

An estimated 59 million tonnes of food are wasted annually in Europe⁵, highlighting a critical need for innovative and effective solutions to address this issue. Among these, the food redistribution and donation

⁴ CHORIZO Deliverable 3.1, available at <https://chorizoproject.eu/deliverables-repository/>

⁵ See https://food.ec.europa.eu/food-safety/food-waste_en

sector plays a pivotal role in reducing food waste by recovering surplus food and redirecting it to those in need for human consumption.

The potential for food waste reduction in food redistribution and donation arises from the significant quantities of surplus food generated at various stages of the food supply chain. In many locations in Europe, these food-redistribution and donation activities have been handled by NGO-type organizations and most of the time volunteer-based, for instance food banks. By capturing this surplus and redirecting it to food banks, a substantial portion of edible food can be saved from landfills and utilized to address food insecurity.

Food banks are non-profit organizations that collect, store, and distribute surplus food from donors such as retailers, manufacturers and HORECA actors to people in need through partner agencies like homeless shelters, food pantries, and community centres. Food banks serve as critical intermediaries between food surplus generators and communities in need and establish the social norms among stakeholders that help to reduce food waste. Food banks possess the infrastructure and logistics needed to safely collect, store, and distribute surplus food, as well as they partner with local charities to ensure that food reaches vulnerable populations.

The success of food redistribution initiatives often hinges on shifting social norms around food waste. By normalizing practices such as donating surplus food and valuing food as a precious resource, businesses can be motivated to participate in reducing food waste. Campaigns and educational efforts led by food banks and allied organizations can play a transformative role in fostering these behavioural changes.

In 2023, food banks across Europe distributed over 839,000 tonnes of food, providing support to 12.8 million people in need⁶. Despite this achievement, it accounts for only 3% of the total food waste generated in the food supply chain (excluding household waste)⁷. These numbers highlight the significant untapped potential for expanding food redistribution initiatives.

By addressing these challenges and opportunities, food banks and their partners can play a central role in building a more sustainable and equitable food system.

Relevance of social norms and FLW initiatives: example from CHORIZO partner the Hungarian Food Bank Association (HFBA)

Every company dealing with food has some degree of food surplus that could potentially be donated, for example:

- **Retailers:** mostly unsold bakery products, fruits and vegetables, left at the end of the day of the shelves of the stores
- **Food processing companies:** products in slightly damaged packaging, seasonal products after the seasons, products coming to close to expiration date, and wrong packaging therefore not possible to sell to food retail chains
- **Hospitality sector:** food surplus in hotels, restaurants, school canteens, event catering

⁶ See <https://www.eurofoodbank.org/our-mission-impact-values/>

⁷ See <https://www.eurofoodbank.org/our-mission-impact-values/>

Although awareness related to food waste and sustainability is growing in Hungary, food donation is still not an unequivocal solution. Currently approximately 10 000 tonnes of food are donated through and redistributed by Hungarian Food Bank (HFBA) annually⁸, but a multiple of this amount could be saved. HFBA currently has partnerships with about 150 companies, and there are still many more that could be involved. The members of the European Food Bank Federation (FEBA) have redistributed 840 000 tonnes of food in 2023 in 30 European countries⁹.

Figure 6: Relevance of social norms and FLW initiatives: example from CHORIZO partner the Hungarian Food Bank Association (HFBA)

Through CHORIZO research and food bank case study, several social norms have been identified that affect food donation. Social norms can have a number of impacts, both positive and negative. We have therefore made a distinction between those which may help the reduction of FLW in the context of redistribution and donation, and those which may be less helpful, instead supporting the increase of FLW. Interventions to reduce FLW can therefore work with and support helpful social norms, or try to enable target groups to move away from existing unhelpful norms.

Helpful social norms:

- In order to reduce the food safety concerns clear guidelines for effective storage and handling practices approved by National Food Chain Safety Office and established through donation chain should be better communicated to the donor companies. Social norms can be used in the way this information is communicated (also potentially in cooperation with the NFCSO), like “more and more companies are donating their food safely through the Food Bank”. In relation to the MOA Framework this solution can help increasing the capability and motivation.
- Awareness should be raised about the ultimate destination of the donations, how these donations help people in need, and the long-term social benefits of such actions. If companies better understand the social impact and importance of food donation and its effect on the corporate image, then it would help them changing their attitude toward surplus food donation.
- Finding and engaging "internal champions" - individuals within companies who are passionate about social causes – could influence immediate decisions and also play a key role in shaping the company's long-term strategies, fostering a more socially responsible and impactful approach to surplus food management. In MOA terms we would call this enabling the motivated employees and in social norms terms to uplift the in-group and make the behaviour appealing to people's identity.

Unhelpful social norms:

- The social norm of “better stay on the safe side” often blocks the donation process. The donated food has to be given to people in need and has to remain suitable for human consumption through the donation chain. Companies often have unjustified fear of potential legal consequences or negative public perception if the donated food was misused or did not meet safety standards. However, this mindset can often be shifted through effective long-term awareness campaigns that educate companies about food safety measures within the redistribution process¹⁰.

⁸ See <https://www.elelmiszerbank.hu/hu/eredmenyeink.html>

⁹ See <https://www.eurofoodbank.org/our-mission-impact-values/>

¹⁰ For example, through articles such as <https://www.flavournetwork.ca/article/10-foods-you-can-eat-after-the-expiry-date/>

- Decision makers in all food chain segments often feel the pressure of making profit, therefore they usually prioritize the immediate financial benefits of discounting surplus products over the longer-term, intangible benefits of donating the food, such as improved social image of the company. We see the injunctive norm here at place that “making profit is seen as good (and normal) practice”, and also the descriptive one of “many other companies prioritize profit over social impact”.
- Employees often experience value dissonances when their personal views on food surplus donations (“should do”) differ from their company's actions. Although personal beliefs in a fortunate scenario can have a significant impact on corporate decision-making.

Gender and social norms:

Although the CHORIZO food banks case study did not explicitly address gender and intersectional differences, there is a potential impact of gender when it comes to systems of redistribution and donation. Additionally, other intersectional differences, including age, socio-economic status, and geographical location, may influence the MOA of individuals when it comes to FLW behaviours.

3. Overview of relevant social norms in the food redistribution and donation sector

The table below sets out a number of social norms which are found in relation to questions in food redistribution and donation settings and examples of how these have been or could be used to reduce food loss and waste.

KEY QUESTIONS	SOCIAL NORM	EXAMPLE OF HOW THIS HAS BEEN/COULD BE USED TO REDUCE FLW
Are we sure about the quality of donated food	Better for reputation and legal issues to stay on the safe side: never compromise on food safety!	The donated food has to be and has to remain suitable for human consumption through the donation chain. The fear of the companies that there is going to be complain about donated food quality can be reduced with more detailed and thorough communication regarding the applied food safety actions.
Should we really redistribute to people in need	Businesses are cautious about collaborating with NGOs due to concerns over reliability	By presenting the organizations involved in the distribution and explaining the processes, accountability, and control mechanisms in place, we can reduce the perceived risk and increase the willingness to donate
What to do with food surplus?	All edible surplus food should be donated to people in need	Individual beliefs can influence decisions about donating food surplus within a company. Identifying and contacting the persons at companies who are committed

		to food donation can help accelerating the donation process
Business considerations or CSR?	Decision makers prioritize financial benefits over non-financial benefits such as social impact when donating food.	Decision-makers should receive detailed insights and feedback on where the donated food went and the impact it had on those who received it. If we can make social impact more measurable, there is an opportunity for non-financial impacts to become more 'competitive' in executive decision-making. It is equally important to communicate that surplus food is distributed to only those who otherwise will not have access to such food, as so business are not losing potential demand and their sell.
What is really the best alternative usage of food surplus	Utilizing food surplus for animal feed or biofuel production is equally beneficial as donating it.	Surplus food can be used not only for human consumption but also for feeding animals or producing biofuel. By widely promoting the hierarchy of food waste management and emphasizing that higher levels yield greater social impact, we can create opportunities to 'guide' efforts from lower levels toward donation.

Table 2: Social norms and how to address them: The table shows some of the key questions to ask, the social norms around and suggestions for how to do something about them

4. 8 steps to reduce food waste, including social norms insights in the food redistribution sector

Interventions, actions or just initiatives are words that is often used when organisations want to achieve more effective operations. For instance when they want to address food waste and when they want to move from one set of routines to a more effective one. Traditionally such attempts are organised as projects in order to make sure the participants know what to do what to achieve and how to measure whether the objectives are achieved. At research level such attempts are normally referred to interventions, but the approach can be used in practise as well and is a way for the organisation to make sure that goals are reached. An important part of interventions actions and initiatives is the inflation. Here we present a general model for that can be used as a recipe.

The following 8-step guide is designed to break down the process of designing and implementing a food waste reduction intervention into manageable steps. Based upon tried and tested expertise from the behaviour

change field, this approach is adapted from the Academy of Change framework¹¹ and combined with CHORIZO research findings, case study knowledge and examples from the wider food waste sector.

Figure 6 shows the order of the steps to reduce food waste. The CHORIZO additions relate to the steps 3 and 4, enabling the inclusion of social norm insights in the intervention. Once you have put your intervention in place following step 1-7 and evaluated its impact, steps 4 to 8 can be followed again in order to refine the process for continual improvements in effectiveness. If you already have interventions in place and would like to refine the social norms elements in the process, we suggest that you focus on step 3 onwards.

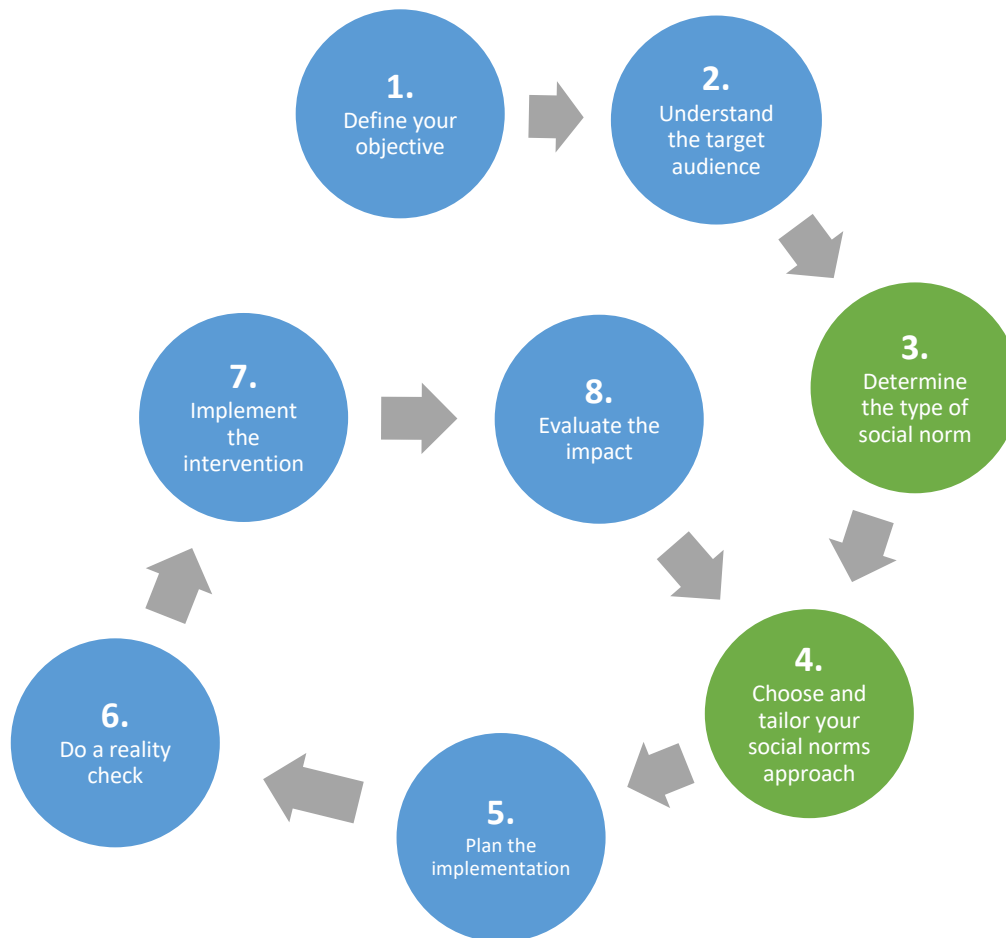


Figure 7: 8 steps to reduce food waste, including social norms insights (steps shown in green)

4.1. Step 1: Define your objective

In this first step, it's time to get clear about what exactly you aim to achieve with your intervention. To take action now, ask yourself the following critical questions:

What is the specific, tangible behaviour you're targeting?

¹¹ See <http://aochange.org/>

Try to first focus on one specific behaviour you want to target as this makes designing an intervention more manageable, as the scale is not too big. It is easier to dive into the factors surrounding one particular behaviour, than to try to analyse a complex system of behaviours. To ensure that you are focusing on a behaviour rather than an attitude, see **Figure 7** for an overview of the differences.

Attitude-Action-Gap of food waste activities

Consider if you are thinking of a behaviour or an attitude. An attitude of believing that we should only take what we can eat in a hotel breakfast buffet is different to the actual behaviour of not overfilling the plate in practice. Attitudes may support behaviour but often are not enough on their own to reduce FLW effectively. For instance, someone might care deeply about sustainability but still choose convenience over environmentally friendly options (e.g. buying multipacks of food products because there is a deal in the supermarket, while believing that we should only buy what we need to avoid waste). This is called the “attitude-action-gap”— the reality that people’s beliefs don’t always align with their behaviours, due to habits, social pressures, social norms or practical barriers. Recognizing this gap helps clarify whether influencing attitudes alone will achieve your goal or if your approach needs to address a behaviour directly.

Figure 8: Attitude-Action-gap of food waste activities

What influences your targeted, specific behaviour?

If you do have a specific, tangible behaviour in mind, then dive deeper—analyse the context around this behaviour. Map out the general influences, using a model like the MOA (see **figure 5** and **section 2.1**) to capture how various factors in the fields of motivation, opportunity and ability connect and impact upon your objective. Be specific and thorough; it will strengthen your intervention strategy. In this step, try to think in general terms about the MOA of this behaviour in society. In step 2, you will dive into the MOA of your target group more specifically.

How would you like to change the behaviour with your intervention?

Try crafting a clear, detailed objective: define exactly what you want to change in this behaviour and what the desired impacts should be. The more concrete you are, the easier it will be to follow the next steps effectively.

4.2. Step 2: Understand the target group

With this second step we dive even deeper into the context of the targeted behaviour to define and understand the target group you have in mind.

What do you know about your target group?

Remember the MOA Framework introduced in **figure 5**? You can use the framework to understand the motivations, opportunities and abilities of the targeted group. The following questions may help you to navigate the MOA framework by adding in specific considerations which are of relevance to your target group:

- What is your target group’s **motivation** to engage with a new behaviour or to elaborate a new social norm?
- Do the target group have the **opportunity** to take the action? Is there a supporting infrastructure in place, physically and socially?
- What **abilities** do they need in order to enact and establish the behaviour? Consider how existing skills and abilities may differ across a diverse target group.

If you are struggling to answer the questions above, further research on your target group may help. There may be existing evidence or knowledge from other actors in the sector (including, for example, CHORIZO project resources), or gathering your own additional data may support this understanding (e.g. through surveys or interviews with the target group).

Understanding the target group: example from HFBA

Based on HFBA's experience, the Horeca sector has both the ability and opportunity for food donations, but motivation remains a challenge. HFBA is well-acquainted with the sector's players, regularly attending and organizing events. Despite the prevalence of leftover food at these events, companies are often reluctant to donate due to concerns about food safety. To address this, HFBA can enhance motivation by sharing information on food safety measures and successful donation examples from other actors. This can be achieved through casual discussions, formal presentations, or by engaging a dedicated internal contact person within the companies.

Figure 9: Understanding the target group: example from HFBA

4.3. Step 3: Determine the type of social norm

Social norms are both a reflection of common behaviours within a group and powerful tools for driving change. Observing norms helps reveal what people already do or value, and strategically highlighting these behaviours can encourage broader adoption. Understanding which type of social norm you are working with will help to tailor your approach and therefore bring a FW intervention to the next level of impact.

Descriptive norms show widespread behaviours, such as "most households reuse leftovers" while *injunctive norms* reflect what a group considers the right action, like "our community values wasting less to protect resources". Deciding whether it will work best to use *static framing* around existing behaviours, like "Most people plan meals to avoid waste" versus *dynamic framing* around growing trends like "More people each year are joining the movement to reduce food waste" will make your message resonate even more.

Gather the information you have already brought together on the 1) target behaviour, 2) influences on the behaviour, 3) specific desired change in the behaviour through your intervention, and 4) the motivations, opportunities and (cap)abilities of your target group. With this information, consider the potential relation of social norms to each:

- 1) **Target behaviour** – is there already a relevant social norm mentioned in **section 3** which is known to relate to this kind of behaviour? If not, consider what else may be a norm in the context upon which you are focusing.
- 2) **Influences on that behaviour** – consider the environment in which the behaviour takes place. What are the factors which might affect whether someone behaves in this specific way or not?
- 3) **The desired change in the behaviour through your intervention** – consider whether the desired change is either a) a wish to make a certain behaviour itself a norm (e.g. taking home a 'doggy bag' of leftovers from a restaurant if you don't finish your meal), or b) influenced by social norms which exist around the behaviour and contribute to its uptake (e.g. the behaviour of over-providing for guests when hosting a dinner party is influenced by the social norm of a good host being seen as providing multiple different options and more food than is needed).

- 4) **The motivations, opportunities and (cap)abilities of your target group** – map out the MOA of your target audience (those who do/would conduct the behaviour in question) especially focusing on what motivates the target group to perform certain behaviour related to food waste. The social norms are the influencing factors to the motivation. Social norms are most likely to be found in the motivation section (see CHORIZO Deliverable 3.1 *Conceptual Framework for Behavioural Change Understanding* for further information).

With this information, you should have been able to identify a specific social norm or norms with which you can work, in order to change the desired behaviour (whether directly or indirectly).

At this point it is also important to be clear on whether the norm(s) are *helpful norms* which you are looking to support to have a bigger influence (e.g. those which already contribute to lower FLW behaviours but are not yet routine or mainstreamed in your target group) or *unhelpful norms* which reduce the likelihood of the FLW behaviour taking place (e.g. something which influences individuals towards another behaviour than the socially desirable one, or which makes the FLW behaviour less likely or impossible). Examples are given in **section 2.2**. By identifying this, you know whether your intervention should seek to a) build and support an existing social norm or norms, or b) change or reduce the influence of an existing social norm or norms.

4.4. Step 4: Choose and tailor your social norms approach

Now that you have identified social norms that can influence behaviour, it's time to design your intervention plan by choosing your approach. Referencing **sections 2.2 and 3** for additional evidence-based insights as you create your intervention plan. Using varied communication strategies—whether static, dynamic, or changing the ‘environment’—can help reinforce and spread desired behaviours (for more information see **section 4.5**).

To effectively use social norms to reduce food waste, consider these three approaches, how they can be used and the potential for tailoring, based on the CHORIZO project's learnings:

1. **Reinforce Existing Norms:** If an appropriate social norm around reducing waste already exists, emphasize it to strengthen commitment. Reminding people can for example happen like “most people in our community already avoid food waste” and can build on this established behaviour.
2. **Create New Norms Through In-Group Values:** When a norm is not yet present, it should be built by aligning it with in-group values. For instance, messaging like “In our community, we believe in reducing food waste to support sustainability” can shape waste reduction as part of the group's identity.
3. **Establish Norms via Environmental Cues:** Modify the environment to signal desirable behaviours. Visible prompts, such as signage promoting meal planning or providing compost bins, illustrate that reducing waste is common here, encouraging others to follow suit.

Tailoring your approach: example from HFBA

At the Association of Hungarian Event Organizers (AHEO), HFBA presented a case study of a pioneering donor, highlighting their donation process, food safety measures, and the social impact of their contributions. This initiative aimed to foster new norms within the group by leveraging shared values among the Association's members.

Figure 10: Tailoring your approach: example from HFBA

By tailoring these approaches—reinforcing, creating, and establishing norms—to specific communities and behaviours, social norms can inspire and drive lasting change in achieving zero food loss and waste.

4.5. Step 5: Plan the implementation

Now it is time to devise a plan for implementing the intervention by considering the following three **key Steps for Designing an Effective Plan**:

- 1. Define setting, delivery and timing:** Determine *where, how, when* and *by whom* your intervention will be communicated to the target group/audience. Find the best setting: in which location or situation can you get closest to the target behaviour? What is the right place and time to reach your target audience? Interventions can be targeted communication at points of action, appealing to people's identity, or altering the choice environment (the space or set of conditions in which they make a decision). When is your target audience most receptive? What are their relevant moments of change (e.g. is there a seasonal point when people already take action in this field)? Target locations where waste behaviours are most relevant—like meal prep areas or trash disposal points—and time your intervention when people are most receptive, such as before meals. How will you communicate your intervention? See **section 2.1** for the different ways in which norms can be expressed. Anticipate challenges and adapt plans as needed to overcome potential obstacles, such as practical barriers to running an intervention in a specific location, or the target group's lack of capacity to focus on something new at busy times of year.
- 2. Identify Tools and Add Fun Elements:** Use tools like *nudging, self-commitments, or gamification* to engage participants. For instance, place reminders near waste bins or introduce rewards for reducing waste. Make the initiative fun and memorable—use engaging visuals, creative prompts, or interactive elements to boost participation.
- 3. Collaborate for Greater Impact:** Team up with diverse partners to broaden reach and share resources. Collaborating with unexpected allies—like local businesses, schools, or community groups—can amplify the intervention's effectiveness and encourage a community-wide commitment to reducing waste.

Communicating an intervention: example from HFBA

The Association of Hungarian Event Organizers invited HFBA to present to their conference. The goal was to emphasize the importance of food donation and establish connections with potential new donors, with the aim of involving them in food donation initiatives in the future. During the presentation, we included a testimonial from the CEO of the pioneering partner and also officially appointed him as a Food Bank Ambassador.

Figure 11: Communicating an intervention: example from HFBA

By carefully coordinating these steps, your intervention can promote lasting change, making food waste reduction a shared, impactful effort.

4.6. Step 6: Do a reality check

Before launching your intervention, it's essential to do a reality check to ensure it is as effective and user-friendly as possible. This step helps identify any obstacles that could hinder participation and allows you to refine your approach for maximum impact.

1. **Make It Easy:** Simplify every step. Remove barriers, streamline interventions, and, if possible, eliminate unnecessary choices to guide participants naturally toward the desired behaviour.
2. **Choose Clear Language:** Use accessible, relatable language, avoiding overly technical or distant terms. Language should connect with the audience and reflect shared values, making it easy for others to support and spread.
3. **Did you think of everyone?** Consider whether your approach is truly inclusive. Are there potential biases, like assuming certain cultural norms or access to resources? Tailor your plan to include diverse perspectives (considering e.g. gender, disability, socio-economic background and other factors) and adapt it as needed to make sure no group is overlooked.

Doing a reality check: example from HFBA

Some HFBA colleagues reviewed a presentation prepared for a conference prior to the event, providing feedback on its clarity, engagement, and motivational impact.

Figure 12: Doing a reality check: example from HFBA

Conducting this reality check ensures your intervention is clear, simple, and inviting, ultimately making it more likely to achieve meaningful change by many people.

4.7. Step 7: Implement the intervention

Now it's time to bring your plan to life! Implementation is all about making your intervention visible, accessible, and impactful. To ensure your planned project reaches people effectively in the right place and at the right time, keep these steps in mind:

- **Prepare Your Resources:** Confirm locations, timing, and materials to make sure your messages and tools are available exactly where and when people need them.
- **Coordinate with Your Team:** Align everyone involved, so they're prepared to answer questions and make adjustments on the go. Plan in time for feedback talks.
- **Start with a pilot:** Testing in smaller settings first can reveal what works best, letting you refine and scale up smoothly.
- **Stay Flexible:** Watch how people respond, and be ready to adapt! If certain elements are more engaging than others, adjust your approach to enhance impact.

A well-implemented plan brings your ideas to action, helping people connect with the message and inspiring them to reduce food waste.

4.8. Step 8: Evaluate the impact

Evaluating impact is crucial to see if the action you took truly made a difference. This step focuses on measuring real behaviour changes and understanding the broader effects of your intervention.

Measuring change is always a crucial and important action in any intervention. Amount of food waste is easy to understand and is always a good measure. However it should be kept in mind that collecting data can be a tedious and challenging task. Therefore it's important to find easy ways to measure but also to think about the fact that there might be good proxies or indicators for the real amounts. Such proxies are often easier to measure through questionnaires and surveys and can include topics such as knowledge about the goals, skills to carry out the intended action, willingness to act or simply knowledge about the intervention program. Often it is a good idea to have more outcome measures to verify that the intervention is actually working.

Here's a guide to effective evaluation:

- **Define Key Metrics and Collect Evidence:** Set clear measures like waste volume reduction, participation rates, or uptake of new habits like meal planning. Combine this quantitative data with feedback to provide you a full picture.
- **Measure Behaviour, Not Just Attitudes:** Track real actions (like reduced waste) instead of relying only on survey responses. This helps address the *attitude-behaviour gap*, where people's stated values don't always align with their actions.
- **Monitor for Rebound Effects:** Monitor whether reduced waste in one area causes increased waste elsewhere, helping you avoid unintended consequences.
- **Tailor Evidence to Your Audience:** Think about who you need to convince—community members or stakeholders. Collect the evidence they'll find most compelling.

Use of metrics: example from HFBA

Key Metrics for the food redistribution and donation sector:

- **Leads:** Number of potential donors expressing interest.
- **Engagement:** Number of signed donation agreements.
- **Impact:** Number of meals donated.

HFBA also monitors the use of plastic boxes and other packaging materials, which tends to rise with the increase in food saved from the Horeca sector. This usage is tracked, and actions are planned to minimize environmental impact.

Depending on the target audience of HFBA's communication, various metrics are employed, such as the number of portions saved, the number of people served, or the equivalent kilograms of carbon footprint neutralized.

Figure 13: Use of metrics: example from HFBA

By tracking outcomes and refining your approach based on real-world results, you can enhance the long-term impact of your interventions.

5. Additional resources and support to implement interventions

Have you now read the guidance and find yourself feeling inspired but not sure where to get started? Don't worry - in 2025 we are running a European capacity building programme designed specifically to help you put these words into action!

The online and physical workshops will provide you with practical skills, examples and tips to design your own behaviour change intervention using fresh findings from the CHORIZO project and the relevant tools to use social norms in the reduction of food waste.

Sound good? Sign up to the [CHORIZO newsletter](#) to hear about the latest information and capacity building registration.

Additionally, the [CHORIZO Insider Data Hub](#) contains a whole range of data collected through the project's case studies and research on FLW and social norms. Feel free to request relevant data for use in designing your own interventions.

CHORIZO Project Deliverables and resources

- CHORIZO project *Food Loss and Waste (FLW) Datahub and "Insighter"*, available at <https://data.chorizoproject.eu/>. (Accessed 29 January 2025)
- CHORIZO Deliverable 1.2 (2023), "*Evidence-based Analysis of Food Loss and Food Waste (FLW) Prevention Actions*", available at <https://chorizoproject.eu/deliverables-repository/>
- CHORIZO Deliverable 2.3 (2024), *Empirical Evidence Sensemaking*, available at <https://chorizoproject.eu/deliverables-repository/>. (Accessed 29 January 2025)
- CHORIZO Deliverable 3.1 (2023), "*Conceptual framework for behavioural change understanding*", available at <https://chorizoproject.eu/deliverables-repository/>
- CHORIZO project *newsletter sign up form*, available at https://chorizoproject.eu/dissemination_and_newsletter/. (Accessed 29 January 2025)

Literature

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Websites

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- European Commission, *Food Waste*, available at https://food.ec.europa.eu/food-safety/food-waste_en. (Accessed 29 January 2025)
- European Food Bank Association, *Our Mission, Impact & Values*, available at <https://www.eurofoodbank.org/our-mission-impact-values/>. (Accessed 29 January 2025)
- Flavour Network, (2024), *Foods You Can Still Eat After the Expiry Date*, available at <https://www.flavournetwork.ca/article/10-foods-you-can-eat-after-the-expiry-date/>. (Accessed 29 January 2025)

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- REFRESH project: *Resource Efficient Food and dRink for the Entire Supply cHain*, available at <https://www.eu-refresh.org/>. (Accessed 29 January 2025)
- *The Academy of Change*, available at <http://aochange.org/>. (Accessed 29 January 2025)

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