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Process evaluation of the ‚National Strategy of Food Waste Reduction‘

ABSTRACT OF FINAL REPORT

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File number: 324-06.01-2820HS014

Project duration: November 2021 – November 2024

Berlin, Cologne, Hamburg, 25.11.2024

Abstract

In the context of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN 2015) and the revised European Waste Framework Directive (EU 2018), the German government adopted the National Strategy for Food Waste Reduction (BMEL 2019). The objective of the National Strategy for Food Waste Reduction is to achieve a reduction of 50 percent in per capita food waste in Germany by 2030, at both the retail and consumer levels. Additionally, it aims to minimize food losses throughout the production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses. The National Strategy for Food Waste Reduction delineates measures in four fields of action: the policy framework, process optimization in industry, behavioral changes among all actors, and the potential for advancement arising from research and the digital transformation. In order to evaluate the National Strategy for Food Waste Reduction, an external evaluation was commissioned. Accordingly, the evaluation team devised an evaluation design for the purpose of assessing and optimizing the National Strategy for Food Waste Reduction. The evaluation design focused on the four fields of action and included, for example, interviews and online surveys with decision makers, forum members and practitioners as well as a media resonance analysis.

The findings of the evaluation demonstrate that the five established dialogue forums (four pertaining to the industry and one focused on private households), the Working Group of the Federal Government and the Federal States, the National Dialogue Forum and the Working Group on Indicator SDG 12.3 have created a conducive political framework for engaging relevant actors in the reduction of food waste. 14 major companies in the wholesale and retail trade sector, as well as 262 companies in the 'away-from-home-consumption'-sector, demonstrated their commitment to the objectives of the National Strategy for Food Waste Reduction by signing specific target agreements. In the context of the National Strategy for Food Waste Reduction, a total of 137 existing projects were listed, and 41 demonstration projects implemented with the objective of identifying effective and efficient measures to reduce food waste and losses. Nevertheless, the insufficient intersectoral dialog (i.e. in between the primary production, processing, and retail) and the lack of data on the amount of food waste that is generated by the respective sectors have led to constraints, particularly in the area of primary production and processing. By July 2024, a total of 50 projects had been funded from the BMEL funding programs. The "Too Good For The Bin" initiative initiated a preliminary impact on outreach and engagement with consumers. Considering the intricate nature of the food supply chain and consumption behavior, the achieved level of engagement within the National Strategy for Food Waste Reduction represents a mere first step that necessitates further expansion.

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