



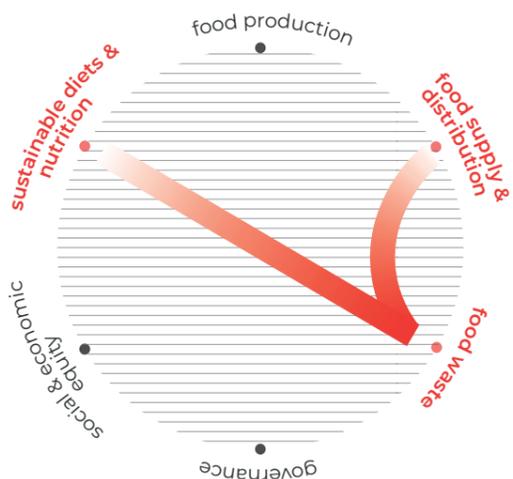
## BRUGES BELGIUM

Title of Practice

### BRUGES: FOOD WASTE REDUCTION IN HEALTHCARE INSTITUTIONS

Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Category **FOOD WASTE**

Main impacts on other MUFPP categories



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#### Context

In 2015, the city of Bruges facilitated a bottom-up process to build a sustainable food policy. This resulted in the establishment of the **Food Lab of Bruges**, a platform where local stakeholders drew up the food guidelines of the city. One of their two guidelines targeting food waste was **reducing food waste in public organizations**. In reaction to these guidelines, the facility managers of hospital AZ Sint-Jan and hospital AZ Sint-Lucas expressed their need of guidance in reducing food waste in their institution. Recent research shows that food waste is a major problem in the healthcare sector and could reach up to 40 percent of city total waste. The potential to reduce food waste is hence enormous. However, the sector faces unique challenges: healthcare structures create personalized dietary options based on the health status of patients and they frequently serve non-voluntary consumers and unpredictable numbers of clients. On top of that, it is often not straightforward to gather the different stakeholders along the food chain of the healthcare institutions. This makes food waste reduction a complicated effort. To tackle this, the Municipality of Bruges coordinated an immersive, participatory process of measurement, ideation, evaluation and refinement of food waste reduction approaches in the healthcare sector of the city.

#### Overview of the food practice

Together with multiple stakeholders, the city of Bruges facilitated and coordinated an innovative project based on international tools and methods. The overall objective was to find solutions for reducing food waste in healthcare institutions, through a **participatory approach**. Bruges counts 19 healthcare institutions, four of which are actively involved in this project, including:

- Hospital AZ Sint-Jan, counting 909 beds on 3 campuses;
- Hospital AZ Sint-Lucas, counting 412 beds;
- Riddersstove, a catering operator serving six care institutions related to the public centre for social welfare (OCMW);
- Day Centre “De Kade”, which houses 158 patients of which 112 are children.

The first step of the process was to measure and analyse current food waste and its economic impact in four healthcare institutions in Bruges. The following step was to support them in reducing food waste by coaching them. The final step consisted of developing and **disseminating successful methodologies** to reduce food waste in healthcare institutions and raise awareness on the topic. The personnel of the healthcare structures were trained in measuring food waste and actively involved in an innovation process to develop specific solutions to challenges within their institution. Furthermore, surveys were conducted among personnel, patients and visitors

to gain information on the quality, quantity, choice and timing of meals and the way they are being served. The solutions were transferred to other healthcare institutions in Bruges and the region of Flanders through a manual and a dissemination event. Along with healthcare institutions, FoodWIN (European Food Waste Innovation Network supporting European cities to reduce food waste) and the Food Lab of Bruges were also involved in the innovation process.

#### Results and lessons learned

First measurements showed that there is 30 to 40 percent of food waste in the institutions.

Some preliminary results of one of the participating projects are promising. They show that food waste can **be reduced annually by 27 652 kg**, which is equivalent to 88 487 kg CO<sub>2</sub> per year. Converted to food cost, this means a yearly EUR 27 652 cost **reduction**. Along with the direct ecological and economic impact in the participating institutions, this project also has an indirect **educational impact**, thanks to the dissemination events. Besides prevention, the project also focuses on valorization of food waste, through **donations to local food banks**.

Beyond quantifiable results, the main innovation proposed by this practice lies in its participatory approach, which was fundamental in addressing the complexities of tackling food waste in the healthcare sector. The experience from the Municipality of Bruges highlights the **key role of the personnel** of the healthcare institutions, who were actively involved in the project. In fact, food waste within these institutions is often caused by subtleties in communication, logistics or patient dissatisfaction. Nurses, nutritionists and kitchen personnel are therefore in key positions to create tailored solutions. The process also engaged hospital staff to carry out the measurements themselves, not only to ensure frequent replication of measurements without need for outside experts, but also to raise awareness. Moreover, by drawing attention to the amounts of food that is wasted, staff understand the urgency of the problem and become promoters of the changes



- [foodlab.brugge.be](http://foodlab.brugge.be)
- [www.wrap.org.uk](http://www.wrap.org.uk)
- [foodwastechallenge.eu/resulting-projects](http://foodwastechallenge.eu/resulting-projects)
- <https://bit.ly/2Lk2epX>