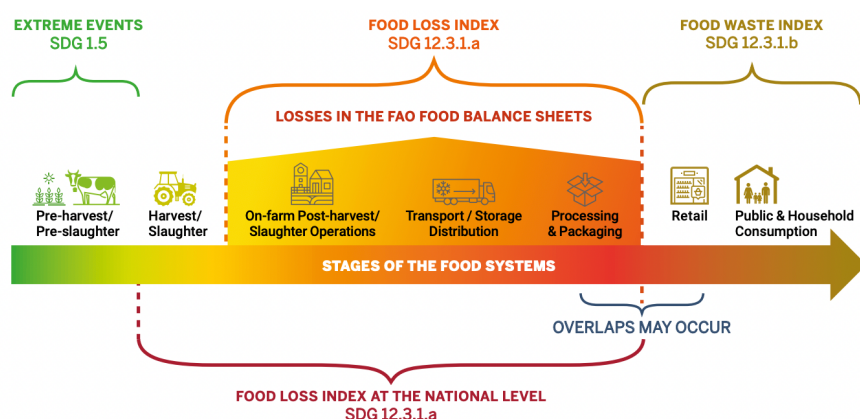


State of Food Waste In West Asia

Following the publication of the Food Waste Index 2021 report (UNEP 2021), this report dives into the challenges of the West Asia region.

Food loss occurs during the production and distribution of the food supply chain, whereas **food waste** occurs at the retail and consumer levels. This report focuses on the current state of food waste in West Asia and on existing efforts, gaps and opportunities. It advocates sustainable food waste management for West Asia, an area that is historically known for producing high amounts of food waste, so it complements the region's efforts to end poverty, reduce hunger and improve human health.

To date, information about attitudes and behaviours governing food waste generation in West Asia is scarce. A key goal of this study was to assess the attitudes and behaviours that determine food waste in the region, to better understand and tailor community-based interventions.



Sustainable Development Goal 12 seeks to “ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.” Under this goal, the third target (Target 12.3) calls for halving per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer level, in addition to reducing food loss along the production and supply chains by 2030.

Regional insights

West Asia comprises 12 countries with income disparities.

The region has unique regional features related to its diverse culture, religion, history, and climate, impacting food waste generation over short periods. During Ramadan research shows that from 25%-50% of food prepared is wasted.



Food waste facts

17% of food is wasted at consumer level, and an estimated 690 million people were hungry in 2019 - a number that is expected to rise sharply during and post COVID-19. (UNEP 2021)

Household food waste estimations in West Asia range from 75 to 163 kg/cap year. (UNEP 2021)



Key findings:



A sample of 200 participants from 10 countries in West Asia was requested to complete an online survey between July and November 2020. One-third of the survey respondents reported an increase in their food waste generation following the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, respondents simultaneously increased their use of food leftovers.



Collecting data on national food loss and waste generation enables governments to understand the scale of the problem, target hotspots, assess the efficacy of policy interventions and track progress towards 2030.



Raising awareness of the impact of food waste on the environment and food security, and the financial benefits of reducing food waste, is important, as well as promoting gender inclusive strategies across the food value chain.



Policies and institutions are the main drivers for reducing food loss and waste. Appropriate policies should be developed to encourage stakeholders to adhere to directives while encouraging various supply chain operators to invest and adjust.



Given the magnitude of food loss and waste in West Asia, an increase in investments needs to go hand in hand with adopting and transferring appropriate technologies.

