

A Roadmap to Reduce Soft Wheat and Date Losses in the Kingdom of Morocco

Draft



United Nations
Beirut, 2022

Introduction

The Kingdom of Morocco has adopted the 2030 UN Development Program Agenda and its 17 SDGs, it committed itself to working tirelessly for the full implementation of this Agenda by 2030. While indicators show moderate improvement in few SDGs, such as 1, 2, 6 and 13, trend information about SDG12 on sustainable consumption and production, however, is unavailable. More specifically, studies estimating the extent of food loss and waste in the Kingdom of Morocco are insufficient, imprecise, and fragmented.

To make it up for this scarcity of information, in 2022 the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) has conducted a study on food loss in the Kingdom, which identified loss spots of dates and soft wheat along their supply chains, and highlighted spots where major loss takes place. The study provided information that can feed the decision-making process on where, when, and how to reduce food loss. For the study to have an impact on the ground, its findings need to be incorporated into a “strategic national action plan” which leads overall initiatives to reduce food loss, in particular, dates and wheat losses.

Such an action plan is a national exercise that involves a broad range of stakeholders. Yet, it has to be led by the Ministry of Agriculture, as the “custodian” of the plan and responsible for its effectiveness. The plan needs to complement the Green Morocco Plan and consider other national development plans and strategies, and interlinkages between SDG12 and other SDGs.

To pave the way and facilitate the development of such an action plan, this document provides a simple roadmap, which represent the opinion of national and international experts in the field. The roadmap aims to assist the development of an evidence-based national action plan, by providing a “directional” strategy. The plan tackles 7 recommended strategic paths that the Ministry of Agriculture can take to construct the plan.

1. Develop national strategies for preventing and reducing soft wheat and date losses.

A national strategy should be developed to prevent and reduce soft wheat and date losses with clear and quantifiable objectives and in line with (SDG) Target 12.3 which states that the world is committed to reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including pos-harvesting losses. The Kingdom of Morocco has several national development plans, such as the Green Generation strategy, which don't directly tackle the food loss reduction issue. Mainstreaming SDG12 at national and sub-national levels

requires the development of a detailed national strategy for food loss reduction, which builds on the Green Morocco Plan and extends it, with a focus on soft wheat and dates given their socio-economic importance.

Attention should be given to interlinkages among other SDGs, given the high interlinkages of food loss reduction with other SDGs, such as SDG1 on poverty and 2 on hunger, integrating food loss reduction policies will have a multidimensional impact on the sustainable development progress of the kingdom and, hence, national policies and programs will complement one another, speeds up the progress towards achieving the SDGs.

2. Gather data on food loss and construct a database

To intervene at a national level and reduce food loss, there is a need to develop a database that informs decision makers on food loss causes, places and best methods to deal with it. There is also a similar need for ad-hoc research to populate the database. Future research on food loss needs to cover a large study region with a representative sample size to come up with valid outcomes. Provision of detailed and precise data on food loss are indispensable to provide an insight on current levels and causes of food losses, impacts on food security and costs incurred at the micro and macro levels. The ad-hoc research, together with the database, should help define and further missing information and relevant technologies and good practices to reduce food loss.

The main actions to be taken under this component are to:

- Create a national observatory to monitor food loss issues;
- Start gathering the existing data to populate the database;
- Identify the critical missing information;
- Conduct studies to collect missing data;
- Agree with major stakeholders on a common methodology to quantify Food losses;
- Encourage major stakeholders to participate to the development of the database;
- Make the database accessible to all concerned actors;

One of the recommended methodologies to be used to research food loss in the kingdom is a quantitative methodology developed by the United Nations with the name “Quantifying Food Loss and Waste: The United Nation Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) food loss and waste measuring methodology

for fresh produce supply chains, it is designed to quantify food loss along the supply chain of fruits and vegetables.¹

3. Awareness raising and dissemination of good practices

The prerequisite for convincing the various actors along the supply chain to adopt the best practices that make it possible to reduce losses is to raise awareness among these stockholders and policy makers about the scale of losses and their impacts on food security, natural resources, energy, and the environment. Many actors are unaware about the economic costs and other impacts of food losses, largely because financial losses are borne by consumers through higher prices or the state through subsidization.

The main actions to be taken under this component are:

- Conduct awareness campaigns on the scale and various impacts of food losses that involve schools, universities, producers, media, importers, industrials and consumers;
- Develop educational material that integrates religious, cultural and economic considerations capable of convincing actors to reduce losses;
- Create communication channels between actors along the supply chain for information sharing;
- Inform the various actors about technologies and best practices through specialized institutions working with farmers, such as agricultural extension services, industrial federations and associations, civil society agents and NGOs, schools and universities.

4. Ensure financial support to help actors take action in order to reduce food losses (focus on farmers)

Establish a national Food Loss Prevention Fund to provide sustained financial support for national initiatives, projects and organizations in their fight against food loss. The funds should be utilised to support the importation and adoption of technologies and good practices capable to reduce and prevent food losses.

5. Encourage entrepreneurs to invest in modern storage projects

Morocco's Green Generation strategy (2020-2030) has placed strong emphasis on the development of human capital. As such, particular attention has been given to the category of young people with the aim of bringing out a new generation of young agricultural entrepreneurs, through support for professional

¹ If the Ministry of Agriculture finds it suitable, UNESCWA can support the Ministry to build capacity on the use of the methodology, and support research using it upon receiving an official request from the Kingdom, if needed.

integration and self-employment. One of the actions to achieve this objective is to encourage young entrepreneurs to embark on business activities in fields related to agriculture and para-agriculture.

In Morocco cereal storage offers good opportunities for small-scale businesses, for this reason it is recommended to support and encourage young people to invest in storage units to offer their services to small farmers who do not have the means to invest in modern storage facilities.

6. Promote loss recovery actions and speed up transition to a circular economy model in food industry

Encourage and speed up transition to a circular economy model in the Moroccan food industry through public-private-partnerships, which provide circular business solutions, resulting in loss reduction through technology, research, and collaboration.

Promote loss reduction businesses and activities that go beyond the “reduce” phase, this can take the form of reuse, recycling into processed food. Finding easy financing solutions to enhance investments in green and circular activities that consider food loss as one of their objectives.

7. Promote cooperation at local and regional levels

Promote cooperation at regional level: Cooperation at this level should facilitate the transfer of technologies, good practices, international aid and foreign investments into the Kingdom.²

Promote cooperation at local level: This can take the form of encouraging farmers to organize themselves into cooperatives, economic interest groups or associations to strengthen farmers' capacities for collective action, intensify dialogue on practices that prevent or reduce losses, invest in units for the valorization of products of poor quality.

² UNESCWA can facilitate this strategic path upon receiving an official request from the Kingdom.