



# Action Plan for Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems

2023



# An industry on the move – but we can't do it alone

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Director General



A year ago, FoodDrinkEurope launched its Action Plan for Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems and we are now delighted to report back on our progress so far.

Over the past 12 months, we have launched more than 20 activities within the Action Plan, all aimed at speeding the transition to more sustainable food production, as well as fulfilling our commitment to [the EU Code of Conduct for Responsible Business and Marketing Practices](#).

Action Plan activities include practical resources to help businesses become more sustainable, such as a carbon reduction toolkit for companies to plot their path to net-zero. Other activities aim to lead the research agenda, such as a recent study commissioned to cost out the transition to more sustainable agriculture in Europe, alongside ideas to plug the funding gap. In addition, the Action Plan signposts to hundreds of best practice actions FoodDrinkEurope member companies are undertaking as they also transform their operations to become more sustainable.

## 5 ways policymakers can help

Ahead of the EU elections in 2024, FoodDrinkEurope is asking policymakers to focus on 5 key areas to complement our Action Plan, to deal with the cost of living crisis and to complete our goal for sustainable and resilient food systems.

Collectively we need to:

- **Stimulate investment:** There is currently a significant financing gap to meet the EU's sustainability ambitions.
- **Support innovation:** We need an innovation-friendly, science-based and predictable policy environment to avoid the finance- and brain-drain out of Europe.
- **Boost trade and secure supplies:** An ambitious plan should be developed to promote the EU's excellent agri-food produce abroad, while safeguarding vulnerable supply chains.
- **Build better regulation:** All new EU policy should enhance the Single Market and be subject to impact assessments to avoid unintended consequences.
- **Improve governance and coordination:** The creation of a DG Food within the European Commission will help avoid current confused EU policy proposals that lead to unnecessary trade-offs on food safety, environmental goals, food security and economic sustainability.

Reading this report, I hope you get a flavour of the journey our sector is on and the commitment of our organisation in driving this further. FoodDrinkEurope stands ready to partner with you in making change happen!

# FoodDrinkEurope Action Plan for Sustainable Food Systems

This Action Plan is FoodDrinkEurope's proactive approach to help tackle core challenges around **climate change**, **packaging** and **nutrition**.

At the same time, sustainable food systems can only be delivered when businesses can thrive, innovations come to market and partnerships are encouraged. Since its launch 12 months ago, FoodDrinkEurope has initiated more than 20 activities to drive change in each of these areas to help the transition to more sustainable and resilient food systems. Check out our progress to date.

## More Than Food Project

While this Action Plan focuses on FoodDrinkEurope's external role towards more sustainable food and drink, we also believe that sustainability starts at home.

With that in mind, FoodDrinkEurope launched its More than Food project, where our staff work in the local community, take action for the good of our planet and ensure we support each other's values, health and wellbeing.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

and the path to net zero

### THE TARGETS:

- Net zero carbon food chain by 2050
- Halve per capita food waste at the retail and consumer level by 2030 and reduce food losses along EU food supply chain
- A deforestation-free food supply chain, with no forest degradation and no destruction of natural habitats
- All commodities sourced from sustainable farming

### FOODDRINKEUROPE ACTION:

- Net zero toolkit published
- Food waste reduction toolkit (coming soon)
- Sustainable farming initiative launched
- SME Greener Planet Award
- Climate conscious office

## SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING

and the circular economy

### THE TARGETS:

- All food and drink packaging recyclable or reusable by 2030
- 10m tonnes of recycled plastic are used in new products by 2025

### FOODDRINKEUROPE ACTION:

- Product environmental footprint guidelines published
- Sustainable packaging guide (coming soon)
- Best practices portal online

## NUTRITION

food safety and  
healthier living

### THE TARGETS:

- Healthy, balanced and sustainable diets for all European consumers
- Reverse malnutrition and diet-related health conditions
- A food environment that makes it easier to choose healthy and sustainable diets
- Clear, transparent information to help consumers choose a healthy, balanced and sustainable diet
- Total consumer confidence that their food and drink is safe

### FOODDRINKEUROPE ACTION:

- Reformulation and product innovation guideline published
- Portions and fibre guidelines (coming soon)
- Digital labelling initiative launched
- SME Healthier Living Award
- Food safety toolkit updated

## THRIVING BUSINESS

to drive the change  
to sustainable food systems

### THE TARGETS:

- Thriving businesses that contribute to vibrant communities and lead the transition to sustainable food systems
- All SMEs equipped to transition to sustainable food systems
- An agri-food chain resilient to external shocks
- Quality jobs and a skilled workforce where workplaces are safe, diverse and inclusive

### FOODDRINKEUROPE ACTION:

- Invested in jobs through a Pact for Skills
- New business Learning Zone online

## INNOVATION

to speed the change to  
sustainable food systems

### THE TARGETS:

- Innovations to support the transition to sustainable food systems are encouraged
- Faster research and innovation-to-market towards sustainable food systems

### FOODDRINKEUROPE ACTION:

- €250k commitment into innovation
- Expertise provided on multi-stakeholder projects

## PARTNERSHIPS

to scale the change to  
sustainable food systems

### THE TARGETS:

- Truly collaborative partnerships to drive towards a common goal of more sustainable food systems
- An open dialogue that gives everyone a voice, and explores all ideas to tackle sustainability challenges

### FOODDRINKEUROPE ACTION:

- Food chain partnership project
- #FoodFuture dialogue project

# CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE PATH TO NET ZERO



To avoid irreversible and disastrous consequences for generations to come, we must work around the world and across every sector to fight the climate emergency.

Food production from farm-to-fork represents 30% of total carbon emissions within the EU, with the food manufacturing process accounting for **3% of total EU emissions**. Food is also one of the first victims of climate change.

With this in mind, the food and drink sector is well placed to not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions from its own operations, but also to work with partners to cut emissions along the entire food chain.

We are committed to the Paris Agreement objective to keep the rise in global temperature within 1.5°C above 1990 levels thus reaching net zero by 2050.

At the same time, our industry must tackle a wide range of interrelated environmental challenges such as food waste, deforestation and unsustainable sourcing.

## The targets:

1. Net zero carbon food chain by 2050; contribute to a 55% reduction of EU food chain emissions by 2030
2. Halve per capita food waste at the retail and consumer level by 2030 and reduce food losses along EU food supply chain
3. A deforestation-free food supply chain, with no forest degradation and no destruction of natural habitats
4. All commodities sourced from sustainable farming

## Our actions:

### Climate Action Project

FoodDrinkEurope established its Climate Action Project in January 2023. It is a dedicated workstream to help food and drink businesses move to net zero emissions and tackle wider environmental challenges. The project takes a collaborative approach to develop partnerships to harness the power of the food chain to drive systemic change.

### Progress to date:

Net zero toolkit: First, FoodDrinkEurope commissioned a study by leading environmental consultancy Ricardo to develop recommendations and a [roadmap](#) to decarbonise the food and drink industry, specifically looking at scope 1 and 2 emissions. This was published in 2021.

FoodDrinkEurope has now developed a practical toolkit to help food and drink businesses, especially SME's, to plot their individual path towards net-zero.

Through 2023 and 2024, FoodDrinkEurope will be amplifying the toolkit to all food and drink businesses through a series of webinars and communications through its network and partnerships.

Food waste reduction toolkit: [Nearly 59 million tonnes of food in the EU are wasted every year](#), which equates to 131 kilograms per inhabitant and about €132 billion. About 70 percent of this waste comes from retail, foodservice and households. This comes at the expense of vast resources and energy. Simply put, food waste is bad for business.

FoodDrinkEurope will soon publish a practical toolkit to help food and drink businesses plot their individual path towards reducing and eliminating food losses and food waste. We are also working in partnership with the European food banks (FEBA) to update our joint guidelines to encourage businesses to support their local food banks.

Through 2023 and 2024, FoodDrinkEurope will be amplifying the toolkit and guidelines to all food and drink businesses through a series of webinars and communications.

Sustainable farming initiative: Given the food and drink manufacturing industry buys 70% of EU farm produce, as well as agricultural raw materials from around the world, FoodDrinkEurope has established a sustainable farming initiative to work with farmer organisations, agronomists, research institutes, financial institutions and others to encourage more sustainable farming.

Over the past 12 months, FoodDrinkEurope has published a series of [thought leader articles](#) on regenerative agricultural practices, produced an educational [series of webinars](#) in partnership with regenerative agriculture experts Soil Capital, and communicated widely with One Planet Business for Biodiversity, [including this joint statement](#).

FoodDrinkEurope recently commissioned a study looking into the obstacles to scale and finance the transition to more sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices. We look forward to publishing this important work later in 2023.

SME Greener Planet Award: One of the best ways to inspire businesses to take effective action to tackle environmental challenges is to show them that it's not only possible, but also good for business.

FoodDrinkEurope has therefore established [The Foodies](#), a competition to recognise some of Europe's most sustainable small

and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). The Greener Planet Award is for an SME committed to reducing its environmental impact.

In September 2022 the [Greener Planet Award](#) was won by Flahavans – an Irish SME that sources 70% of its energy needs from renewables.

In addition, FoodDrinkEurope continues to showcase [best practices](#) to inspire and guide the industry towards more sustainable food systems.

Climate conscious office: Recognising the importance to walk the talk FoodDrinkEurope has established a Planet Action Team within the office. We have developed a plan to reduce our carbon emissions, supported a cookstove project to prevent deforestation in Burkina Faso and invested into Soil Capital's carbon sequestration certification scheme, helping French farmers reduce their carbon emissions by 50-tons in 2022 – this is equivalent to the amount of carbon sequestered by 60 acres of forest in a year.

The Climate Action Project will continue to evolve with guidelines and training to help food and drink businesses tackle wider environmental challenges including deforestation and unsustainable sourcing.



## Our policy asks:

To facilitate a swift transition towards net zero, and to reach our wider environmental targets, the food and drink industry urges policymakers to prioritise the following areas:

- **Access to renewable energy:** Ensure pan-European infrastructure and access to renewable energy for manufacturing businesses of all sizes.
- **Sustainable farming:** Use the EU Common Agricultural Policy, as well as Green Deal and farm to fork initiatives, to support sustainable farming practices that lead to healthier soils, carbon sequestration and support farmer livelihoods.
- **Support for innovation:** Develop a predictable policy environment that encourages investments into low environmental impact technology, as well as low impact food and drink products.
- **Competitiveness of SMEs:** Consult SMEs, which make up 99% of the food and drink manufacturing sector, to ensure environmental policy takes their capacity and needs into account.
- **Consumer engagement:** Help consumers play their part with a harmonised approach to provide environmental information on products, prevent misleading claims and avoid food waste.
- **Global leadership:** Include trade and sustainable development chapters in all EU Free Trade Agreements to ensure trading partners agree on shared sustainability principles and facilitate international regulatory cooperation and dialogue to promote global coherence.
- **Effective due diligence:** Enforce effective and harmonised legislation to ensure globally responsible supply chains and due diligence on all sustainability issues including the protection of biodiversity, climate change mitigation, human and labour rights.

To learn more about FoodDrinkEurope's detailed policy positions on EU legislative proposals around climate and the environment please contact [info@foooddrinkeeurope.eu](mailto:info@foooddrinkeeurope.eu).



## Company case studies:

By integrating climate change in their business strategies, European food and drink manufacturers have achieved a **21% reduction in carbon emissions per unit of value added** between 2008 and 2018, that is to say, the industry is getting more carbon efficient when producing food and drink products.

Here are some examples of how FoodDrinkEurope members are reducing their **carbon emissions**.

In addition, members have developed a range of initiatives to tackle **food waste**, end **deforestation** and improve their sustainable sourcing.

You can find more pledges and commitments to the Code of Conduct [here](#).

# SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING AND THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY



Packaging plays a vital role in protecting, preserving and transporting food and drink products to consumers.

However, the production and use of packaging, such as plastic, can have adverse environmental impacts. When packaging is overused, littered or incinerated, rather than minimised, re-used or recycled, the environmental damage to our planet is exacerbated.

As a major user of packaging, the food and drink industry has an important role to play in improving the circularity of packaging for food and drink products and driving future innovation.

## The targets:

1. All food and drink packaging recyclable or reusable by 2030
2. 10m tonnes of recycled plastic are used in new products by 2025

## Our actions:

### Sustainable Packaging Action Project

FoodDrinkEurope established its Sustainable Packaging Action Project to help food and drink businesses help ensure all food and drink packaging is recyclable or re-usable by 2030. The project takes a collaborative approach to develop partnerships to harness the power of the food chain to drive systemic change.

### Progress to date:

[Sustainable packaging guide](#): FoodDrinkEurope will soon publish a practical guide to help food and drink businesses use more sustainable packaging. Topics include the use of more recycled plastics, as well as improving sustainable packaging design, packaging waste collection and sorting, and supporting innovations for new, more sustainable packaging materials. The guide supports FoodDrinkEurope's commitment and membership of the [Circular Plastics Alliance](#).

[Product environmental footprint guidelines](#): As an important link to the circular economy and wider sustainability agenda, work on resource efficiency is also critical. FoodDrinkEurope has [published guidelines](#) to help food and drink businesses use the EU product environmental footprint (PEF) methodology to evaluate the environmental

footprint of a product and provide product environmental information to consumers.

[Inspire businesses through best practices on sustainable packaging](#): FoodDrinkEurope has developed an [industry action online tool](#) to showcase member activities on sustainable packaging. There are currently more than 50 examples – including how companies are working on new designs, developing new sustainable materials and improving recyclability – which are used to inspire and teach best practices to the wider industry. Through 2023 and 2024, FoodDrinkEurope will be amplifying the guidelines and best practices to all food and drink businesses through a series of webinars and communications through its network.



## Our policy asks:

To facilitate a swift transition to a circular economy and to meet packaging targets, the food and drink industry urges policymakers to prioritise the following areas:

- **Improved infrastructure and technology:** Increase EU and Member State investment into packaging waste management infrastructure and recycling technologies, such as chemical recycling
- **Collection and sorting:** Enhance Extended Producer Responsibility schemes and introduce deposit return schemes where needed to increase packaging waste collection and sorting.
- **Policy alignment:** Align EU packaging and food contact regulations to ensure coherent and harmonised rules that maintain food safety.
- **Access to recycled PET:** Give the food and drink industry priority access to food-grade recycled PET material.
- **Consumer role:** Help consumers with better information and awareness around zero waste, re-use and re-cycling, including harmonised guidance on sorting packaging waste.

To learn more about FoodDrinkEurope's detailed policy positions on EU legislative proposals around climate and the environment please contact [info@fooddrineweurope.eu](mailto:info@fooddrineweurope.eu).



## Company case studies:

FoodDrinkEurope's members have developed a [range of initiatives](#) to deliver more sustainable packaging and a circular economy which you can [find on our website](#).

In addition, many food and drink companies have made ambitious circular economy [commitments to the Code of Conduct](#).

# NUTRITION, FOOD SAFETY AND HEALTHIER LIVING



Food and drink have a very practical role – providing nutrition to look after our bodies and energy to power us through the day.

Good food and drink are also woven into the fabric of European culture, with eating and drinking central to our time spent with friends and family.

However, today the nutritional balance has often been lost. More than half of the European adult population and a third of children are overweight or obese, while malnutrition in all of its forms remains a major challenge.

Given the food and drink manufacturing industry helps provide 1.5 billion meals in Europe every day, it also has an important role to help consumers achieve a balanced, healthy and sustainable diet.

On top of this, food safety remains our number one priority.

## The targets:

1. Healthy, balanced and sustainable diets for all European consumers
2. Reverse malnutrition and diet-related health conditions
3. A food environment that makes it easier to choose healthy and sustainable diets
4. Clear, transparent information to help consumers choose a healthy, balanced and sustainable diet
5. Total consumer confidence that their food and drink is safe

SME Healthier Living Award:  
FoodDrinkEurope has established **The Foodies**, a competition to recognise some of Europe's most sustainable small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). The Healthier Living Award is for an SME committed to helping consumers access a healthy and balanced diet.

In September 2022 the **Healthier Living Award** was won by **Good4U** – an Irish SME that provides healthy snacks.

In addition, FoodDrinkEurope continues to showcase **best practices** to inspire and guide the industry towards more sustainable food systems.

**Call to action on healthy lifestyles:** In 2023, FoodDrinkEurope signed the '**call to action**' led by the International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA) and JOGG/Youth Health Community for a European plan to prevent non-communicable diseases and promote healthy lifestyles.

## Our actions:

### Nutrition Action Project

FoodDrinkEurope established its Sustainable Packaging Action Project to help food and drink businesses help ensure all food and drink packaging is recyclable or re-usable by 2030. The project takes a collaborative approach to develop partnerships to harness the power of the food chain to drive systemic change.

### Progress to date:

**Reformulation and product innovation guide:** FoodDrinkEurope has developed **guidelines on reformulation and product innovation** to help manufacturers, particularly SMEs, by providing insight on the aspects of product innovation and reformulation that may need to be considered when undertaking reformulation work or developing new innovative products.

**Fibre and wholegrain toolkit:** In addition to the reformulation guidance, above, FoodDrinkEurope will soon publish a guide for SMEs with examples and best practices on how to use fibre and wholegrain in product development, innovation and reformulation.

**Portions toolkit:** FoodDrinkEurope will soon publish new guidelines on portions to help manufacturers, particularly SMEs, understand how to develop portions and related communications.

**Labelling guidelines:** In 2023, FoodDrinkEurope published **updated guidelines on legibility of labelling** to help manufacturers to comply with the legal requirement to provide legible information on packs.

**Digital labelling initiative:** FoodDrinkEurope has commissioned a study to identify opportunities to improve transparency and consumer information through digital labelling. We will publish recommendations and encourage open dialogue on the next steps later in 2023.

### Food Safety Action Project

Food safety remains FoodDrinkEurope's number one priority. Food and drink cannot be healthy if it is not safe. EU food safety standards are among the highest in the world and FoodDrinkEurope will continue to provide businesses with guidance to ensure the protection of consumer health. We must ensure food safety while also seeking to enhance environmental protection and maintain the competitiveness of the sector.

### Progress to date:

**Food safety toolkit:** FoodDrinkEurope recently published new guidelines on **food allergen management** and **food safety culture**, and continues to update and promote its guidance documents on reducing the occurrence of contaminants in food.

Here is a full set of available resources on food safety:

- An acrylamide toolbox ([see here](#))
- Guidelines on reducing the transfer and the occurrence of undesired mineral oil hydrocarbons in food ([see here](#))

- Guidelines on food safety culture ([see here](#))
- Guidelines on food allergen management ([see here](#) and [here](#)) and precautionary allergen labelling ([see here](#))
- Guidelines on the use of flavourings ([see here](#))

FoodDrinkEurope continues to promote and disseminate these resources to EU businesses.

# Our policy asks:

To facilitate a swift transition towards healthier, and more sustainable diets, while always looking after food safety, the food and drink industry urges policymakers to prioritise the following areas:

## On food safety

- **Avoid trade-offs:** Legislators should assess possible tensions and avoid trade-offs when achieving food safety, food security and sustainability aims.
- **Allow structured feedback:** A structured dialogue is necessary with the European Commission, including feedback with the whole food chain, to enhance information-sharing to ensure food safety.
- **Better use of the precautionary principle:** Policymakers must support a more predictable and science-based application of the precautionary principle.
- **Ensure harmonisation:** Develop harmonised analytical and scientific guidance when dealing with specific and more recurrent food safety issues.
- **Allow industry input:** Give consideration of industry guidance as an appropriate tool to manage safety issues where setting of maximum levels will not be feasible.
- **Better risk communication:**

Improve risk communication and coordination between EFSA, the European Commission and the wider food chain, taking a 'one health' approach to provide consumers with confidence in their food.

## On nutrition and consumer information

- **Recognise the benefits:** While challenges exist, acknowledge that processed food and drinks are one essential tool to deliver sustainable food systems, providing all consumers – from vegan to meat eater and everything in between – with products to suit their lifestyle and meet their dietary needs.
- **Ensure evidence-based policy:** Avoid unfounded discrimination of products, ingredients, methods and processes. Invest in reliable, comparable, up-to-date pan-European dietary consumption intake data.

- **Diversity and quality:** Ensure market conditions and policy tools to support production of a diverse range of products for healthy, balanced, affordable and sustainable diets.

- **Better awareness:** Provide EU-wide education and awareness around how to achieve healthy, balanced, affordable and sustainable diets.

- **Maintain the Single Market:** Policy measures around nutrition and health should be harmonised across the EU to avoid consumer confusion and additional financial and logistical burdens on business, particularly SMEs.

- **Support innovation:** The European regulatory process should inspire consumer confidence for business investment in new products for healthier diets. At the same time,

regulatory bottlenecks to innovation should be identified and eliminated to ensure innovative processes, technologies and products can be introduced onto the market as soon as possible.

To learn more about FoodDrinkEurope's detailed policy positions on EU legislative proposals around climate and the environment please contact [info@fooddrinkeurope.eu](mailto:info@fooddrinkeurope.eu).

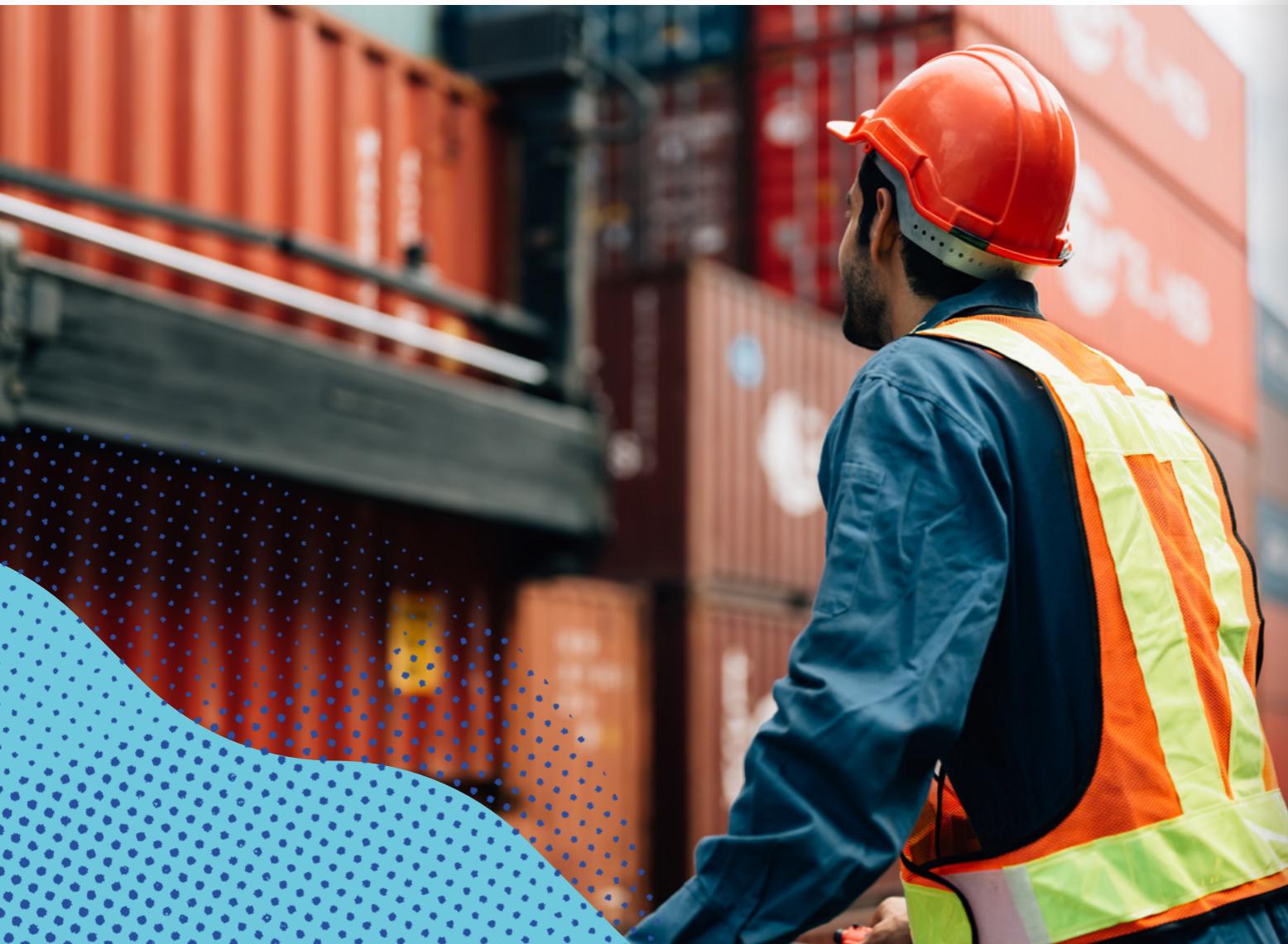
# Company case studies:

FoodDrinkEurope's members have developed a range of initiatives to deliver on healthier living on topics including **nutrition, labelling, lifestyles and advertising**.

In addition, many food and drink companies have made healthier living **commitments to the Code of Conduct**.



# THRIVING BUSINESS TO DRIVE THE CHANGE TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS



The transition to sustainable food systems will require significant investment to support the practices and innovations needed to transform the way we grow, manufacture and consume food and drink.

The private sector has a major role to help finance the change. Europe's food and drink manufacturing sector is made up of 294,000 businesses of all shapes and sizes and together they employ 4.6 million people and contribute around €1.1 trillion into the economy. The EU is also the world's largest exporter and third largest importer of food and drink.

All EU food and drink businesses will need to be economically sustainable if they are to invest in a more sustainable future for their employees, for their consumers and for the planet.

The goal for FoodDrinkEurope is to help business to thrive because of their commitment to sustainable food systems, not despite it.

## The targets:

1. Thriving businesses that contribute to vibrant communities and lead the transition to sustainable food systems
2. All SMEs equipped to transition to sustainable food systems
3. An agri-food chain resilient to external shocks
4. Quality jobs and a skilled workforce where workplaces are safe, diverse and inclusive

## Our actions:

### Thriving Business Action Project

FoodDrinkEurope works on behalf of its members to call for an EU policy environment where social, environmental and economic sustainability are not only compatible, but necessary to transition to sustainable food systems.

Industry competitiveness is key for jobs and growth and impacts the capacity of companies to generate the financing required to drive change. We are particularly focused on supporting SMEs in their transition to sustainable food systems and helping develop jobs and skills in the sector.

### Progress to date:

**Invested in jobs through a Pact for Skills:**  
Employing more than 4.6 million people, the food and drink manufacturing sector is Europe's leading employer. FoodDrinkEurope has partnered with the EU farmer association Cope-Cogeca to develop and coordinate an Agri-Food **Pact for Skills**. The aim of the Pact, which was launched in February 2022 and is supported by a range of other stakeholders, is to upskill and reskill the current workforce, and make agri-food more attractive to young people.

In addition, as part of a European Social Dialogue, **FoodDrinkEurope partners with trade union EFFAT**, to identify bottlenecks in recruiting new and skilled employees and to tackle challenges arising when companies have an ageing workforce.

**SME capacity building:** Many SMEs do not have the resources or knowledge to embark on the transition to more sustainable operations. FoodDrinkEurope has therefore launched a new capacity building project including a 'Learning Zone' to provide toolkits, guidelines, best practices and expertise.

Through 2023 and 2024, FoodDrinkEurope will be amplifying these resources – covering topics such as food safety, health, nutrition, climate change and packaging – through a series of webinars and communications.



# Our policy asks:

To further enable thriving businesses to drive the move to sustainable food systems, we encourage policymakers to prioritise the following areas:

## On competitiveness

- **Support for the Single Market:**

Reinforce the Single Market to ensure a competitive, thriving sector that can invest in sustainable food systems. Procedures should be strengthened to hold Member States accountable for attempts to introduce national legislation and actions which obstruct the functioning of the Single Market.

- **Keep economy central to sustainability:**

Ensure economic, social and environmental sustainability are recognised as three equally necessary pillars in the transition to sustainable food systems.

- **Assess impact:**

Carry out an impact assessment on any new policy proposal to avoid unintended consequences.

- **Invest:**

Analyse obstacles and measure the cost of the transition to sustainable food systems and develop public and private funding mechanisms which bridge the investment gaps.

- **Go digital:**

Develop a comprehensive plan to facilitate and stimulate the digital transition of the European food and drink sector, including unblocking regulatory barriers.

- **Support a favourable business environment:**

Promote a comprehensive EU industrial and trade policy framework which drives competitiveness, jobs and growth.

- **Include SMEs:**

Consult SMEs, which make up 99% of the food and drink manufacturing sector, to ensure environmental policy takes their capacity and needs into account.

- **Support jobs and skills:**

Actively support the Pact for Skills for the agri-food sector and other initiatives and measures to support skills and jobs in the EU. Ensure effective policy and enforcement to make workplaces safe for all, and protection of human rights along the supply chain.

## On crisis preparedness and food security

- **Agri-food chain as an essential sector:**

Recognise the agri-food chain as essential and 'societally critical' across all EU Member States.

- **Access to energy:**

Ensure the agri-food chain has priority access to energy supplies, in case of shortages and threats to food security.

- **Be prepared:**

Use the European Food Security Crisis Preparedness and Response Mechanism (EFSCM) to develop a list of 'urgency provisions' needed to ensure continuation of food and drink supply in times of crises

To learn more about FoodDrinkEurope's detailed policy positions on EU legislative proposals around climate and the environment please contact [info@fooddrinkeurope.eu](mailto:info@fooddrinkeurope.eu).



# INNOVATION TO SPEED THE CHANGE TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS



Research and innovation (R&I) are key to making food systems more sustainable, resilient, inclusive and healthy.

While the food and drink industry is actively engaged in R&I, it cannot claim to have all the answers for a sustainable food future. Public investment in collaborative R&I is essential to find new solutions to the challenges we are facing – such as tackling climate change, biodiversity loss and supporting more healthy and sustainable diets.

## The targets:

1. Innovations to support the transition to sustainable food systems are encouraged
2. Faster research and innovation-to-market towards sustainable food systems

Specifically, FoodDrinkEurope has committed to:

- Work alongside [23 partners](#) on the European Commission's [FoodSafety4EU](#) project to shape the food safety system of the future.
- Participate in [FIELDS](#) and [I-RESTART](#), two collaborative ERASMUS+ projects to identify existing and emerging skills needs in the food sector and provide recommendations to address skills gaps.
- Work with the European trade union federation EFFAT on the FoodDrinkSD project. This Social Dialogue workstream will focus on the economic recovery of the food and drink sector post-Covid.
- Participate in [FOODPaths](#) to offer a concrete pathway and necessary tools to support the establishment of the European Partnership for Sustainable Food Systems for People, Planet & Climate, to be launched in 2023/2024.

## Our actions:

### Innovation Action Project

The goal for FoodDrinkEurope is to work collaboratively with all players, to contribute our expertise and to leave no stone unturned when it comes to finding innovations to ensure sustainable food systems.

### Progress to date:

[€250k commitment into the Food for Life European Technology Platform \(ETP\) up to 2027:](#) FoodDrinkEurope has committed €250,000 from 2022-2027 to support the ETP [Food for Life](#). The platform, led by academic and industry experts, works on a pre-competitive research agenda to speed the transition to sustainable food systems.

This investment is part of longstanding support of the ETP and is in addition to the food and drink industry's R&I spend, which [topped €1.9 billion](#) in 2020 from Europe's top 11 companies alone.

[Expertise provided on multi-stakeholder projects:](#) FoodDrinkEurope provides expertise to collectively develop and implement an EU-wide research and innovation agenda around sustainable food systems.



## Our policy asks:

To facilitate the development of innovations that will contribute to sustainable food systems the food and drink industry urges policymakers to prioritise the following areas:

- **Encourage public-private partnerships:** Support public-private partnerships and collaborative funding mechanisms to stimulate R&I investment into more sustainable food systems.
- **Inspire confidence:** Improve risk communication and the messaging on benefits to inspire consumer confidence in products and give business confidence to innovate.
- **Remove bottlenecks:** Simplify and speed up regulatory bottlenecks to ensure that innovative and sustainable processes, technologies and products can be introduced onto the market in a more timely manner, based on scientific assessments and help maintain global competitiveness of the industry.

To learn more about FoodDrinkEurope's detailed policy positions on EU legislative proposals around climate and the environment please contact [info@fooddrinkeurope.eu](mailto:info@fooddrinkeurope.eu).



# PARTNERSHIPS TO SCALE THE CHANGE TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS



If you want to go quickly,  
go alone. If you want  
to go far, go together.  
The EU's ambitious  
sustainability goals can  
only be met if all actors  
work together.

The global food chain is a long and complex system, with multiple players involved long before a farmer puts a seed in the ground and long after a consumer takes a bite of food.

The food manufacturing industry is right in the middle, and therefore has a vital coordinating role with players both up and down the food chain.

## The targets:

1. Truly collaborative partnerships to drive towards a common goal of more sustainable food systems
2. An open dialogue that gives everyone a voice, and explores all ideas to tackle sustainability challenges

## Our actions:

### **Innovation Action Project**

To make the food systems fit for the future, we need transformative partnerships between farmers, civil society, policymakers and businesses across multiple industries. The goal for FoodDrinkEurope is to find and nurture partnerships and drive the conversations and ideas that will help scale the change needed to move towards more sustainable food systems.

### **Progress to date:**

Food chain partnership project: FoodDrinkEurope has an open call for organisations that share our common goal for more sustainable food systems and a mindset for collaboration, and we have worked with dozens of partners over the past 12 months.

We continue to take a lead role in the signatories' group to the [Code of Conduct](#), driving communications and events to support the Code and amplify best practices.

Partnerships are also a central element of FoodDrinkEurope's climate, packaging and nutrition action projects and we encourage all interested parties to get in touch at [info@fooddrinkeurope.eu](mailto:info@fooddrinkeurope.eu).

#FoodFuture dialogue project: In 2021 FoodDrinkEurope launched its #FoodFuture project, a listening exercise to hear from stakeholders about their vision for the future of food.

Since the launch we have engaged with more than 3,000 stakeholders and included 100 in-depth conversations to help us build our Action Plan for Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems.

Highlights of the project so far include:

- The launch of [Food For Thought](#), a sustainable food series produced by BBC StoryWorks for FoodDrinkEurope looking at innovations to transform the food system.
- The inaugural [#FoodFuture Ideas Fest](#) attended by hundreds of prominent stakeholders, all involved in shaping the future of food in some way.
- Monthly #FoodFuture emails about sustainability issues sent to 8,000 subscribers.

We will continue to engage with critical, as well as supportive, voices to build on the Action Plan and ensure it truly delivers on its objectives.



## Our policy ask:

To facilitate partnerships and develop ideas that will contribute to sustainable food systems the food and drink industry urges policymakers to maintain an open, transparent and participatory approach where all stakeholders are able to contribute to common goals.

# MORE THAN FOOD PROJECT



While this Action Plan focuses on FoodDrinkEurope's external role towards more sustainable food and drink, we also believe that **sustainability starts at home**.

With that in mind, FoodDrinkEurope launched its More than Food project in 2022, where our staff work in the local community, take action for the good of our planet and ensure we support each other's values, health and wellbeing.

## Our community

The FoodDrinkEurope secretariat has established a Community Action Team, leading on a number of initiatives including:

- A partnership with the Brussels-Brabant Food Bank which provides food security to 30,000 of the most vulnerable people in Brussels. FoodDrinkEurope has donated 7.5 tons of rice and will continue to support the food bank in 2023/4.
- A commitment to donate up to 46 days to local charities each year as staff are actively encouraged to take two days every year to support community initiatives.
- An annual office run/walk to raise funds for a chosen good cause voted for by staff.
- Regular food collections for local NGOs.



## Our planet

The FoodDrinkEurope secretariat has established a Planet Action Team, which is driving a more sustainable Brussels office with activities including:

- A carbon reduction plan, plus wider sustainability actions to reduce waste and ensure sustainable office sourcing.
- A partnership with Soil Capital, regenerative agriculture experts, that includes a 2022 investment to help farmers lock 50 tonnes of carbon into the soil.
- Support for a project to train women in Burkina Faso to make efficient cookstoves that require less wood fuel (reducing carbon) and are less smoky (reducing air pollution).



## Our people

The FoodDrinkEurope secretariat has established a Happiness Action Team, providing opportunities for staff to concentrate on their own health and wellbeing, and to ensure the organisation is true to the values that are important to staff.

