

PHASE 1 – IDEATION PHASE

1.1 Project Overview

The **FoodConnect** initiative was conceived to tackle one of society's most persistent paradoxes — the coexistence of food wastage and hunger. Every day, restaurants, hotels, banquet halls, and large events dispose of huge amounts of edible food, while millions of people go to bed hungry. The goal of this project is to build a **Salesforce-based cloud application** that streamlines the end-to-end process of collecting, managing, and distributing surplus food to those in need.

By leveraging **Salesforce CRM** functionalities such as custom objects, automation tools, workflow rules, and dashboards, the system provides a unified digital platform where food donors, NGOs, and volunteers can collaborate efficiently. Donors will be able to register leftover food in real time, NGOs can assign available volunteers for pickup and delivery, and administrators can monitor all ongoing activities through dashboards and performance reports.

The core idea is not merely to create a database but to build a **social-impact ecosystem** using technology. With Salesforce as the backbone, FoodConnect ensures transparency, traceability, and accountability at every stage—from donation to delivery. The project highlights how low-code tools like Flow Builder and Lightning App Builder can be used to address real-world humanitarian challenges. In short, it aims to bring structure, automation, and insight into a process that is currently fragmented and mostly manual.

1.2 Objectives

- The project's objectives were designed to align with the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger**, and to support sustainable use of available resources.
- The primary objective is to reduce food wastage by connecting surplus food providers with NGOs that can distribute the food to people in need.
- Another major goal is to enable efficient logistics by using Salesforce automation to track the entire lifecycle of each donation — from pickup to final delivery.
- Additional objectives include maintaining a database of volunteers with their contact details, skills, and availability; generating accurate reports and dashboards to help administrators understand performance metrics; and ensuring transparency so that all stakeholders have access to up-to-date, trustworthy data.
- Secondary objectives include encouraging community participation, promoting corporate social responsibility among restaurants and event organizers, and demonstrating Salesforce's adaptability beyond traditional business CRM use cases.
- The project also aims to provide a replicable model that can later be extended to other types of donations such as clothing, books, or medical supplies.

- Through these objectives, the project not only delivers a functional Salesforce prototype but also shows how **cloud technology can become a driver of social transformation**.

1.3 Problem Statement

Despite technological advancement and sufficient food production worldwide, food insecurity remains a pressing global issue. Studies show that nearly one-third of all food produced is wasted each year, while millions suffer from malnutrition. The real problem lies not in food shortage but in **poor distribution and lack of organized systems** for managing surplus food.

Restaurants, hotels, and event organizers often have large quantities of leftover food but no structured channel to donate it safely and quickly. At the same time, NGOs and volunteer organizations find it difficult to identify nearby donors or coordinate volunteers efficiently. Most existing efforts rely on manual communication through phone calls or social-media groups, leading to mismanagement and delays.

The current challenges can be summarized as follows: the process is highly manual and time-consuming; there is no real-time visibility into available food donations; accountability is weak because it is difficult to verify where and when food was delivered; volunteer coordination is cumbersome; and most small organizations lack the infrastructure to scale their operations.

All these inefficiencies result in wasted food, duplication of effort, and missed opportunities to feed people in need. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a **digital, cloud-based, and automated solution** that can connect all stakeholders under one unified system. Salesforce, with its modular design, secure cloud database, and powerful workflow automation, provides an ideal foundation for building such a system.

1.4 Proposed Solution

- The **FoodConnect** project is a Salesforce-based application designed to manage food donation and distribution from start to finish. It includes components for **Venues** (donors), **Drop-Off Points** (NGOs/centers), **Volunteers**, **Tasks**, and **Execution Details** to track all activities and performance.
- Automation through **Salesforce Flows** and **Apex Triggers** enables automatic record creation, distance calculation, and real-time alerts. **Validation Rules** ensure data accuracy, while **email and SMS notifications** keep volunteers and coordinators informed.
- The system can also integrate with **Google Maps API**, **SMS gateways**, and **Einstein Analytics** for future predictive insights. Overall, FoodConnect offers a **structured, automated, and transparent solution** that improves efficiency, accountability, and coordination in food donation management.

1.5 Expected Outcome

- Fully functional Salesforce application simplifying the food donation process
- Easy user login, record creation, task assignment, and progress tracking through a user-friendly interface
- Automatic matching of donors to nearby drop-off points based on distance and volunteer availability
- Streamlined donation workflows for efficient management
- Real-time dashboards and reports showing donations, meals distributed, volunteer participation, and operational efficiency
- Data-driven decision-making and improved transparency for donors and organizations
- Increased community participation from restaurants, event organizers, and volunteers
- Volunteers feel motivated and appreciated through performance tracking and recognition features
- Cloud-based system ensures scalability, longevity, and low maintenance costs
- Secure, accessible, and easily maintainable data storage within Salesforce
- System can be replicated or extended to other cities and social service initiatives
- Creates a strong connection between technology and humanitarian service
- Demonstrates how cloud innovation can reduce food waste and support social welfare