

# S2S Food Recovery – Strengths, Gaps & Best Practices

This document is a summary of strengths and gaps in the Sea to Sky, and a compilation of best practices, which provided a 'cheat sheet' to inform action planning. It includes the relative scale of the recovery potential for each food industry type, the strengths and challenges related to regional food recovery, as well as food recovery best practices pulled from a number of source documents that are listed at the end. Each best practice in the table is coded A, B, C, etc. according to the document from which it was sourced, and endnotes are used to provide more information about some of them.

## Definitions and abbreviations used in this document

- **Food waste:** Food that is not sellable and needs to be managed.
- **(Avoidable) Edible food waste:** Food waste that can be further prepared for consumption or consumed as is.
- **(Unavoidable) Inedible food:** Food that is not consumable by humans because it has spoiled or is unusable (e.g. bones, cut-offs, peels, etc.).
- **Recovered/recoverable food:** Edible food that is/can be kept out of the waste stream and donated to FDOs.
- **Dedicated food donations:** Food that is allocated/intended for donation at the time of purchase.
- **Donated food:** All food provided to FDOs, whether dedicated for donation or recovered for donation.
- **HRI:** Hotels, restaurants and institutions
- **FDO:** Food distribution organizations (see details at the end of the document)

## Recoverable food potential by source in the Sea to Sky

The table below summarizes the potential for food recovery, where green represents the highest potential, yellow = moderate potential, and red = the lowest potential. For more detail, including a breakdown by community, please see the Food Recovery Engagement and Research document provided as a separate document.

	Production/ Grow	Processing Manufacture	Transport/Distribution	Retail/Grocer	Hotels, restaurants and institutions (HRI)	Food Distribution Organizations (FDO)
Number of entities	Up to 51 orgs. 38 Sellers 8 Community Gardens	24 food processing orgs.	Very few	49 locations	372 HRI locations	16 Food programs
Potential tonnes <sup>i</sup>	Unclear	Unclear/Limited	Unclear/Limited	2,400	2,600	10

## S2S Strengths and Challenges/Gaps, and General Best Practices

S2S Strengths (green) + Challenges/Gaps (red)	Best Practices	Organization Types:*							
		Gen	LG	F	P	R	HRI	T	FDO
<b>1. Monitoring and assessment</b>									
<i>Track levels and sources of food waste and (re-)assess potential to increase food recovery.</i>									
S2S FDOs don't typically distinguish between dedicated food donations and recovered food waste when measuring food received; <b>some don't measure at all. And while the FDOs have indicated that they generally can meet the</b>	Track donations using a variety of identification codes in case of recalls. <sup>ii</sup> (A)			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Measure recovered food and assess potential to increase both. (D)			✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Measure success beyond "kilograms collected" (e.g. people served, events, volunteers, etc.). This information is crucial for grant applications. <sup>iii</sup> (C) (D)								✓

\*Organization types: General, Local Government, Farms (moderate recovery potential), Processors (low recovery potential), Retail (high recovery potential), Hotels/Restaurants/Institutions (high recovery potential), Transport, Food Distribution Organizations (which are described at the end of the doc.) Colour coding follows the first table in the document and represents the size of the opportunity for food recovery in the S2S Corridor.

S2S Strengths (green) + Challenges/Gaps (red)	Best Practices	Organization Types:*	Gen	LG	F	P	R	HRI	T	FDO
<p>demand for food, there hasn't been any assessment of unmet demand, or additional needs by those who cannot easily access the FDO services.</p> <p>Most grocers/retailers track unsellable food as 'shrink' but this is confidential information; the amount of 'shrink' that is recovered and donated is not tracked as carefully (sometimes not at all and sometimes just as an estimate based on the number of boxes of food).</p> <p>Most HRI do not track the amount of food thrown out.</p> <p>No regional organization in the S2S to monitor, assess, and address food waste/recovery.</p>	Support a coordinated system for individual business/organizational level tracking and assessment of recoverable/donated and received/redistributed food. (D)	✓								
	Assess assets, gaps and further development of food rescue infrastructure. (D)	✓								
<b>2. Planning, policy, regulations</b> <i>Remove barriers, establish requirements, incentives and disincentives to improve recovery.</i>										
<p>Best before date or other food liability concerns from the food industry are barriers to donating food.</p> <p>There is a lack of enforcement preventing food waste in the garbage at the food operation so food is lost.</p> <p>Squamish Zero Waste Plan includes banning organics as an action item.</p> <p>Pemberton does not have a ban on organics/food scraps.</p> <p>Whistler has a ban on organics in the landfill, and tipping fees are higher than for unmixed waste. Industrial, commercial, institutional and large multi-family residential parcels must separately collect food scraps, organics, recyclables and landfill waste for disposal.</p>	Ban food and food scraps from the landfill (e.g. CRD, Metro Van <sup>iv</sup> ). (A)	✓								
	Review and revise vendor agreements to enable donation of edible food. (D)	✓								
	When issuing RFPs, include need for respondents to include food recovery and redistribution strategies, and to measure and reduce the amount of food going to waste. (D)	✓								
	Review organizations date code/food donation policies to ensure that they do not prevent the donation of safe food. (D) <i>(Background: In BC, the Food Donor Encouragement Act FDO Guidelines are permissive – they allow for distribution, as long as the source is known, trusted, BB date is clearly displayed, and ingredients are known/accessible.)</i> (A))				✓	✓	✓			
	Create official protocols for serving systems (e.g. buffet process) to encourage donation of excess food. (D)							✓		
	Establish clear, robust rules surrounding the management of potentially donatable food by public health institutions, to address the current "when in doubt, throw it out" philosophy. (D)						✓	✓		
	Remove any clauses in crop insurance policies that prevent the donation of edible crops. (D)			✓						
<b>3. Funding/Financial Resources</b> <i>Grants, rebates, financial incentives to community orgs to enable food recovery</i>										

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S2S Strengths (green) + Challenges/Gaps (red)	Best Practices	Organization Types:*									
		Gen	LG	F	P	R	HRI	T	FDO		
<p>Funding from Federal Government (Local Food Infrastructure Fund) - \$50M over 5 years. Provides access to expensive infrastructure, e.g., refrigeration.</p> <p>A \$10 million grant from the Province enabled Food Banks BC to provide 89 community food banks with walk-in coolers and freezers, refrigerated trucks and related infrastructure.</p> <p>Clean BC Program exists and could prove to be a mechanism for food recovery.</p> <p>Farmers and HRIs can receive a charitable tax receipt for donating food to FDOs that is sellable.</p> <p>Many strong and established FDOs already exist in the region with successful programs.</p> <p>Lack of resources (human and financial) to monitor, assess and address food waste.</p> <p>United Way has provided funding for food security initiatives.</p>	Fund food recovery initiatives, including infrastructure, staffing, communication, etc., considering revenue from waste reduction or tipping fees. (C)	✓	✓								
	Collaboratively invest in and operate redistribution infrastructure and community food programs initiatives. (D)	✓	✓				✓			✓	
	Fund the development and commercialization of innovative solutions for transforming inedible FLW into edible foods and ingredients (e.g. soup stock). (D)	✓									
	Fund the start-up of social ventures that will in turn fund or deliver food programs for those in need. <sup>vi</sup> (B)		✓			✓	✓			✓	
	Fund non-profit organizations to run scheduled retrieval services, driving to farms and retail stores, picking up donated goods, and delivering to food banks. (F)		✓			✓					
	Offer a tax rebate (or other financial incentive) to farms, producers, retailers, and HRIs that donate food to FDOs (Milan, Italy offers a 20% reduction on their waste tax). (E)		✓								
	Share purchasing power. FDOs augment their food donations by purchasing additional food. A retailer or wholesaler might share their purchasing power with a partnering FDO in order to help reduce their costs. (A)						✓	✓			✓
<b>3. Human Resources</b> <i>Individuals and organizations have the capacity to recover and redistribute food.</i>											
<p>Staffing challenges for food banks, and the cost of labour and wages are not covered by grants or sales.</p> <p>Challenges coordinating and staffing pick-ups/deliveries between donors and FDOs.</p> <p>Very passionate and dedicated senior staff at HRI who go out of their way to collect and donate food.</p> <p>Strong collective knowledge and passion amongst FDOs in the region.</p>	Engage employees in food recovery solutions and operations. (D)				✓	✓	✓				
	Designate someone to make decisions about food donations. This designated “donation liaison” leads the day to day activities involved with food donation. (A)				✓	✓	✓				
	Use food recovery and donation activities as team-building opportunities in organization since most FDOs rely heavily on volunteers. (A)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			
	Establish additional food bank locations, which could lessen travel distances and make redistribution easier for many farmers and retailers. (F)		✓							✓	
	Deliver lean <sup>vii</sup> training to FDO staff and volunteers to optimize the use of resources. (D)									✓	
	Encourage public participation in volunteer recovery and redistribution programs. (D)	✓									✓

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4. Infrastructure Including service facilities, storage, refrigeration, equipment, vehicles, etc.									
<p>Cold chain issues; lack of refrigerated trucks.</p> <p>Insufficient on-site storage, loading bays and refrigeration, leading to spoilage at donor locations and FDOs.</p> <p>Squamish Food Hub expansion, but too early to tell if it will meet growing needs.</p> <p>A Pemberton Food Hub is being planned by Sea to Sky Community Services.</p> <p>Whistler facilities currently meet the needs of the 80-100 clients per week. Pemberton space is limited; not enough space to store food (during COVID space has also forced reduction in staffing due to physical distancing requirements).</p> <p>Lil'wat facility (which is only temporary) has ample storage space, but human resource and transportation capacity is challenged (especially true during COVID).</p> <p>Remote communities (mainly Indigenous ones) have access challenges and very little storage capacity for food redistribution.</p> <p>HRI may have existing infrastructure (e.g. storage, vehicles, kitchens) that can support gaps/needs.</p> <p>Food can be missorted and spoils each other.</p> <p>Mobility/transportation barriers exist for some FDO clients.</p> <p>Pemberton has a commercial community kitchen at the Community Centre, but space is limited and challenging for FDOs/processors to have to move equipment and food in and out for other community users. Lil'wat has a commercial kitchen, but it is very busy most of the time. Squamish is currently working on a strategy to inventory commercial kitchens and determine when they are not in use and could</p>	Share infrastructure. Many FDOs report needing more access to cold storage and transportation. Donating warehousing space, freezer or cold storage space, or arranging for transportation and delivery from your facilities could be very beneficial. (A)				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Share packaging, supplies and services. Dishes, equipment, storage wares, and environmentally sensitive packaging might be needed by FDOs. (A)			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Encourage and support the development of new business models by waste management haulers, who might expand their services to support food recovery efforts (D).		✓					✓	
	Ensure adequate refrigeration at FDOs, which enables them to provide customers with a choice of products, similar to shopping at a supermarket (vs. receiving a box of pre-selected food). This is identified as one of the top needs in the Sea to Sky.								✓
	Establish commercial community kitchen that enable food processing by FDOs, farmers and other community organizations.	✓	✓						✓

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be accessed by small food businesses/processors.									
<b>6. Food redistribution/ access programs</b> <i>How the food is managed and distributed by FDOs to those in need.</i>									
<p>Some St'at'imc communities are very remote and travel is sometimes challenging or not possible at all. Lower St'at'imc Health Society distributes food for remote Lower St'at'imc communities.</p> <p>Need for better collaboration between new food programs and existing programs.</p> <p>Well managed and resourced food programs exist in S2S and are generally meeting existing requests for food.</p> <p>Sea to Sky farms are donating more food than in the past and these foods are in high demand.</p> <p>COVID has strengthened local food networks that can aid future food recovery.</p> <p>Squamish food program facility expansions provides food in a market-like setting.</p> <p>Food industry operations are generally very supportive of donations and recovering food.</p> <p>Responsive to new/emerging food needs (e.g. Lil'wat Food Bank set up quickly in response to COVID).</p> <p>Strong FDO anecdotal understanding on what their needs are and how they can best meet those needs.</p>	Provide ongoing support to regional working groups focused on recovery and redistribution.		✓						
	Support implementation of foundational redistribution system, with guidance on modifying to suit local conditions. (D) <sup>viii</sup>		✓						
	Grow or manufacture food specifically for donation. Farmers may "grow a row," and manufacturers may do a special product run specifically intended for an FDO. In-demand products <sup>ix</sup> should be the focus. (A)			✓					
	Provide free left-over or unsold lunch menus from restaurant on weekdays to people experiencing homelessness. <sup>x</sup> (B)						✓		
	Build a more formal, long-term relationship with FDO(s), which will help to clarify expectations for both organizations. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) <sup>xi</sup> can be a helpful tool to capture important information such as contacts, hours of business, expectations, etc. (A)			✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Build relationships with those receiving the food, and listen to their ideas about how it should be delivered in way that most allows recipients choice and dignity.								✓
	Establish formal collaborative agreements between multi-regional food redistribution and community food programs. (D)								✓
	Improve strategic and operational collaboration between food rescue and community food programs at all levels (federal down to local). (D)	✓	✓						
	Sell products from wholesale/retail, industry, catering, agriculture etc. that can't be sold are near or past their 'expiration' date at lower prices in social markets. <sup>xii</sup> Could be done through a smartphone app. (B)			✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Although food banks cannot sell food, they can set up a social enterprise with retail where they sell items and raise funds for food banks.								
	Establish 'gleaning' programs with farms, where FDOs are given permission to access farm fields post-harvest and recover food that would otherwise be wasted.			✓					✓
	Establish or expand food programs for school-aged children.								✓

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7. Education, communications									
Increase food recovery stakeholder awareness and capacity related to food recovery.									
<p>Uncertainty amongst retail and HRI donors about the ability to use prepared foods at food banks.</p> <p>Uncertainty about what raw foods the food banks need e.g. too much bread and sweets, additional composting costs for the food banks if not needed.</p> <p>There has been significant education in Whistler in the commercial sector, including a Solutions Guide and workshops for reducing food waste.</p> <p>Strong existing community groups to support education and communications efforts.</p> <p>Global groundswell/movement taking place that S2S can learn from.</p>	Shift the language of 'food waste' to 'surplus food' or 'forgotten food' to educate that the surplus food is not garbage; it is edible and nutritious. (C) (D)	✓	✓						
	Create a 'take-home' culture within restaurants where (sustainable) to-go containers are cool and encouraged. (E)		✓				✓		
	Publish best practice date coding policies to inform processors. (D)	✓	✓						
	Publish a comprehensive donor resource to encourage donations and reduce organizational time dedicated to the effort, including: the benefits, facts/figures, health regulations, date labelling meaning, the BC Food rescue timetable.xiii (D)	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Educate about ways to transform food waste into edible foods and ingredients (and extending the shelf-life). (D)			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Recognize businesses working with FDOs as a way to encourage others to do the same. (E)		✓						✓
	Provide health inspectors with the training and tools to more explicitly integrate food donation issues into their work (health authority).	✓							
	Offer value-added services like community meals, film screenings, workshops (how to grow, prepare, and reduce food surplus), and community kitchen events to preserve fruits and vegetables, to benefit all community stakeholders, and increase awareness and support (MacKenzie & Park, 2015). (C)								✓
	Establish standardized communication system and processes for donors and redistributors (e.g. website, checklist, set times for pick up, etc.). (D)					✓	✓		✓
	Encourage organizations to engage their employees in recovery and redistribution initiatives, within the organization or as individual volunteers. (D) <sup>xiv</sup>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
8. Advocacy (to other levels of government)									
Secure the needed support and/or legislation from the provincial and/or federal governments									
Food recovery is not currently part of Clean BC program (nor federal programs) as a strategy to address climate change.	Advocate for policies that promote a reasonable living wage and mitigate food insecurity. <sup>xv</sup> (C)	✓							
	Lobby for supportive donor and liability (e.g. Good Samaritan Act) legislation. <sup>xvi</sup> (C+D)	✓							
	Advocate for improved strategic oversight of food rescue and community food programs at all levels (federal down to local). (D)	✓							
	Advocate for the requirement that schools educate students on food sustainability and rescue.	✓							

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	<b>Dates</b>								
	Advocate for the adoption of new national enforceable date code formats (e.g. Julian codes) that enable and expand food recovery and donations. (D, Technical Report)	✓							
	Advocate for the establishment of industry standard on date code protocols regarding food donations. (D)	✓							
	Advocate that government work with industry to eliminate date codes from being abused for competitive advantage. (D)	✓							
	Advocate for the establishment of clear guidelines and legal framework for allowing mislabelled food products that do not represent a food safety hazard to be donated. (D)	✓							
	<b>Food loss and waste (FLW)</b>								
	Advocate for the establishment of a national ban to prevent FLW going to landfill with firm timelines for its implementation. (D)	✓							
	Advocate for the establishment of collaborative FLW agreement with industry members in conjunction with voluntary FLW reduction agreement with government. (D)	✓							

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## What are Food Distribution Organizations (FDOs)?

Source: BCCDC Industry Food Donation Guidelines, March 2019

The most widely known FDOs are food banks, but there are a range of organizations and programs that use donated food to feed hungry people, support healthier eating, build community capacity, educate and train people, or help maintain cultural eating practices.

1. **Community kitchens** are programs in which food is collectively prepared and consumed. They include educational, community building, and/or food provision aspects. Food may be consumed on site or taken home to be consumed at a later date.
2. **Food banks** & smaller food pantries provide food at no cost to clients. Food banks perform a number of functions including receiving, holding, storing, packaging, repackaging and distributing food to be consumed off the premises, but do not generally process or serve food.
3. **Low cost retail outlets** provide food for pick-up by members, either at a reduced charge or at cost. Foods unsuitable for sale by wholesalers or retailers may be allowable for sale at these premises. Foods must be appropriately packaged and stored for use in a retail setting.
4. **Meal programs** (e.g., soup kitchens) fit the definition of a food service establishment or food premise; they prepare and serve food to clients on-site.
5. **Social enterprises** include culinary training schools, non-profit restaurants, and low-cost retail outlets. Foods given to social enterprises may be used in teaching kitchens or sold through a catering or grocery non-profit business.

## Sources for best practices

- A. BCCDC Food Donations Guidelines: <http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/EH/FPS/Food/Food%20Donation%20Guidelines%20Complete.pdf>
- B. Best Practices to prevent food waste in Europe: <http://www.reducefoodwaste.eu/best-practices-to-prevent-food-waste.html>
- C. Harvesting Potential from Forgotten Food – Best Practices, Found and Dalhousie University: <http://foundns.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Food-Rescue-Best-Practices-2017.pdf>
- D. Page 25-27: <https://secondharvest.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Avoidable-Crisis-of-Food-Waste-The-Roadmap-by-Second-Harvest-and-VCMI.pdf>
- E. Circular Cities Roadmaps 2020 (Banff, Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Strathcona) <https://recycle.ab.ca/circular-cities/>
- F. FAO. 2011. Global food losses and food waste – Extent, causes and prevention. Rome. <http://www.fao.org/3/mb060e/mb060e00.pdf>

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## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> Estimates based of national averages and the Sea to Sky population (with visitors) estimate of 64,215 people. Rounded.

<sup>ii</sup> Keep track of the following: • Donation date • Name of the recipient FDO • Name of the item • Unit of measure for the item (e.g., cartons or kg) • Quantity donated • BBD (Best Before Date) • Production dates, UPC codes, lot codes, or specific batch numbers • Wholesale unit cost for the item • COGS or cost of goods sold (multiply the unit cost of the item by the number of units) Optional: • Weight of food donations (kg) • No. of meals by portion donated.

<sup>iii</sup> Though many organizations effectively measure the weight of the food they have rescued, this number does not account for poor growing seasons, differences in food weights, food packaging, and the nutritional value of one food versus another. Shift your key performance indicators to numbers of harvest events, community partners and volunteers. In this way, you are measuring the social value of building community, reducing waste, increasing awareness, and increasing access to food, rather than simply how much food you have collected (Miroso, Mainvil, Horne & Mangan-Walker, 2016). **Food-Rescue-Best-Practices-2017.pdf**

<sup>iv</sup> Starting in 2015, organics (e.g., food or food scraps) are banned from Metro Vancouver garbage. Healthy edible food can be donated. Waste or scraps should be collected for compost or biofuel.

<sup>v</sup> In BC, the Food Donor Encouragement Act protects corporations and their directors, agents, and employees from liability when donating food or distributing donated food.<sup>7</sup> As long as the food was not rotten or unfit for consumption, and the food was not donated or distributed with reckless disregard for safety, this Act provides protection from liability. <http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/EH/FPS/Food/Food%20Donation%20Guidelines%20Complete.pdf>

<sup>vi</sup> Kitchens use fresh, non-compliant vegetables (misfits) from organic farmers, which cannot be sold on the market. The food is served in refillable jars at events or delivered by bike to the offices in Vienna.

<sup>vii</sup> Lean practices optimize resources (human, financial, and other) and are guided by tenets of continuous improvement and respect for people.

<sup>viii</sup> Support the implementation of food recovery distribution models based on local community needs, existing assets, and existing organizations.

<sup>ix</sup> In-demand items in BC are included in Appendix 1: <http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/EH/FPS/Food/Food%20Donation%20Guidelines%20Complete.pdf>

<sup>x</sup> Employees of the Social Services Centre pick up the left-over or unsold lunch menus directly from the canteens and transport them to the Centre of emergency assistance for those in extreme social situations where the homeless can get a good hot meal which would have otherwise been thrown away.

<http://www.reducefoodwaste.eu/best-practices-to-prevent-food-waste.html>

<sup>xi</sup> MOU templates are available on the BCCDC website.

<sup>xii</sup> All those social markets are charitable organisations or non-profit companies with clear regulations on prices, food hygiene and access authorisations. All goods are donated for free from retail and industry. <http://www.reducefoodwaste.eu/best-practices-to-prevent-food-waste.html>

<sup>xiii</sup> BCCDC Food Rescue Timetable: [https://www.foodrescue.ca/docs/default-source/food-safety/best-before-timeline.pdf?sfvrsn=c7501331\\_22](https://www.foodrescue.ca/docs/default-source/food-safety/best-before-timeline.pdf?sfvrsn=c7501331_22)

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<sup>xiv</sup> When people understand the issues at hand, they are more likely to participate in solutions (know better, do better). Redistribution efforts can often take more time and effort than just composting or putting food in the garbage. Engaged staff will support stronger food recovery programs.

<sup>xv</sup> Explore, understand, and then make explicit the connections between poverty, food waste, and food insecurity. Help to educate the local community and government to understand the social, health, and environmental impacts of our broken food system, and how your organization can help mitigate those impacts (Lipinski, Hanson, Loma, Kitinoja, Waite, & Searchinger, 2013).

<sup>xvi</sup> Our research found that, in Canada especially, organizations encountered resistance to participation from potential retail and corporate donors because they were worried they were not protected from liability for selling “near-expired” food. Removing liability as a barrier would greatly enhance the ability of organizations to do their work. Food-Rescue-Best-Practices-2017.pdf

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