



## FINAL REPORT

### Results of the ECR Austria Working Group "Social Sustainability"



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Guide to Food Redistribution  
ECR Austria Working Group "Social Sustainability"

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## Foreword

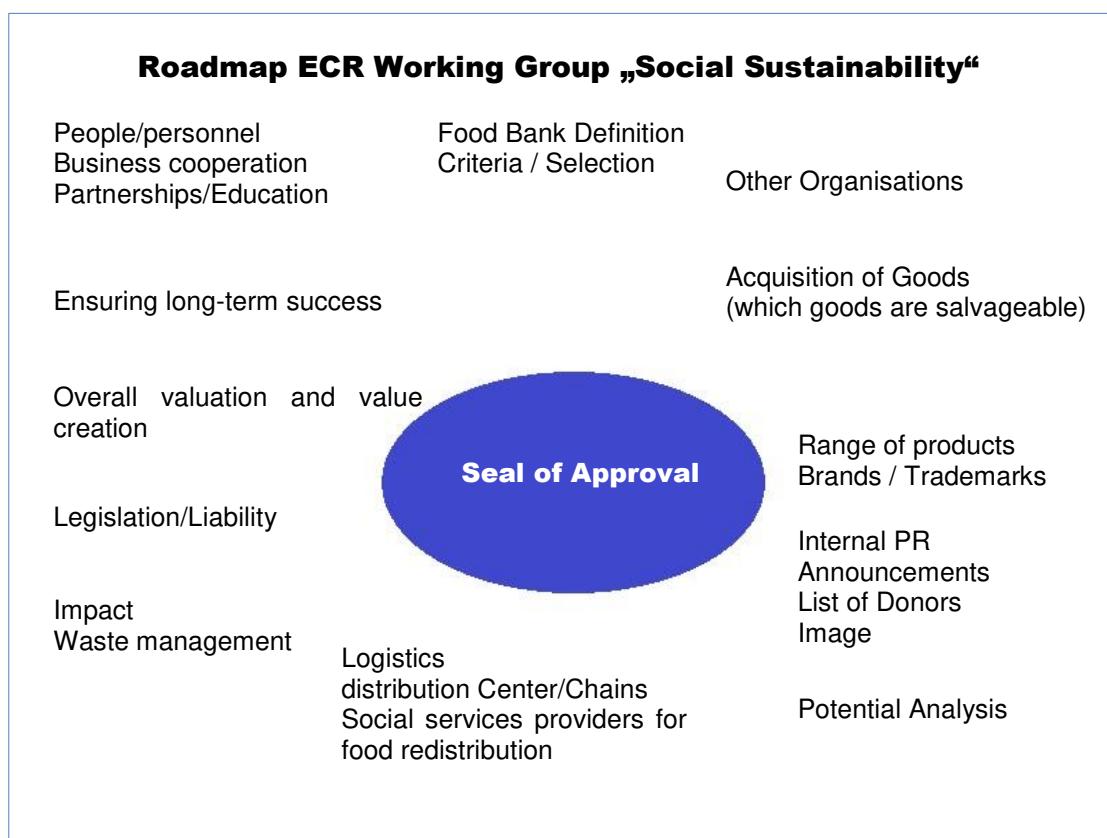


Dr. Nikolaus Hartig

"Recycling instead of disposal" – In our affluent society, in which only "perfect products" are demanded by legislators and purchased by the consumer, this concept is an attempt to address the challenge of creating a fair balance for those who urgently need it. Given that anywhere from 80,000 to 160,000 tons of original and damaged food products in Austria and approximately 1.3 billion tons worldwide are discarded, it is time to act.

In 2010, the ECR Austria "Social Sustainability" Working Group was launched, whose goal is to provide poverty-stricken people and those threatened with poverty with products that are no longer or, on a limited basis, sold in traditional stores.

All of the welfare institutions of SOMA, from LE+Os, a Caritas project, and the Wiener Tafel, to Vinzimarkt and Tischlein Deck Dich, make important contributions towards fighting and alleviating poverty. The ECR Austria Social Sustainability Working Group has worked out the key subjects according to the following roadmap and developed a guide.



This guide is meant to both inform and motivate companies to cooperate with welfare institutions in order to salvage discarded food items.

## 1 Executive Summary

The way food products are handled in our society does not reflect well on our actions - while tons of food are being discarded, there are people living on and below the poverty line. According to a recent report from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 1.3 billion tons of food are disposed of worldwide each year. In Austria, studies indicate that 12,000 to 25,000 tons of food waste is produced by the food industry itself annually. At the same time, approximately 990,000 people in Austria qualify as at risk of poverty (see Introduction).

For more than a decade, a number of **welfare institutions for food redistribution** have positioned themselves as another link in the supply chain in order to salvage unsellable but edible food prior to disposal that could benefit poverty-affected people or those vulnerable to poverty. Examples: SOMA Austria and Partner, as a parent organization to a number of food banks in Austria, Le<sup>+</sup>O, food and orientation as a Vienna Caritas institution with associated social counseling, and the environmental association and registered charity Wiener Tafel, which exclusively supplies non-profit organizations (see Chapter 3 Welfare Services for Food Redistribution).

Welfare institutions do not claim to offer a full range of products. A large selection of those on offer consist of bread & bakery products, sweets, dairy products, fruits and vegetables, as well as canned goods. Goods acquired by welfare institutions for redistribution must be basically fit for consumption but no longer sellable. Packaging defects, short sell-by dates, or damaged labels qualify products for redistribution. In principle, goods that are unfit for consumption do not apply (see Chapter 4 Procurement and Range of Goods).

Welfare institutions that redistribute food products are regarded as **another link in the supply chain**. Goods are traded between two companies of the food branch. What is unusual is that the value of the goods is fixed at zero euros. Food safety is a key term in this context. Every company has to ensure this through internal measures. Welfare institutions must, like all other food retailers, comply with all food regulations (see Chapter 5 Legal Aspects of Cooperation and Chapter 6 Logistics and Information Flow).

A study commissioned by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) shows that about one-third of all food produced worldwide gets lost due to **throwaway mentality** and damage during transport and storage. Avoiding food waste as a central field of action is reflected in a set of measures by the Austrian federal waste management plan. Secure, aggregated data on the turnover of goods by welfare institutions are not currently available. Regardless of this, selective information can give an impression of the industry: for example, in 2009, 525,000 kg of food products were put back on sale in the Neustiftgasse local food bank in Vienna. The Le<sup>+</sup>O institution redistributed about 362,000 kg of goods in the first year. In 2010, Wiener Tafel was able to deliver about 330,500 kg of "expired" food products and hygiene products (see Chapter 7 Impacts of Waste Management).

From a societal perspective, welfare institutions that redistribute food products constitute effective activity within the three pillars of **sustainability**: people who can only participate in the economy in a limited way are addressed as customers. Beyond that, within the framework of transitional jobs, unemployed people can be introduced to and connected with the labor market (**social aspect**). From pricing up to free handouts, an increase in the purchasing power of the target groups emerges. Empirical evidence shows that the saved resources will be used by these



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people for further regular food purchases (**economic aspect**). Foods that would otherwise be handled in the respective waste management systems are provided for human consumption by the originally assigned welfare institution, thereby avoiding waste (**environmental aspect**) (see Chapter 8 Collective Added Value).

With sustainable development in mind, food producers and retailers fulfill their responsibilities and, in doing so, count on the cooperation of welfare institutions for food redistribution. To maintain long-term and stable relations, future development is going away from individual / private initiatives to organizations and larger units (see Chapter 9 Outlook).

**This guide is designed to allow participating companies and social institutions to consolidate their existing partnerships. Moreover, it will be easier for interested organizations to build new partnerships efficiently and objectively. Therefore, issues such as food safety, legal aspects, the range of goods, and value will be addressed.**



## 2 Introduction

In 1999, a private initiative in Upper Austria began the acquisition of unsellable products and the sale of these at reduced prices to verified people in need. The starting point and main motivation was to bridge the gap between avoiding food waste and discarding food that cannot be sold due to various reasons by passing it on to people in need. Meanwhile, with more than 30 partner sites, SOMA Austria and partners is active throughout Austria and, with facilities like Le+o and Wiener Tafel, as well as countless regional and local bodies, form the backbone of a highly expansive industry: the welfare institutions for food redistribution.

**The aim of this guide is to make an action plan available to companies and welfare institutions to provide security to existing partnerships. Moreover, it will make it easier for interested organizations to efficiently establish new partnerships in a goal-oriented way. This guide therefore deals with topics such as food safety, legal aspects, the range of goods, and value.**

In recent years, the issue of **food waste** has increasingly captured the public eye. According to a recent FAO report, 1.3 billion tons of food are disposed of worldwide every year, which corresponds to about one-third of all the food produced worldwide. Food waste accrues along the entire value chain, from production, to trade, to the consumer. In industrialized countries, the reasons can be traced back to the behavior of consumers, as well as to a lack of coordination between the individual actors in the supply chain<sup>1</sup>. For Europe, the authors of the FAO study estimate a loss of 280 to 300 kg per year and per capita across the entire value chain. This information includes preventable classified interests (e.g., retail boxed foods) as well as unavoidable assumed interests, for example, preparation surplus. A 2010 study of commercial waste in Austria estimated that 12,000 to 25,000 tons of food was went to waste<sup>2</sup>.

How we deal with our food sheds light on our society – on the one hand, tons of food which must be disposed of, and on the other, people who live on or below the poverty line, even in Austria. **Poverty** means a general lack of opportunities and also relates to being prevented from participating in society. 60% of the average per capita household income qualifies as being on the threshold of poverty<sup>3</sup>. This can be seen in the form of restrictions in central areas of life, such as the consumption of basic goods like clothing and food. For 2011, this risk-of-poverty threshold in Austria was 994 euros for a single adult, or 1,491 euros for two adults. About 12% of the total population, or at least 993,000 people, were vulnerable to poverty according to this classification<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> FAO 2011

<sup>2</sup> BMLFUW 2011a

<sup>3</sup> In Social Sciences discussions, a trend towards a less restrictive and more comprehensive and integral concept of poverty has been emerging. In order to more effectively describe what poverty means for those affected by it the term "social exclusion" is used more and more instead of "poverty". (WIESINGER 2004).

<sup>4</sup> BMASK 2011

### 3 Welfare Institutions for Food Redistribution

A variety of social institutions are engaged in distributing unsellable but edible food to people in need. The way the food gets to the consumer depends on the original motivation of the initiators. Accordingly, different interpretations of the framework conditions and differences in day-to-day implementations arise. Regardless of the implementation, these facilities face the following essential questions:

- Goods purchased?
- Acceptance of donations (goods or money)?
- Target group: individuals or other institutions?
- Free donations or sales with symbolic pricing?
- Access restrictions for the target group, and criteria for this?
- Shared goods (food or other product groups)?

While the individual institutions are clearly distinguishable in their concrete, daily work, they all agree that **food products fit for human consumption which would otherwise be disposed of are to be redistributed to people in need.**

SOMA Austria and partners, Le<sup>+</sup>O, and Wiener Tafel base their daily work on the following criteria<sup>5</sup>:

- Only goods that can no longer be sold by the cooperation partner through traditional redistribution channels are offered.
- Products are provided free of charge by the partner.
- The focus is on everyday items - there is no claim to a full range of goods.
- Alcohol and cigarettes are not redistributed.
- Goods are traded at symbolic prices (in the case of food banks and Le<sup>+</sup>O) or passed on to welfare institutions (in the case of Wiener Tafel) free of charge.
- The operator is non-profit, profits are reinvested in social projects.
- The operator complies with the legal requirements of the food trade.
- The purchaser is treated as a customer, rather than a recipient of charity.
- The goods are presented and placed accordingly.
- Identification cards are allocated after a verification of income.
- Purchases are recorded and limited to each customer's own requirements.
- The redistribution is made to persons in need or to welfare institutions with support services.

As an extension, **food banks** offer food products and other items for daily use such as hygiene and skin care products at extremely discounted prices. Only persons who have a demonstrably low income are entitled to purchase them.

The maximum purchase is limited and is monitored by means of authorization cards. Goods are purchased from retailers as well as manufacturers and consist mainly of goods that would

<sup>5</sup> As defined in LIENBACHER, HOLWEG 2011, supplemented by ECKER 2011 and SCHMIDT 2011

otherwise be disposed of. Commercial and industrial enterprises benefit from avoided disposal costs. Food banks thereby fulfill a logistical function and strengthen the purchasing power of people in need.

Food banks act as market participants, with the business purpose of the procurement and sale of goods (in particular, food). In the structural analysis of "Food Banks in Austria", a food bank is defined as a "small-sized, non-profit oriented retail operation, offering a very limited range of required daily goods at symbolic prices, mainly available on a self-service basis. Only financially challenged people are entitled to make purchases. The goods are donated by commercial and industrial enterprises, since they are no longer on sale due to minor defects or overstocked for normal trading but are still suitable for consumption. Profits are reinvested into social projects."<sup>6</sup>

Since 1999, **SOMA Austria and Partners** has developed from being individual food bank operators to a brand that also uses individual operators in accordance with defined criteria, such as, e.g., no additional purchases of goods. The original idea was to salvage food products prior to their disposal and to help people in need at the same time.<sup>7</sup> About half of the over 60 sites of food banks and institutions similar to food banks exist under the aegis of SOMA Austria and Partners.

Purchases are only possible with an authorization card. Upon issuance, certificates of residency and income, i.a., are inspected. So far in 2010 approx. 24,000 out of approx. 45,000 authorization cards registered in all food banks were regularly used.<sup>8</sup>

In cooperation with Vienna parishes, the Caritas institution **Le+O - Lebensmittel und Orientierung** ("food and orientation") has been providing emergency aid for people in need since 2009. At 11 redistribution points in Vienna, once a week, people in need receive the required food products and goods for daily use with an authorization card for the symbolic amount of one euro. Approximately 50 companies regularly donate basic food staples, canned foods, fruits and vegetables, dairy products, and toiletries. Donations are picked up by the partners, sorted in the Le+O warehouse in Floridsdorf, transported to the reRedistribution points, and given out by more than 400 volunteers. In 2010, 10,000 poverty-stricken people in

#### What is a socially inclusive enterprise?

The objective of socially inclusive enterprises (SIU) is to track the introduction as well as the integration of unemployed people into the labour market. Socially inclusive companies are financed by subsidies through the job centre (*Arbeitsmarktservice AMS*) and the Federal Social Welfare Office (*Bundessozialamt BASB*), which mediate which persons should work in the companies. By providing relatively protected temporary jobs (transitional jobs), sustainable integration of hard-to-place people into the labour market is supported (placement support). Sponsored, temporary employment enables as well as facilitates the transition from unemployment into the regular employment system (transitional function with specifically defined entry and exit). As long as no other otherwise agreed-to length of stay is indicated in the grant agreement, the maximum length of stay in a project is 12 months – the average length of stay that should be adopted is eight months (AMS Styria, 2010). The key forces are responsible for the necessary social work-related counseling and/or for expert guidance and training. Socially inclusive companies in the field of food redistribution improve the local social supply structure and allow for the improved participation of marginalized population groups in consumption that covers their basic needs and therefore improves their participation in society. In these companies, there are employment opportunities for groups targeted by labour market policy in the field of the food retail trade.

<sup>6</sup> LIENBACHER, HOLWEG 2011

<sup>7</sup> STEINER 2010

<sup>8</sup> LIENBACHER, HOLWEG 2011

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3,850 households were able to receive quick and unbureaucratic assistance through the food redistribution network. Staying faithful to the motto, "Help to self-help", at Le<sup>+</sup>O, the food redistribution is complemented by a range of free counseling services with social workers. It aims to provide ongoing help to people on their way out of poverty.<sup>9</sup>



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<sup>9</sup> ECKER 2011

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Since 1999, the environmental association and registered charity **Wiener Tafel** has collected expired food items from retail, industry, and agriculture to salvage them before disposal.<sup>10</sup> These donated goods are promptly redistributed free of charge by 220 volunteers to over 10,000 poverty-affected people in 80 welfare institutions in Vienna. Wiener Tafel organized the collection and redistribution of the goods with four of their own delivery vehicles and through this "social shipping", is making a contribution against the global destruction of food, as well as a contribution to the local fight against poverty and hunger. Wiener Tafel's supplies are aimed at charitable and non-profit organisations that provide poverty-affected people in Vienna with basic supplies (either through direct food banks or the redistribution of the products to people in need), as well as professional advice and/or support for the stabilization of living conditions. Without exception, consigned food no longer reaches the retail outlets.<sup>11</sup>



**Other social institutions** which are engaged in the redistribution of food are (non exhaustively): Hilfswerk, Volkshilfe, regionale Tafeln, Kolping, Team Österreich, VinziMarkt, Laube, TiSo, Markt, Tischlein Deck Dich, Der Korb, Barbara Laden, Solidarmarkt, and Kraut und Rüben.

<sup>10</sup> An outline of Wiener Tafel's basic principles can be found in the Appendix.

<sup>11</sup> SCHMIDT 2011

## Recommendation

To ensure a fair and long-lasting cooperation, we recommend that you go through the above criteria with your partner and discuss them. Keep a written record of all agreements.

This procedure ensures that a decision on whether and with whom you cooperate takes place on the basis of mutually agreed terms.

From the perspective of ECR Austria, clarifying these points fosters a holistically oriented cooperation. A failure to reach agreement on individual points, however, does not mean that cooperation ought to be considered in a negative light! Rather, it is essential to contact the organization you are in discussions with and to make clear which positions are adopted on specific points. The criteria thus serve as a decision-making tool to determine whether and how to work with a potential trading partner.

## 4 Procurement and Range of Goods

Welfare institutions do not claim to offer a full range of products. Following the typology of goods defined by A.C. Nielsen, the main food products on offer are bread and bakery products, sweets, dairy products, fruits and vegetables, as well as canned goods.

For example, meat and fish are only offered in about one-third of all **food banks**. In contrast, the range of non-food products is considerably more limited. For non-food products, the shelf life is quite long, which is why there are less surplus goods available. At food banks, detergents and cleaning products are the most abundant non-food products on offer<sup>12</sup>. Representative of food banks, the following range of food products were found in the SOMA food bank on Neustiftgasse in 2009<sup>13</sup>:

**Vegetables:** red cabbage, cucumbers, zucchini, cabbage, tomatoes, celery, squash, peppers, onions, turnips, radishes, cauliflower, scallions, avocado, cherry tomatoes, carrots, kale, green beans, white cabbage, arugula, broccoli, trusses, leeks, peppers, Brussels sprouts, beets, green cabbage, radishes, fennel, sweet corn, chicory, mini radish, beans, artichokes, chicory, eggplant, Romanesco, garlic, black radish, cauliflower, bean sprouts, parsley, peas, dill, spinach, chives, white radish

**Bread:** bread, biscuits, sweets, crisp bread, pita bread, rusks

**Fruit:** grapes, apples, wine grapes, pineapples, bananas, plums, grapefruit, oranges, watermelons, honeydew melons, peaches, melons, strawberries, apricots, persimmon, nectarines, Vistula, kiwi, lime, cherry, blueberry, pomegranate, tropical fruits

**Other Foods:** yogurt products, soft drinks, mineral water, potatoes, prepared foods (convenience products), ready meals (catering menus), desserts, spreads, soy products, salt, fish, tea, frozen foods, salads, pasta, sauces, ice cream, sausages, nuts, snacks, mushrooms, milk, cocoa, chocolate, butter, spices, coffee, cooking oil, unspecified foods

**Wiener Tafel** acquires food and hygiene products, whereby the latter make up a very small percentage of the total. Wiener Tafel supplies welfare institutions with donated goods as accurately and as much in line with demand as possible, with no guarantees of specific

<sup>12</sup> LIENBACHER, HOLWEG 2011

<sup>13</sup> MEISSNER 2010

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products and quantities. In terms of product groups, the biggest amounts of redistributed products in 2010 were fruits and vegetables (32%), as well as bakery products (24%). A lesser role was played by dry foods (9%) and sweets (6%). 5% or less were made up of dairy products, canned foods, frozen food, and other or non-foods. In addition, 12% of the merchandise came from the selection of goods available at supermarkets<sup>14</sup>.

Food products account for the largest portion (49%) of the inventoried amount from the institution **Le+O**. Other categories include dairy products (21%), basic food staples (17%), and fruits and vegetables (10%). Hygiene products play a major role with 3%<sup>15</sup>.

The goods (from both food and non-food sectors) acquired by welfare institutions for redistribution must be basically fit for consumption and of reasonable quality but, however, no longer sellable. The following aspects qualify goods for redistribution:

- *Packaging defects*, such as torn or scratched packages; dented cans
- *Label defects*, such as the wrong year, foreign-language text, wrong ingredients, loose labels and products without labels, etc.
- *Design flaws*, such as erroneous color printing
- *Minimum shelflife* - controls and responsibility lie with the transferee to determine whether or not the product
- *bears reasonable remaining shelflife* and its viability to be traded
- exceeds its promotional period;
- (with printed promotional theme or time)
- *exceeds the minimum storage life* (Also requires customer information ascertaining that the product meets minimum quality standards)
- Arising from the *overproduction* of regular goods;
- *Seasonal goods*, such as Easter Bunnies after Easter, etc.;
- *Bread and pastries* from previous day, no longer bearing that "freshness" required for them to be sellable;
- *Fruits and vegetables with minor quality defects* (yellow leaves, etc.), which cannot be sold due to the freshness criteria;
- *Production errors* such as batches with too little salt, etc., or with too hard or soft a consistency, but which meet minimum quality standards;
- *Products from test series*, such as products that are too strong/weak in color, etc.; with too much/little flavoring; etc., but which meet minimum quality standards
- *Products made for trade presentations*, for example, products intended to be presented and handed over for promotional events, etc., but which were undelivered
- *Products for foreign countries*<sup>16</sup>, for example, if products were produced for foreign countries, but for some reason cannot be sold, but whose quality meets Austrian food law requirements

The various institutions implement the above points differently. For example, Wiener Tafel only acquires products whose sell-by dates have already been exceeded with a food regulatory certificate of good standing that has been obtained by the provider.

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<sup>14</sup> SCHMIDT 2011

<sup>15</sup> ECKER 2011

<sup>16</sup> Provisions regarding the product identification of non-German labelled products should be noted.

The following products are generally deemed unacceptable:

- *Alcohol and cigarettes*
- *Products that are unfit for consumption and which represent a danger to human health are excluded.*
- *Products which must be disposed of due to an interruption in the cooling/freezing chain.*

### Recommendation

Check which products are eligible for redistribution to welfare institutions based on your company's applicable principles, on your product range, or on the range of products and the above criteria catalog. Inform those responsible for these products of the possibilities and the criteria for donation.

Clarify internally, how you might go about dealing with possible private labels. Does the question of donation come up? If so, under what conditions?

If your business operates with sustainable development goals in mind, with an active sense of corporate and social responsibility and/or an environmental management system, contact those responsible in connection to this. Cooperation between your company and food banks and similar bodies should be considered as part of these aims and be a long-lasting and fundamental principle within your company.



## 5 Legal Aspects of Cooperation

According to § 3 of the "*Lebensmittel*" food safety and consumer protection law and according to article 2 of the EU food law regulations<sup>17</sup>, it is understood that food is "any substance or product, intended or reasonably expected to be, ingested by humans in a processed, partially processed or unprocessed state". With this in mind, welfare undertakings are required to comply with the food law, to verify compliance by carrying out checks and to take the necessary measures to correct and mitigate wherever necessary. The respective Governors are responsible for ensuring compliance. Entrepreneurs need to tolerate control operations and support such endeavours in their workplace, and provide required information<sup>18</sup>.

Food safety is an essential term in this context. Every company has ensured this through internal measures. Welfare institutions are treated equally in this respect, like any other food retailers, and must therefore comply with all food legislation<sup>19</sup>. The relevant ministry of health supports the implementation by publishing thematic guidelines, such as e.g., on general food law<sup>20</sup> or regarding HACCP<sup>21</sup> in retail companies<sup>22</sup>. The welfare institution is therefore a part of the value chain.

In case of doubt, the internal measures should be discussed with the local food inspector and adjusted accordingly.

For products produced abroad, it should be noted that no food should be put on the market for which the required information (including list of ingredients, net quantity) has not been drawn up in a language that is easy to understand for consumers<sup>23</sup>.

To counteract the disposal of principally edible food products from production and trade, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management and the Ministry of Health are currently working on a guide that deals exclusively with the legal aspects of food redistribution and, in particular, food safety.

### Recommendation

In terms of ensuring a long-lasting cooperation, enquire as to how to deal with the issue of food safety with your supplier. What internal measures are taken in order to ensure, for example, that the cold storage chain is not broken?

Establish with your partners written agreements which in all cases discuss issues pertaining to:

- Commitments to standards of legal compliance, especially regarding food safety
- Handover / Collection
- Dealing with tainted goods
- The exclusion of compensation claims (especially compensation and warranty) from third parties
- Product liability law
- The place of jurisdiction (court location)

<sup>17</sup> Regulation (EG) Nr. 178/2002

<sup>18</sup> BGBl 2010

<sup>19</sup> BMLFUW 2011b

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.bmg.gv.at/cms/home/attachments/8/1/6/CH1284/CMS1131199811633/guidance\\_rev\\_7\\_de.pdf](http://www.bmg.gv.at/cms/home/attachments/8/1/6/CH1284/CMS1131199811633/guidance_rev_7_de.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> The Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points Concept (short: HACCP Concept, German: *Gefahrenanalyse und kritische Lenkungspunkte*) is a preventative system that is meant to protect the safety of food products and consumers.

<sup>22</sup>

[http://www.bmg.gv.at/cms/home/attachments/7/9/3/CH1285/CMS1173704353211/l\\_einzelhandelsunternehmen1.pdf](http://www.bmg.gv.at/cms/home/attachments/7/9/3/CH1285/CMS1173704353211/l_einzelhandelsunternehmen1.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> EU-RL 2000

## 6 Logistics and Flow of Information

From a waste management point of view, the existing waste prevention potential can only be seen as met when no principally edible food along the value chain has to be disposed of. The key to this lies in a proper logistical redistribution plan that can replace the usual logistical disposal plan.

Welfare institutions that redistribute food products are regarded as **another link in the supply chain**. Goods are traded between two companies of the food branch. What is unusual is that the value of the goods is fixed at zero euros. In this sense, it is quite conceivable that information flows to and from welfare institutions in existing systems with delivery orders, booking categories, etc. are integrated and common standards trade and industry partnerships are built up.

SOMA Austria and Partner operates a transport service through its centrally managed redistribution center. Offered products are picked up from the supplier within 48 hours and stored if necessary in one of two intermediate warehouses. The delivery to the branches takes place via a redistribution list specified by the parent organization SOMA. Goods from regional branches are picked up directly from the SOMA establishment.<sup>24</sup> The goods handled centrally by the parent organization SOMA represent about 1/3 of the total goods handled by SOMA in total<sup>25</sup>. More than 85% of all food banks have transport vehicles. The delivery of goods is usually carried out by individual pick up<sup>26</sup>.

The Caritas establishment Le+O have their own vehicles, which include trucks with freezer and refrigeration facilities. In the Le+O warehouse in Vienna-Floridsdorf, which has a storage capacity of 100 pallets as well as freezer and refrigeration facilities, the food is sorted and then transported to the redistribution points. Goods from companies close to the redistribution points are picked up directly by volunteer employees and passed on. Deliveries of goods directly to the warehouse by companies or shipping companies take place from Monday to Friday from 10 am until 4 pm<sup>27</sup>.

Businesses that provide products to **Wiener Tafel** declare their quantity, weight, shelf life, packaging unit, pick-up address, etc. Then a pick-up appointment is scheduled. Wiener Tafel arranges the loading, transport, and delivery quickly and unbureaucratically with their own delivery vehicles (two refrigerated vans, a delivery van and a pickup truck). For pickups of goods from other regions, Wiener Tafel falls back on shipping companies that can transport large quantities of goods as cooperation partners. The redistribution of donated products is offered based on requirements lists, and the acquisition and storage capacities of the food banks. Using a professional logistics system, the surplus food is directly conveyed to people in need within a few hours (mostly without the need for interim storage). Strict documentation of each and every individual flow of goods ensures that the donated goods are handed over to the poverty-affected free of charge.

The transferee confirms the receipt of the donation in writing. Maximum transparency ensures that the products will no longer enter the retail market and no work or costs will be incurred by the company<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> STABAUER/PIEKARZ 2010

<sup>25</sup> STEINER 2010

<sup>26</sup> LIENBACHER, HOLWEG 2011

<sup>27</sup> ECKER 2011

<sup>28</sup> SCHMIDT 2011

### Recommendation

Check the basic framework for collections / deliveries with your trading partners, such as

- Time windows for collections
- Minimum and maximum amounts
- Transport packaging

In the case of cold and frozen foods, ensure procedures are detailed in agreements and arrangements to ensure an uninterrupted refrigeration chain.

In the interests of documentation, transparency, and traceability, it is recommended that deliveries of food to welfare institutions have their own processing reference number.

## 7 Impacts of Waste Management

Evidence regarding the quantities of food transferred to welfare institutions for redistribution is currently considered insufficient. When food products are passed on to waste management companies, it is required by law that records be kept of their type (as key code<sup>29</sup>), quantity (in kg or tons), and origin. In contrast, the organization of quantities redistributed to welfare institutions holds rather minor importance. Rapid, unbureaucratic deployment is the priority for the donor. For the transporter, the most important issue is the pallet storage capacity in the transport vehicle. For the welfare institution, what counts is the most expedient handover of the goods.

A study commissioned by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) shows that about one-third of all food produced worldwide is wasted due to a throwaway mentality and damage that occurs during transport and storage. Not only are resources needlessly wasted, but high concentrations of greenhouse gases are also emitted, and with no practical application whatsoever. The annual average production of food products for human consumption is estimated to be 900 kg per inhabitant per year for Europe. The losses along the entire value added chain are between 280-300 kg per inhabitant per year. Approximately 185 kg per inhabitant per year originate from the production and retail sectors<sup>30</sup>.

According to supply balance sheets by Statistics Austria, there is a long-term average loss of around 16% for the domestic use of Austrian fruits or vegetables. This corresponds to about 160,000 tons of vegetables and 70,000 tons of fruit per year. These include all the losses, from farms to retail, which occur during storage, transport, processing, packaging, and sorting<sup>31</sup>.

An investigation regarding the potential amount from branches of a food discounter came to 13.5 tons of food per branch per year. A proportional projection for all food retailers is therefore only of limited significance, since the relevant conditions are too variable (e.g., scope of range, freshness, internal processes)<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> See key codes for general Waste Catalogue Ordinance at:  
[https://secure.umweltbundesamt.at/edm\\_portal>Liste\\_Abfallarten\\_30-12-2008.pdf](https://secure.umweltbundesamt.at/edm_portal/Liste_Abfallarten_30-12-2008.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> FAO 2011

<sup>31</sup> SCHNEIDER 2010

<sup>32</sup> SCHNEIDER 2004

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The prevention of food waste is also reflected in the federal waste management plan. The federal waste management plan<sup>33</sup> describes the dynamics and development in the field of waste management in regard to the achievement of the objectives and principles of the waste management act with its periodic updates, and defines the "food waste prevention" measures as a central field of activity of the waste prevention program of 2011. The objective of the packet is the reduction of the volume of food waste along the entire value chain, including from trade and industry.

Secure, aggregated data regarding the turnover of goods from food banks are currently not available. Regardless, specific information can convey an impression of the industry:

A sales quantity estimation for all food banks in Austria amounts to 7,000 - 10,600 tons of food in 2009. This estimate is based on the results of a structural analysis by WU Vienna, as well as the analysis by the Austrian Ecology Institute<sup>34</sup> of flows of goods to SOMA Neustiftgasse in Vienna. In 2009, the governing body, SOMA Austria and partner, were able to deliver a total of 718 pallets to the SOMA outlets via a shipping company<sup>35</sup>. In total, the umbrella organization provides about 30% of the quantities available to partner companies<sup>36</sup>.

A study on the waste management effects of SOMA Neustiftgasse shows that in 2009, 571 tons of food were delivered, approx. 53% of which were vegetables, fruit, and bread. Ultimately 525 tons were sold, of which 101 tons alone were bread and pastries. Only 46 tons had to be disposed of by the SOMA operator, of which 40% was vegetable waste, which no longer met sales requirements<sup>37</sup>.

The Le+O institution redistributed around 362.000 kg of goods in the first year from 11/2009 to 11/2010. Around 400 volunteer workers were active in the 11 dispensaries<sup>38</sup>.

Wiener Tafel was able to increase the volume of their deliveries in recent years. During 2008, 280,000 kg of food products were redistributed, while in 2009, the amount increased to 320,500 kg. In 2010, each respective volunteer delivery team traveled a total of 70,000 km, six days per week. 220 volunteer workers spent about 10,000 work hours to bring 330,500 kg of expired food and hygiene products to the poverty-stricken<sup>39</sup>.

The total potential amount eligible for waste prevention at this point of the value chain has not been directly quantified. Due to the complexity of the matter, valid data are currently not available. In particular, the collection of data and all the different approaches used to record this represent a major challenge. Dividing avoidable and unavoidable food waste is currently not feasible. Regardless, the above numbers indicate that the previously redistributed food represents only a small fraction of what is arising from trade and industry.

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<sup>33</sup> BAWP 2011

<sup>34</sup> The assessment was carried out independently through several approaches: the number of shops, the size of the shops, annual sales, and customer frequency. All estimates fall within the above range of 7,000-10,600 tons.

<sup>35</sup> STABAUER/PIEKARZ 2010

<sup>36</sup> STEINER 2010

<sup>37</sup> MEISSNER 2010

<sup>38</sup> ECKER 2011

<sup>39</sup> SCHMIDT 2011



### Recommendation

Explore what potentials lie in the waste from your company. Clarify what possibilities exist for internal booking. Can new booking numbers be installed? Through redistribution, the waste flows are categorized using key codes. (What codes are used in your organization and what will be assigned to these? For example, how does the key number SN92402 put together former foods and foods of animal origin?)

Document the amounts given to you in weight measurements (e.g. kg, tons). A quantification is essential regarding the valid implementation of waste prevention in enterprise-wide strategies for sustainable development or environmental management systems.

## 8 Collective Added Value

Welfare institutions that redistribute food products constitute effective activity within the three pillars of **sustainability**: people who can only participate in the economy in a limited way are addressed as customers. Beyond that, within the framework of transitional jobs, unemployed people can be introduced to and connected with the labor market (**social aspect**). From the pricing up to the free handouts, an increase in the purchasing power of the target groups emerges. Empirical evidence shows that the saved resources will be used by people for further regular food purchases (**economic aspect**). Foods that would otherwise be handled in the respective waste management systems are provided for human consumption by the welfare institution of the original assignment, thereby avoiding waste (**environmental aspect**).

With the mostly cost-incurring disposal of mainly edible food products through specialised waste management companies, value chain-invested goods are completely squandered. An extension of the value chain in the form of organizations that redistribute food makes a quantifiable contribution towards avoiding these losses.

Social integration enterprises are non-profit enterprises (non-profit limited liability companies or associations) whose corporate objective is the gradual increase as well as integration of people far-removed from the labour market into the first labour market. Customers are those individuals who take advantage of purchasing food products, thereby being able to participate in 'normal' economic life. Target groups are those individuals who, through labour market policy measures, receive employment opportunities in social integration company logistics, processing, and food sales (long-term unemployed people, older unemployed people, young people with disabilities, and people with special needs). Social integration enterprises use various support schemes, financed mainly by the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS), the Federal Social Welfare Office (BASB), project funding on the EU level (e.g., Equal), various departments of the provincial governments, as well as municipalities.

The savings of a food bank customer with social markets can amount to around 3,700 euros per year. For the customer target group, this means the doubling of their purchasing power<sup>40</sup>.

In the first year, **Le+O**-assisted households could save approx. 1,000 euros on average. To address the structural causes of poverty, social consultations by 1,438 qualified social workers were conducted in the **Le+O** dispensaries. The interventions cover everything from simple information about financial claims to more in-depth advice on social problems or recurring discussions over topics such as, for example, debt regulations. A clear goal of social counselling is to motivate the use of one's own resources and thus the "exit" from **Le+O**<sup>41</sup>.

The savings per month through the donated goods from Wiener Tafel are difficult to assess for the target group of the facilities. According to a 2009 survey for which 65 social facilities were polled, only half of the surveyed institutions addressed this topic. 47% of the surveyed institutions save an average of 100 euros a month. For 17% of the facilities, the products supplied by Wiener Tafel are an additional benefit that they otherwise could not afford<sup>42</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> MARIN 2011

<sup>41</sup> ECKER 2011

<sup>42</sup> SCHMIDT 2011

### Recommendation

Combine your partnerships with the approach taken by Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Sit down with those responsible in connection to this. Cooperation between your company and institutions for food donations can stimulate and guide with its social responsibility and endeavors to achieve successful sustainability to use in your company and society.

Take advantage of the cooperation with food banks, which are conducted as a social integration initiative, as well as for recruiting new employees for your business (for example, apprentices, warehouses, and store personnel).

## 9 Outlook

The activities in the area of food redistribution, which have strongly increased in the last few years, are gaining increased attention in the public due to their multidimensional, positive impacts (social, economical, and ecological). Apart from the ethical aspects, the disposal of edible food products represents a societal waste of resources and energy that is worth minimizing.

In terms of sustainable development, food manufacturers and retailers are meeting their responsibilities and building on collaborations with welfare institutions for food redistribution.

In order to maintain long-term and stable relationships, future development will move away from individual / private initiatives towards organizations and larger units. On the one hand, long-term agreements increase the reliability of supply for welfare institutions and on the other hand, give manufacturing and retail partners more security and confidence in the dissemination of their brands and products.

Security, trust, and mutual benefits will deepen existing cooperations. Successful, publicly present activities will be emulated and new connections will be established.



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## 11 Appendix

- Contact information for welfare institutions mentioned in text
- Criteria and principles for SOMA Austria and Partner and Le+O and Wiener Tafel
- Catalog of goods that qualify for redistribution
- Roadmap ECR Working Group Social Sustainability
- Addresses of welfare institutions in Austria

## Contact information for welfare institutions

### SOMA Österreich und Partner

Sandra Simonis  
Soma Österreich & Partner  
Tel: +43 664 111 43 27  
[sandra.simonis@wiener.hilfswerk.at](mailto:sandra.simonis@wiener.hilfswerk.at)  
[office@somaundpartner.at](mailto:office@somaundpartner.at)

### Caritas Le+O Lebensmittel und Orientierung

Doris Chvatal  
Fundraising & Logistik **Le+O**  
Lebensmittel und Orientierung  
Caritas der Erzdiözese Wien  
1210 Wien, Heinrich von Buolgasse 10  
Tel.: 0664/842 97 52  
[doris.chvatal@caritas-wien.at](mailto:doris.chvatal@caritas-wien.at)

### Wiener Tafel – der Verein für sozialen Transfer

Simmeringer Hauptstraße 2-4, 1110 Wien  
Tel: + 43 1 236 56 87  
Fax: + 43 1 236 56 87-9  
e-mail: [office@wienertafel.at](mailto:office@wienertafel.at)  
[www.wienertafel.at](http://www.wienertafel.at)  
ZVR: 283 996 437

## **Criteria and principles for SOMA Austria and Partner and Le+O and Wiener Tafel**

For the purposes of the ECR Working Group, the institutions are based on the definition elaborated by LIENBACHER, HOLWEG (2011) and pay due attention to the following, more advanced criteria:

- Only goods that can no longer be sold by partners via traditional redistribution channels are offered.
- Goods are provided without charge to the partners.
- The focus is on everyday goods - there is no entitlement to a full range of products.
- Alcohol and cigarettes are not redistributed.
- Goods are traded at symbolic prices (in the case of welfare institution Le+O) or donated free of charge to social institutions (in the case of Wiener Tafel).
- The operator operates a non-profit, profits are reinvested in social projects.
- The operator complies with the legal requirements for the food trade.
- The buyer / people experiencing poverty is / are seen as a client and not as the recipients of charity.
- The goods are presented and placed accordingly.
- A certificate is issued after the redistribution (SOMA, Le+O).
- Purchases are recorded and are limited to recipients' needs (SOMA, Le+O).
- The transfer is made to people in need or social institutions with care services

Wiener Tafel's guidelines for **accepting goods**:

1. The products are provided by the partner companies Wiener Tafel without charge and following prior arrangement.
2. This implies products provided to Wiener Tafel do not demonstrably constitute health concerns (various addictive substances, such as alcohol and nicotine based products, etc.).
3. Wiener Tafel accepts for sound legal and ethical reasons, only sizable, non-expired, unspoiled, and (still) edible food. The assessment of quality is up to the respective on-site Wiener Tafel employees in charge.
4. Wiener Tafel guarantees to the donors of goods that the products will not be put back on the market.
5. Wiener Tafel guarantees the agreed date to pick up the products free of charge, insofar as they comply with the minimum health and legal constraints/requirements as discussed above.
6. Furthermore, Wiener Tafel agrees to supply the donated products to the social services accordingly, to pass them on free of charge and thus to people affected by poverty, so as to provide them with basic necessities.
7. Communication will be based on recognized social organizations with care services and depends on their needs, as well as their acquisition and storage capacities. The details pertaining to the redistribution of the supplied goods is up to Wiener Tafel.
8. In addition, Wiener Tafel guarantees to the donating companies which are interested the confirmation of the flow of donations and, furthermore, to take into account their public relations needs.

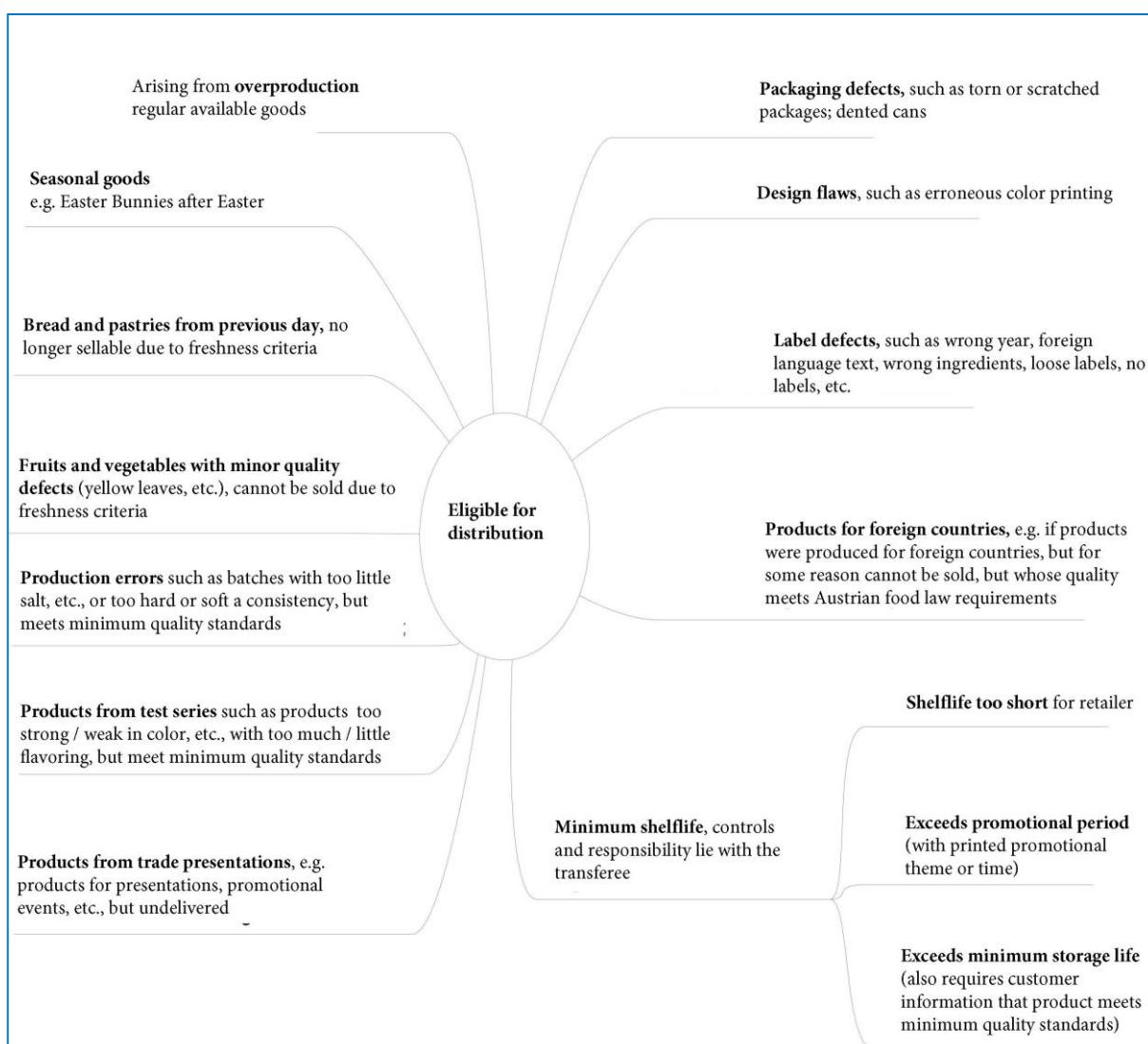
Guidelines governing the **redistribution of products** from Wiener Tafel to welfare services:

1. It is a charitable and non-profit organization
2. The welfare institutions supply poverty-affected people in Vienna with substantive primary care services (either through the direct redistribution of food or via dissemination of the products to people in need)
3. The basic goods are supplied to people affected by poverty and who will benefit from them (according to the definition of income poverty) regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual and political orientation, and religious affiliation
4. In addition to the supply of basic goods, the welfare organization provides professional advice, and / or is supervised by professionals who provide advice, enabling the achievement of independence and the stabilization of living conditions.

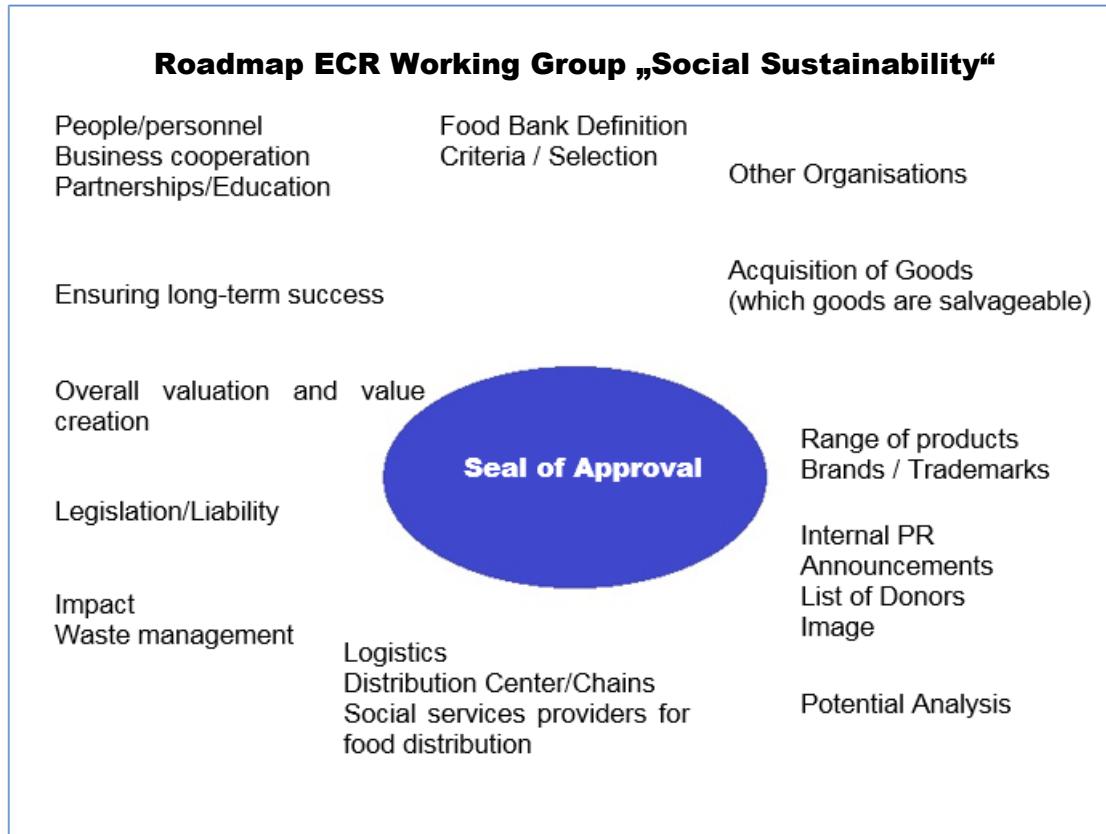
## Catalog for the redistribution of eligible products

Goods acquired by social services (food and non-food sector) must be fit for consumption and of a high standard in terms of quality, but no longer sellable in most cases. The following products are, in principle, not accepted.

- Alcohol and Cigarettes
- *Products* that are unfit for consumption and which represent a danger to human health are excluded.
- *Products* which must be disposed of due to an interruption in the cooling/freezing chain.



## Roadmap ECR Working Group „Social Sustainability“



## Welfare Institutions in Austria Stationary Welfare Markets in Austria 2010 according to LIENBACHER, HOLWEG 2011 (addresses)

Welfare Markets in Vienna	
Samariterbund Sozialmarkt Frömmigasse 31 1210 Wien	SMW Sozialmarkt Wien Kalvarienberggasse 15 1170 Wien
Samariterbund Sozialmarkt Pillergasse 24 1150 Wien	SOMA Sozialmarkt Wiener Hilfswerk Neustiftgasse 73-75 1070 Wien
SMW Sozialmarkt Wien Braunspergengasse 30 1100 Wien	Vinzi Markt Wien Wallgasse 12 1060 Wien

Welfare Markets in Lower Austria	
Badener Sozialmarkt Antongasse 21-23 2500 Baden	SOMA Ternitz Gfiederstrasse 3 2630 Ternitz
SOMA Amstetten Wagmeisterstrasse 7 3300 Amstetten	SOMA Soma Tulln Frauentorgasse 9-13 3430 Tulln
SOMA Klosterneuburg Schüttaustrasse 8 3400 Klosterneuburg	SOMA Waidhofen Ybbsitzerstrasse 7 3340 Waidhofen/Ybbs
SOMA Mödling Bahnstrasse 4 2340 Mödling	SOMA Krems Bahnhofplatz 6 3500 Krems
SOMA St. Pölten Linzerstrasse 24 3100 St. Pölten	SOMA Schwechat Sendnergasse 24 2320 Schwechat
SOMA Stockerau Judithastrasse 5 2000 Stockerau	SOMA Wiener Neustadt Grazerstrasse 81 2700 Wiener Neustadt
VM Kottingbrunn Kardinal König Platz 3 2542 Kottingbrunn	SOMA Wolkersdorf Brünner Straße 7 2120 Wolkersdorf

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Welfare Markets in Upper Austria	
Cent-Markt-Ischl Esplanade-Kaltenbachstrasse 8 4820 Bad Ischl	SOMA Linz Wienerstrasse 46 (ehem. Lustenauerstrasse 28) 4020 Linz 
COOP-Markt Traun Georg-Grinniger - Strasse 46 4050 Traun	Sozialmarkt Arcade Böhmergasse 5 4240 Freistadt
Der Korb Stadtplatz 22a 4840 Vöcklabruck	Sozialmarkt Eferding Brandstätterstrasse 10 4070 Eferding
SOMA Lebensmittel-Laden Bahnhofstrasse 16 4560 Kirchdorf/Krems	Sozialmarkt Mondseeland Thalstrasse 15 5310 Tiefgraben 
Rotkreuz-Sozialmarkt Bahnhofstrasse 5 4522 Siernig	Sozialmarkt Mobisom Perg Gartenstrasse 4320 Perg 
Rotkreuz Sozialmarkt Kirchenplatz 1 4463 Großraming	Sozialmarkt Steyr Johannesgasse 1 4400 Steyr
SOMA Enns Gutenbergstrasse 2 4470 Enns	Sozialmarkt Wels Vogelweiderstrasse 29 4600 Wels 
SOMA Gmunden Badgasse 7 4810 Gmunden	

Welfare Markets in Salzburg	
Laube Markt Pongau Industriestrasse 14 5600 St. Johann/Pongau	Laube Markt Pinzgau Alte Landesstrasse 11 5700 Zell am See
Laube Markt Tennengau Griesplatz 8 5400 Hallein	SOMA Salzburg Plainstrasse 2 5020 Salzburg 

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Welfare Markets in Tirol	
Tiso Markt Innsbruck Adamgasse 13-15 6020 Innsbruck	Sozialmarkt Kitzbühel-Lade Jochbergstrasse 38 6370 Kitzbühel
Sozialladen Sprungbrett Salvatorgasse 15 6060 Hall in Tirol	CarLa Sozialmarkt St. Johann/Tirol Bahnhofstrasse 7 6380 St. Johann in Tirol
Barbara Laden Schwaz Johann Messner Weg 11 6130 Schwaz	Somi Sozialmarkt Imst Pfarrgasse 26 6460 Imst
CarLa Sozialmarkt Wörgl Brixenthalerstrasse 5 6300 Wörgl	Kraut und Rüben Kirchplatz 1 9971 Mattrei

Welfare Market in Burgenland	
Sozialmarkt Oberwart Johann Straussgasse 5 7400 Oberwart	

Welfare Markets in Styria	
Caritas Solidarmarkt Hartberg Michaeligasse 5 8230 Hartberg	Vinzi Markt Leibnitz Schmiedgasse 20 8430 Leibnitz
Caritas Solidarmarkt Mürzzuschlag Wienerstraße 35 8680 Mürzzuschlag	Vinzi Markt Voitsberg Bahnhofstraße 7 8570 Voitsberg
Friedas Lebensmittelladen Bahnstrasse 5 8720 Knittelfeld	Vinzimarkt Deutschlandsberg Grazerstraße 27 8530 Deutschlandsberg
SOMA Fürstenfeld Schillerstraße 11 8280 Fürstenfeld	Vinzimarkt Graz Hergottwiesgasse Hergottwiesgasse 51 8020 Graz
Sozialmarkt Trofaiach Hauptstraße 14 8793 Trofaiach	Vinzimarkt Graz Rochelgasse Rochelgasse 15 8020 Graz

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Welfare Markets in Carinthia	
Sozialmarkt Klagenfurt Kaufmannsgasse 3 9020 Klagenfurt	 Sozialmarkt Wolfsberg Burgergasse 2 9400 Wolfsberg
Sozialmarkt Klagenfurt Kanaltalerstraße 19 9020 Klagenfurt	 Sozialmarkt Villach Gerbergasse 5 9500 Villach
Sozialmarkt St. Veit/Glan Waagstraße 2 9300 St. Veit/Glan	 Sozialmarkt Spittal/Drau Kirchgasse 4a 9800 Spittal/Drau

## Mobile Welfare Markets in Austria 2010 (Addresses)

mobile Welfare market in Salzburg	
Laube Markt Mobil <a href="http://www.laube.at">www.laube.at</a>	6 Stationen
mobile Welfare market in Lower Austria	
Waldviertelmobil <a href="http://www.SOMAnoe.at/">www.SOMAnoe.at/</a>	14 Stationen 
mobile Welfare market in Upper Austria	
Mobiler Sozialmarkt Ansfelden <a href="http://www.ansfelden.at/">www.ansfelden.at/</a>	4 Stationen 
Mobisom Perg <a href="http://www.roteskreuz.at">www.roteskreuz.at</a>	2 Stationen 
mobile Welfare market in Styria	
VinziBus <a href="http://www.vinzi.at">www.vinzi.at</a>	3 Stationen