



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Shaping the Future for Transforming Food Loss and Waste

Best Practices from Fruit and Vegetable Wholesale Markets in Asia

Regional Symposium | 21–22 January 2026 | Hotel Regenta, The World, Surat, India

CONCEPT NOTE

1. Food loss and waste in the wholesale market: Challenge or an opportunity

Asia accounts for over 70 percent of global fresh fruit and vegetable (FFV) production. Urban wholesale markets play a pivotal role in food and nutrition security, serving as key distribution hubs. On the other hand, these markets are also hotspots for food waste.

Food Waste disposal as a key challenge for wholesale markets:

- Large markets send approximately 80-100 tons of unprocessed organic waste to landfills daily.
- Contribute up to 1/3rd of the waste going to overflowing landfills in cities.
- Contributing to rising pollution through methane emissions, reaching 8%-10% globally.
- Economic impact on a global scale to the extent of 1 trillion from food waste generation.
- Compliance with norms and policies for Solid Waste Management
- Forgone the opportunity to distribution of safe food to mitigate urban hunger.

Proposed solutions:

- Financially viable, environmentally friendly technologies exist for achieving a circular economy and mitigating GHG emissions from food waste.
- Japan, Korea, Singapore, among others, have implemented effective waste management systems in wholesale markets.
- Many pioneering efforts in the region exist – Waste to resource models
- Food processing is the redistribution of safe food.

Impact of best practices (example from Surat, India):

- 50-ton-per-day bio-CNG plant in the wholesale market.
- Reducing methane emissions by 7,500 tons annually.

- Generating revenue from the sale of bioCNG and biofertilizer for nutrient recycling to enrich soils.
- Future potential for linkage with carbon markets with a strong bio-circular economy model.

Leading global conventions emphasize methane reduction from food waste.

- COP29, the Declaration on Reducing Methane from Organic Waste, was signed by over 30 countries.
- COP30 reaffirmed the Global Methane Pledge (30% cut by 2030) and stressed “No Organic Waste” as an accelerated solution.

2. Purpose of the regional symposium:

The Regional Symposium aims to share best practices, present business cases, and catalyze upscaling of such models by providing a space for knowledge exchange, networking, and facilitating dialogue for building the investment ecosystem. The most important contribution is to demonstrate **“Waste is Wealth.”** The symposium seeks to convene governments, wholesale market authorities, city leaders, investors, and innovators to:

- Exchange insights on FLW challenges in FFV wholesale markets.
- Showcase regional innovations and business models, supported by enabling policies.
- Strengthen regional collaboration for systemic FLW reduction as per global protocols.
- Support the development of investment-ready waste-to-value interventions.
- Exploring and aligning Sustainable finance tools for solution implementation

3. Expected outcomes:

- Informed pathways for formulating large-scale investments to reduce and manage FLW.
- Consensus on establishing a regional platform for tracking FLW in wholesale markets.
- Heightened awareness about opportunities to offset methane emissions.
- Strengthened linkages between salvaged food, food banks, and communities.
- Improved knowledge exchange among governments, market authorities, investors, academia, and innovators.
- Stronger cross-sector exchange among policymakers, markets, investors, and innovators.

4. Key thematic areas:

- Sustainable Circular Economy Models, bio-CNG (Biomethane), biomethanation, composting, and Black Soldier Fly Larvae (BSF).
- Stronger cross-sector exchange among policymakers, markets, investors, and innovators.

- Food recovery and redistribution systems.
- Governance models for modern wholesale markets.
- Investment and financing (including carbon markets).

5. Participants:

- Wholesale market representatives from Asia Region
- Department of Agricultural Marketing officials from Asia Region
- Food banking organizations
- Donor partners
- Private investors and financial institutions
- Technology and waste-management innovators
- Academia and researchers

6. Structure and format:

The symposium will include:

- Plenary sessions
- Case study presentations
- Marketplace of innovations
- Field visit to Surat Wholesale Market and Bio-CNG Plant

7. Field exposure visit overview

The symposium includes a structured field visit to Surat Wholesale Market, showcasing:

- 50-TPD Bio-CNG Plant operations
- Waste segregation and collection systems
- Valorisation models for compost, biofertilizers, and animal feed
- Food recovery and redistribution practices
- Market management governance structure and financial mechanisms

This will enable real-time learning on operations, financial sustainability, and stakeholder coordination.

8. Venue and logistics

- **Location:** Hotel Regenta, The World, Surat, India | **Date:** January 21–22, 2026 | **Format:** In-person symposium and field visits.

For more information, please contact: md@cosamb.org; Meeta.PunjabiMehta@fao.org; kunal.tiwari@fao.org