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# Wicked Problem - Reducing Food Waste in Portugal

## Situation and Problem

In Portugal, approximately 1.9 million metric tons of food waste are generated each year, equating to 185 kilograms per capita. Households are the largest contributors, responsible for 123 kilograms per person annually, meaning 2.38 kg per week (Statista). Food waste has significant environmental, economic, and social impacts. Environmentally, decomposing food releases methane, contributing to climate change. Economically, each citizen spends about €350 annually on food that is never consumed, leading to inefficiencies across the supply chain. Socially, food waste highlights disparities as some populations face food insecurity despite the surplus (Statista, Sul Informação).

## Complication

Food waste in Portugal is driven by inefficiencies in the supply chain, consumer behavior, and inadequate policies. Overproduction, logistics challenges, and aesthetic standards contribute to waste, worsened by poor communication among stakeholders. Households often discard food due to misunderstanding expiration dates, impulse buying, and inadequate storage. Cultural attitudes and a lack of awareness also play a role. Limited regulations and poor waste management practices exacerbate the issue.

## Question

How can a Multi-Stakeholder Partnership (MSP) effectively reduce food waste in Portugal by improving supply chain efficiency and promoting sustainable consumption behaviors?

## Stakeholders

This initiative involves

* **Government agencies** (Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Portuguese Environment Agency, National Commission for the Fight Against Food Waste, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization),
* **Food delivery platforms**: Glovo, Uber Eats: (end-of-the-day discounts)
* **Food producers, manufacturers & retailers** (Jerónimo Martins, Grupo Lusiaves, Sumol+Compal, Sovena Group, Lactogal)
* **NGOs** (local Food Banks, Too Good to Go, Refood, Equal Food, Quercos),
* **Waste management companies & technology providers**
* **Consumers**

Collaboration among these stakeholders is crucial for implementing sustainable practices and reducing food waste.

## Sources

* Statista: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1394109/portugal-food-waste-per-capita-by-sector/>
* Sul Informação: <https://www.sulinformacao.pt/en/2024/09/cada-portugues-gasta-350-euros-por-ano-em-alimentos-que-nao-come/>
* The Portugal News: <https://www.theportugalnews.com/news/2024-09-23/each-portuguese-person-wastes-350-on-uneaten-food/92270>