

National Roadmap on FRESH PRODUCE RECOVERY - 2026



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Website URL:

CoFTI - Coalition for Food-Systems Transforma(c)tion in India - <https://cofti.org/>

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India Food Banking Network (IFBN)

About CoFTI

The **Coalition for Food-Systems Transforma(c)tion in India (CoFTI)** was born out of the United Nations (UN) Food Systems Summit 2021 with a commitment to reshaping India's food system so that safe and nutritious food is accessible to all. Its mission addresses hunger and malnutrition while championing biodiversity, climate resilience, and the protection of livelihoods. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, CoFTI works to create sustainable and equitable solutions that balance the needs of people, planet, and economy. Grounded in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Coalition drives positive change across seven key areas of work, ensuring that India's food systems remain resilient for both present and future generations.

CoFTI's approach is anchored in three core objectives. First, Thought Leadership - using research, innovation, and evidence-based insights to shape effective policies and guide their implementation. Second, Collective Action - offering a collaborative space where stakeholders can unite, share resources, and work together across its areas of focus. Third, Building Connections - fostering strong local and international networks to enable the exchange of knowledge and strengthen partnerships. Through these objectives, CoFTI serves as both a catalyst and a convener, ensuring that India's journey towards a just, sustainable, and nourishing food future is grounded in shared purpose and actionable solutions.

CoFTI Core Group comprises of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Welthungerhilfe India (WHH), Food Future Foundation (FFF), and Watershed Support Services and Activities Network (WASSAN), which hosts the CoFTI Secretariat. CoFTI is supported by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation (BMZ).

The background image shows a vibrant agricultural scene. In the foreground, there is a large pile of fresh cauliflower. In the middle ground, a man wearing a pink shirt and a white turban is working. Behind him, another person in a white shirt is visible. They appear to be in a field or a processing area with many green leafy vegetables. A wooden structure, possibly part of a cart or a support system, is also visible.

Acknowledgements

The **National Roadmap on Fresh Produce Recovery - 2026** is the outcome of a structured consultative process led by India Food Banking Network (IFBN) in 2025. This process began with a series of mandi-level convenings across five major cities - Delhi, Bangalore, Bhopal, Pune, and Mumbai - which brought together diverse stakeholders to identify challenges, opportunities, and pathways for strengthening fresh produce recovery systems. These discussions culminated in the National Dialogue on “Unlocking the Potential of Fresh Produce Recovery,” which helped consolidate insights and recommendations from across the country into a shared national agenda provided in this National Roadmap.

The successful organisation of both the mandi-level convenings and the National Dialogue was made possible through the generous support of the Coalition for Food Systems Transformation in India (CoFTI). CoFTI's financial assistance enabled the planning, coordination, and execution of these engagements, while its commitment to reducing food loss and strengthening food recovery systems provided an important platform for stakeholder dialogue, knowledge exchange, and collective action. The National Roadmap reflects the contributions of participants across these consultations and represents a shared vision for advancing fresh produce recovery in India.

We express our deep appreciation to the National Council of State Agricultural Marketing Boards (COSAMB) for serving as the anchoring partner for the Dialogue. COSAMB's unique expertise in the agricultural marketing sector, along with its national institutional network and technical leadership, enabled the participation of senior practitioners and experts from multiple domains. The representatives from various State Agricultural Marketing Boards further enriched the convening with regional learnings. Their stewardship ensured that the Dialogue remained grounded, solution-oriented, and knowledge-driven.

We also gratefully acknowledge the valuable participation of Mr. Harchand Singh Barsat, Chairman, COSAMB; Dr. J. S. Yadav, Managing Director, COSAMB; Mr. Raj Kumar Bhatia, Hon'ble MLA, Adarsh Nagar; Ms. Meeta Punjabi Mehta, UNFAO Regional Office for Asia and Pacific; Dr. Bharat Bhusan Nagar, Environmental Consultant and Policy Expert; Mr. Hanumant Yadav, COSAMB. We also sincerely acknowledge the participation of representatives from Uttarakhand, J&K, and Punjab State Agricultural Marketing Boards (SAMBs), APMC official Mr. Sudhakar, mandi stakeholders Azadpur Deepak Gogie, Anshul Rana (Vendors' Association, Azadpur), Rishab Kapoor, Ankit, Nakul, Ms. Shalu (Samarpan Foundation), and Nidhi Gupta (Swabimaan, Delhi), whose active engagement, practical insights, and collaborative spirit greatly enriched the deliberations and strengthened the outcomes of the National Dialogue. The organisers place on record their sincere thanks to all partners and participants whose collaboration and shared commitment made this National Dialogue both meaningful and impactful.



VISION

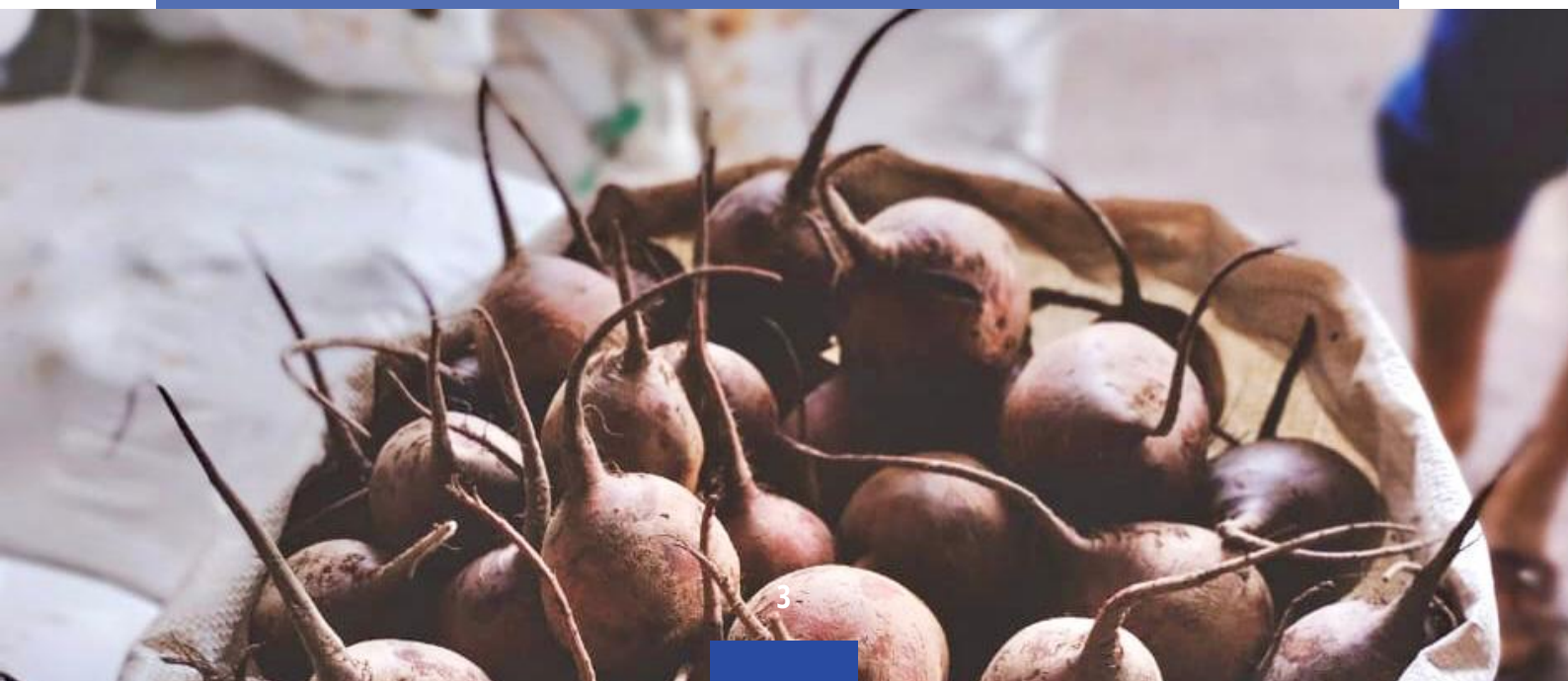
To establish a resilient, inclusive, and climate-responsive food recovery ecosystem across India that prevents fresh produce loss, maximizes recovery of edible surplus, strengthens livelihoods, and ensures safe and nutritious food access for vulnerable populations while contributing to climate mitigation and circular economy outcomes.



STRATEGIC RATIONALE

India's agricultural markets generate significant volumes of edible surplus that remain underutilized due to gaps in grading, storage, transportation, and redistribution systems. Strengthening Fresh Produce Recovery (FPR) mechanisms within Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs) presents a high-impact opportunity to simultaneously address food insecurity, resource efficiency, environmental sustainability, and livelihood generation.

The Coalition for Food Systems Transforma(c)tion in India (CoFTI) - supported pilot convenings and consultations have demonstrated that structured recovery systems, when combined with infrastructure, institutional coordination, and awareness-building, can significantly reduce fresh produce loss and improve access to nutrition at scale. The 2026 Roadmap aims to transition from pilot learning to structured scale-up.





STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

To establish a resilient, inclusive, and climate-responsive food recovery ecosystem across India that prevents fresh produce loss, maximizes recovery of edible surplus, strengthens livelihoods, and ensures safe and nutritious food access for vulnerable populations while contributing to climate mitigation and circular economy outcomes.

Prevention First

Prioritize interventions that prevent food loss before waste occurs.

Systems Approach

Promote convergence across government, market institutions, development partners, private sector, and civil society.

Food Safety & Quality

Ensure standardized handling, storage, and redistribution systems.

Climate Alignment

Integrated recovery interventions with emission reduction and circular economy strategies

Livelihood Integration

Promote income opportunities for women's groups, farmers, and small enterprises through value-addition activities.

Scalability & Replicability

Develop models that can be adopted across multiple states and markets.

Key Pillars of the Roadmap **2026**

1 MAXIMISING CAPTURE OF EDIBLE SURPLUS

- Institutionalize recovery systems within mandis and aggregation points.
- Promote structured segregation practices to identify edible surplus early.
- Encourage trader and retailer participation in systematic recovery networks.

2 STRENGTHENING MARKET AND FARM-LEVEL PRACTICES

- Introduce improved grading, sorting, and aggregation practices at farm and mandi levels.
- Build capacity among farmers, traders, and workers on quality-based segregation and safe handling.
- Promote decentralized grading and sorting infrastructure to reduce rejection-based losses.

3 INFRASTRUCTURE FOR RECOVERY AND REDISTRIBUTION

- Establish Recovery and Redistribution Centers at strategic market locations.
- Expand cold storage, cold carts, and transport systems to maintain freshness and reduce spoilage.
- Integrate small-scale processing equipment to support value addition and shelf-life extension.

4 LIVELIHOOD AND VALUE ADDITION INTEGRATION

- Link recovery systems with women-led Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and livelihood missions.
- Promote processing and value-addition models such as drying, pickling, and dehydration of surplus produce.
- Develop enterprise-based recovery models generating local employment.

5 CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND WASTE VALORIZATION

- Promote Reduce-Reuse-Recycle-Redistribute frameworks across markets.
- Integrate composting, animal-feed utilization, and bio-methanation systems for non-edible waste streams.
- Support decentralized waste-to-resource pilots within selected APMCs.

6 AWARENESS, BEHAVIOUR CHANGE, AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Conduct trader and stakeholder awareness campaigns on food recovery practices.
- Strengthen partnerships with trader associations, retailers, municipalities, and civil society organizations.
- Promote multi-stakeholder coordination platforms for sustained recovery operations.

7 CLIMATE ACTION AND FINANCING OPPORTUNITIES

- Integrate greenhouse gas reduction metrics within recovery initiatives.
- Explore carbon finance and climate-linked funding opportunities.
- Encourage CSR and blended financing models supporting infrastructure and operational scale-up.

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK (2026)

- Scale Fresh Produce Recovery systems across priority APMCs identified under the pilot initiative.
- Develop standardized SOPs for handling, storage, transportation, and redistribution.
- Strengthen CSR, development partner, and government convergence for financing and technical support.
- Establish monitoring systems capturing recovery volumes, nutrition reach, livelihood benefits, and climate outcomes.
- Develop state-level expansion strategies based on pilot learning.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Increased recovery and redistribution of safe, nutritious fresh produce.
- Reduction in food waste disposal from participating markets.
- Strengthened livelihoods through recovery-linked value-addition enterprises.
- Improved access to fresh nutrition for vulnerable communities.
- Measurable reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from avoided landfill disposal.
- Development of scalable institutional models for nationwide replication.

This National Roadmap 2026 has been developed based on insights emerging from the CoFTI-supported pilot consultations and convenings, which provided critical field learnings, stakeholder inputs, and strategic direction for scaling Fresh Produce Recovery systems across India. The year 2026 marks a transition from pilot-based experimentation to institutional scale. Through coordinated investments, infrastructure strengthening, policy convergence, and multi-stakeholder collaboration, Fresh Produce Recovery can become a central pillar of India's food security, climate resilience, and circular economy agenda.

JULY 2026



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INDIA FOODBANKING NETWORK (IFBN)

India FoodBanking Network is building a more sustainable and resilient future by reducing food waste, cutting greenhouse gas emissions, and strengthening local food systems through its network of food banks. Addressing hunger, however, is not a challenge that can be met alone - it demands a collective effort from food banks, governments, community-based organizations, volunteers, food companies, and corporate partners working together to ensure that no one goes hungry.

India FoodBanking Network is leading a united front to tackle hunger.

Your Support Strengthens Our Fight Against Hunger.



FOOD SECURITY FOUNDATION INDIA
(India FoodBanking Network)



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