



Supporting Circular Food Systems in Nova Scotia

May 2023



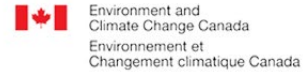
Acknowledgements



IN COLLABORATION WITH



HALIFAX



The National Zero Waste Council is a collaborative, leadership initiative of Metro Vancouver that brings together business, government, and the community to advance waste prevention and the circular economy in Canada.

nzw.ca

Background

The National Zero Waste Council, in collaboration with Circular Opportunity Innovation Launchpad (COIL), Halifax Regional Municipality, Halifax Food Policy Alliance, and others is leading **Circular Food Hubs: Mainland Nova Scotia**. This project provides support for the development of food hubs in mainland Nova Scotia that integrate circularity and food loss and waste (FLW) prevention. Circular food hubs in Nova Scotia will create additional anchors of activity in the Canadian landscape and contribute to the evolution of a Canada-wide circular food system. A core component of the project is its contribution to the development of a national network of peer leaders in food waste prevention and circularity – from British Columbia to Nova Scotia, coast to coast – where shared



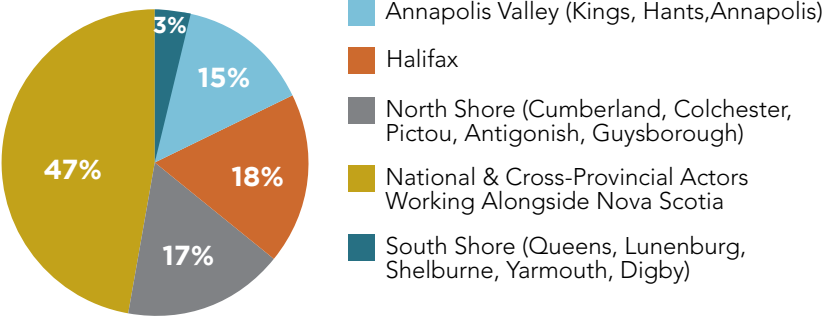
learnings and collaborative action advance food system change. The project uses a 5-step process designed by COIL. Step One brings together regional food system participants to set a shared circular vision that guides action.

Workshop Overview

A visioning workshop held in April 2023 brought together more than 70 food system actors from across Canada and within Nova Scotia to network, connect, and co-create a vision for how a Nova Scotia circular food system may develop. Interest in attending this workshop was significant, and many who could not attend continue to look for additional project participation opportunities. Throughout the summer and fall, project partners will provide additional engagement activities. These activities will continue to build food system representation as regional circular solutions are advanced. Listen to the workshop recording [here](#).

The workshop provided participants with working definitions for a circular food system and circular food hubs. A circular food system mimics natural systems of regeneration so that waste doesn't exist, but is a feedstock for another cycle. Circular food systems reduce food waste, promote good human health, protect ecosystems, increase market opportunities, and can deepen climate action. Circular food hubs bring this to life by connecting place-based stakeholders across the food system to ensure FLW is prevented.

Geographic Representation



A circular food system may be constituted by multiple hubs of activity where circular solutions are co-located. While shared infrastructure may be part of these circular food hubs, co-located circular food solutions will look different from hub to hub and do not require shared infrastructure.

Date: April 12, 2023, 1:00 – 4:00 pm ADT

Workshop Goal: Begin to evolve circular food hubs in mainland Nova Scotia, as part of a Canada-wide circular food system.

Workshop Objectives:

1. Introduce the 5-step pilot project Circular Food Hubs: Mainland Nova Scotia
2. Support the development of a mainland Nova Scotia network of circular food solution leaders, connecting with other peer leaders from Metro Vancouver and Montreal
3. Collaboratively identify elements of a shared vision for a circular food system in Nova Scotia

Agenda	
1:00 - 1:10 pm	Welcome and Introductions
1:10 – 1:30 pm	Keynote: Dr. Tammara Soma, Food Systems Lab, Simon Fraser University
1:30 – 2:00 pm	Networking
2:00 – 3:00 pm	<p>Stories of Canadian Circular Food Solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Messer, Circular Opportunity Innovation Launchpad • Erin Nichols, City of Vancouver • Jonathan Rodrigue, Still Good • Rebecca Tran, The Station Food Hub
3:00 – 3:45 pm	Breakout: Developing a Shared Circular Vision - Challenges and Opportunities
3:45 – 4:00 pm	Next Steps

Developing A Shared Circular Vision

Workshop participants were introduced to components of a circular vision in a keynote address by Dr. Tammara Soma. Dr. Soma explained why place and values matter in cultivating a vision for a circular food hub, and introduced six key values her team developed: resilient and just economies, reconciliation, systems thinking, environment, education, and health. Dr. Soma emphasized the importance of working together to develop a shared circular vision so that food system actors are working towards a co-created goal. Other guest speakers provided

on-the-ground context, sharing their own experiences with implementing circular solutions and the values that guided their work.

With that kick-off to discussions, workshop participants shared in small groups how circularity and food loss and waste (FLW) prevention is currently happening in their own work in Nova Scotia. Participants then discussed the gaps and opportunities in mainland Nova Scotia for building circular food hubs. Below represents common themes and ideas that surfaced during the discussions.



Six main challenges were articulated across the different discussion groups

Lack of Infrastructure	Missing infrastructure for food storage/processing to prevent loss and waste
Data Gaps	Gaps in data on food flows and where waste is originating
Inequity	Good quality, local food is not accessible or affordable for all
Missing Finance and Investment	Lack of available funding for innovation and scaling up
	A misunderstanding of how preventing FLW can create economic gain
Unawareness	Lack of understanding within the general public and across industry on the impact of food waste
Lack of Capacity	Food system actors are stretched thin and lack additional capacity to establish new system
Uncertainty	FLW can be created from unexpected circumstances (climate events, business closure, etc.)

To address these challenges, and build a food system that prevents FLW and supports circular food hubs, the participants identified an initial circular vision for mainland Nova Scotia. The circular vision described here is intended to be constantly evolving as the project progresses.

In the discussions, participants articulated that circular food systems in Nova Scotia are built upon connected and thriving networks of food system actors and citizens, all the way from farm to fork. Backing these systems are strong financial, physical, and logistical supports that ensure food loss and waste is prevented throughout the supply chain. In addition, communities across the province have access to affordable, accessible, good-quality local food.



Vision Elements

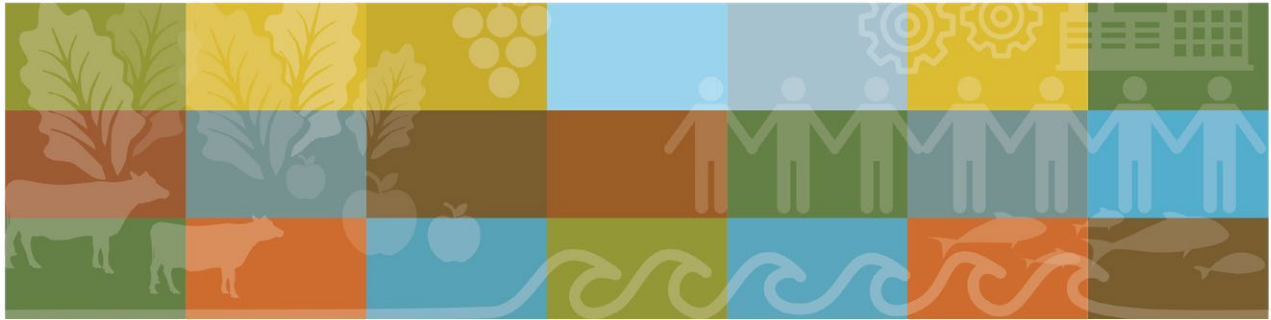
Six key elements emerged as important to a shared circular vision. A circular solution can incorporate multiple elements.

Food Security: Participants voiced the need for food systems to be equitable and inclusive. This includes a dignified approach to food access for all citizens. Participants also raised the importance of having a secure food supply and food stocks in case of emergency or unexpected weather events that may become more frequent due to climate change.

Waste Prevention: Discussions surfaced on the priority of waste prevention in all stages of the food supply chain. This may come to life as additional income streams for manufacturers selling byproducts previously seen as waste, upcycling unused products from one supply chain in another, or adjusting the food delivery process to remove opportunities for waste such as opting for personalized portions rather than prepacked.

Community Awareness and Support: A commonly articulated vision element was greater awareness and understanding of the issue of food loss and waste across the community. This might look like general skills for reducing food waste at home all the way to programs at schools for teaching students about food in their province. Not only understanding but greater community support for approaches and policies that enable circularity is critical to the evolution of circular food systems.

Partnerships: While this workshop was one example of bringing together food system actors, a key component of circular food systems is strong connections, partnerships, and collaborations throughout the province. Participants highlighted the importance of partnerships between food processors and producers who can help each other prevent waste. Partnerships with First Nations and school programs were also raised as key to bringing together all essential members of the community on valuing and sharing food.



Innovation: Participants recognized that circular food systems may require new ways of organizing food flows, processing byproducts, and logistical infrastructure that ensures food loss and waste is prevented. This is captured within the element of innovation, and within that, financial and institutional support for innovation so that new ideas and businesses can be supported to develop and scale up. An example of this would be through an innovation challenge that awards financial prizes.

Institutional & Financial Investment: Participants shared that they see circular food systems growing through the dedicated investment of time, policy tools, and finances from key institutions within the province and at the federal level. These investments, such as procurement policies or grants, can signal support for change and help businesses to adapt and thrive through circularity.

Next Steps

A shared circular vision amongst food system actors will continue to unfold throughout the project. Participant feedback is welcomed and encouraged to support this evolution. Please see the contact email below.

Step Two and Three of the project involves conducting a high-level waste flow analysis and circular intervention assessment. The initial results of that analysis will be presented at the second workshop in June 2023 where participants will explore shared circular intervention opportunities. Future project activities will involve transforming the vision into action with long-term targets and success indicators. Initial action, however, will focus on identifying solutions that draw on currently available capacity and funding.

On behalf of all the partners, a generous thank you goes to all participants that attended the visioning workshop. We encourage you to continue connecting with us and each other as this project advances. Please share this project widely with your network.

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