



IMPACT REPORT · 2025 – 2026

South Africans
save **R12.5 million**
as Refreshi
rescues **200 000**
meals from landfill
in just one year.

A local tech-for-good startup is quietly transforming how South Africans shop, eat, and reduce waste — one Surprise Bag at a time.

refreshi.co.za



THE MODEL

What is Refreshi?

Refreshi is a South African startup that built a surplus-food marketplace connecting consumers with quality unsold food from grocery stores, bakeries, and restaurants at deeply discounted prices through an easy-to-use app.

Users browse available "Surprise Bags" at participating stores nearby, pay securely online, and collect their bags during a scheduled pickup window at the end of the day. Food that would otherwise be discarded is instead enjoyed at a fraction of its original retail price.

It is a win for consumers, a win for retailers, and a meaningful step forward for South Africa's environment.



1 · Browse

Find Surprise Bags from stores near you in the app.

2 · Pay

Reserve and check out securely — all in-app.

3 · Collect

Pick up in-store during your collection window.

ONE YEAR OF IMPACT

By the numbers

Since launching in Stellenbosch in March 2025, Refreshi has grown faster than anticipated, delivering measurable results across consumer savings, retailer revenue recovery, and environmental impact.



R12.5M

Consumer savings

Kept in South Africans' pockets



200K

Meals rescued

Diverted from landfill



700

Partner stores

Up from 35 at launch



R10M

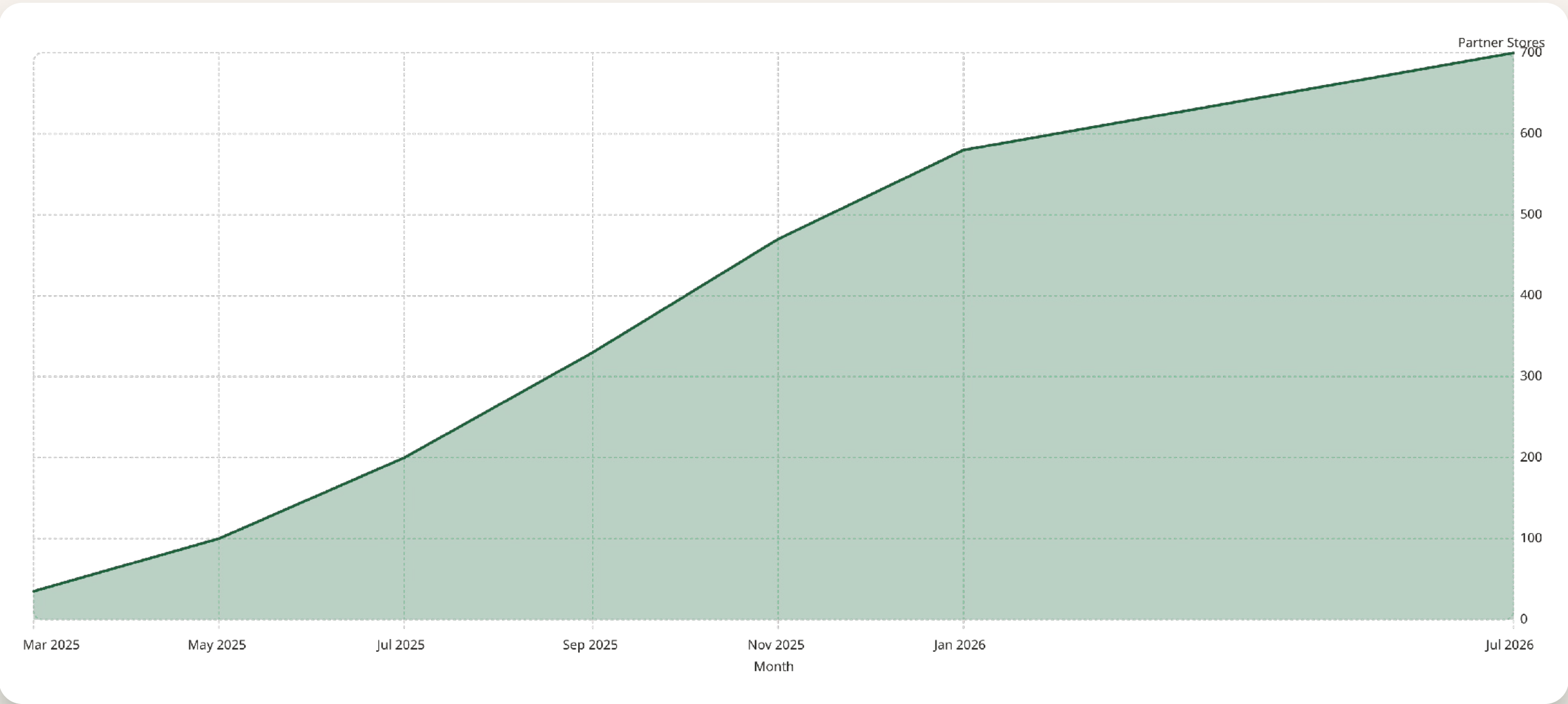
Retailer revenue

Recovered from surplus stock

GROWTH

From 35 stores to 700 in 12 months

Growth has been driven by strong consumer demand and retailer appetite to recover value from surplus stock rather than write it off entirely.



10-15

new partner stores
joining **every week** as of
July 2026.

A **20×** increase in the partner
network in the platform's first
year.

PARTNER NETWORK

Who's on board?

Refreshi's partner network spans grocery stores, coffee chains, bakeries, restaurants, and convenience stores: offering a diverse mix that reflects just how widespread food surplus is across South Africa's retail landscape.

GROCERY & CONVENIENCE



CAFÉS & COFFEE



BAKERIES



RESTAURANTS & QUICK SERVICE



HOTELS & GROUPS



...and more joining weekly

STRETCHING SOUTH AFRICAN GROCERY BUDGETS

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Food waste isn't only an environmental issue — it's becoming a cost-of-living issue for millions of South Africans. Every Surprise Bag helps a family spend less on groceries while helping a business recover value from food that's still perfectly good to eat.

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Jakob Holbak · CEO & Founder, Refreshi

200 000+

registered users

20 000+

meals rescued every month

Since launching in Stellenbosch in March 2025, Refreshi has grown faster than anticipated, delivering measurable results across consumer savings, retailer revenue recovery, and environmental impact.

"Every Surprise Bag helps a family spend less on groceries while helping a business recover value from food that is still perfectly good to eat. That's why we've seen such strong growth over the past year."

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Good for wallets. Better for the planet.

By rescuing approximately **one kilogram of food per Surprise Bag sold**, the Refreshi community has generated environmental benefits that extend well beyond the dinner table.

Estimated greenhouse gas emissions prevented through food rescue over the past year



500 000kg

CO₂ emissions prevented

Of water conserved: the embedded water cost of producing food that never reached landfill



120ML

of water conserved

Of agricultural land effectively saved by keeping edible food in circulation rather than discarding it



400 000m²

of agricultural land saved

Estimated on the basis of approximately 1 kg of food rescued per Surprise Bag sold.

THE NATIONAL PICTURE

South Africa's food waste crisis

South Africa discards an estimated R61.5 billion worth of food every year, with approximately 10.3 million tonnes of edible food sent to landfill annually. Organic waste now accounts for more than half of the country's general waste stream, placing increasing pressure on already-strained municipal landfill sites.

This waste crisis collides directly with a severe cost-of-living crisis, one of the most punishing periods for South African consumers in recent memory. Rising food prices and household budget pressure make every rand saved on groceries count.,

R61.5_{bn}

worth of food discarded every year.

10.3_{Mt}

of edible food sent to landfill annually.

50%₊

of general waste is organic matter.

All of this while millions of South Africans face a deepening **cost-of-living crisis**.

THE SOLUTION

Technology can help change these circumstances

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By creating an easy-to-use, everyday app, we knew we could build a pathway for consumers and businesses to keep surplus food in circulation — while putting money back into both their pockets.

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– Jakob Holbak · CEO & Founder, Refreshi



COVERAGE

Nationwide & growing

Refreshi launched in Stellenbosch in March 2025 and has since expanded to South Africa's major urban centres, making surplus food rescue accessible to millions of consumers across the country.

WESTERN CAPE

Cape Town & Stellenbosch

Original launch region — the densest store network.

GAUTENG

Johannesburg & Pretoria

Gauteng's major metros.

COASTAL

George, Mossel Bay & Gqeberha

Coastal expansion along the southern seaboard.

KWAZULU-NATAL

Durban

Refreshi's KZN gateway.



LOOKING AHEAD

Refreshi's growth ambitions

BENCHMARK · ITALY

~29 000

stores on comparable platforms, rescuing

~22M

meals a year. That's the scale Refreshi is building toward.

1 2 000+ partner stores across South Africa.

2 Millions of meals rescued annually.

3 South Africa's largest circular economy marketplace.



TWO PLATFORMS, ONE MISSION

Refreshi Exchange: the B2B platform

Refreshi's consumer app is complemented by the Refreshi Exchange a separate business-to-business platform enabling manufacturers, distributors, and retailers to move surplus inventory efficiently before it reaches expiry.

CONSUMER

Refreshi

Surplus food from supermarkets, bakeries, restaurants and cafés — sold to everyday shoppers as **Surprise Bags**.

refreshi.co.za

BUSINESS TO BUSINESS

Refreshi Exchange

A marketplace for manufacturers, distributors and retailers to **clear surplus stock before expiry** — at scale, business to business.

exchange.refreshi.co.za



PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER

Complementing the broader food rescue ecosystem

Refreshi does not position itself as a replacement for South Africa's established food rescue organisations, it sees itself as a meaningful complement to their vital work.

The startup has already partnered with FoodForward SA and recognises the critical contribution of organisations like SA Harvest in supporting vulnerable communities. However, not every surplus product can be redistributed through donation channels quickly enough. Refreshi's app is designed to bridge that gap, keeping good food in circulation through a commercial model that is scalable, self-sustaining, and everyday.

As South Africa works towards its commitment to halve food waste by 2030 in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Refreshi believes the solution lies in making food rescue a normal part of everyday shopping, not an occasional act of sustainability.

OFFICIAL PARTNER

FoodForward SA

Partnered for food bank distribution to communities in need.

RECOGNISED

SA Harvest

We recognise and respect their vital hunger-relief work.

ALIGNED WITH

UN SDG 12.3

The global goal to halve food waste by 2030.

EVERYDAY FOOD RESCUE

Making food rescue an everyday habit in SA

In just one year, Refreshi has demonstrated that surplus food rescue is not a niche concept, it is a scalable, commercially viable solution to two of South Africa's most pressing challenges: food waste and the cost of living.

FOR CONSUMERS

Save money

Great food at a fraction of the price, via Surprise Bags.

FOR RETAILERS

Recover revenue

Turn surplus stock into income instead of waste.

FOR THE PLANET

Cut waste

Less CO₂, less water used, less pressure on landfill.

Download the app at www.refreshi.co.za



B2B enquiries · exchange.refreshi.co.za

