



CASE STUDY

WWF FUTURE FOOD TOGETHER



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The Sustainable Diner

Asia has become one of the world's economic engines. Between 2005-07 to 2015-2017, Asia has seen an increase in 7 out of 8 global flows including trade (27% to 33%), capital (13% to 23%) and energy (36% to 43%). The continent's share of global consumption increased from 23% to 28%; and its share of the global middle class rose from 23% to 40% percent¹.

One of the main industries contributing to GHG emissions in the Philippines is the tourism sector, and a key component of the tourism sector's footprint is food consumption, with the Philippine food service sector worth 14.9 billion USD in 2019².

In 2018, the Philippines had a population of 106,7 million people and, among those, 16,7 million lived below the poverty line³. Moreover, around 22 million Filipinos are moderately to severely food insecure⁴. And an estimated of 2.1 million families experienced involuntary hunger immediately before the COVID-19 pandemic, during which this number grew dramatically to 7.6 million in September 2020⁵.

Quick Facts

- Location: The Philippines
- Duration: 2017 - 2021
- Organization: WWF Philippines



Challenges and Objectives

Tourism is an increasingly important economic sector in the Philippines, providing livelihoods to over 12 million people, about 19% of the working age population. Tourism's contribution to the Filipino economy has steadily increased from 7.9% in 2012 to 12.7% in 2018⁶. However, tourism also contributes around 5% of global CO2 emissions today – but on course to increase by approximately 130% between 2005 and 2035 if no measures are taken⁷.

The food service industry accounts for a substantial share of local consumption and production as dining out is fast becoming a part of the Filipino's daily habit. In fact, spending on restaurants and hotels is the second highest in terms of consumption expenditure growth, which indicates a growing culture of out-of-home consumption. Due to economic growth and increased income, Filipinos are now more willing to spend on higher value goods and services, such as better-quality meals, ready-to-eat food delivery services, and new restaurant trends. This has entailed an increased consumption of meat, which has a higher carbon and environmental footprint than traditional dietary options. The Philippine meat consumption growth trend is one of the highest in the world, while vegetable intake is the lowest in Asia⁸.



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Trade-offs and Synergies

Meanwhile, despite the challenges in terms of hunger and food security, large amounts of food are wasted in the Philippines, including up to 308,000 tons of rice every year⁹. In Metro Manila, 2175 tons of food end up in trash bins daily, amounting to 800,000 tons of food waste every year¹⁰. Therefore, one of the major opportunities to be addressed by the country is the reduction of food waste. Wasting food also means wasting resources and energy that were used for production, processing, transport, etc. In face of these challenges, the objective of WWF Philippine’s project named [‘The Sustainable Diner’](#) was to assist the food service sector in initiating a journey to low-carbon, sustainable food consumption and production practices, using the reduction of food waste as an entry point.

Strategy

The project worked through three main strategies:

- Working with the food service sector (restaurants, hotels) to provide a greater offering of sustainable dining options, both by cutting waste as well as by procuring products with better sustainability performance (local and sustainable food sourcing, food waste reduction, water and energy efficiency, avoidance of single-use plastics, plant-based dining options). For private sector engagement, the Hotel and Restaurant Association ([HRAP](#)) is the primary business platform for the project, though it also engages with individual food service establishments for sustainable operations.
- Increasing awareness among the dining public regarding the impact of their dietary choices (e.g., meat vs. plant-based options), while being mindful of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Engaging with both local governments of key tourist destinations and with the national government on integrating sustainability considerations into their policies, sectoral action plans, and providing support for implementation.



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Tools

A range of tools and resources were developed to engage, build capacity and/or trigger action among stakeholders.

- For the dining public, a consumer awareness survey produced data on target group characteristics, which helped develop communication strategies and tailor project interventions. An example of a derived result were the environmental teaching manuals and trainings for primary, secondary, and tertiary schoolteachers, and the connected efforts to integrate sustainability issues into school curricula.
- For the private sector, the certification “National Eco-labelling Program – Green Choice Philippines (NELP- GCP)” was revisited to include new criteria for Food Service Establishments involving the continuous improvement of practices across four categories: 1) Food and Health Safety; 2) Nutrition; 3) Environmental Management; and 4) Resource Efficiency. The project also used the [WWF Hotel Kitchen Toolkit](#) with food service establishments to combat food waste, yielding 10% decrease in four months, with 95% employee engagement. Further, the project produced a ‘Life Cycle Analysis of Food Service’ and a ‘Cost-Benefit Study of Integrating Sustainable Consumption and Production into Business Operations of Food Service Establishments’, to incentivize companies through evidence of the business case of reducing food waste and implementing other SCP practices.



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Lessons Learned

- As a pioneering project in the Philippines, building trust through face-to-face engagement with partners was key in the effort of communicating the strong business case of food waste prevention.
- In terms of integrating sustainable consumption and production (SCP) principles in policies, seeking ‘champions’ (supportive officials) within the governmental agencies and working with them closely was key.
- Using successful examples of green business models and emphasizing how SCP practices can help reduce costs and gain profit can help secure top management support.
- As businesses management embrace the fight to reduce food waste (and other sustainability measures), it is critical to involve staff from the outset, particularly for the food waste mapping step as staff have essential information on waste hotspots.

Results

The project leveraged the results achieved through private sector engagement, with 24 partner restaurants in three cities. In parallel, partnerships were signed with industry platforms that could act as multipliers, raising awareness of the project: HRAP and the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The project delivered policy advocacy achievements, playing a part in promoting or advising several bills, policies, and guidelines such as the Food Surplus Reduction Bill, the National Sustainable Consumption and Production Framework, the National Food Waste Guidelines, or an MoU with the Department of Tourism to develop a policy mandating sustainability training for the food service industry. The project also achieved results in agenda-setting through its thought leadership and education actions, producing a significant number of resources, such as a food service life-cycle assessment, and environmental teaching manuals for schoolteachers.



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Conclusions

By addressing one of the fastest growing sectors in the Philippines – tourism – and one of the fastest growing domestic trends – dining out – the project is tackling a growing source of environmental and societal impacts through the promotion of SCP practices. A range of private sector partners were engaged and adopted changes in their operations through ‘The Sustainable Diner’ project. These partnerships were leveraged to demonstrate to government authorities the opportunities for sustainable local development. This in turn led WWF-Philippines to be considered by government agencies as an important actor for advising on critical policy-making processes on food waste and SCP. The business case can act as a good entry point to tackle other SCP practices.

¹<https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Featured%20Insights/Asia%20Pacific/The%20Future%20of%20Asia%20Asian%20Flows%20and%20Networks%20are%20defining%20the%20next%20phase%20of%20globalization/MGI-Future-of-Asia-Flows-and-Trade-Discussion-paper-Sep-2019.pdf>
²https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Food%20Service%20Hotel%20Restaurant%20Institutional_Manila_Philippines_09-30-2020
³<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC?locations=PH>
⁴<http://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1044577/?iso3=PHL>
⁵<https://www.sws.org.ph/swsmain/generalArticlePage?page=1&srchprm=&artyp=3&stdtrng=&endtrng=&swtyp=3>
⁶<https://psa.gov.ph/content/contribution-tourism-philippine-economy-127-percent-2018>
⁷https://europeancclimate.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/06/Tourism_Briefing_Web_EN.pdf
⁸<https://business.inquirer.net/211357/ph-among-worlds-fastest-growing-meat-consumers-say-experts>
^{9,10}<https://climate.gov.ph/news/367>



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