



Eating in Hesse

Transferable indicator-based environmental communication for sustainable nutrition with minimized food waste, using the example of pilot operations in the Federal State Hesse in Germany (company canteens, prisons and vocational training centres)

Context

Our current dietary styles and their impacts on the environment and climate are increasingly becoming a focus of scientific and political discussion. From a political and scientific perspective, changes in our dietary habits are seen as offering significant leverage for mitigating global challenges such as climate change. The same is true for the currently very high levels of food waste, which should be reduced not only for ethical-moral reasons but also for reasons of resource and climate protection. These aspects are also reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals, officially known as *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* adopted on 25 September 2015 by the heads of state and government at the UN General Assembly in New York.

One of the key areas suited to achieving changes in dietary styles and lowering food waste is the food-away-from-home sector. Eating away from home accounts for EUR 71.1 bn/a of food expenditure, second only after the food retail sector at EUR 117.8 bn/a in Germany. Almost 40% of all food spending is now for food consumed away from home. Already an estimated 50% of the population consume the majority of their meals away from home or have meals delivered to their home. The food-away-from-home sector will continue to gain in significance in the future. This development is driven by flexible daily schedules, high work and activity levels, high mobility, and scarce living space in conjunction with smaller kitchens and increasingly lower cooking skills. Moreover, the food-away-from-home sector is the biggest contributor to food waste after end consumers. More than 35% of food prepared away from home ends up being discarded. At the same time, the sector is characterized by a high food waste avoidance potential resulting also in a considerable reduction of potential costs. Research has shown that even small changes made to menu lines and simple measures to avoid food waste can have a significant impact.

Project objectives

Together with selected operators in the food-away-from-home sector and the Hessian Ministry for the Environment, Climate Protection, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, pilot projects addressing the issue of resource-saving diets and food waste reduction are being implemented. The aim is to offer more sustainable meals in communal catering while at the same time minimizing food waste. Implementation will take the form of process support with the aim of optimizing, documenting, evaluating and disseminating meals offered, taking into account all

aspects of production, processing and consumption processes. As part of the project, model calculations will be performed for the pilot operators in order to show how prices and costs would change and what effects this would have on selected resources (environmental indicators). Health indices will also be taken into account.

For further information regarding the methodology, see:

Abfall-Analyse-Tool by United against Waste e.V: <http://www.united-against-waste.de/>
SusDish: <http://www.nutrition-impacts.org/index.php/gastronomy-catering>

The following measures will be implemented as part of the project:

- Analysis and optimization of catering concepts using health, environmental and economic parameters.
- Recording and reduction of food waste at the participating operators.
- Description of economic and environmental effects as well as of the assessment of health quality parameters at operator level. Description of results obtained in the course of the project as well as a before-and-after comparison.
- Increase in the share of seasonal, regional and certified sustainable products (e.g. EU organic or MSC, ASC for fish).
- Development and provision of communication materials
 - internal communication (*i.a.* for staff development) and
 - external communication (customers, general public).
- Establishment of a platform for dialogue “*Auf dem kulinarischen Weg zur Nachhaltigkeit – Essen in Hessen*” (“Towards culinary sustainability – Eating in Hesse”) aimed at the development of guidelines and examples of good practice for the food-away-from-home sector, of recommendations for national and state policy and of proposals for inclusion into the operators’ sustainability reporting. Moreover, the events will be designed to create a long-term platform for a sustainable, resource-saving food-away-from-home sector in the State of Hesse.
- Organization and implementation of a two-day closing event.

The project will be the first to combine a range of instruments enabling the analysis, assessment and optimization of both topics, i.e. sustainable nutrition and food waste avoidance. Moreover, the project will take a holistic view of health, environmental and economic effects and communicate these effects in ways that are specific to the different target groups. The project’s pilot region is the State of Hesse. The selection of operators however will ensure the project’s nationwide outreach.

Focusing on selected pilot operators

As part of the project, the following pilot operators are to be selected for involvement in the project activities:

- Betriebskantine Dyckerhoff (W&S Service Center GmbH & Co. KG), Betriebsrestaurant Hessisches Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Energie, Verkehr und Landesentwicklung (Primus Service GmbH), Betriebsrestaurant Union Investment (Sodexo Services GmbH) and Betriebsrestaurant Union Investment Maintor (Sodexo Services GmbH) in the “company canteens” category;
- BTZ Kassel in the “vocational education” category;

- JVA Weiterstadt, JVA Frankfurt am Main III and Jugendstrafanstalt Wiesbaden in the “prisons” category.

In the selection process, care will be taken to insure that the operators fall into the SME category and that they have the potential to be drivers of innovation for large operators.

Project outcomes:

- The participating operators will have been able to significantly reduce their food waste. Food procurement and the meals on offer will have been optimized with a view to health and environmental aspects.
- Results reports will have been prepared for the participating pilot operators.
- Recommended actions in the areas of “food waste avoidance” and “resource-saving diets” (good practice/action guidelines) will have been prepared for the three target groups.
- Materials will have been developed for internal and external communication.
- Recommended actions for policy will have been prepared.
- Recommendations will have been prepared for the integration of these topics into the operators’ quality management and sustainability reporting.
- A public closing event will have been held.
- A final report will have been prepared.
- A platform for dialogue termed “*Auf dem kulinarischen Weg zur Nachhaltigkeit – Essen in Hessen*” (“Towards culinary sustainability – Eating in Hesse”) will have been established and is being continued.

Breadth of project outreach and permanent adoption

The breadth of outreach of the project’s results and communications components is being insured by the selection of operators and by the environmental communication and dissemination concept. In addition, attempts will be made to integrate the project’s results into existing structures, such as for example the Green Week international trade fair or the “environment week” and events held by state ministries. Moreover, the project partners are linked into an extensive network which allows them to communicate and disseminate the project results to different target groups within their varying scopes. There are also plans to present, as far as possible, the project results in the form of presentations and speeches at trade fairs, specialist conventions (e.g. internorga, anuga, seminars held by the German Nutrition Society (DGE) etc.) and other events. Following the end of the project, the platform for dialogue will be continued by the Hessian Ministry for the Environment, Climate Protection, Agriculture and Consumer Protection. Concrete measures and courses of action for reducing resource use in the food sector in Hesse are to be developed based on the project results. Subsequently the results will be integrated into the research protection strategy of the State of Hesse. In this context, suitable measures and initiatives will be defined that will allow for the recommendations and political initiatives to be permanently adopted and periodically updated. The project is consistent with the objectives of the sustainability strategy of the State of Hesse.

Project partners

The team to be charged with the project’s implementation combines comprehensive expertise in the fields of “sustainable nutrition” and “food waste avoidance” and in PR work and campaigning. Moreover, the partners’ recourse to a broad network will ensure the project’s optimum implementation and wide public visibility. Moreover, the Hessian Ministry for the

Environment, Climate Protection, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (HMUKLV) will provide organisational support to the project as well as financial support for the provision of the 50% own contribution to project funding.

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