

Case Study

THE BENEFITS OF CLASSIC GREEN INNOVATION IN BUSINESS

Country:	United Kingdom
Title of the case study:	Preventing food, drink and packaging waste
Geographical scope:	United Kingdom
Main partners involved:	WRAP, UK Governments, grocery retailers and manufacturers, municipalities, hospitality/food service businesses

Short description

WRAP developed and launched a range of evidence projects, voluntary agreements and behaviour change campaigns to reduce the quantity of food, drink and packaging waste arising in the UK in (1) the grocery manufacturing and retail supply chain through a voluntary agreement entitled [The Courtauld Commitment](#), and (2) UK households through the Courtauld Commitment and [Love Food Hate Waste campaign](#). More recently, WRAP applied this approach to the hospitality and food service sector through the [Hospitality and Food Services Agreement](#). Together, these measures have so far encouraged [2.3 million tonnes of food, drink and packaging waste prevention](#). WRAP estimates the value of this prevented waste is approximately £3.5 billion.

1. Measurement of the original baseline of consumption and production

WRAP completed and published world-leading research into UK food waste in 2008. This identified the original data on the quantity, value and environmental impact of waste food, drink and packaging waste arising in the UK. It enabled WRAP to determine the opportunities to reduce waste, make a case to businesses and governments, and set appropriate targets for reduction with its partners. Since the original research, WRAP has updated the work to monitor progress and performance - available [here](#). WRAP estimates the total amount of food waste at 15 million tonnes and packaging at 6 million tonnes for the UK for 2010.

Each company that signs one of our voluntary agreements, measures and reports its waste production. WRAP reports the collective progress towards the targets annually, an example of which can be found [here](#). Changes in household waste are measured by an independent impact study. The methodologies for measurement and reporting are available in a draft Toolkit WRAP produced in partnership with UNEP and UN FAO and in the EU FP7 project "[FUSIONS](#)".

2. Green innovation implemented, timeframe and cost of the measure

- WRAP worked with governments and businesses to develop and deliver evidence-based actions to reduce food, drink and packaging waste in the areas with the greatest opportunities for impact. WRAP's Courtauld Commitment, in three phases, progressively targeted retailers and their supply chain to reduce packaging waste, food and drink waste. WRAP also influenced householders' food waste behaviours through behaviour change campaigns (see below), and changes to product and packaging design incentivised through the Courtauld Commitment. This agreement started in 2005, initially with a focus on packaging waste. The current phase, which runs until 2015, includes action on household food waste, food and drink waste in the supply chain and has engaged 93% of the sector measured by sales.
- WRAP's "Love Food Hate Waste" national consumer behaviour change campaign was launched in 2007. It provides evidence and information to retailers and municipalities in a form that enables them to influence food waste behaviours in UK households in a clear and consistent manner. The campaign also promoted simple methods of reducing food waste directly to consumers through for example [Lovefoodhatewaste.com](#) and social media.
- WRAP's [Hospitality and Food Service Agreement](#) targets commercial and public sector catering companies to reduce the quantity of waste generated in their catering operations. The Agreement started in 2012, has 150 signatories from the commercial and public sector so far, and runs until 2015.

This work has cost UK Governments around £5 million/ year. Taking into account the total independently-verified cost savings for those activities, the estimated financial benefit to the UK has been around £115 for every £1 invested. Defra has conducted an assessment of the total benefits of the programmes, taking into account social benefits and have identified benefits of >£300 per £1 invested.

3. Quantified figures reflecting the situation after implementation of the initiative

The total impacts of the initiatives so far have been:

- 2.3 million tonnes of food, drink and packaging waste prevented. The cost of this prevented waste is around £3.5 billion to UK business, householders and municipalities.
- Of this, household food waste has fallen by 1.1 million tonnes (13%) and is on track to reduce by 20% by 2015. This reduction alone has avoided 3.6 million tonnes/year of CO₂ eq emissions and reduced water use by 1.0 billion litres/year.
- Food and drink supply chain waste has reduced by 8.8% in 2 years since work began in this sector.

4. Return on investment and payback time

The cost savings of this work to the UK economy has been substantial and is likely to have yielded a large net saving to the UK economy within 2-3 years of starting the programme. The long term investment is paying dividends to the Government funders: the cost of delivery has declined significantly as businesses and partners do more. For example the third phase of the Courtauld Commitment (2012-15), WRAP targets another 1.1 million tonnes of waste prevented, and savings of around £1.6 billion at a total cost to the taxpayers of around £10 million.

5. Why is this case study a success? How can it be replicated?

- The approach provides a forum for business to discuss overall direction and common goals, putting aside competition and commercial sensitivities. It allows partners to develop collectively a clear strategic framework for change and set relevant targets.
- This allows the sector to give clear signals to its suppliers on its priorities and level of ambition. It also provides a supportive environment to encourage consumers to reduce waste and save money.
- WRAP acts as the independent convener of these agreements. This role is seen as crucial by all partners.
- WRAP ensured that baseline was established and progress rigorously monitored to demonstrate progress to stakeholders and agreement participants.
- WRAP provides a credible and independent evidence base and guidance on how to change, allowing competitors and different parts of the supply chain to work towards a common goal.
- WRAP provided simple and effective materials to support the delivery of behaviour change through its Love Food Hate Waste campaign and supported these with changes to packaging and products delivered by commercial partners.

We believe this approach can be adapted and used successfully in other countries and WRAP is working with UNEP and UNFAO to encourage this to happen through for example the global food waste reduction initiative. This partnership is producing a draft toolkit to help other countries build on this success and use it in their countries, and WRAP is ready to help this process where it can.