

CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND FOOD WASTE

Case Study

THE DANISH APPROACH TO FOOD WASTE REDUCTION

Denmark has been at the forefront of efforts to combat food waste, implementing innovative strategies that leverage circular economy principles to minimise waste throughout the food supply chain.



BACKGROUND

In 2015, Denmark launched the "Stop Wasting Food" (Stop Spild Af Mad) campaign, a nationwide initiative aimed at raising awareness about food waste and promoting sustainable consumption practices. The campaign, led by the nonprofit organisation Stop Wasting Food Movement, mobilised businesses, government agencies, and consumers to take action against food waste.

KEY INITIATIVES

Public Awareness Campaigns: The Stop Wasting Food campaign employed a variety of communication channels, including social media,

television, and educational materials, to educate the public about the environmental, social, and economic impacts of food waste. By highlighting the value of food and encouraging mindful consumption habits, the campaign inspired individuals and households to reduce waste at home.

Surplus Food Redistribution: Denmark implemented innovative programs to divert surplus food from landfills and redirect it to those in need. One notable initiative is the "Too Good To Go" app, which connects consumers with restaurants, bakeries, and grocery stores offering surplus food at discounted prices. By leveraging technology to facilitate surplus food redistribution, Denmark has created a win-win solution that reduces waste while providing affordable meals to consumers.

Collaboration with Businesses: The Danish government partnered with businesses across the food industry to implement strategies for waste reduction and resource optimization. Through initiatives such as food waste audits, supply chain optimization, and packaging redesign, businesses have been able to identify inefficiencies and implement targeted interventions to minimise waste and maximise value.

Policy Support: Denmark has enacted legislation to support food waste reduction efforts, including tax incentives for businesses that donate surplus food to charities and nonprofits. Additionally, the government has introduced regulations to standardise food date labelling and clarify expiration dates, reducing confusion among consumers and preventing premature discarding of edible food.

RESULTS AND IMPACT

The Danish approach to food waste reduction has yielded tangible results, with significant reductions in food waste observed across the country. According to a report by the Danish Environmental Protection Agency, Denmark achieved a 25% reduction in household food waste between 2011 and 2016, surpassing the national target of 15%. Moreover, businesses have reported cost savings and improved sustainability outcomes as a result of adopting circular economy practices.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Danish experience offers valuable lessons for other countries seeking to address food waste through circular economy principles:

- **Public Engagement:** Engaging consumers through targeted messaging and behavioural interventions is essential for driving behaviour change and promoting sustainable consumption habits.
- **Partnership and Collaboration:** Collaboration between government, businesses, nonprofits, and community stakeholders is critical for implementing effective solutions and scaling up impact.
- **Innovation and Technology:** Leveraging technology and innovation can streamline surplus food redistribution processes and create new opportunities for waste reduction and resource optimization.
- **Policy Support:** Enacting supportive policies and regulations can create an enabling environment for circular economy initiatives and incentivize businesses to adopt sustainable practices.

In conclusion, Denmark's holistic approach to food waste reduction demonstrates the transformative potential of circular economy principles in creating a more sustainable and resilient food system.

By learning from the Danish experience and adapting proven strategies to local contexts, countries around the world can accelerate progress towards achieving the **Sustainable Development Goal of halving food waste by 2030.**