



EWR good practices and case studies

(Integrated management of food and other types of waste)

1. Details of Action:

Coordinator: IHOBE - Basque Country Government Environmental Management Public Society

Action Developer: Unialco SL

Name of nominated action: Integrated management of food and other types of waste

Town: Irun

Region: Gipuzkoa

Country: Spain

Website: <https://www.uvesco.es/>

Nominee category: Business/Industry

Dates of action: throughout 2016, and especially from November 19 to November 27.

2. Action's theme:

- Reduce – Strict avoidance and reduction at source
- Reuse – Preparing for reuse and reuse
- Recycle – Waste sorting and Recycling
- Let's Clean Up Europe!

3. Action related to the Prevention Thematic Days 2016: Packaging waste – Use Less Packaging?

- Yes
- No

4. Description of the nominated action:

This initiative is a combination of various measures that were implemented with the objective of minimizing food waste in our logistics warehouse. At the same time taking advantage of any food waste to create other recycled materials. Previously, all food waste was put into trash compactors, without any separation of materials, and then sent to the local rubbish tip.

Our solution involved various initiatives and actions. Each type of material had to be managed in different ways to help maximize any benefits from these improvements.

The first measure that was implemented was an idea proposed by our production employees. After analysing the large volume of food that was being wasted, a proposal to donate the food that was still able to be consumed but was not in a condition for commercial sales purpose. Currently we have two employees managing the daily donations to local food banks.

The next measure involved updating our commercial terms & conditions of sale to our customers (supermarkets). In cases where customers returned Food back to our logistics platform (warehouse), and if that food was in date (more than four days before the expiry date, but less than 12), the money they paid for the food would be returned. With this measure, the company increased the amount of food sent to local



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food banks.

After further analysis of wastage, we found an opportunity to take advantage of fruit and vegetables that were not fit for human consumption. We started recycling this waste into compost which was then sold after the treatment as peat. To obtain a good compost quality, we have one person supervising this process on a daily basis, furthermore this person is part of a social integration plan for people with disabilities.

The remaining material that was too difficult to separate for recycling, we began sending it to a methane plant, where it is used to generate methane and peat.

Finally and to complete the cycle, a group of production employees formed an improvement team with two clear goals. First, to minimize any food breakages, and secondly, to ensure the work force bought into the improvement program to help identify areas for improvement. A systematic problem solving methodology was employed, and it involved various groups of employees. The breakage causes that were identified were found to be bad or inefficient working practices/habits of the of warehouse workers, breakages from suppliers, and inefficiencies with our logistic platform's facilities. To fight against these inefficiencies, for example, we organize training sessions to teach our employees how to stow the products in the trucks.

All of the mentioned actions are still in progress, in a continuous manner. During the European Week we sent a communication to all our staff reinforcing the idea of the need to continue working to further reduce our waste and encouraging them to come up with new ideas.

5. Type of evaluation conducted and outcome of the evaluation:

- Number of visitors/participants
- Feedback from visitors/participants (willingness to change their behaviour)
- Quantity of waste avoided/collected
- Amount of CO2 avoided
- Other indicators

Outcome of the evaluation:

Apart from the positive feedback from visitors and participants, there are three key indicators that show the good results of the different actions:

- 370.000 euros donated to the food bank per year.
- Improvement of the recycling rate from 0% to 95%. 400 tons per year.
- 5% decrease in food breakages.

6. Reasons why the action has been selected for the EWWR 2016 Awards:

a) Visibility and communicational aspects

Undoubtedly, the company has an obligation to manage its activities in a responsible way and taking care of the environment is a key objective for it. They achieved this objective via this action, which can provide the organisation with positive marketing tool by increasing the visibility of environmentally friendly actions and to help give them competitive advantage over other organizations in their sector.



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The company managed to give joint visibility to all its actions through the communication sent to the employees during the week.

b) Quality of content and focus on waste reduction, products reuse or materials recycling

Clearly, the combination of different measures has a direct impact in the waste reduction with the improvement program focused on breakages in the one hand, and the recycling with the food banks and the materials separation in the other. The main waste stream generated by this company is food waste, which will be the subject of concern until 2030 for fulfilling the Community objectives.

c) Originality and exemplarity: What makes the action original or innovative?

More than the originality, the method applied is exemplary. The actions can inspire other to follow the example and implement similar changes, which can have a real positive impact on the environment.

It is remarkable the idea of endowing each supermarket with an individual income statement, so that wasted food is an economic loss for them (who are the customers of Unialco SL). In addition, these customers have the opportunity to avoid such losses if they return the products before the expiration date, which encourages them to apply the best management of the stocks.

d) European reproducibility: How can other entities adapt the action to other contexts or European regions?

All the actions can be applied regardless of the location. They can be adopted by any company involved in food distribution, but it would take some time to implement all of them. The result achieved in Unialco SL is the fruit of years of work.

e) Lasting impact: In what way is the action designed to have a lasting impact?

Undoubtedly, applying this solution to other European regions, the panorama in terms of waste would change radically. With these types of solutions, the sustainability of the economic activities would be much higher having a direct impact in the environment. This action is designed to have a lasting impact in the future because it is permanent. The initiative fundamentally changed how we deal with waste. The investment made in these changes is large and with a long term vision.

f) Motivation: How will your action motivate its target audience/the general public?

The expectation is to be a good example of how doing some little changes and applying common sense, the results can be very visible. That is why it is so exportable to other economic activities. All employees are encouraged to propose actions and they are also informed about the results obtained. The motivation of clients (supermarkets) is guaranteed, because the better they manage food products, the better they obtain economic advantage.



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Preparing food products to donate to the food banks

Image showing the situation before the action

