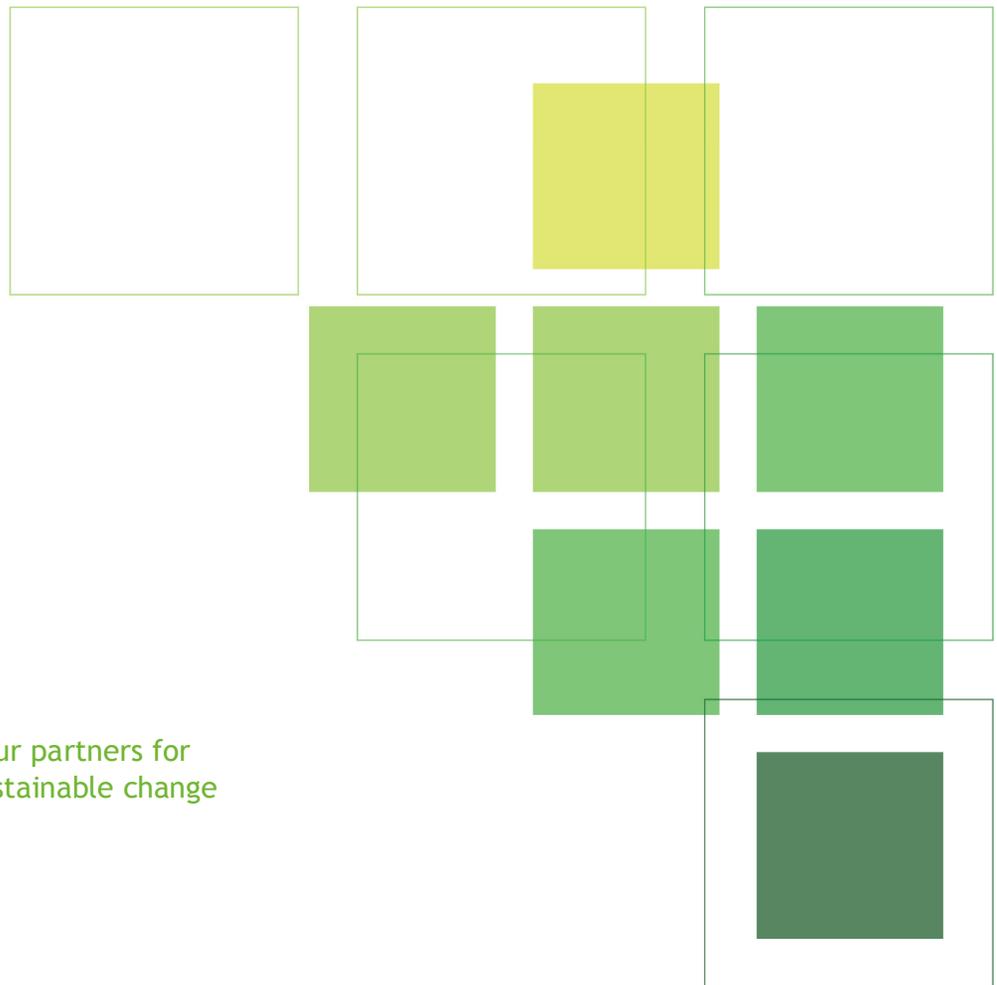


Case Study...

A Cluster Approach to Reducing Food Waste (in Welsh Tourism SME Businesses)





“...920,000 tonnes of food is wasted at outlets each year, 75% of which is avoidable and could have been eaten.”
Overview of Waste in the UK Hospitality and Food Service Sector, WRAP report

Client...
WRAP

The Challenge...

The Wales hospitality sector (pubs, hotels, restaurants & fast food outlets) sends 72,000 tonnes of potentially recyclable waste to landfill each year, of which (41%) is food waste. Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) comprise more than 90% of the Welsh tourism industry and previous projects have found that tourism SMEs can be difficult to reach and engage in environmental/sustainability issues. The challenge was to pilot the development of sustainable food business clusters by working with a geographic cluster of hospitality and tourism SMEs to identify and implement waste prevention opportunities; challenge perceptions of, and barriers to, effective waste management; and promote the benefits of working as a cluster of businesses.

The Work...

Strategy - Based on our extensive experience of working with SMEs our strategy was to build and maintain 1 to 1 relationships over a period of time and present strong evidence to answer the question “what’s in it for me?” Furthermore, our approach was to ensure advice and support was highly practical and hands on taking full account of business staff resourcing, business operational factors and staff attitudes.

Project management - A key challenge was to select a region and recruit a cross section of businesses that were representative of the Welsh hospitality and tourism sector. We built upon the existing Destination Management approach to promoting tourism in Wales. The project was delivered in Swansea/ Mumbles/ Gower, which brought together urban and rural SMEs, of which our face to face engagement strategy resulted in nine businesses actively engaging in the pilot.

Technical - Three types of surveys were carried out: walk over surveys, detailed site audits and behaviours and attitudes surveys. Sufficient information was gathered to formulate recommendations for prevention and increased recycling of wastes and the development of waste prevention plans. The attitudes and barriers survey was used for the first time to gain insight into the change management approaches that may be most effective for each organisation, moving away from adopting a “one size fits all” approach to support.

Stakeholder engagement and communications - An important task of the project was to identify a “host” for the project that could provide a mechanism upon completion of the pilot for the cluster of businesses to remain a cluster and for the cluster to grow and develop. An engagement plan was developed resulting in a combination of a local wholesale supplier, tourism sector organisation and an environmental group working together to host the cluster.

The Outcomes and Benefits...

For the environment - Nine businesses took part in the project, identifying significant waste prevention opportunities with action already taken towards reducing waste to landfill by >115 tonnes per annum.

For the bottom line -Direct financial savings for individual businesses varies significantly from £100s to £1000s a year. Examples include reducing perishable food purchasing in a 4 star, 106 bedroom city centre hotel by 25% to savings of over £850 a year by recycling nearly 7 tonnes of food waste in a rural fine dining restaurant with rooms.

For people -Visitors to Wales can have more confidence that hospitality and tourism businesses they use are helping make their experience in Wales a more sustainable one. Hospitality sector staff are now more aware of the influence they can have on keeping Wales green and are able to carry out recycling practices in their workplace as well as they do at home.

Further information on the project can be seen at: www.environmentandsustainability.co.uk/welshcluster

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