Reducing food waste through sustainable procurement: stories from the healthcare sector

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Health Care Without Harm (HCWH Europe)

Procura+ Seminar
Rome, 13th October 2016
Vision
Healthcare mobilises its ethical, economic and political influence to create an ecologically sustainable, equitable and healthy world.

Mission
Transform healthcare worldwide so that it reduces its environmental footprint, becomes a community anchor for sustainability and a leader in the global movement for environmental health and justice.

Overarching Goals
*Transform the Supply Chain*: Establish and globalize procurement criteria and leverage health care’s purchasing power to drive policies and markets for ethically produced, healthy, sustainable products and services.
"Governments have few sources of leverage over increasingly globalized food systems – but public procurement is one of them. When sourcing food for schools, hospitals and public administrations, governments have a rare opportunity to support more nutritious diets and more sustainable food systems in one fell swoop”.

Olivier de Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food (15th May 2014)
Policy context

- Dietary guidelines

All the SDGs are directly or indirectly connected to sustainable and healthy food - eg. SDG2 – link between healthy nutrition and sustainable agriculture

2016 FAO study: “Plates, pyramid and planet”: a few countries have issued dietary guidelines that secure good nutrition for all and address climate change and other environmental impacts
Policy context

• **Sustainable Food Consumption and Production and Food Waste**

In 2013, EC consultation on the sustainability of the food system Strategy expected in 2014 but blocked!

*Instead, CEP package* encourages MS to adopt food waste reduction strategies in line with SDG 12.3: “by 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels”
Policy context

- **Sustainable Public Procurement**

**Directive on public procurement (2014/24/EU)**, creates opportunities for sustainable public procurement (green and ethical) and for innovation procurement.

**Revision of GPP criteria** for food and catering services.

Different sustainable food strategies have been adopted at the **national level**, like in Denmark, Sweden, or Switzerland, encouraging and in certain cases **demanding to public institutions like hospitals to procure sustainable and healthy food**.
# STRUCTURE OF THE EU GPP CRITERIA: FOOD AND CATERING SERVICES

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Framework of sustainable food procurement

Engagement of all stakeholders

*Purchasing*: tender specifications for production and products, diversity of bids

– Make environmental, health and sustainability criteria more explicit for food products

*Catering*: menu design, healthy eating, vending machines

Facilities management (kitchen, canteen, wards)

Personnel training
Why procurement of sustainable food in healthcare?

Healthcare facilities are major consumers of products and materials, including food. The healthcare sector should pave the way in *procuring* food that:

- Does not degrade the environment, contribute to climate change, and compromise sustainable food production
- Does support direct marketing or short-supply chains from rural communities,
- Does not increase diet-related diseases, or cause longer patient recovery times.

To do that the **healthcare sector should offer meals** that minimize food waste and are:

- being produced and *procured* in a sustainable way,
- fresh, diverse, and healthy - rich in plant-based products (eg. vegetables, fruits, pulses, whole grains), less reliant on animal-based products, and meet patients’ need and preferences,
- limited in sugar, saturated fats, and salt.

Prevention and reduction of food waste will allow the healthcare sector to dedicate resources to improve sustainable food procurement.
Food waste: policy context

Objective
Reach SDG 12.3 to halve food waste by 2030 – today around 100 million tonnes of food are wasted every year in the EU

Key actions
- Develop an EU methodology to measure food waste
- Create a platform for the SDG on food waste and share best practices and results achieved
- Clarify EU legislation on waste, food and feed, and encourage food donation
- Improve the use and understanding of date marking along the food chain
Prevent and reduce food waste in the healthcare sector: HCWH Europe work

**Interviews** with European hospitals and healthcare systems about their strategies to prevent and reduce food waste:

- **7 hospitals** from four European countries (Denmark, France, Spain, and the UK),
- **2 regional programmes** from Denmark and Sweden, and
- **2 national initiatives** from Ireland and The Netherlands, and

Examples can serve as a role model and inspire others to gives the problem of food waste the recognition it deserves in the healthcare sector.
Prevent and reduce food waste in the healthcare sector

Reducing the **high wastage rates** at healthcare is a priority and an opportunity to:
- Invest in better and healthier meals
- Reduce complications and increase speed recovery
- Fight against climate change and generate social and economic benefits
- Change the old model of doing things

Some **hospitals are adopting** preventive and resource efficiency approaches:
- **Awareness** around smart **purchasing**, storage and preparation of food
- Optimizing their **ordering system**
- Establishing **protected mealtimes**,
- Offering different **portion sizes** (i.e. large, standard, or small), or
- Improving coordination, education, and communication (internally and externally)
Hvidovre Hospital (Denmark)

- Excellent example, although lack of support
- Patients can choose from à la carte menu
- Patients have the possibility to order a double portion
- Good communication at all levels, which contributes to both patient and employee satisfaction.

- Introduction of a strict inventory management system
- Attention to the aesthetics of their dishes
- Re-use - uneaten sandwiches from the staff canteen are served in the cafeteria
The Västra Götaland Region (Sweden)

- Reducing food waste is one of their priorities

- Since 2013, the Region has been working with diverse audiences to improve menus. As a result, food waste in kitchens and wards has been reduced, patient satisfaction has been increased, and nutrition improved.

- Pilot project at Kungälv Hospital (2016) - qualitative changes:
  - Patients can choose their food
  - Introduction of ward hostesses
  While measuring food waste by department, and distinguish between lunch and dinner

- Replication in other hospitals of the region.
The Irish Green Healthcare Programme (GCHP) on food waste

- Start in **2009** as a collaboration between the Irish EPA, the CIT, and around 40 Irish hospitals

- This **programme**:
  - Has set up a system to measure food waste in hospitals by food weight and purchase cost (€2/kg),
  - Provides recommendations to prevent and reduce food waste in wards, canteens, and hospital kitchens - such as improving communication and coordination between the staff

They have proven that food waste reduction is possible and it can quickly improve things, apart from **generating savings**.
Research on food wastage in the healthcare sector by Wageningen University & Research

In the Netherlands, 25% of food in healthcare facilities is thrown away, representing a loss of €50,000 - 150,000

- The Wageningen UR has developed and applied a practical method for measuring food waste and examining different factors:
  - The quantity of food wasted during different steps in the production process
  - Which products are thrown away the most

- They have obtained some interesting results, as:
  - Vegetables are usually the most often discarded item; or
  - Thursday and Friday are the days when most meals are returned

This method also allows for comparison of results between facilities and makes benchmarking possible.
What have we learned?

• Never underestimate the **commitment** (time and resources) required

• Make sure that you have **board support** and **clinical engagement** from the outset

• Make sure you have good **patient representation** in the team – provides quality input and feedback

• **Train and engage** your staff – to slowly change the mind – set in the hospital

• **Stop and reflect** throughout the project stages to make sure you are delivering the project – maintain focus
Recommendations

Know your suppliers and incorporate sustainable criteria in your PP

Cook meals on-site, and ensure new build includes kitchens

Establish protected mealtimes

Ensure patients can select different portion sizes

Do satisfaction surveys to change menus, if needed

Train your staff, in prior phases and adequate separation of waste

Use transparent waste bins

Focus on prevention and explore some alternatives to redistribute surplus food

Organise focus or work groups for testing different culinary innovations, consistencies or presentations

Check your fridge
**Closure the loop**

**Considerations:**

- Procurement process *maximise opportunities for sustainability*
  
  – Consider the best outset

- Sustainability impacts are created throughout the whole product lifecycle, including production, transport and *disposal*.

- Careful stock control and demand forecasting will reduce the cost and wastage associated with over-provisioning

- Look for recycling and reutilisation of raw materials

- Search for innovation/alternatives
Challenges ahead / What remains to be learned

• Develop specifications with environmental and health criteria

• Need for new skills to help public procurement professionals to assess real value for money based on whole-life costs

• Clarify aspects of sustainability and efficiency, and include them in contracts - develop 2nd and 3rd suppliers

• Seek out expertise in academia / organisations to have an holistic approach of catering and procurement

• Raise awareness of the policy and secure more commitment for action

• How to transform good practice into standard practice?
HCWH Europe Food Pledge (forthcoming)

My institution will:

- Increase the number of fresh, seasonal, organic and locally produced food products purchased
- Cook meals on-site, and ensure new build includes kitchens
- Moderate the amount of animal-based products served to patients, staff and visitors and promote other sources of protein, such as peas, beans, pulses and nuts.
- Limit the offer of processed food and offer a broad range of healthy meals, where fruits and vegetables are constantly available, including in vending machines.
- Adopt cooking methods that reduce the use of salt, sugar, fats and artificial additives and preservatives.
- Serve tap water in preference to other beverages – particularly soft drinks.
- Set targets for preventing and reducing food waste both in the kitchen and wards
Next week:
CleanMed Europe 2016

Copenhagen
19th - 21st October
www.cleanmedeurope.org

Europe’s leading conference on sustainable healthcare
Thank you for your attention!

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