Case study: Eliminating edible food waste at WRAP’s offices
UN SDG Target 12.3 calls upon the world to halve food loss and waste by 2030. This is a hugely ambitious target which will require a monumental, collaborative effort by governments, business and all of us citizens to bring about systemic change. WRAP is at the forefront of this effort; building the case for change and working directly with partners to take action.

At WRAP we went a step further than the global goal. We set ourselves the challenge to achieve zero edible food waste in our workplace, and ensure no food waste is sent to landfill. This case study examines how, through using the Target, Measure, Act approach, we virtually eliminated edible food waste in less than one year.

We show how through engaging and motivating staff, transparent measuring and reporting, and a series of simple, practical steps we achieved maximum difference for minimum investment.

Key Facts

- WRAP’s targets: to eliminate edible food waste from WRAP’s offices and to ensure that no food waste, edible or inedible, goes to landfill.
- Only 0.49% of all food waste wasted was edible.
- All food waste is sent to anaerobic digestion.
- WRAP has reduced its total food waste by 40%.
TARGET: Set a target for reducing food waste that contributes to SDG12.3

As pioneers in building the case for change in food waste and advocates of the global campaign to reduce it, at WRAP we know that we can talk the talk. But can we walk the walk? We have been measuring our food waste since 2012, but because we were making good progress we never set ourselves a target.

In 2018, we decided we could do better and set ourselves two key ambitious targets. The most challenging was to eliminate all edible food waste from our offices at WRAP. We also wanted to ensure that no food waste, edible or inedible, is ever sent to landfill.

MEASURE: Align measurements with international standards and share data transparently

To measure progress towards our targets, all bins at the offices sorted and weighed every day for a week four times a year. Food that could have been eaten is weighed separately. The results are then extrapolated to provide an average quantity per month. To ensure the results are valid and representative, no staff (apart from those recording the data, of course) know when the recordings take place.

Figure 1 above shows that whilst there are fluctuations, overall we are making good progress. To raise awareness, these results are shared across WRAP. They will also be published on Atlas.

Since we started measuring food waste in 2012 we have reduced our food waste by 40%, from 120kg/month of total food waste (edible and inedible) down to 72kg/month. Good progress, but we still have work to do to meet Sustainability Goal 12.3.

How are we doing against the challenging target of having no edible food? Overall, we’ve made great progress over a short period of time. Some months are better than others. Since we started measuring our edible food waste, in three of the four audits reported we had already met this target and no edible food was wasted. But, one month we threw away 1.4 kg of edible food waste. Across our offices this equates to 0.49%, so still not perfect!

ACT: Gain insights on food loss and act on reducing waste

So, how have we managed this? How have we reached the point in which the edible food we waste accounts for less than 0.5% of all the food we waste? How did we reduce our total food waste by 40%?

The process of measuring and monitoring waste allowed us to see the progress that has been made. It also helped us to pinpoint areas that needed improvement.
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Two food waste bins were installed into the counter top, next to the kettle, so that tea bags and waste from food preparation can be easily dropped straight into the bin.

There is close monitoring of the food that is stored in the fridges at the office. Everyone is asked to write their names on their food so we can remind the owner when we see it is approaching the use by date.

We have permanent sharing shelves in both fridges for colleagues to help themselves to food going spare. Without a doubt, everything, from cakes to carrot sticks, always vanishes!

Clear instructions and signs on all the bins ensure that all staff and guests know exactly where to dispose of their waste.

We held a zero waste BBQ and a zero waste picnic to raise awareness of the campaign to eliminate edible food waste, share advice and, importantly, prove that it can be done.

We have been able to tap into the fantastic resources produced by our colleagues in at Love Food Hate Waste. They have lots of practical hints and tips on how to reduce food waste which we could share around our offices. We encourage the sharing of ideas between colleagues with a whiteboard full of suggestions.

The ‘Chill The Fridge Out’ campaign, part of Love Food Hate Waste, promotes checking that our fridges stay below 5°C. Food can last 3 days longer when the fridge is set at the right temperature.

Similarly, the recently launched ‘Compleating’ campaign encourages us to eat edible parts of common foods that are often thrown away such as baked potato skins and bread ends or pizza crusts.
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And elsewhere, we have worked with our in the **TRiFOCAL** programme to develop a **staff engagement pack** to make it easy for businesses to engage their employees in the Small Change Big Difference campaign. Theme 2 encourages everyone to reduce their food waste by eating what they buy.

At WRAP, in the coming months, we want to improve on the 0.49% of edible food being wasted and hit our target to have no edible food waste. We still need to reduce our total food waste further to hit the 50% food waste reduction target. Not only this, we hope that the staff engagement we have encouraged inspires us all to spread the word about reducing food waste in other parts of our lives and to the people around us. Are we walking the walk? Nearly! We’ve taken huge steps towards our finishing line.