

# How Sodexo Are Reducing Food Waste In The Middle East



## Did you Know....?

- **Around 815 million people in the world go hungry every day?**
- **Approximately 1/3 of all the food we produce as a species goes to waste?**
- **Food waste is the 3rd largest contributor to CO2 emissions?**
- **Food waste makes up 8% of all greenhouse gases?**
- **The cost of food waste in the UAE is approximately \$3.5 billion each year?**

If reading those statistics makes you feel like taking some action, you are not alone.

## Be Part of the Solution

At Sodexo, we acknowledge our responsibility to help turn these statistics around and we know that our clients want to join us in the effort to combat food waste. Since 2018 we have been rolling out a programme called **WasteWatch** which targets a 50% reduction in the total volume of food waste and a complete elimination of food waste going to landfill by 2025. An ambitious target for sure but with so many positives for the planet, society and even financially, the incentives are clear. The program will be rolled out to 41 sites in the Middle East during the 2nd half of 2021. With all our clients fully on board with these objectives, the benefits are felt by everyone.

Rachid Noujeim, CEO of Sodexo Middle East reinforced the commitment to reducing waste when he said recently:

**“Sustainability has always been at the core of Sodexo’s values. Being a company that offers ‘Quality of Life’ services, we believe that a healthy climate and environment are of the utmost importance to the quality of life and human prosperity over the long term.”**

And in a further declaration of Sodexo’s intentions in this regard, Sodexo’s global CEO Denis Machuel makes the company’s position on food waste crystal clear:

**“We need to accelerate the fight against food waste for the sake of humanity and in light of hunger worldwide. The rapid deployment of WasteWatch is our rallying cry across Sodexo to do our part while empowering our clients and the consumers we serve. We must track how much food is discarded at each and every one of our food service sites – and we are committed to make these figures public to bring a sense of urgency and motivate us to always do better,”**



## What Steps Are Sodexo Taking to Reduce Waste?

The first step is always to understand and analyse the issue. So we start by rigorously measuring the volumes of food that are wasted at each of our sites. This involves weighing everything that gets thrown away and categorising it to better understand what caused the waste. For example, was it left by the customer at the cafeteria or generated in the kitchen? was it from off-cuts during preparation or food that was left over after a hot service? Was it food that was over-ordered for a meeting or event or was it stock that was ordered but never used due to expiry? To illustrate the scale of the project, during the pilot phase which took place across 5 sites in the UAE, a total of over 11,000kg of food waste was recorded over a five month period.

Once the data has been collected, it is put into the AI driven system powered by our technology partner, Leanpath which logs all the recordings and provides a visual output of the results. This helps everyone to see immediately where the waste is coming from. It’s a very effective tool in highlighting where efforts need to be concentrated.

## Keeping Focus

Having set the benchmarks, we then move on to set some aggressive but realistic goals. We communicate these goals to the entire team, highlighting where the issues lie and, as a team, we identify practical steps to reduce the waste. We also work closely with the client in whose site we are working to see where we can collaborate and take steps together to achieve our combined goals. These steps can involve adjusting orders to suppliers, increasing or reducing the amount of food served during a meal service based on how much is left once it's over, streamlining refreshment orders for meeting rooms and optimising the kitchen routine so that less food is kept in reserve. We also empower the teams to make the right decisions that can lead to reductions in waste.

Nothing magical is happening, we haven't invented a new type of food (or a new type of customer), we have just analysed every process and every link in the chain with this goal in mind and enabled our teams to be the main architects of the solution. Because everyone can see the importance of it, we have achieved some fantastic results.



## A Path to the Future

After going through this process, any kitchen where this program has been implemented has seen an average drop in food waste of around 50% and also a reduction in overall food costs of around 3%. Sites that have implemented the programme also report an increase in staff engagement. This is one of those rare projects that delivers results and benefits all the stakeholders. A true win-win which we are proud to be delivering.

- 3.5 billion - Arabian Business - Combatting UAE's \$3.5bn annual food-waste challenge (2021) - <https://www.arabianbusiness.com/culture-society/464487-combatting-uaes-35bn-per-year-food-waste-challenge>
- 1/3 of food goes to waste - nFAO - Food Loss and Waste Database (2019) - <http://www.fao.org/food-loss-and-food-waste/flw-data>
- 815 mil go hungry every day - FOA - The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (2017) - <http://www.fao.org/state-of-food-security-nutrition/2017/en/>
- 3rd largest contributor to CO2 - FAO - Food Wastage Footprint - 2013 - <http://www.fao.org/3/i3347e/i3347e.pdf>
- 8% of greenhouse gasses - FAO - Food wastage footprint & Climate Change - 2011 - <http://www.fao.org/3/bb144e/bb144e.pdf>