

The **restaurant industry** plays a pivotal role in the global pursuit of sustainability, with a unique capacity to drive awareness and foster a sense of community engagement. Within this broader responsibility, restaurants hold a critical position in addressing the issues of food waste and packaging waste, particularly plastics. The industry can actively participate in reducing its environmental footprint by advocating for conscious consumption, responsible waste management practices, including waste segregation at the source, reuse and recycling practices to address packaging and food waste while emphasizing sustainable choices and promoting the circular use of materials.



nusaned is a Lebanese-based Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). Their aim is to empower and enable marginalized Lebanese communities by supporting sustainable development through a community-based approach. By offering access to food security, shelter, and continuous opportunities for creating productive economies, Nusaned works on building sustainable communities that are self-sustaining.



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UNEP's [Food Waste Index](#) highlights the challenge of measuring food waste in the food service sector, which is attributed to the sector's diversity, including restaurants, hotels and canteens, and to entities within this sector often resisting waste audits, further complicating efforts to gather the data. Also, the absence of robust national data on metrics (number of operating restaurants, the volume of meals consumed outside homes), increases the challenge of realizing a national food waste estimate for the sector.

NUDAWWER GREEN AND CIRCULAR RESTAURANTS

Within the scope of the project, **Green and Circular Restaurants** refers to eateries committed to environmental responsibility and the principles of a circular economy, which includes efficient resource use, waste segregation, minimization, and recycling or repurposing materials.

The terms **Plastic Circle** and **Food Circle** refer to creating a closed loop system for the plastic waste and food waste generated in the area, where socio-economic returns are ensured by rewarding contributors with points redeemable for vouchers for local vendors to reinvest proceeds into the local economy.



UNEP collaborated with the Lebanese NGO "Nusaned" to implement the pilot project Nudawwer in Beirut. Nudawwer (arabic word) refers to a circular or continuous movement in Arabic and the root of the word may also be associated with recycling. Throughout the project duration (July 2022 – December 2023), the emphasis is on drawing lessons learned from the testing phase to instil circularity, particularly the concepts of prevention and reduction, rather than just promote recycling practices within the community.



MAR MIKHAEL - GEMMAYZE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The project is implemented in the mainly residential and commercial neighbourhood of Mar Mikhael - Gemmayze. Mar Mikhael-Gemmayze are located at the eastern boundary of Beirut in the Medawar district which has a total population of 8,112.

ENGAGING RESTAURANTS IN SCP & CE PRACTICES

The project engaged 10 restaurants to address packaging and food waste throughout the testing phase, they were encouraged to adopt sustainable practices, taking part in the Plastics Circle and Food Circle strategies to encourage active participation and positive change in the restaurant industry to reduce environmental impact and give back socio-economic returns.

During the initial phases of the project, situational assessments were conducted on the participating entities to map out current practices. After the baseline assessment in August 2022, restaurants further underwent evaluations through surveying to monitor their practices including responsible procurement procedures, water efficiency, and energy efficiency.

During one-to-one visits, restaurants received valuable guidance and were provided with additional resources to encourage the adoption of environmentally friendly practices.

Engaged restaurants

The participating restaurants varied from dine-in only to take-out only entities serving various cuisines. This diversity emphasised the applicability and pertinence of sustainable practices in the food service sector, regardless of the dining format. The pilot project welcomed the inclusion of both traditional and contemporary culinary experiences, underscoring the importance of embracing sustainable principles throughout the entire restaurant industry.

Actions and commitments presented to the engaged stakeholders to support their switch to more circular practices on plastic and food waste are:



- Preventing and reducing food waste
- Sorting waste at the source (packaging waste and food waste)
- Meal tracking to monitor waste generation per meal
- Waste composition analysis to gain insights into discarded materials
- Composting: turning food waste into nutrient-rich compost
- Minimizing packaging waste
- Tracking energy and water consumption
- Repairing/repurposing items
- Spreading awareness on environmental issues

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United Nations Environment Programme

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The SwitchMed programme is funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by UNEP. It aims at achieving a Circular Economy in the southern Mediterranean by changing the way goods and services are produced and consumed. To achieve this, the SwitchMed provides tools and services directly to the private sector, supports an enabling policy environment, and facilitates exchange of information among partners and key stakeholders. www.switchmed.eu