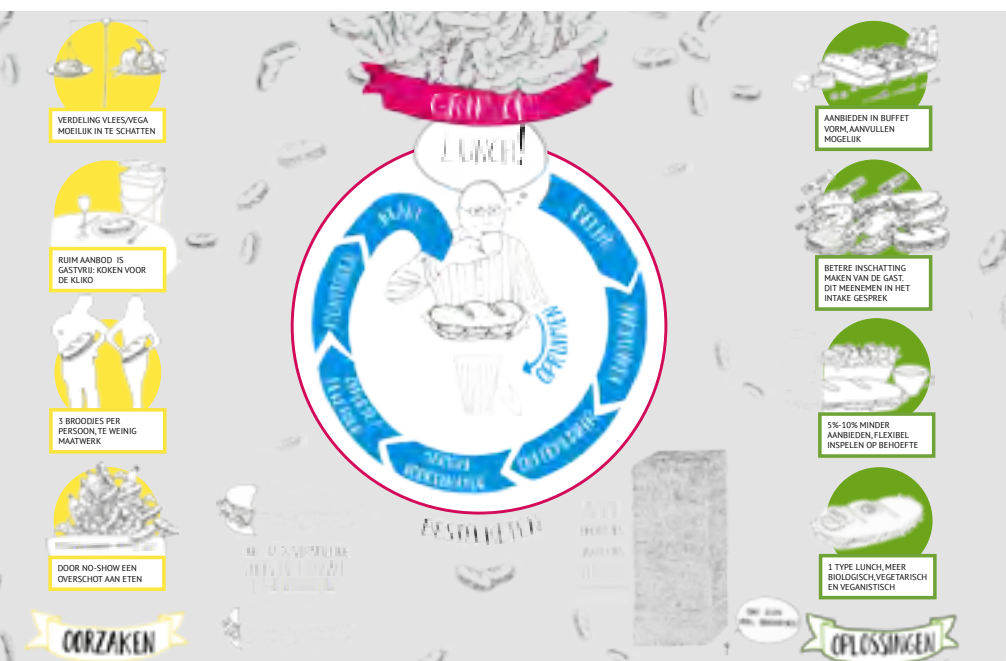


## IN BRIEF

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# Reduction of food waste in Rijkswaterstaat meeting lunches



*The waste of sandwiches fell from 17% to 7%.*

Almost one in five sandwiches served during meeting lunches and gatherings in the Westraven building ends up in the waste bin. 'Does it have to be that way?' Rijkswaterstaat wondered.

## Project description

The state wants to reduce food waste. Rijkswaterstaat (the Department of Waterways and Public Works) is doing its part with its meeting lunch project. The Bureau Wastewatchers and the caterer were asked to measure the quantity of food and drinks wasted at the various lunches and gatherings in the Westraven building in Utrecht. Measures were then investigated and implemented, such as offering food differently. This significantly reduced waste.

## Approach

In the period from September to November 2016, 200 lunches and socials with about 7,000 participants were monitored. The causes of waste and the possibilities to prevent this waste were then examined. This was done together with the policy-makers, the clients, the event organisers, the people who process the order and the people who prepare the lunches. It was found that improvements could be made everywhere in the supply chain. The effect of the measures to counteract waste was then measured in December 2016.



## FACTS & FIGURES

- > Tender volume: in the whole national government, about €7 million is spent on meeting lunches per year (source: Rebel report).
- > 200 lunches and socials with about 7000 participants were monitored.
- > The amount of waste was 7%, which comes to €1.11 per person.
- > Of the sandwiches, 17% were thrown away. Measures were implemented to reduce this to 7%.

## Results

The study by Bureau Wastewatchers primarily looked at the facts and figures of the waste. In the 200 lunches, there was 7% waste, which comes to €1.11 per person. Of the sandwiches, as much as 17% were thrown away. Almost one in five sandwiches therefore disappeared into the waste bin. This is a waste of money, resources and energy, but also of the attention with which this food was produced and prepared.

*Hospitality is great, but it shouldn't lead to throwing away food.'*

Rob Heijink,  
Rijkswaterstaat, catering category manager

A change to the food offered at the lunch invites people to consume differently. For example, measurements showed that by serving 20% fewer currant buns, the sandwiches wasted fell from 17% to 7%. Other promising measures include better cooperation in the supply chain, communicating about food waste, and serving in buffet form.

Partners: Wastewatchers | AAFM | Albron

## Lessons learned

- **Collaborating.** Make sure people from the catering supply chain know each other and share the available information. This information can be used in future orders.
- **Process.** The complexity of the process, with different contact people and databases, makes it difficult to get access to all the data. Keep monitoring and learn from experiences.
- **Ordering.** Create flexibility in the ordering process to make last-minute changes possible.
- **Flexible use of staff.** Deploy catering employees flexibly. You can offer less food and drink and then serve more if necessary.
- **Quality and composition of lunch.** This has an influence on the quantity of food and drink that is consumed. For example, is enough vegetarian/vegan food offered?
- **Communicate.** Sometimes participants in a meeting lunch do not know that a lunch is being served.
- **Responsibility.** The caterer is responsible for providing enough (or too much?) food and drink. But who is actually responsible for the waste?

- **Enough is enough.** Clients and caterers are often worried about shortages. But offering enough is also good hospitality.
- **When a lunch?** Only offer a lunch as a part of the programme.

## About REBus and the Green Deal Circular Procurement

The Green Deal Circular Procurement (GDPCP) is an initiative of CSR Netherlands, NEVI, the Government of the Netherlands, Duurzame Leverancier (Sustainable Supplier), PIANOo, Kirkman Company and Circle Economy. Several pilot projects that have come out of the GDPCP are financed in part by the European project REBus, which is being implemented in the Netherlands by Rijkswaterstaat (Department of Waterways and Public Works). Together, they are working to support entrepreneurs and governments with their circular procurement ambitions.

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