

The project UMBESA is supported within the Initiative for European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). ETC provides a framework for implementing joint actions among national, regional and local actors from the European Union. The project contributes to an increased share of regional, organic and seasonal food in large-scale kitchens and supports the exchange of information among kitchens, suppliers/producers, stakeholders and organisations of organic agriculture in Austria and the Czech Republic. Another goal is to initiate the building of networks among the different stakeholders.



Project UMBESA

Sustainable Menu – Implementation of Sustainability in Large-scale Kitchens by Using Regional, Seasonal and Organic Ingredients and Fresh Cooking

Relevance of the sustainable menu for large-scale kitchens

1.5 million persons in Austria and the Czech Republic are daily customers of large-scale kitchens. By implementing a sustainable menu design, i.e. by using local, seasonal and organic food and by preparing the meals freshly, the CO₂ emissions of canteen kitchens can be reduced. Studies have shown that an increase of up to 37% organic share is achievable without additional expenditures. Along with environmental and nutritional aspects, the economic value plays also an important role. Large-scale kitchens tend to employ convenience products or reduce staff members in order to achieve financial efficiency, but this approach is not necessarily bound to produce real savings compared to fresh cuisine.

Fresh Cuisine

A growing tendency towards using convenience-products can be observed in large-scale kitchens—mostly for economic reasons, e.g. less personnel costs. Convenience products are, however, generally more expensive than fresh food. An analysis of operating, personnel and purchase costs shows that, with a share of 60%, the purchasing costs (i.e. for food ingredients) have the strongest impact on the total costs. Personnel and operating costs are secondary for the price formation.



Illustration: work in a large-scale kitchen

Target Group

The target group are primarily large-scale kitchens in Austria and the Czech Republic, as well as:

- Producers
- Retailers/suppliers
- Operators of large-scale kitchens
- Executive chefs
- Purchase managers
- Clients of large-scale kitchens
- Dietitians/nutritionists.

Implementation

- By analysing the menus and the resource use
- By researching flagship projects
- By actively participating in regional stakeholder networks
- By performing consumer surveys focused on food quality
- By optimising the cooking method for selected dishes
- By conducting information and sensibilisation campaigns aimed at concerned stakeholders
- By optimising the menus
- By extensive awareness-raising



Illustration: organic vegetable patties

Benefit

The effect of the UMBESA project is the transformation of the menu in large-scale kitchens towards increased sustainability. This is achieved by the correct choice of ingredients, by optimising dishes and by creating new recipes.

The benefits for the kitchen:

- Energy and cost savings by menu optimisation
- Process optimisation according to nutritional criteria as well as to those for organic, regional, seasonal and fresh ingredients
- Sensitisation for a deliberate variation of the foods
- Healthy and sustainable nutrition for the consumers
- An attractive menu

Active support of the large-scale kitchens establishing a sustainable menu is guaranteed through an intensified use of organic, regional, seasonal, freshly prepared food and the optimisation of portion size (e.g. with meat products) as well as the substitution of convenience products with fresh ones.

Another goal is the establishment of different networks to implement sustainable menus in large-scale kitchens. Along with the kitchens, a producer/supplier network is initiated. Shared events allow for networking and information exchange among large-scale kitchens, suppliers, stakeholders and organisations.

Additionally, a training tool is developed for ongoing provision of knowledge of sustainable menus during the education and training of executive chefs/chefs/executives.

Results

The UMBESA project establishes a network of large-scale kitchens, stakeholders and participating organisations and enables a broad and varied exchange of information and knowledge. In particular

- Implementation of a sustainable menu in participating kitchens
- Information and sensitisation during workshops with executive chefs, chefs and kitchen staff.
- Publication of a pool of recipes, which include the successfully implemented sustainable dishes
- Implementation of the project in the education of prospective executives in gastronomy, tourism and public kitchens in form of internal trainings

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