

CASE STUDY

This case study outlines how TRiFOCAL recruited Vienna as a replication city through effective project networking.

About BOKU

The Institute of Waste Management of the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna (BOKU) is the leader of STREWOFA (Strategies to Reduce Food Waste in Central Europe) project specialising in research in waste management that aims to reduce and manage food waste in Central Europe with 6 participating countries. The project includes actions on waste prevention in schools.

Background

The TRiFOCAL project undertook networking activity with other London, UK and EU projects in order to add value to the project, for example in terms of increasing knowledge, networks or impact.

The LIFE communication guidelines¹ consider project networking to include activities such as meetings, events and information exchange with relevant projects, regardless of whether they have been funded by LIFE or other funding streams.

Objectives

The project team undertook desk research to identify suitable events for networking and connected these with other objectives in the project; in this case achieving the headline target to involve at least 10 European replication cities in the TRiFOCAL replication programme.

By early 2018, 8 European cities had already signed up to the replication programme. The project team set an interim target to recruit the remaining 2 cities by the end of 2018 by harnessing the power of networking activities.

Networking and dissemination activity

In recruiting Vienna (BOKU) as a replication city, TRiFOCAL employed several networking approaches.

Drawing on existing networks

WRAP is the lead partner for TRiFOCAL, so the team capitalised on strong internal connections with WRAP's other EU-funded projects, particularly the Horizon 2020 project REFRESH which also operated in the food sector and had strong European networks. REFRESH promoted the opportunity for new replication cities to join TRiFOCAL via social media and direct email communications (Figure 1). BOKU had previously worked with WRAP in other EU projects (REFRESH and Fusions) and responded with interest.



Figure 1 – Tweet by REFRESH on TRiFOCAL's call for replication cities

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/section/life/life-communication#inline-nav-3>



Figure 2 – LIFE Platform meeting attendees



Figure 3 – TRiFOCAL poster-board

LIFE Platform meeting

The LIFE food platform event in October 2018 was organised in Budapest by the LIFE team for stakeholders and projects working in the food sector and brought together participants from European institutions, local authorities, universities, civil society and the private sector. This event was key for LIFE projects to network with others and learn from their challenges and successes. The meeting reached a very high level with a video introduction from Commissioner Karmenu Vella (Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries) and Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis (Health & Food Safety) in attendance.

TRiFOCAL had a strong presence during the event: Project Manager Katharine Fox from WRAP presented in the plenary session and attended the catering workshop; Ali Moore from LWARB co-hosted the households workshop; a poster-board (Figure 3) was displayed which attracted attention during the breaks and stimulated new conversations.

BOKU plays a prominent role in European food waste activities, and as such attended the LIFE food platform event and Gudrun Obersteiner from BOKU University hosted the catering workshop which facilitated a direct exchange with TRiFOCAL on the challenges and solutions encountered in this sector.

STREFOWA Conference - BOKU event

Following the LIFE platform meeting, BOKU invited TRiFOCAL to participate in the STREFOWA food waste conference in Spring 2019 and share project learnings/outputs with a targeted audience. The conference programme included a series of workshops, the catering workshop was chaired by Gudrun Obersteiner from BOKU University and part of the Interreg project STREFOWA. TRiFOCAL presented learnings and outputs from catering sessions during this session and facilitated the workshop on campaigns and policy.

Direct communication

TRiFOCAL proposed that BOKU join the project as an EU replication city, to enhance some of their existing food waste activities. To provide more information on the project and tailor the approach to BOKU and the Vienna context, a series of conference calls and email communications followed and BOKU formally accepted to participate in the project in December 2018.

Value of networking & partnership for BOKU

Vienna has a long tradition in food waste separation and has been following food waste prevention and reduction in waste management strategies for approx. 10 years. Materials developed by TRiFOCAL supported both the promotion of food waste prevention ('freeze your bread') and recycling ('use potato peelings for compost', 'recycle banana skins to create energy') in Vienna.

As a TRiFOCAL replication city, the focus in Vienna was to act as multiplier to spread the concepts of Small Change Big Difference and to share knowledge from the project on common aims to prevent and reduce food waste.

BOKU were keen to find a way to combine the TRiFOCAL materials with those from other projects to then disseminate across their network, including schools and waste management associations, both being multipliers to reaching householders.

Capacity Building Webinar - Agenda

Introductions

Behaviour change theories

How to deliver a food waste workshop/training

- Structure of the sessions
- Materials
- Logistics
- Challenges & learnings

Engaging diverse communities in food waste sessions

- Connecting with communities
- Recruitment
- Challenges & learnings

Advice and guidance on campaign evaluation

- Evaluation approach for TRiFOCAL in London
- Discussion on Vienna delivery plans
- Initial recommendations for evaluation (based on discussion)

Connecting with policy and policy makers

The team in Vienna also benefited from the capacity building webinar delivered by the TRiFOCAL team in London on 11 April 2019. The training focussed on 3 core elements of the TRiFOCAL delivery: behaviour change theories, community engagement and campaign evaluation (see full agenda in Figure 4.) Feedback from the webinar was positive, though the resources for acting were limited. BOKU considered the webinar as a starting point for further cooperation or possible projects with the TRiFOCAL partners and local waste management companies.

Value of networking & partnership for TRiFOCAL

The networking activities undertaken by the TRiFOCAL team resulted in a new replication city joining the project. This has directly contributed to one of the project's headline targets while also providing substantive evidence of successful networking activity.

BOKU has added value by introducing TRiFOCAL to its European networks, particularly in the food service sector (catering). By publishing the abstracts provided by the projects that participated in the STREFOWA food conference in 2019 – including TRiFOCAL – BOKU and the STREFOWA project continue to share and disseminate the TRiFOCAL messages to a wider European audience².

In addition, the campaign materials have been localised for another European city and language, offering potential to take the project's messages to new audiences in Europe. The flyers were provided to stakeholders in German and adapted to the Vienna context (Figure 4). The brand 'Small Change Big Difference' was retained in English. The materials used during the Vienna campaign activity including the localised campaign leaflet is available on the [TRiFOCAL resource bank](http://resources.trifocal.eu.com/).



Figure 4 – German version of the Small Change Big Difference flyers used by BOKU in Vienna

Outcomes/Learnings

By harnessing the obligatory networking component of the LIFE funding, TRiFOCAL successfully recruited 3 additional replication cities to join the project, including Vienna. The project team recognises the importance of first establishing an objective for the networking activity as this improves the effectiveness of participating in conferences, talks and meetings. Successful networking also encourages relationship building and further dissemination of the project messages/resources.

² http://www.reducefoodwaste.eu/uploads/5/8/6/4/58648241/abstracts_strefowa_conference_vienna_april_2019.pdf