

## MICE Capabilities Introduces New Pledge towards Food Waste Prevention

**THAILAND (01 November 2017)** - A whopping US\$165 million worth of food is estimated to be thrown out in America every year, according to the *Food Recovery Programmes – Tips on Getting Started* report presented at IMEX America 2017 by Mariela Mcilwraith, Director of Sustainability for the Events Industry Council, and Courtney Lohmann, Director of Culture for Koncept Events.

Both Mcilwraith and Lohmann encouraged the audience to consider food waste prevention measures during the planning stages of their events instead of figuring out what to do with leftover food post-event. They said to involve venue and catering partners when planning and that planners should be flexible with the menus and focus on the quality instead of quantity of the menu.

In 2011, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations collaborated with Messe Dusseldorf to lead the SAVE FOOD programme, a global initiative on food loss and waste reduction. The programme is supported by four key pillars:

- Raising awareness on the impact of, and solutions for food loss and waste.
- Collaboration and coordination of world-wide initiatives on food loss and waste reduction.
- Policy, strategy and programme development for food loss and waste reduction.
- Support for investment programmes and projects implemented by private and public sectors.

### THAILAND MEASURES UP

The MICE Capabilities Development Department (MICE Capabilities) of the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) shares the same sentiments and aligns its commitment to responding to this global concern. Built on the success of its Farm-to-Function programme, MICE Capabilities has launched a sequel strategy to educate and encourage the Thai business events industry to embrace the need of preventing food wastage before produce are cooked.

Supported by six organisations including Business France and LightBlue Environmental Consulting, MICE Capabilities introduced the first food waste prevention certification that has a nine-point pledge:

1. The Cut on Food Waste policy drafted, signed, distributed
2. Ongoing food waste monitoring system
3. KPIs to measure the financial impact of the programme
4. Best practices at critical food waste generation points
5. Food Lovers' Committee set-up (cross departmental)
6. Regular training for employees on how to cut food waste
7. Client engagement on reducing plate waste
8. Canteen awareness-raising campaigns run regularly
9. Redistribution and/or transformation of food leftovers

### THE SAMPRAN RIVERSIDE CASE STUDY

The Sampran Riverside is the first hotel to successfully comply with the pledge on Food Waste standard. The results spoke for itself. Since committing to preventing food waste, Sampran Riverside salvaged 6,405 kilograms of food and achieved 19,215 kilograms of carbon offset. The company also benefited financially from a 12.5 percent reduction in dollar per cover.

A help in measuring this success is a tool designed by LightBlue Environmental Consulting called the Food Efficiency Indicator (FEI). It calculates the total amount of food waste in kilograms over the total food bought in kilograms. For example, the result may show that out of 100 kilograms of food bought by a hotel, 38 kilograms of it ended up in the bin. The FEI measure only looks at the amount of produce that can be consumed, so things like inedible vegetable trimmings are not counted towards the amount of food waste generated. Sampran Riverside, on average, scored an impressive 90.7 percent using the FEI tool over the duration of this project.

## UNDERSTANDING FOOD WASTE PREVENTION

According to LightBlue, the financial impact of food waste is very often misunderstood, mainly because of a lack of clear first-hand data (how many kilograms of food is wasted per day), and the fact that associated costs are almost systematically overlooked.

To calculate the true cost of food wastage, you need to take the purchasing price of each item and add costs related to energy, water and labour. According to the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), a leading UK think tank on food waste, the purchasing price represents only 62 percent of the true cost.

So when you know that a hotel selling 15,000 meals a month can generate more than 70 tonnes of food waste per year, and that the average true cost of food waste per kilogram is US\$5, it becomes easier to understand the scale of savings to be made from reducing food waste.

Participants can achieve strong results through implementing controls at the crucial food waste generation points. They are:

- At the point of receiving produce
- At the point of distribution
- At the point of storage
- At the point of preparation
- At the point of service
- At the point of disposal

Ms Orachorn Wongpan-Ngam, the newly appointed Acting Director of MICE Capabilities Development Department at TCEB, said, "Thailand has a rich legacy in agriculture excellence and our cuisine is second to none. To build a sustainable future for our industry and our people, we must value food source and prevent food from going to waste. MICE Capabilities is committed to working with the Thai business events industry to ensure that those who participate in this pledge will benefit from it."

## ENDS

### About MICE Capabilities Development Department

The MICE Capabilities Development department is set up to significantly strengthen Thailand's MICE industry through content and knowledge management, networking and astute market intelligence. The overall goal is to generate well-trained professionals who are capable of delivering international standards of service while exuding traditional Thai warmth and friendliness. This innovative programme will inspire a new generation of students to pursue a rewarding career in Thailand's rapidly expanding MICE industry, while encouraging industry professionals to enhance their management skills.

### About TCEB

Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) - the government leading edge agency - has been the key to success for a wide range of global & regional business events since 2004. With our key strategic model, Growth Driver, TCEB works as your strategic business partner, delivers creative ideas, and provides solutions from our capable resources for every scale and various customised business events.

TCEB has formed numerous collaborations and networks linked to open up grand new chapters of business opportunities, and to strategically enhance every business success with special care that will spur lasting advancement and achievements. Our goal is to equipping business events industry at national, regional, and global stage for continuous development, long-term growth and sustainable success.