


Chapter 6

Building Environmentally Sustainable Restaurants in France Through CSR, GSCM, and Circular Economy

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ABSTRACT

The French restaurant industry faces growing environmental challenges despite progressive regulations such as the Anti-Waste Law (AGEC) and the Grenelle II Act. This study explores how sustainability practices and regulatory frameworks influence business strategies in French restaurants. Using a multi-method approach, including a systematic literature review, policy analysis, and case studies of fine dining, chain, and independent restaurants, the study examines how Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM), and Circular Economy (CE) drive sustainability adoption. Findings reveal that large chains implement structured programs, while SMEs struggle due to financial and regulatory barriers. However, consumer demand and CSR-driven initiatives are key enablers of sustainability improvements. To build a more resilient and sustainable restaurant sector, the study advocates for targeted policy adjustments, SME-specific financial incentives, and industry-wide collaboration to accelerate sustainability adoption across the sector.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The restaurant industry is a vital component of both the global and national economies, providing essential food services and generating employment across a wide spectrum of establishments, from small family-owned restaurants to large corporate chains. However, this sector also exerts a significant environmental footprint, contributing to food waste, plastic pollution, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and excessive consumption of water and energy resources (Kasim & Ismail, 2012). While sectors such as manufacturing and transportation have made notable strides toward sustainability, restaurants have often been overlooked in both academic research and policy discussions (Visser, 2023). In recent years, however, political, economic, and consumer-driven pressures have combined to push sustainability to the forefront of the restaurant industry's strategic agenda.

Among the most pressing sustainability challenges faced by restaurants is food waste. Globally, approximately 1.3 billion tonnes of food are wasted annually, accounting for between 30% and 50% of total food production (Morone et al., 2019). Within Europe, the food system generates 931 million metric tonnes of waste per year, making it the third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases if treated as a single country (*News | European Parliament, 2024*). Restaurants contribute disproportionately to this waste due to overproduction, inefficient inventory management, and oversized portions (Filimonau & De Coteau, 2019). Alongside food waste, restaurants are also major consumers of single-use plastics, particularly in takeaway and delivery services, contributing to severe environmental degradation. Furthermore, restaurant operations are highly energy- and water-intensive, with refrigeration, heating, cooking, and dishwashing processes consuming substantial resources (Kim & Hall, 2020). These combined environmental pressures make restaurants a critical focal point for sustainability interventions, particularly in France, where environmental concerns feature prominently in national policymaking.

France has emerged as a global leader in sustainability policy, with regulations targeting the environmental footprint of multiple sectors, including hospitality. The Anti-Waste Law for a Circular Economy (AGEC) and the Grenelle II Act are two landmark policies requiring restaurants to reduce food waste, phase out single-use plastics, and adopt sustainable sourcing practices (Pollutec, 2023). The effectiveness of these measures is evident, with *Eurostat* (2024), reporting a 10% reduction in food waste between 2016 and 2020. However, these regulations present uneven challenges across different restaurant industry segments. Larger chain restaurants often have greater financial resources, centralized procurement systems, and the managerial capacity to comply with sustainability regulations. By contrast, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which comprise a significant share of France's restaurant sector often struggle to implement sustainability practices due to financial constraints,

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