



Food Waste Charter 2023

The Food Waste Charter is a public expression of commitment to reduce food waste by businesses and organisations in Ireland. The Charter is a voluntary agreement to accelerate action to reach Ireland’s food waste reduction target waste in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.3. The Charter promotes a collective industry commitment to measure, reduce and report food waste along the food supply chain. This Charter builds on the principles of the Food Waste Charter developed in 2017.

Context

Urgent action is needed to reach Ireland’s food waste reduction target under the UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.3. According to national waste statistics, 770,300 tonnes of food waste were generated in Ireland in 2020. When food is wasted, all the resources used to produce that food have been wasted too.

We recognise that food waste is a significant contributor to climate change globally, generating 8% to 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions. We recognise that tackling food loss and food waste is one of the key steps we can take to achieve sustainability, reduce resource use, help combat climate change and support Ireland’s transition to a circular economy and bioeconomy.

We recognise that to meet national targets, actions need to be prioritised in line with the Food Use Hierarchy, where prevention of food waste is the most preferable option.

We are committed to the objectives of the Government’s National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap, Food Vision 2030 and the EPA-led National Food Waste Prevention Programme to meet national targets and associated milestones to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030 in line with SDG 12.3.

Every organisation, every business, every household and every individual has a role to play. Food waste prevention needs to be embedded in everyday behaviour across society and sectors. Through preventing food waste, becoming more efficient in using what we have, and rescuing surplus food that cannot be prevented, Ireland can take steps to meet the national goals and reduce the environmental impacts associated with food waste.

Measurement

To reduce food waste effectively, we need to improve monitoring, measurement and reporting of food waste across all sectors. Driving food waste reduction across the food value chain will require food sector businesses to commit to measuring and reporting of food waste in a clear and consistent manner. Improved monitoring of food waste levels will highlight the costs of mismanagement of food, and in turn, identify and prompt action by business operators to reduce food waste.

The provision of food waste data in a common format, using the EPA's national standard methodology, will be used to collectively track progress of the Charter and support Ireland's EU reporting requirements.

Target-based actions

By measuring where food is being wasted, food sector businesses should identify appropriate interventions with the greatest potential and implement target-based actions to reduce food waste in the business.

To meet national targets and associated milestones, food sector businesses that sign the Charter should set targets for food waste reduction within their business that meet or exceed SDG 12.3.

Reporting

Members of the Charter will report annually to the EPA on progress towards measurable outcomes and achievements, and these will be published in aggregated form to collectively track Ireland's progress towards national targets and associated milestones.

We recognise Ireland has many experiences and good practice examples to showcase. We need to build on these, scaling up the reach and measuring the impact and effectiveness of these actions. We need to work together to develop innovative food waste prevention solutions and implement technical and behavioural interventions to prevent food waste.

Supporting organisations

Organisations that do not produce, process, manufacture, distribute or retail food and drink may pledge to support the Charter as a supporting organisation. These organisations should champion this Charter through their food and drinks industry networks to prioritise the achievement of the national objectives to meet SDG 12.3 and integrate a consistent approach to food waste measurement using the EPA national standard methodology in resources and supports aimed at food sector businesses.

Review

The effectiveness of this voluntary approach to food waste measurement and reporting will be reviewed by the end of 2024 in line with the action under the National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap.

We endorse this Charter and confirm our commitment to providing leadership and support in this area.

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