Food Waste Measurement Protocol
Sectoral Focus - Prepared Food Producer

Developed to help Irish food and drink companies measure food waste consistently, the Food Waste Measurement Protocol supports businesses in identifying all food waste related flows and comparing their destinations against the food use and waste hierarchy. State agencies such as Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) have signed up to the Food Waste Charter and are promoting the Protocol within their sector.

Background

Around 50% of whitefish and 65% of salmon go to human consumption, mainly as fillets. The remaining portions are typically used for low value fish meal. Ireland generates approximately 10,000–12,000 tonnes of whitefish waste and 3,000 tonnes of salmon waste annually.

The Interreg funded Food Heroes project—led by Irish partners BIM and the Clean Technology Centre and completed in 2021—used a design thinking approach to develop new food products that make better use of currently wasted resources. With increasing pressure on global fish stocks and growing awareness of waste throughout the supply chain, the project sought to maximise use of the whole fish.

Actions taken

One action focused on extracting more meat from post filleted fish frames and using other under utilised parts of the filleting process. While frames are usually seen as waste, they can be processed through recovery machinery to produce mince. This mince, combined with off cuts that would otherwise go to fish meal or animal feed, can be frozen into blocks and turned into new products.

Solution

As part of this approach, BIM collaborated with national processors and international technology providers to extract mince from fish frames. This enabled the creation of various product formats, including fish burgers, fish cakes and fish fingers. Several Irish SMEs are now developing production lines using this resource, with an estimated 400 tonnes of fish potentially being utilised annually.

For more on BIM's circular seafood work, visit: https://bim.ie/seafood-processing/sustainability-and-certification/