



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Ireland's National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap 2026-2028

Draft for Public Consultation



Ireland's National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap 2026-2028 – DRAFT

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1. Introduction

Food waste is a global problem that has environmental, social and economic consequences. Growing, processing, transporting and storage of food all use significant amounts of resources. An estimated 8-10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions are associated with food that is not consumed. 19 percent of food that is made available to consumers at the retail, food service and household levels is wasted.¹ Tackling food loss and food waste is one of the key steps we can take to achieve sustainability, help combat climate change and support Ireland's transition to a circular economy and bioeconomy. Reducing food waste brings savings for consumers and businesses, and the recovery and redistribution of surplus food that would otherwise be wasted also has an important social dimension in terms of providing safe food for those in need. According to published data, 8.9% of the population in Ireland experienced food poverty in 2021.² Redistribution of surplus food can help to address food poverty. Tackling food waste also ties in with policies on the recovery of nutrients and secondary raw materials, the production of feed, food safety, biodiversity, bioeconomy, and renewable energy.

Food waste can occur at any point along the food supply chain, from primary production (such as damage to harvested crops), processing and manufacturing (for example, waste arising from quality control processes), retail and distribution (such as unsold stock), restaurants and food services (such as food uneaten by customers) and households (for example, where purchased food is not consumed on time). Food waste generation can arise due to a number of different reasons in each sector and different solutions may be needed depending on the sector.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Ireland generated 708,000 tonnes of food waste in 2024.³ Approximately 31% of the total comes from households, 26% comes from restaurants and food service, with the remainder coming from the processing and manufacturing sector (24%), retail and other distribution of food (12%) and primary production (8%).

¹ [Food Waste Index Report 2024 | UN Environment Programme](#)

² [Food poverty Government programmes, schemes and supports](#)

³ [Food Waste Statistics for Ireland | EPA](#)

Food Loss and Food Waste

The approach to what is considered to be food loss and food waste differs in the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 commitment and EU waste legislation.

Food Loss

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation* food loss is the decrease in the quantity or quality of food resulting from decisions and actions by food suppliers in the chain, excluding retailers, food service providers and consumers.

EU Guidance** indicates that the concept of food loss as presented above is not used in the EU legislation in the same meaning. All food discarded as waste is covered in the EU simply as food waste, while concept of food loss is used rather to describe loss of food in primary production (for example, pre harvest losses), which is excluded from the scope of the Waste Framework Directive.

Food Waste

According to the EU Waste Framework 'food waste' means all food as defined in Article 2 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council that has become waste.

Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2019/1597 states that the definition of food encompasses food as a whole, along the entire food supply chain from

production until consumption. Food also includes inedible parts, where those were not separated from the edible parts when the food was produced, such as bones attached to meat destined for human consumption. Hence, food waste can comprise items which include parts of food intended to be ingested and parts of food not intended to be ingested.

The Decision also states that food waste does not include losses at stages of the food supply chain where certain products have not yet become food as defined in Article 2 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002, such as edible plants which have not been harvested. In addition, it does not include by-products from the production of food that fulfil the criteria set out in Article 5(1) of Directive 2008/98/EC, since such by-products are not waste.

EU Guidance on reporting of data on food waste and food waste prevention states that food waste is any food that has become waste under these conditions:

1. *It has entered the food supply chain;*
2. *It then has been removed or discarded from the food supply chain or at the final consumption stage;*
3. *It is finally destined to be processed as waste.*

* <http://www.fao.org/platform-food-loss-waste/en/>

**<https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/b01d2930-990e-44fb-9121-a9a6b00a1283/library/a43d15bb-465f-495a-9ab3-e8f4ce12bdb3/details>

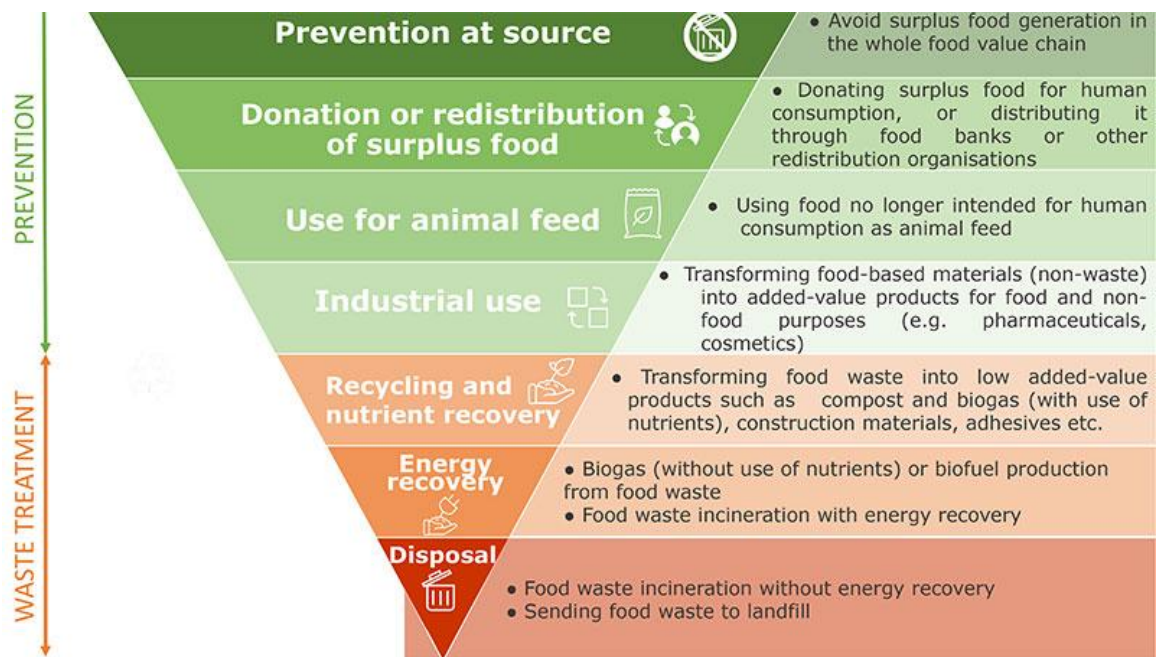


Figure 1: Food Use and Waste Hierarchy⁴

⁴ Food use and waste hierarchy | European Commission

The use of circular economy and bioeconomy approaches, and the Food Use and Waste hierarchy, to address food waste requires a strategic and collaborative approach to find solutions across the entire food system rather than continuing to operate within single, linear supply and consumption chains. In line with the Food Use and Waste hierarchy (see Figure 1), the top priority in terms of a National Food Waste Prevention Strategy for Ireland continues to be the prevention of food waste.

Ireland is committed to reducing food waste by 50% by 2030 – in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Ireland's first National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap 2023-2025 published in November 2022⁵, set out a number of priority actions to focus on food waste prevention across key sectors in the food supply chain. Since the publication of the first Roadmap, a revised Waste Framework Directive⁶ entered into force and includes binding food waste reduction targets to be achieved at national level by 2030. The development of this second National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap for the period 2026-2028 will continue to help steer our efforts to tackle food waste, in addition to meeting our EU legal obligations to reduce food waste by 2030, and our progress towards achieving SDG 12.3.

⁵ [National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap 2023-2025](#)

⁶ Directive (EU) 2025/1892

2. Reducing Food Waste - International, EU and National Commitments

In 2015, UN Member Countries adopted 'Transforming Our World' - the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Integral to the 2030 Agenda are the 17 SDGs. Goal 12 of the UN SDGs deals with responsible consumption and production and Goal 12.3 has set a target 'by 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses.'⁷ Ireland is committed to reducing food waste in line with SDG 12.3. Information on the reporting on progress in meeting SDGs is set out in Ireland's Second National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals 2022-2024.⁸ A third National Implementation Plan is currently in development at the time of writing (June 2026).

In terms of EU requirements, a targeted revision of the Waste Framework Directive entered into force on 16 October 2025, establishing the following legally binding food waste reduction targets to be achieved by Member States by the end of 2030:

- (a) reduction of the generation of food waste in processing and manufacturing by 10% in comparison to the amount of food waste generated as an annual average between 2021 and 2023;⁹
- (b) reduction of the generation of food waste per capita, jointly in retail and other distribution of food, in restaurants and food services and in households, by 30% in comparison to the amount of food waste generated as an annual average between 2021 and 2023.⁹

The revised Directive also lists specific measures to be taken by Member States to prevent the generation of food waste. These include, for example:

- Developing and supporting behavioural change interventions to reduce food waste and information campaigns to raise awareness of food waste prevention;
- Identifying and addressing inefficiencies in the functioning of the food supply chain and supporting cooperation amongst all actors;
- Encouraging food donation and other redistribution for human consumption;
- Supporting training and skills development as well as facilitating access to funding opportunities (particularly for SMEs and social economy entities);
- Encouraging and promoting innovation and technological solutions.

⁷ [THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development](#)

⁸ [National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals 2022-2024](#)

⁹ Please note there is an option to use an earlier reference year subject to conditions set out in the revised Directive

There is also a strengthened focus on surplus food donation in the revised Directive including for Member States to take measures to ensure that economic operators, identified as having a significant role in the prevention and generation of food waste, propose donation agreements to food banks and other food redistribution organisations.

The European Commission will, before the end of 2027, review the targets which may be modified/extended to other areas of the food supply chain, and may also set targets beyond 2030. By the end of 2027 the Commission will also:

- assess the extent and causes of food waste and losses in primary production and carry out an identification and an assessment of feasibility of appropriate levers to reduce such waste and losses;
- assess the possibility to introduce legally binding targets to be reached by 2035;
- and assess the impact of changes in production levels on the achievability of the food waste reduction target with respect to processing and manufacturing.

The revised Directive requires Member States to evaluate and adapt its food waste prevention programmes, with a view to attaining the targets set out in the Directive.

Member States are also required to designate the competent authorities responsible for the coordination of specified measures to prevent generation of food waste referred to in the Directive implemented in order to reach the targets.

Since the revised Directive came into force in October 2025, the EPA, the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment, and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine have been designated as Ireland's National Competent Authorities in accordance with the revised Directive.

Ireland is required to transpose the revised Directive into national law by June 2027.

Ireland's commitment to reduce food waste is also set out in national policy such as the Climate Action Plan¹⁰, Food Vision 2030¹¹ and the recently published Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy 2026-2028: *Accelerating Action*¹².

Our commitments and obligations, in particular the revised Waste Framework Directive, are important in shaping several of the key actions in this next iteration of Ireland's National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap.

¹⁰ [Climate Action Plan 2024](#)

¹¹ [Food Vision 2030](#)

¹² [Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy 2026-2028: Accelerating Action](#)

3. The Second Roadmap

The Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022 ('the Act') provides the statutory basis for the preparation of the national food waste prevention strategy (known as "the national food waste prevention roadmap"). The legislation requires the preparation of the national food waste prevention roadmap at least once every three years. The Act states that in preparing the national food waste prevention strategy, the Minister shall take into account, inter alia, the Circular Economy Strategy which is to be prepared and made in accordance with section 7 of the Act.

Following the publication in February 2026 of the Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy 2026-2028 *Accelerating Action*, which is the first Circular Economy Strategy to be prepared in accordance with section 7 of the Act, section 15 of the Act will be commenced and this iteration of the National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap is the first to be prepared and to be published on a statutory basis.

The first National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap set out the context on food waste, Ireland's overall commitment to reduce food waste, and provided the pathway to help achieve Ireland's goal of reducing food waste by 50% by 2030. This second iteration of the Roadmap builds on the work that has been done to date, and its preparation is being informed by actions achieved over the period of the last Roadmap, the new binding food waste reduction targets to be reached by 2030 and associated requirements as set out in the revised Waste Framework Directive.

This Roadmap sets out:

- An overview of the progress of the first Roadmap delivery and progress in tackling food waste;
- A re-emphasis of our commitment to work together, to enhance food waste measurement, and identify and implement key priority actions along the food supply chain to help deliver on Ireland's commitments on food loss and food waste prevention;
- How we will ensure a continued robust national system is in place for food waste measurement and reporting in order to meet Ireland's reporting obligations and to monitor Ireland's progress in meeting its UN and EU commitments over the next number of years;
- How Ireland will establish its national reference year on food waste that links to the legally binding food waste reduction targets under the Waste Framework Directive;
- A continued commitment to Ireland's Food Waste Charter;

- How we will transpose and implement the revised Waste Framework Directive, including specified measures to be taken to prevent food waste;
- A strengthened focus on food donation and redistribution;
- A continued focus on enhanced food waste segregation across businesses and households;
- A continuation of support for research and innovation, and green public procurement in relation to food waste prevention;
- A commitment to continue to deliver sustained communications and awareness on food waste prevention and segregation;
- A monitoring and evaluation framework to check progress of key activities and Roadmap delivery.

All stages along the supply chain are included in Ireland's National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap, as follows:

- Primary Production;
- Processing and Manufacturing;
- Retail and other distribution of food;
- Restaurants and food services;
- Households

As set out previously the binding food waste reduction targets to be achieved, along with other measures listed in the revised Waste Framework Directive, are instrumental in informing the actions set out in this iteration of the Roadmap. In terms of the UN SDG 12.3, we will continue to actively work towards this target which is further emphasised in the Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy 2026-2028: *Accelerating Action*.¹³

We will also continue to commit resources nationally to the prevention of food waste and will strive to collaborate across Government departments to identify appropriate funding sources to fund actions to prevent food waste. The Circular Economy Fund that was established under the Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022 will continue to be considered as a resource for further funding of food waste prevention projects and initiatives.

The Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (DCEE), continues to be the lead Government Department in developing Ireland's National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap, and in the coordination and review of its implementation.

¹³ [Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy 2026-2028: Accelerating Action](#)

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) is the lead Government Department for UN SDG12.3. Both Departments will continue to work closely together to pursue ambitious food loss and food waste reductions that contribute effectively to the implementation of the Roadmap.

The EPA will play a key operational role in driving implementation of key actions in the Roadmap, particularly in the context of their continued responsibility in delivering Ireland's National Food Waste Prevention Programme which includes the Stop Food Waste and Food Waste Charter programmes, annual reporting on Ireland's national food waste statistics and Regulation 27 By-product as a mechanism for food waste prevention in the bioeconomy.

The recent mid term review¹⁴ of the EPA's Circular Economy Programme (CEP) recommends that food waste prevention remain a priority for the CEP recognising the new EU food waste reduction targets to be met, the EPA's recent designation as a competent authority for coordination of implementation measures (along with DAFM and DCEE). Further, the recommendation outlines that the focus of the EPA's work should be on waste prevention in sectors where there are mandatory targets (manufacturing and processing, retail, restaurants and food services, households) and targeting sectors with high volumes of food waste. This Roadmap commits to the strengthening of the National Food Waste Prevention Programme led by the EPA (as part of the National Circular Economy Programme) in terms of scaling up its reach, measuring the impact and effectiveness of the programme and ensuring it continues to play a central role in meeting food waste prevention targets. The evaluation of the EPA's food waste prevention programme by 17th October 2027, in accordance with the revised Waste Framework Directive, should identify further actions and the resources that are needed to implement a strengthened programme that is focused on sectors where there are mandatory targets.

The coordinating Competent Authorities (DCEE, DAFM and the EPA) will engage with other key Government Departments and State Agencies, and other actors operating and contributing to the functioning of the food supply chain, to identify opportunities and supports within those organisations that can facilitate implementation of priority actions within the National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap, the EPA's National Food Waste Prevention Programme, and fulfilment of Ireland's obligations as set out in the revised Waste Framework Directive.

The following Table 1 sets out the priority action areas of the Roadmap that the coordinating competent authorities will play a key role in.

¹⁴ Mid-term Evaluation of the Environmental Protection Agency's Circular Economy Programme 2021-2027

Table 1: Coordinating Competent Authorities and Priority Action Areas

Roadmap Priority Action Area	Coordinating Competent Authorities
Regulatory	DCEE
National Food Waste Prevention Programmes	EPA, DCEE, DAFM
Food Waste Measurement and Reporting	EPA, DCEE
Food Waste Charter	EPA, DCEE, DAFM
Supporting the Bioeconomy	DCEE, DAFM, EPA
Food Donation – Redistribution	DCEE, DAFM
Business funding and training supports and resources	DCEE, DAFM, EPA
Food Waste Segregation	DCEE
Communications, Education and Awareness	DCEE, DAFM, EPA
Research and Innovation	EPA, DAFM, DCEE
Green Public Procurement	DCEE, EPA
Monitoring, Evaluation, Review and Knowledge Sharing	DCEE, DAFM, EPA

Appendix 1 of this Roadmap sets out the priority actions to be undertaken during this Roadmap period.

Appendix 2 sets out key recommendations resulting from a Food Circle project that focuses on food donation and redistribution. Appendix 3 sets out supporting policy and legislative context and Appendix 4 provides further information on key sectors along the food supply chain.

4. Where are we now?

The Waste Management Act requires the EPA to establish waste prevention programmes and adopt specific food waste prevention programmes within their waste prevention programmes. The EPA has led food waste prevention initiatives since 2010, and in that time the EPA has worked in partnership with many stakeholders across the food supply chain. The EPA's Circular Economy Programme 2021-2027 incorporates the National Waste Prevention Programme and is the driving force for Ireland's move to a circular economy by businesses, householders and the public sector.¹⁵

The first National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap 2023-2025, approved by Government and published in November 2022, has delivered a number of key actions that are steering efforts to reduce food waste. These include, for example:

- Engagement at EU level on new binding food waste reduction targets;
- Annual publication of national food waste statistics;
- The launch of a revised Food Waste Charter and the publication of resources to support businesses to measure and reduce food waste;
- New legislation on commercial and household bio-waste collection;
- Food waste awareness activities, for example an annual National Stop Food Waste Day and National Food Waste Recycling Week;
- Food donation and redistribution activities;
- Research and Innovation funding (e.g. Growers Project);
- New Green Public Procurement Policy which includes a focus on food waste prevention;
- Annual Forum on Food Waste;
- Establishment of a Food Waste Prevention Task Force and Food Waste Charter Action Group.

DCEE is also funding the Food Circle Project, a two-year grant agreement that was established with FoodCloud in August 2024. Supported by the Circular Economy Fund, the main purpose of the project is to promote, and identify further actions to support surplus food

¹⁵ [The Circular Economy Programme 2021-2027](#)

donation and redistribution, therefore reducing food waste. This includes examining international best practices around food donation and redistribution and engaging with Irish food business stakeholders to understand how differing scenarios might work in an Irish context.

The National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap Annual Review Reports are available on DCEE's website.¹⁶

The most recent EPA published estimates indicate that Ireland generated 708,000 tonnes of food waste in 2024.¹⁷ As shown in Figure 2, approximately 31% of the total comes from households, 26% comes from restaurants and food service, with the remainder coming from the processing and manufacturing sector (24%), retail and other distribution of food (12%) and primary production (8%).

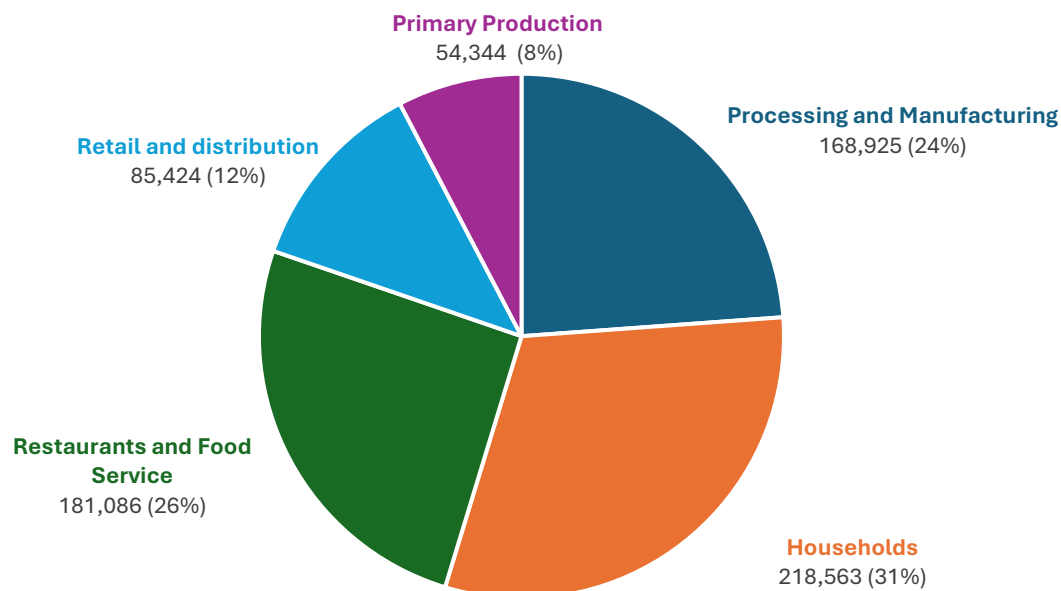


Figure 2: Estimated tonnage of food waste produced in Ireland in 2024

¹⁶ [National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap 2023-2025](#)

¹⁷ [Food Waste Statistics for Ireland | EPA](#)

5. Working Together with a Common Goal

Every organisation, every business, every household and every individual has a role to play in efforts to reduce food waste. A concerted approach across all stakeholders - Government Departments, organisations across the public sector, businesses, industry and representative bodies, academia and the research community, community organisations, social enterprises, food rescue organisations, households and individuals – will be crucial in driving the delivery of Ireland's second National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap. Working together within and across sectors to focus on common issues, to introduce new ways of thinking, and to educate on issues in different parts of the supply chain will continue to be important.

We need to build on the food waste prevention work and innovation that has been happening over the past number of years, and the strong foundation for this work has been already established by the National Food Waste Prevention Programme, and the first National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap. We aim to contribute to and adopt an integrated approach where we continue to:

- *Collaborate* to achieve common goals;
- *Innovate* to find new solutions and change the way we do things;
- *Share* knowledge and data so we are better informed to make decisions.

To help prevent food loss and food waste, and to meet our targets under the Waste Framework Directive and UN SDG 12.3, all sectors must play their part in committing to reduce food loss (where applicable) and food waste.

As a priority we need to continue to measure our food loss and food waste in order to identify targeted actions, and support food waste reporting obligations. It is particularly imperative that sectors, for which there are legally binding targets, play a key role in ensuring food waste is reduced along the food supply chain.

Business Sectors

If you are a business within the manufacturing and processing, retail and distribution or restaurants and food services sectors, support the Roadmap goals by measuring and reducing your food waste using the EPA standard methodology, and by signing up to the EPA led Food Waste Charter at <https://foodwastecharter.ie>.

Membership of the revised Food Waste Charter continues to be open to food sector businesses that produce, process, manufacture, distribute or sell food and drink.

Organisations that do not produce, process, manufacture, distribute or retail food and drink can also sign the Charter as a supporting organisation. DCEE, DAFM, Bord Bia, Bord

Íascaigh Mhara, Enterprise Ireland, Fáilte Ireland and Teagasc have all signed up to the Food Waste Charter as supporting organisations.

Businesses should commit to raising awareness around food waste and sharing knowledge and experience, such as at events like the EPA's Forum on Food Waste.

The EPA has developed guidance with input from businesses in manufacturing sub-sectors, including the bakery, seafoods, prepared foods, brewing, distilling, meat and dairy sectors. This sectoral guidance can be accessed on the Food Waste Charter website.¹⁸

Primary Producers

If you are a primary producer, measure your food loss and food waste and engage with efficient practices to reduce food loss and food waste. Commit to raising awareness around food loss and food waste and sharing your knowledge and experience.

The Growers' Project, a FoodCloud initiative funded by DAFM, seeks to establish a national programme for the redistribution of surplus food from growers, that would not otherwise be able to donate due to cost, to Community partners across Ireland. If you are a primary producer who has Grade II/surplus produce, no matter how insignificant the amount seems to you, you can find out more at: <https://food.cloud/growers-project>.

Householders

As a householder you can support the food waste reduction goals by following guidance and tips on household food waste prevention that are available through the national campaign [StopFoodWaste.ie](https://stopfoodwaste.ie). Commit to raising awareness around food waste and sharing your knowledge and experience. For unavoidable food waste (such as peelings), visit [MyWaste.ie](https://mywaste.ie) for tips and best practices regarding what should go into your brown bin.

¹⁸ [Food Waste Charter | Resources](#)

6. Food Waste Measurement and Reporting

To reduce food waste effectively, monitoring, measurement and reporting of food waste across all sectors is needed in order to meet our food waste reduction targets under the revised Waste Framework Directive and UN SDG 12.3.

EU Reporting

Member States are required to collect and report data on food waste generated each year to the Commission. This data must be reported within eighteen months of the reference year. Data is accompanied by a quality check report, in order to help verify the quality of the data and improve data collection in the future.

In accordance with the European Union (Waste Directive) Regulations 2020,¹⁹ the EPA is required to monitor and assess the implementation of national food waste prevention measures by measuring the levels of food waste generated by different sectors, according to the methodology established by the Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2019/1597.²⁰ The first reference year for national food waste reporting was 2020, with the statistics published in 2022. The EPA has been reporting on Ireland's food waste statistics on an annual basis, and this will continue throughout the period of the second Roadmap.

EU Food Waste Reduction Targets - Baseline Reference Year

The reference period relating to the legally binding food waste reduction targets in the revised Waste Framework Directive refers to an annual average of food waste reported between 2021 and 2023. However, there is a provision for Member States to select an earlier reference period as long as certain conditions are met. The relevant article in the revised Directive sets out the following:

*Where, in relation to the food waste reduction targets, a Member State is able to provide data for a year prior to 2021 which have been collected using methods set out in Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2019/1597 (***) or, for years before 2020, using methods comparable to the methodology and minimum quality requirements for the uniform measurement of levels of food waste as set out in that Delegated Decision, the Member State may use an earlier year as the reference period.²¹*

¹⁹ European Union (Waste Directive) Regulations 2020 (Statutory Instrument No. 323 of 2020)

²⁰ [Commission Delegated Decision \(EU\) 2019/1597](#)

²¹ [Directive \(EU\) 2025/1892](#)

Member States must inform the Commission and other Member States if they intend to use an earlier reference year and must provide the data and measurement methods used to collect them and make those data and measurement methods publicly available.

Considering Ireland has been engaged in food waste prevention initiatives for several years (for example, such as the Stop Food Waste campaigns and the Food Waste Charter via the National Food Waste Prevention Programme) and has compiled food waste statistics since 2018, the EPA has carried out an assessment of food waste statistics for earlier years, and the methodologies used to compile these statistics to determine if it is appropriate to use an earlier year as the reference period. Based on the assessment of methodologies used and data availability, the EPA has proposed that 2021-2023 average be used as the reference period in relation to processing and manufacturing, and 2018 be used as the reference year for retail and distribution, restaurants and food services, and households. Further information is provided in Table 2 below.

Following this assessment Ireland is considering notifying the Commission and Member States of the intention to use an annual average between 2021 and 2023 for Processing and Manufacturing, and 2018 as the baseline year for Retail and Distribution, Restaurants and Food Services, and Households.

Table 2: Baseline Reference Year Assessment

Processing and Manufacturing		
Target Calculations		2021-2023 Average
Processing and Manufacturing	Total (tonnes)	169,715
	10% Reduction (tonnes)	16,971
	2030 Target (tonnes)	152,744
Retail and Distribution, Restaurants and Food Services, and Households		
Target Calculations		2018
Retail and other distribution of food	Total sector (t)	100,382
Restaurants and food services	Total sector (t)	203,342
Households	Total sector (t)	259,920
Three Sectors	Total (kg)	563,644,000
Population Data (CSO) Estimate	Estimate in year	4,857,000
Waste Generation per Capita	Total (kg) for three sectors	116.0 kg per capita
Reduction of 30% Per Capita	Target	81.2kg per capita

National Reporting

Every sector in the food supply chain should pursue food waste measurement and reporting as part of their operations. Businesses should measure their food waste to identify what food is being wasted and they should implement solutions, through waste prevention and the redistribution of surplus food.

Measurement protocols have been established under Ireland's Food Waste Charter (see next section) and for other sectors, such as primary production. For example, the horticulture sector has in place requirements to consider crop losses and food waste as part of a sustainable horticulture assurance scheme.²²

²² [Sustainable Horticulture Assurance Scheme \(SHAS\)](#)

There are examples of mandatory food waste reporting in the EU and internationally²³. In order to meet targets, set at EU level, we need to examine the introduction of mandatory proportionate reporting measures for businesses that generate a significant amount of food waste, therefore enabling relevant stakeholders to measure, identify and prevent food from going to waste in the first instance. Through consultation with key sectors and stakeholders, the introduction of proportionate reporting measures will be considered during this Roadmap period.

The Food Circle report on farm level loss in Ireland recommends supporting the use of structured tools such as the World Wildlife Fund Global Farm Loss Tool, progressing food loss and waste reporting (while recognising any burden these places on growers), and promoting collaborative work on specifications, contracts, labour and logistics that will reduce surplus. The Food Circle report recommendations will be examined as part of this Roadmap implementation.

As part of Ireland's approach on food waste measurement and reporting Ireland will:

- Publish the national food waste statistics and reporting methodology for food waste data collection, and quality check reports²⁴, for the purpose of reporting on Ireland's official statistics on food waste and progress made in reducing food waste;
- Confirm the baseline reference period that relates to the binding food waste reduction targets under the revised Waste Framework Directive;
- Continue to provide annual updates on food waste prevention (e.g. via the EPA's national waste statistics reporting) to chart the progress of the impact of Ireland's National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap, the National Food Waste Prevention Programme, and progress towards meeting Ireland's food waste reduction targets;
- Engage with the Central Statistics Office on the inclusion of food waste statistics as part of the 'circularity dashboard' to be developed under the Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy 2026-2028;
- Through a sectoral approach identify training and develop supports for organisations to facilitate robust food waste measurement and reporting activities, including businesses that may be subject to future mandatory reporting requirements;
- Continue to work with key sectoral organisations and programmes to help ensure food waste measurements are integrated into such programmes, where relevant;

²³ Refer to the Food Circle Reports

²⁴ In accordance with provisions under the revised Waste Framework Directive

- Continue to promote the EPA's national measurement protocol as a tool to assist businesses in fulfilling requirements on food waste measurement and reduction for existing certification and accreditation schemes;
- Examine the establishment of food loss measurement and tracking system as part of monitoring progress towards achieving UN SDG 12.3 regarding the reduction of food losses;
- With regard to the primary production sector, engage with key Government Departments (for example, DAFM), organisations and representative bodies with the aim of integrating the EPA's national measurement protocol into existing sectoral and industry schemes and programmes;
- Where appropriate, engagement with DAFM will be undertaken in relation to identifying and addressing inefficiencies in the functioning of the food supply chain in line with Article 9a of the revised Directive.

7. The Food Waste Charter

The EPA led Food Waste Charter continues to implement activities to drive change across the retail, distribution, processing and manufacturing sub-sectors, and to reduce food waste in the hospitality and food service sectors, aiming to help deliver on our food waste reduction obligations.

Establishing industry commitment to improve data reporting and targeted food waste reduction across the supply chain will continue to play a key role in this second Roadmap, in addition to encouraging a sense of common purpose and the sharing of best practices across the food supply chain. Improved monitoring of food waste levels is necessary to highlight the costs of mismanagement of food, and in turn, prompt action by business operators to reduce this.

The Food Waste Charter²⁵ is a voluntary agreement first introduced in 2017 to improve the management of food waste in the Irish food and drink sectors. Following the publication of the first National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap, the EPA launched a revised Food Waste Charter in June 2023 with an extended membership that is open to all food sector businesses that produce, process, manufacture, distribute or sell food and drink. As well as a list of commitments included in the pledge, food and drink businesses that sign up to the Charter commit to the following:

- **MEASURE:** by monitoring and tracking of their food waste;
- **REDUCE:** by identifying and taking at least one target-based action to reduce food waste;
- **REPORT:** By reporting annually to the EPA on progress towards measurable outcomes and achievements.

Organisations that do not produce, process, manufacture, distribute or retail food and drink are also invited to sign the Charter as a supporting organisation (e.g. Government Departments, State Agencies, representative bodies for the food supply chain sector or other organisations). DCEE, DAFM, Bord Bia, Bord Iascaigh Mhara, Enterprise Ireland, Fáilte Ireland and Teagasc have all pledged their commitment to support the Charter. Key commitments for supporting organisations include championing the Charter through

²⁵ [Food Waste Charter](#)

their activities and networks and embedding the Charter into their activities where appropriate.

The Food Waste Charter website, where organisations can sign up to the Charter, contains guidance and tools to support measuring and reducing food waste, including the EPA food waste measurement protocol for the manufacturing and processing sector.²⁶ For the hospitality sector, a simplified version of the Protocol has been developed by the EPA, the Food Services Pathway to Less Food Waste, with an associated workbook for food sector businesses to measure food waste volumes produced, calculate the cost for their business, and evaluate how well their waste management system is working.

Guidance has been developed with input from businesses in manufacturing sub-sectors, including the meat, dairy, brewing, distilling, bakery, seafoods and prepared foods sectors. The guidance documents contain case studies of businesses to demonstrate best practice from within the industry. Additional stand-alone case studies of Charter members have been developed. A workbook and guidance for public sector offices were also published by the EPA in 2024 to support the measuring and monitoring food waste obligation set out in the Public Sector Climate Action Plan Mandate. The guide explains how to measure food waste using the Food Waste Measurement Workbook to estimate food waste volumes and segregation levels using waste bills.

To encourage a systems approach across the supply chain and ensure a sense of common purpose, a high-level Food Waste Charter Action Group was established in 2023. The EPA chairs the group which includes representatives from DCEE, DAFM, Enterprise Ireland, FoodCloud and CIRCULÉIRE.

Two Food Waste Charter Implementation Reports have been published since the launch of revised Food Waste Charter, covering the progress and actions taken from June 2023 to June 2024²⁷, and January to December 2024²⁸ respectively.

Membership of the revised Food Waste Charter has increased almost fourfold since 2023. New membership of the Food Waste Charter is ongoing with 103 members signed up at the time of writing (June 2026).

²⁶ [Food Waste Charter](#)

²⁷ [Food Waste Charter Implementation Report June 2023 – June 2024](#)

²⁸ [Food Waste Charter Implementation Report 2024](#)

As part of the transposition of the revised Waste Framework Directive, and informed by the reports produced as part of the Food Circle Project, we will:

- Update the Food Waste Charter, as appropriate, to support the implementation of the revised Waste Framework Directive;
- Continue to extend the Food Waste Charter to food supply chain businesses to expand industry agreement on food waste prevention;
- Build knowledge and develop capacity for food waste measurement and prevention in food sector businesses;
- Continue to coordinate the Food Waste Charter Action Group;
- Promote the Food Waste Charter as a tool to support the implementation of reporting of food waste by identified economic operators, where relevant;
- Identify and conduct studies to build evidence base for developing resources for food waste prevention actions in food sector businesses.

8. Surplus Food Donation and Redistribution

Conditions may arise along different stages of the food production and distribution chain where food donation is an appropriate option. These are primarily associated with, for example:

- Difficulties with managing supply and demand where food businesses may have a 'surplus' of supply to meet orders;
- Errors in the labelling or packaging could mean that perfectly safe food will not be entered into the marketplace and so is available for donation.

In line with the Food Use and Waste Hierarchy, it is preferable for this 'surplus' food to be redistributed or donated by food businesses to various charities, once the food is still in an acceptable condition and it is handled and distributed safely. As established by the hierarchy, prevention should be prioritised in the first instance.

All food businesses whether donating or receiving and handling donated food must make themselves aware of their legal responsibilities under food legislation. The Food Safety Authority of Ireland provides general food safety guidance to both food businesses that donate food and also charities that receive the donated food.²⁹ The guidance includes questions and answers to help clarify the legal provisions in EU food legislation thus allowing the safe donation and receipt of food. The European Commission has also adopted EU food donation guidelines and provided further information on food donation.³⁰

In terms of food donation and the charity sector, FoodCloud has been actively promoting a solution in the form of support infrastructure to facilitate the rescue of surplus food suitable for human consumption from the supply chain and distribute to charities.³¹ Surplus food in the retail sector can be matched and donated to local charities through the Foodiverse app. Larger volumes of surplus food from the production sector can be distributed through FoodCloud Hubs which has created necessary infrastructure around Ireland to facilitate this.

Successful food donation and redistribution initiatives have been carried out at a community level, with promising local models emerging including Limerick Food Partnership and other food partnerships in areas including Bray, Arklow and West Wicklow.³² The University of Galway Students' Union food pantry which is supported by FoodCloud has been highlighted as a particularly impactful initiative, with over 50,000kg of surplus food redistributed to students in 2025.³³ While local community initiatives have significant potential to advance

²⁹ [Food Donations | FSAI](#)

³⁰ [Food donation | European Commission](#)

³¹ [FoodCloud](#)

³² Food Circle Report 4: Building Community Sector Capacity for Surplus Food Redistribution

³³ [Spéir | University of Galway Students' Union Food Pantry](#)

food redistribution, they require further funding and supports to build capacity, as outlined in *Food Circle Report 4: Building Community Sector Capacity for Surplus Food Redistribution*.

The Global Food Donation Policy Atlas, a collaboration between Harvard Law School's Food Law and Policy Clinic and the Global Food Banking Network, completed a review of Ireland's food waste and food donation policy in 2025.³⁴ The report highlighted the strong national policy on food loss and food waste established through the National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap 2023-2025, and recommended measures to facilitate increased food donation, which include, for example:

- Implement a food donation requirement for specific food waste generators, such as retail or wholesale food businesses of a certain size;
- Promote education and awareness among consumers and businesses on the meaning of date labels;
- Introduce 'Good Samaritan' liability protection to food donors and the intermediaries who act in good faith to reduce legal concerns that prevent more food from being donated;
- Provide tax incentives to offset associated costs of food donation.

There is a strengthened focus on surplus food donation and redistribution in the revised Waste Framework Directive which includes the following requirement:

*Member States shall, after consulting with food banks and other food redistribution organisations, take measures, where appropriate on the basis of any existing national food donation system, to ensure that economic operators having a significant role in the prevention and generation of food waste as identified by the Member States propose donation agreements to food banks and other food redistribution organisations so as to facilitate the donation of unsold food that is safe for human consumption, and at reasonable costs for the economic operators.*³⁵

As mentioned previously, DCEE established a grant agreement with FoodCloud, known as the Food Circle Project, to support the implementation of key actions included in the National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap, particularly in relation to surplus food donation and redistribution. Key deliverables for this Project include a number of reports with recommendations to inform policy development on surplus food redistribution and donation including:

³⁴ [Ireland – Food Donation Law and Policy | The Global Food Donation Policy Atlas](#)

³⁵ [Directive \(EU\) 2025/1892](#)

- Policy levers for food redistribution;
- Supporting a voluntary target for food redistribution;
- Building community sector capacity for surplus food redistribution;
- Supporting food redistribution infrastructure;
- Farm level food loss in Ireland – causes and solutions.

The reports are available on FoodCloud's Food Circle webpage, and key recommendations included in the reports are set out in Appendix 2 of the Roadmap.

9. The Bioeconomy - Food Waste Segregation, Valorisation

The bioeconomy encompasses all sectors, associated services, and investments that conserve, produce, regenerate, process, distribute or consume biological resources including related ecosystem services, knowledge, science, technology, and innovation. The National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy (2018)³⁶ outlined Ireland's long-term vision and guiding principles for developing the bioeconomy. The Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025 builds upon the National Policy Statement with 33 actions across 7 pillars to aid in the development of the Irish Bioeconomy.³⁷ Action 3.2 of the Bioeconomy Action Plan outlines that the bioeconomy should contribute *“to the circular economy, including the development of regenerative practices and utilisation of organic side and waste streams from agriculture, forestry, fishery, food and feed, and organic process waste, and returning biodegradable products to the organic and nutrient cycle.”*

In line with the Food Use and Waste Hierarchy, there is increasing scope to re-direct food waste from disposal towards resource recovery through biowaste valorisation. This is a key enabling element of Ireland's circular bioeconomy, offering a practical pathway to reduce emissions, recover nutrients, and create new bio-based value chains from organic residues. Ireland generates significant volumes of biowaste across agriculture, wastewater treatment, forestry, fisheries, and municipal systems; however, much of this resource remains underutilised.

A Biowaste Valorisation Roadmap, as outlined in Action 3.2.1 of the Bioeconomy Action Plan, is currently being developed by DCEE. This roadmap will be a direction setting document, with key priorities for the area outlined and recommendations brought forward into the National Bioeconomy Strategy 2026-2030.

Within the Biowaste Valorisation Roadmap, the importance of the Food Use and Waste hierarchy, and prioritising prevention measures over waste management measures will be recognised. A strong focus will be placed on applying the cascade principle, ensuring that biowaste is used first for higher-value products before energy recovery or land application. The Biowaste Valorisation Roadmap will outline the valorisation opportunities for unavoidable food waste, taking into account the food waste hierarchy, including biorefining, anaerobic digestion (AD), and composting.

³⁶ [National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy 2018](#)

³⁷ [Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025](#)

A number of initiatives are currently underway to support recirculation and biowaste upcycling activity by converting unavoidable waste flows from food and beverage manufacturing into value added products. The CirCoVal research project, funded by DAFM, supports the sustainable processing of meat industry co-products and wastewater into a range of outputs, encouraging circularity within the sector.³⁸ The BioScaleUP demonstration project converts food waste, dairy side streams and wood processing residues into biobased chemicals, materials, fuels, and ingredients.³⁹ REGENERATE is exploring the production of biofertilisers and peat alternatives from agri-food waste streams.⁴⁰ Bord Iascaigh Mhara has implemented multiple projects focused on seafood waste valorisation, including the Seafood Utilisation Project, biomass inventory development, and regulatory assessments for by-products, alongside participation in the EPA Food Waste Charter.⁴¹ €5 million has been awarded under the EU Just Transition Fund Bioeconomy Demonstration Initiative to the TRANSFORM project, led by University College Dublin. This project aims to develop and validate scalable, circular business models that enable food and beverage producers and businesses to convert agri-food by-products into high-value functional ingredients through state-of-the-art bioprocessing.⁴²

Furthermore, Teagasc is progressing plans for a National Bio-Circularity Centre, supported by a feasibility study published in 2025. Enterprise Ireland has also initiated plans for a Food Technology Centre which is expected to include a bioeconomy focus.

As stated previously, in line with the Food Use and Waste hierarchy, food waste prevention is the first priority. Prevention efforts also need to be combined with efforts to better manage the food waste that does arise, some of which is unavoidable. Better awareness of behaviours that lead to food waste generation will help identify efforts to avoid food waste generation in the first instance. For people to engage in positive behavioural change in terms of food waste prevention, there needs to be active engagement in proper food waste segregation and ensuring that the food waste that is generated is directed to the correct bin.

In line with a commitment in the first Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy 2020-2025, new legislation was introduced in December 2023 to mandate that all households on a kerbside collection service be provided with an organic waste bin.⁴³ This was carried out with a view to enable all households access to a waste collection service to segregate their waste, minimise the amount of waste that goes into landfill, and reuse waste through measures such as recycling, composting and anaerobic digestion, thereby making a positive

³⁸ [CirCoVal](#)

³⁹ [Ministers announce €10 million EU Just Transition Fund award for two Midlands Bioeconomy Demonstration Initiatives](#)

⁴⁰ [REGENERATE](#)

⁴¹ [Bord Iascaigh Mhara – Sustainability and Certification](#)

⁴² [Ministers Heydon and O'Brien announce €10 million EU Just Transition Funding for two bioeconomy demonstration projects.](#)

⁴³ Statutory Instrument 679 of 2023

contribution to our national recycling rates. The regulations include obligations in relation to the provision of a household food waste pack including a kitchen caddy.

In terms of measures to improve commercial food waste segregation, the Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022 provides for the application of incentivised pricing for commercial waste collection. Regulations were introduced in March 2023 that place an obligation on waste collectors to provide all their commercial customers with a mixed dry recycling, biowaste and residual waste bin, and to charge fees which incentivise waste segregation as customers' contracts come up for renewal.⁴⁴ This will help increase food waste segregation which will in turn enhance food waste awareness and help identify measures to prevent food waste in the commercial sector.

Significant funding has been allocated to support food waste recycling awareness initiatives being led by the Regional Waste Management Planning Offices over the last number of years including a National Food Waste Recycling Week which takes place annually.

This second Roadmap aims to further target and focus our education and awareness measures. To support this we will use commercial and household waste data from the National Waste Collection Permit Office to identify areas for targeted awareness campaigns on food waste prevention, and for reducing contamination and increasing recycling rates.

⁴⁴ Statutory Instrument 104 of 2023.

10 Behavioural Change, Education and Awareness

Food waste prevention needs to be embedded in everyday behaviour across society and sectors. Communications and awareness activities to highlight positive behaviours that lead to reduced food waste and encourage behavioural change will assist this. The actions in this chapter are intended to align with those of the Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy 2026-2028 that relate to the promotion of circular economy communications. Circular.ie, which was launched as an action of the strategy to promote circular living, provides information and resources for consumers on food waste prevention.⁴⁵

The Stop Food Waste programme, is the national public facing programme for household food waste prevention and has extensive experience working with consumers through campaigns, interventions and living labs.⁴⁶ The EPA's behavioural insights research on food waste provides an evidence base for these interventions.⁴⁷ This Roadmap commits to the continued delivery of a sustained communications and food waste prevention awareness programme, principally through Ireland's Stop Food Waste Programme.

Future national household food waste prevention communication activities will be coordinated by the Stop Food Waste Programme and will continue to be linked to the targeted priority food waste types and populations. These will be implemented through an annual communications plan, which will include a mix of Stop Food Waste activities, social media, PR and other mass communication methods to regularly reach large audiences, and that reflects different preferences for communication channels.

Behavioural change science will continue to be integrated into activities that seek to influence food waste prevention behaviour, as highlighted by the latest findings in the EPA's behavioural insights research series.⁴⁸ The Circular Economy 2025 Key Insights Report⁴⁹ emphasises the role of food waste communications campaigns as an effective entry point for encouraging members of the public to learn more about the circular economy.

The Stop Food Waste Programme coordinates the National Stop Food Waste Day on 1st March each year to highlight opportunities to prevent food waste. Campaigns from previous years have focused on encouraging people to 'know the food they waste the most' by taking the Stop Food Waste Challenge, in which participants were invited to record and track their food waste over the period of a week. The 2026 campaign spotlighted bread as one of the

⁴⁵ [Circular.ie | Turn food waste into food wins](#)

⁴⁶ [Stop Food Waste | EPA](#)

⁴⁷ [Food Waste: Behavioural Insights Research](#)

⁴⁸ [Food Waste: Behavioural Insights Research](#)

⁴⁹ [Circular Economy 2025 Key Insights Report.pdf](#)

most frequently wasted foods in Ireland and provided tips for consumers to reduce this level of waste through freezing their bread for future consumption.⁵⁰

DCEE provides funding to the Regional Waste Management Planning Offices (RWMPO) to coordinate food waste recycling awareness campaigns. This has included, for example the targeted distribution of household food waste caddy packs in 2022 and 2023. Funding continues to be allocated to the RWMPO to coordinate the annual National Food Waste Recycling Awareness Week. The aim of National Food Waste Recycling Awareness Week is to encourage consumers and businesses to use their brown bins, recycle their food waste and reduce their carbon footprint. As part of these awareness initiatives, MyWaste.ie, which is Ireland's official guide to managing waste, provides practical advice, with easy-to-follow hints and tips on how to recycle food waste at home.⁵¹ In 2026 this was held from the 30th of May to the 6th of June.

Education and awareness on food waste prevention in cooking and food management skills will continue to be a priority in the second Roadmap. There is scope to increase awareness and knowledge of food waste reduction practices through increased uptake of Home Economics, educational activities related to the SDGs or inclusion in other subjects such as Civic, Social and Political Education and Climate Action and Sustainable Development.

The Programme for Government 2025 commits to expanding and improving the Hot School Meals Programme and ensuring that suppliers take measures to reduce food waste.⁵² The Green Schools Programme provides education on food waste management through the theme 'Global Citizenship - Food and Biodiversity.'⁵³ The Composting for Schools Programme, supported by 16 local authorities and delivered by Composting Ireland, educates students on food waste recycling and nutrient recovery through composting.⁵⁴ Food waste reduction plans involving collaboration between the school management team, teachers, students and support staff, can further support best practices across school communities.

As mentioned previously, the Food Waste Charter provides tools, resources and guidance on food waste reporting and prevention measures. FoodCloud, in partnership with Atlantic Technological University, delivers online courses on topics including reducing food waste in the home, repurposing surplus food for industry and sustainable food practices.⁵⁵ The identification and development of further education and training supports to promote food

⁵⁰ [Stop Food Waste Day 2026 | EPA](#)

⁵¹ [Food Waste Recycling | My Waste](#)

⁵² [Programme for Government 2025 - Securing Ireland's Future](#)

⁵³ [Global Citizenship - Food and Biodiversity](#)

⁵⁴ [Composting Ireland](#)

⁵⁵ [Courses and Workshops | FoodCloud](#)

waste prevention for stakeholders working across the food supply chain will be considered as part of the delivery of this Roadmap.

Date marking has been a particular area of focus in order to help consumers better differentiate between 'use-by' and 'best before' dates. An EPA commissioned survey has found that passing the 'use-by' (67%) and 'best before' (45%) food dates are the main reasons why people throw out food in their household.⁵⁶ Too Good To Go, a global surplus food redistribution application, launched the 'Look-Smell-Taste' initiative in Ireland in November 2024.⁵⁷ The campaign aims to raise awareness about the difference between Use By and Best Before dates through partnering with major Irish food businesses to include a 'Look-Smell Taste Don't Waste' label on their products.

During this Roadmap period we will:

- Develop and support behavioural change interventions to reduce food waste, and information campaigns to raise awareness about food waste prevention;
- Continue to roll out Stop Food Waste Communications and Awareness activities including National Stop Food Waste Day on 1st March and an annual National Food Waste Recycling Week;
- Identify education and training supports for organisations, workplaces, education settings and community groups that can incorporate robust food waste measurement and prevention activities;
- Provide support to the School Meals Programme on best practices for food waste prevention and reduction;
- Identify national measures, where feasible, that can prevent food waste as a result of date marking;

⁵⁶ [Food Waste: National Attitudes and Behaviours survey 2024 | EPA](#)

⁵⁷ [Look-Smell-Taste Date Labelling Initiative | Too Good to Go](#)

11 Research and Innovation

Tackling food waste means working together with all stakeholders in order to better identify, measure, understand and find solutions to deal with food waste. There is not one single cause with one solution because the food chain is a complex and dynamic system. All actors in the food chain should work together to find solutions, from farmers, fishers, processors, manufacturers, retailers, hospitality, to consumers themselves. Other food sector experts, research scientists, food banks and NGOs also play an important role.

Ireland participates in the work of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste and will continue to take part in activities that include the sharing of knowledge and best practice in relation to food waste prevention. Ireland will continue to utilise all relevant EU and national research and innovation mechanisms to support food waste prevention activities and inform related policy, including, through programmes led at EU level such as Horizon Europe and at national level led by Research Ireland. The Life Programme, for example, provides funding for the support of Environment, Nature Conservation and Climate Action projects throughout the European Union. Previous projects have included food waste reduction initiatives.⁵⁸

EPA Research 2030, is a ten-year high-level framework for the EPA's research programming for the period 2021 to 2030.⁵⁹ Its thematic structure comprises four interconnected hubs that includes, for example, addressing climate change evidence needs and facilitating a green and circular economy. The EPA Research Programme also has a Fast-Track to Policy funding mechanism which aims to provide evidence synthesis, review of policies and best practices to answer urgent emerging policy questions and addressing short-term policy needs. The Behavioural Insights Research series coordinated through the EPA's Circular Economy Programme provides evidence to inform policy, behavioural change interventions and awareness campaigns, including in relation to food waste.⁶⁰

The Circular Economy Innovation Grant Scheme (CEIGS) is a Government of Ireland initiative led by DCEE.⁶¹ The purpose of this grant scheme is to provide support to projects which work in the Circular Economy space, with the aim of advancing the Circular Economy in Ireland and raising awareness of the need to transition to a Circular Economy. The scheme was launched in 2021 and the thematic areas included food waste prevention.

Other research avenues include the DAFM's Rural Innovation and Development Fund (RIDF) which has previously provided funding for initiatives aimed at reducing food waste generated by food businesses, retailer/ wholesalers, or suppliers in rural areas. Food Vision

⁵⁸ [LIFE Programme | European Commission](#)

⁵⁹ [EPA Research 2030](#)

⁶⁰ [Food Waste: Behavioural Insights Research](#)

⁶¹ [Circular Economy Innovation Grant Scheme \(CEIGS\)](#)

2030 includes an action to research the extent of food loss at the production (primary) stage in an Irish context, and develop innovative ways of reducing it.⁶²

Bord Bia has conducted research to better understand global sustainability demands around food and drink and has produced insights that are designed to help understand customer and consumer behaviours and demand around sustainability.⁶³ The research has, for example, identified food waste as an important topic for consumers.

The National Prepared Consumer Food Centre⁶⁴, operated by Teagasc, provides expertise and equipment to allow companies to develop innovative products from edible by-products that would have otherwise gone to waste. They also research more sustainable packaging systems for perishable foods to extend shelf life and further reduce food waste.

Ireland's National Bioeconomy Policy Statement sets out a framework to further develop and strengthen the bioeconomy in Ireland with a focus on sustainability, circularity and innovation.⁶⁵

DAFM's Competitive Research Funding Programme is the primary national funding mechanism for food research in higher education institutions and other public research institutes (e.g. Teagasc). It has been re-configured to help implement the research and innovation commitments contained in the Food Vision 2030 Strategy and the related Mission 4 which is to have 'An innovative, competitive and resilient agri-food sector driven by technology and talent'.

BiOrbic, Bioeconomy SFI Research Centre is Ireland's national bioeconomy research centre, established to promote and develop Ireland's bioeconomy through excellent research and innovation.⁶⁶

As part of the Roadmap's focus on research and innovation the Food Waste Prevention Task Force will continue to maintain a register of priority research topics on food loss and food waste which will inform the different research funding calls that may arise that include the topic of food waste and losses. This will ensure a coherent and strategic overview of food waste and losses research priorities and help identify organisations that could play an important role in associated research activities.

Outputs of key research and innovation projects on food waste prevention will be communicated and disseminated in order to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, methods and tools to help support food waste prevention activities, and to facilitate active

⁶² [Food Vision 2030](#)

⁶³ [Global Sustainability Insights | Bord Bia](#)

⁶⁴ [Teagasc National Prepared Consumer Food Centre](#)

⁶⁵ [National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy](#)

⁶⁶ [biOrbic – Ireland's National Bioeconomy Research Centre](#)

engagement for behaviour change. A compendium of existing research (completed and currently active) on food waste will be maintained to support this work.

It is also important to support innovation and advances in technology, and to continue to identify opportunities to deploy new technologies such as artificial intelligence solutions to support the measurement and prevention of food waste.

12 Green Public Procurement

Following Government approval, *Buying Greener: Green Public Procurement Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027*⁶⁷ was published in April 2024 to drive the implementation of green and circular procurement practices across the public sector. The Strategy has a key sectoral focus with related Green Public Procurement (GPP) actions and targets included, for example, the following related to food waste prevention:

- Update Central Purchasing Arrangements to include specific GPP criteria related to organic food procurement and food waste prevention;
- From 2025, 100% of new contract arrangements related to canteen or food services to include measures that are targeted at addressing food waste, with a specific focus on food waste prevention, taking into account Ireland's commitment to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030, and food waste segregation.

In 2025, additional obligations were included in the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate⁶⁸ regarding food waste. These include that public bodies, subject to the Mandate, are to measure and monitor food waste generated on their premises using a standardised approach to food waste measurement set out in the EPA Protocol/Pathway.

In 2024 the EPA published updated Green Public Procurement: Guidance for the Public Sector⁶⁹ which includes, for example, a focus on food waste prevention as part of public procurement of food and catering services. The EPA's Green Public Procurement criteria set on Food and Catering Services⁷⁰ was also updated in 2024 and includes a reference to signing up to the Food Waste Charter.

The implementation of food waste-related actions and targets set out in *Buying Greener* will continue to be monitored throughout the lifetime of the Strategy.

⁶⁷ [Buying Greener: Green Public Procurement Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027](#)

⁶⁸ [Climate Action Plan 2024](#)

⁶⁹ [EPA GPP Guidance for the Public Sector 2024 | Environmental Protection Agency](#)

⁷⁰ [Irish GPP Criteria: Food and Catering Services](#)

13 Monitoring, Evaluation, Review and Knowledge Sharing

Food Waste Prevention Task Force and Roadmap Monitoring

As was the case with the first Roadmap, the second National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap, coordinated and led by DCEE, will be monitored and reviewed annually to assess the impact of national food waste prevention measures. The Minister will report annually on the implementation of the National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap.

A Food Waste Prevention Task Force was established in 2023 with the principal aim of monitoring the progress and delivery of the actions set out in the National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap 2023-2025. The Task Force is chaired by DCEE and comprises a core membership consisting of representatives from DCEE, DAFM and the EPA. The coordination of the Task Force will continue for the duration of this Roadmap to monitor its implementation.

The Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy 2026-2028: *Accelerating Action* was published in February 2026.⁷¹ To ensure the delivery of the Strategy, a robust monitoring framework is being implemented, including the establishment of a cross-government high level oversight group and regular stakeholder fora to ensure inclusive participation and knowledge sharing. The Strategy contains a number of actions and targets in relation to food waste prevention, including the publication of this Roadmap, transposition of the revised Waste Framework Directive, reducing food loss and waste in line with EU requirements and UN SDG 12.3, and to have 150 organisations signed up to the Food Waste Charter.

The EPA, via the National Food Waste Prevention Programme and national waste statistics reporting, will continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of food waste reduction measures and report on Ireland's progress in meeting its food waste reduction targets.

Regular updates on Ireland's progress in implementing food waste prevention measures and meeting food waste reduction targets will be made available by DCEE, and via the EPA website.

Forum on Food Waste

The EPA hosts the national Forum on Food Waste⁷², a Food Waste Charter networking event which brings together business and policy leaders from across the food supply chain. The Forum was first established in 2014 and is held on an annual basis. It will continue to

⁷¹ [Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy 2026-2028: Accelerating Action](#)

⁷² [EPA Forum on Food Waste](#)

provide a valuable network for information exchange on food waste prevention and reduction activities.

EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste

The EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste, dedicated to food waste prevention, was established in 2016 to bring together EU institutions, experts from the EU countries, international organisations, and relevant stakeholders, to support achievement of the SDG 12.3 target on food waste.⁷³ The Platform aims to support all actors in: defining measures needed to prevent food waste; sharing best practice; and evaluating progress made over time. Ireland will continue to participate in the work of the platform and its subgroups.

⁷³ [EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste](#)

Appendix 1: Proposed Actions for Second Roadmap Period

No.	Action	Lead Delivery Body	Timeline
Regulatory			
1	Transpose the revised Waste Framework Directive (DIRECTIVE (EU) 2025/1892) into national law.		
2	In accordance with the revised Waste Framework Directive, inform the Commission of the designated Competent Authorities responsible for the coordination of measures referred to in Article 9a (1) of the revised Waste Framework Directive.		
3	Examine options for the introduction of proportionate reporting measures for key sectors and economic operators identified as having a potentially significant role in the generation and prevention of food waste.		
4	Examine options for legislation to provide specific indemnity to food donors and food redistributors in respect of donated food, protecting donors and intermediary organisations who have acted in compliance with food safety regulations.		
5	Examine options for food safety regulations to include additional specific steps to food donation to promote a common interpretation of EU rules applying to the redistribution of surplus food.		
National Food Waste Prevention Programmes			
6	Evaluate and adapt the EPA's National Food Waste Prevention Programme to support the meeting of binding food waste reduction targets and, where appropriate taking into consideration the EPA's roles and responsibilities, to incorporate food waste prevention measures that are set out in the Waste Framework Directive and the National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap.		
7	Communicate the National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap and the EPA's National Food Waste Prevention Programme to		

	the Commission in advance of 17 th October 2027 deadline in accordance with the revised Waste Framework Directive.
Food Waste Measurement and Reporting	
8	Fulfil annual reporting obligations on Food Waste Data Reporting to EU.
9	Publish the national food waste statistics, and reporting methodology for food waste data collection, and quality check reports, for the purpose of reporting on Ireland's official statistics on food waste and progress made in reducing food waste.
10	Confirm baseline reference period that relates to the binding food waste reduction targets under the revised Waste Framework Directive.
11	Promote the use and integration of the EPA's standard national food waste measurement protocol and specific sectoral guidance for use in key sectors.
12	Identify key sectors and economic operators, who have a significant role in the generation and prevention of food waste, to be subject to proportionate food waste reporting measures.
13	Identify reporting structures for the administration of reporting of food waste.
14	Capture data on surplus food donation for inclusion in official food waste statistics reporting.
15	Engage with the Central Statistics Office on the inclusion of food waste statistics as part of the 'circularity dashboard' to be developed under the Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy 2026-2028.
16	Examine the establishment of food loss measurement and tracking as part of monitoring progress towards achieving UN SDG 12.3 with regard to reducing food losses.
Food Waste Charter	
17	Update the Food Waste Charter to support the implementation of the revised Waste Framework Directive.
18	Continue to extend the Food Waste Charter to food supply chain businesses to expand industry agreement on food waste prevention.
19	Continue to coordinate the Food Waste Charter Action Group

20	Food Waste Charter Action Group members to provide support to the coordination of measures for identifying and addressing inefficiencies in the functioning of the food supply chain and supporting cooperation amongst all actors.
21	Build knowledge and develop capacity for food waste measurement and prevention in food sector businesses, and promote the Food Waste Charter as a tool to support the implementation of reporting by identified economic operators.
Supporting the Bioeconomy	
22	Identify sectors for the potential for transforming food-based materials, that may result in food waste, into non waste industrial uses (e.g. by-products) that supports the bioeconomy and results in food waste prevention.
23	Examine options for the introduction of by-products regulations to establish a legislative framework that supports the bioeconomy and food waste prevention.
Food Donation - Redistribution	
24	Implement key recommendations, where possible and feasible during the Roadmap period, that are included in the Food Circle Project reports that relate to: • Policy levers for food redistribution including fiscal measures related to VAT, tax credits and relief • Supporting a voluntary target for food redistribution • Building community sector capacity for surplus food redistribution • Supporting food redistribution infrastructure • Farm level food loss in Ireland including examining funding options, within state aid rules, to build on the success of the DAFM funded Growers Project which facilitates the redistribution of surpluses in primary production A list of key recommendations are included in Appendix 2.

25	Identify economic operators that have a significant role in the prevention and generation of food waste for the purpose of proposing donation agreements to food banks and other food redistribution organisations so as to facilitate the donation of unsold food that is safe for human consumption. Establish mechanism to ensure such operators put in place arrangements to propose donation agreements to food banks and other redistribution organisations.
26	Raise awareness on food redistribution and donation including the use of consumer and local business facing technology platforms that facilitate food redistribution and donation.
27	Continue to work with key sectors (e.g., primary production and retail sectors, academia) to examine how food waste due to marketing and product specification related aspects (e.g., misshapen fruit and vegetables) can be avoided.
28	Launch a solution providers directory and decision tree to raise awareness and help facilitate food redistribution and donation among Irish food and drink businesses.
Business funding and training supports and resources	
29	Raise awareness regarding business supports and grants that could be used to measure and prevent food waste including valorisation or redistribution of surplus food.
30	Facilitate and promote access to funding opportunities and resources to support training and skills on food waste prevention with a particular focus on supporting small and medium-sized enterprises and social economy entities.
31	Examine funding mechanisms (e.g. Circular Economy Fund) to support economic operators to invest in changing processes to prevent food waste; and to provide technical assistance to food businesses to measure food waste and identify and donate surplus food.
Food Waste Segregation	
32	Using commercial and household waste data from the National Waste Collection Permit Office to identify areas for targeted awareness campaigns on food waste segregation prevention, with the aim of reducing contamination and increasing recycling rates.

33	Using existing local authority waste enforcement mechanisms, monitor compliance with regulatory requirements regarding the provision of commercial and household biowaste (including food waste) collection.
Communications, Education and Awareness	
34	Develop and support behavioural change interventions to reduce food waste that are supported by behavioural research and insights.
35	Continue consumer facing Stop Food Waste Communications and Awareness activities including National Stop Food Waste Day on 1st March.
36	Continue Food Waste Recycling Awareness activities including an annual National Food Waste Recycling Week.
37	Identify education and training supports for organisations (e.g., food processors, hospitality and food services) that can incorporate robust food waste measurement and prevention activities.
38	Examine the feasibility, and where feasible, introduce national measures on date marking that will promote the prevention of food waste generation.
39	Provide guidance and support to the School Meals Programme on practices that support food waste prevention and reduction
Research and Innovation	
40	Provide funding for research, piloting and demonstration on food waste topics (e.g., via EPA and DAFM Research Programmes, Circular Economy Fund, Circular Economy Innovation Grant Scheme, Rural Innovation and Development Fund).
41	Continue to maintain a compendium of existing and completed research, innovation, piloting and demonstration, on food waste prevention, and a register of Priority Research and Innovation Topics on Food Loss and Food Waste.
42	Support, encourage and promote the use of innovation and technological solutions which contribute to the prevention of food waste.

Green Public Procurement	
43	Monitor the implementation of food waste related actions and targets in the Buying Greener: Green Public Procurement Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027.
Monitoring, Evaluation, Review and Knowledge Sharing	
44	Continue the coordination of the Food Waste Prevention Task Force to monitor implementation of the National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap.
45	Coordinate the Annual Forum on Food Waste.
46	Participate in the work of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste and associated subgroups.
47	Provide annual updates on food waste (via the EPA's national waste statistics reporting) to chart the progress of the impact of Ireland's National Food Waste Prevention Programme and progress towards meeting EU binding food waste reduction targets.
48	Undertake annual review of National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap.

Appendix 2: Food Circle Report Recommendations

Report	Theme	Recommendation
Food Circle Report 1: Policy Levers for Food Redistribution	Donation of Surplus Food	To substantially increase access to surplus food, the Government can require that food businesses across the supply chain offer to donate their surplus food, using as a framework the provision on donation in the revised Waste Framework Directive. In determining which food businesses, the Government will need to consider which food businesses have a significant role in the prevention and generation of food waste, and what would be a reasonable cost for the businesses required to offer food for donation. A validation requirement could also be introduced where appropriate to ensure that edible surplus is assessed for donation before it is sent for recovery or disposal.
	Enhance and promote safe food donation guidelines	Publish an official guidance note on food safety specifically for food donation for food donors and food redistribution organisations, which is supported by relevant government organisations and agencies.
		Promote the content of the guidance through a communications campaign directed at food businesses.
		Strengthen and promote the EU Food Donation Guidelines to include additional information further addressing barriers to surplus food donation and to promote a common interpretation of EU rules applying to the redistribution of surplus food, and promote the use of these guidelines in Ireland.
	Liability protection for 'Good Samaritan' acts of donation	Revise the Liability for Defective Products Act or otherwise provide a specific indemnity to food donors and food redistributors in respect of donated food, protecting donors and intermediary organisations who have acted in compliance with food safety regulations.
	Supporting food donation infrastructure and technical assistance to food businesses	Offer dedicated grants that: - Enable economic operators to invest in changing processes to prevent food waste; and

		- Provide technical assistance to food businesses to measure food waste, and identify and donate surplus food.
		Highlight general grants that could be used to prevent food waste, or valorise or redistribute surplus food.
	Fiscal incentives to enable food donation	Amend VAT so that any VAT reimbursed to a business on food inputs that are subsequently donated can be retained.
		Create a tax credit or deduction for donated food and the logistical costs of donating food.
		Extend the relief available under the Charitable Donation Scheme to in-kind donations of food products.
		Extend the relief available to incorporated entities to individual monetary donors for monetary donations under the Charitable Donation Scheme, in order to make it more attractive for individual donors to donate to all registered charitable organisations including food banks.
	Mandatory Reporting	Require food businesses in all sectors to measure their food waste using the already established mechanism and protocols in the Food Waste Charter, and to prepare a food loss and waste reduction plan.
		Encourage food businesses to adopt a voluntary target for a percentage of edible food to be donated.
		Scale up technical assistance to businesses to measure food waste.
		Ensure that this information gathering is coordinated nationally and the data gathered is used to inform sectoral intervention approaches.
Food Circle Report 2: Supporting a Voluntary Target for Surplus Food Redistribution	Voluntary Targets for Food Donation	Create a voluntary target for the percentage of edible food to be donated using the Food Waste Charter.
		Use a percentage-based metric as the headline target, focusing on edible surplus to link donations to waste reduction.

		Ensure measurement and disclosure protocols are harmonised with existing reporting mechanisms, with clear definitions of 'waste', 'edible' and 'surplus' food outlined in national policy.
		Set differentiated baselines and trajectories for differing sectors, with phased implementation to support smaller businesses.
Report 3: Building community sector capacity for surplus food redistribution	Infrastructure	Invest in capital and operational funding to cover not only equipment (e.g., fridges, freezers, vehicles) but also ongoing running costs.
		Fund the development of local food hubs.
		Support acquisition or upgrade of fit-for-purpose buildings.
		Enable shared infrastructure models to allow multiple groups to access cold storage and transport.
	Local Networks	Fund Local Food Coordinator positions to build and maintain community networks between organisations, donors and local food systems.
		Facilitate a national network of food coordinators to enable knowledge exchange, peer learning, shared resources and input at a strategic level.
		Support the development of local, place-based food partnerships.
		Provide seed funding for collaborative pilot projects, encouraging organisations to test and evaluate cooperative working models.
	Donor and Community Partner Relationships	Establish strengthened national guidelines and standards for food donations to improve the consistency and quality of surplus food.
		Create incentives or support initiatives that enable local retailers, food producers, and growers to donate high-quality, nutritious food locally.
		Support initiatives that connect local growers with community groups.

		Fund capacity-building and network building initiatives between community groups and donors.
	Resourcing and Capacity	Provide multi-annual core funding for community food organisations engaging in surplus food redistribution to reduce reliance on short-term grants and voluntary labour.
		Embed the Local Food Coordinator role within formal and sustained funding streams, such as Sláintecare Healthy Communities or the Healthy Ireland fund, to support operational coordination and enable long-term continuity in SFR.
	Education and Capacity-Building	Fund hands-on, practical training programmes on food waste prevention, and using surplus food safely, creatively, and effectively.
		Invest in 'train-the-trainer' models to build local capacity and allow knowledge to be shared more widely within communities. Include food waste prevention, including interventions from sector leaders.
		Provide targeted grants and support for the establishment of innovative food sharing models, such as social supermarkets or wrap-around service pilots, leveraging the unique leadership of Local Development Companies and their access to SICAP funding.
		In wider policy, recognise community food provision and surplus food redistribution as an engagement gateway and fund programmes that build bridges from food to wider social services and supports.
Food Circle Report 4: Supporting the infrastructure of food redistribution	Support national surplus food redistribution excellence and infrastructure	Support the establishment of a headquarters for FoodCloud to enable scale and establish Ireland as a Centre of Excellence for surplus food redistribution and circular food systems, supporting innovation, policy development, and cross-sector collaboration.
	Support for mid-level redistribution organisations	Support the creation of a network of regional food hubs that would provide a range of services from food redistribution, to wraparound social service, social supermarket and café and community kitchen.
	Support for local level community groups	Creation of a dedicated annual fund (€350,000) providing flexibility for small

		community groups to support infrastructural upgrades and/or ongoing running costs.
Food Circle Report 5: Farm-Level Food Loss in Ireland: Causes and Solutions	Support for a national compensated agricultural recovery programme	Establish a medium term national compensated agricultural recovery programme, building on the Growers' Project, enabling redistribution of 5,000 tonnes of surplus each year by 2030..
		Embed agricultural recovery and surplus prevention in successor strategies to the National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap, Healthy Ireland and the Roadmap for Social Inclusion, and in implementation of the National Strategy for Horticulture, so that farm-level surplus and redistribution are recognised as cross-cutting policy tools.
		Provide multi-annual direct Government funding as the core short term funding mechanism for the programme, while also pursuing alternative options for EU funding.
	Invest in and support food waste prevention in the order established in the Food Use and Waste Hierarchy	Invest in prevention at source by improving data on farm-level losses, supporting the use of structured tools such as the WWF Global Farm Loss Tool, progressing mandatory FLW reporting (while recognising any burden this places on growers), and promoting collaborative work on specifications, contracts, labour and logistics that will reduce surplus.
		Support market-oriented waste prevention initiatives that keep surplus in the human food chain, particularly valorisation activities that create marketable and / or shelf-stable produce, promoting avenues to use these valorised products as part of socially or nutritionally beneficial initiatives (such as for use in institutional settings such as school meals, hospitals, social supermarkets, Meals on Wheels and other types of community food sharing).
		Prioritise prevention of food waste by redirecting food for human consumption ahead of lower-value outlets such as animal feed, industrial uses (rendering or biorefining), anaerobic digestion, composting, or disposal.

Appendix 3: Supporting Policy and Legislative Context

International

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing– in a global partnership. Goal 12.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals includes the target to halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses by 2030.

European

Circular Economy Action Plan for a cleaner and more competitive Europe and the EU Farm to Fork Strategy

The European Commission adopted a new Circular Economy Action Plan in 2020 which is one of the main blocks of the European Green Deal, Europe's new agenda for sustainable growth. The EU's Farm to Fork Strategy is at the heart of the European Green Deal which aims to make food systems fair, healthy and environmentally- friendly. This includes reducing food loss and waste.

Waste Framework Directive

A targeted revision of the Waste Framework Directive entered into force on 16 October 2025, establishing the legally-binding food waste reduction targets which Member States must meet at national level by 2030.

National

Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021

In July 2021, the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 was signed into law. Ireland is on a legally binding path to net-zero emissions no later than 2050, and to a 51% reduction in emissions by the end of this decade. The Act provides the framework for Ireland to meet its international and EU climate commitments and to become a leader in addressing climate change.

Ireland's Climate Action Plans

Ireland's Climate Action Plans sets out a roadmap to deliver on our climate ambition. The plans include commitments related to food waste prevention including to reduce food waste by 50%.

Food Vision 2030 Strategy

Ireland's Agri-Food Strategy, Food Vision 2030 outlines how an essential part of circular bio-based production is putting an end to avoidable waste that occurs in various parts of the food chain, from primary production to the waste-bins in kitchens, with the re-use of valuable materials that are unavoidable waste. The Strategy refers to the National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap and outlines that all relevant stakeholders in the agri-food sector, as well as retailer, food service and consumer representatives should participate in this, building on the work of the existing National Waste Prevention Programme (now the Circular Economy Programme) and related initiatives.

Ag Climatise – A Roadmap towards Climate Neutrality

The Ag Climatise Roadmap recognises the need for action in terms of developing a circular bioeconomy and reducing food waste and loss. The roadmap includes supporting actions in this regard such as promoting the development of a sustainable circular bioeconomy within the agri-food sector and further enhancing carbon credentials of the horticulture sector.

National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy

The Government's vision for the bioeconomy is to grow Ireland's ambition to be a global leader for the bioeconomy through a coordinated approach that harnesses Ireland's natural resources and competitive advantage and that fully exploits the opportunities available while monitoring and avoiding unintended consequences. An important objective of the bioeconomy is to move Ireland beyond simply a target compliance and carbon mitigation focus to integrating sustainable economic development into our economic model as we transition to a low carbon and circular economy. There is increasing recognition at a European level of the potential benefits for economies and societies of adopting a circular economy that maintains the utility and value of products, components and materials in the economy for as long as possible. The bioeconomy has a close relationship with the circular economy and represents an area where Ireland has some crucial advantages. The bioeconomy should promote circularity through solutions and innovations that reuse and recycle materials, maximising resource efficiency through the use of unavoidable wastes and environmental sustainability.

Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025

The Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025 which sets out the Government's ambition for Ireland to become one of the most socially inclusive States in the EU, defines a number of specific targets to be achieved and details a number of key commitments to deliver on this ambition and these targets.

National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021

People with disabilities are more likely to live alone and 42% live in a jobless household, putting them at high risk of poverty. Overall, people with disabilities experience high levels of consistent poverty. The National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021 is the key framework for policy and action to address the needs of people with disabilities. Its overarching objective is to improve the lives of people with disabilities both in a practical sense, and also in creating the best possible opportunities for people with disabilities to fulfil their potential.

National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030

The National Biodiversity Action Plan, the fourth such plan for Ireland, captures the objectives, targets and actions for biodiversity that will be undertaken by a wide range of government, civil society and private sectors to achieve Ireland's Vision for Biodiversity.

Unfair Trading Practices – Agricultural and Food Supply Chain Act 2023

Established under the Agricultural and Food Supply Chain Act 2023, An Realálaí Agraibhia (The Agrifood Regulator) enforces national legislation governing unfair trading practices in business-to-business relationships along the agrifood supply chain. This legislation protects the financial security of our innovative food producers by protecting suppliers against unfair trading practices which could lead to food waste outcomes such as the short-notice cancellations of perishable agricultural and food products or a unilateral contract change, such as in relation to the volume or quality standard of product required, imposed on the supplier by the buyer. Please visit the Regulator's website at www.agrifoodregulator.ie for more information on Ireland's unfair trading practice legislation.

Appendix 4: Further Information – Key Sectors

Households

The EPA's food waste prevention programme targets household food waste through the application of behavioural insights and awareness raising activities through the national public-facing campaign Stop Food Waste to achieve a measured increase in the number of people engaging with the topic and widespread public awareness of the issue of food waste and solutions to help prevent it.

For a successful food waste prevention programme, there is an important role for awareness raising and communication activities that have a large population reach and that maintain an ongoing presence in the public consciousness. Findings from previous EPA behavioural insight studies show that some positive food organisation behaviours, such as checking the fridge before shopping and making a list, are followed by those who are more conscious of food waste on a day-to-day basis, highlighting the need to make people aware of how much food waste they are producing, and how they can take actions in their day-to-day life to reduce the food they waste.

Implemented through an evidence-led communications plan, Stop Food Waste public engagement activities use a multi-channel approach that reflects different preferences for communication channels, including a mix of stopfoodwaste.ie website, social media, PR and other mass communications methods to regularly reach large audiences. Engagement with collaborative partners and working with others is going to amplify the message and reach. The activities and delivery model of the food waste programme have been revised to ensure they are optimised for impact and appropriately focused to play a key role in the achievement of Ireland's 50% reduction in food waste target by 2030 and reduced associated GHG emissions. Activities and interventions are linked to targeted priority food waste types and audiences, informed by the results of attitudes surveys and behavioural insights. These surveys will be repeated to monitor the changes in engagement, inform the identification of target audiences, key messages and evaluating the effectiveness of the programme activities. Reductions in reported food waste will be measured through regular waste characterisation studies to track changes in household food waste.

Processing and Manufacturing

The food manufacturing and processing sectors generate a significant amount of Ireland's food waste. Much of this waste is inedible (for example skins, seeds, bones) and redirected for animal feed or energy production. As a result, it is often overlooked when considering food waste prevention.

In order to reduce wastes in the manufacturing and processing sectors, the specific reasons contributing to the generation of food waste must be identified. These reasons will vary but the following are some that are commonly encountered:

- Trimming during processing;
- Product specifications (e.g. size, cosmetic/ aesthetic standards);
- Quality control;
- Rejected or damaged ingredients or products;
- End of line/batch residues;
- Product lost through cleaning;
- Improper packaging;
- Contamination on the processing line;
- Errors in processing resulting in defects;
- Poor operational practices;
- Poor instrumentation and controls.

Improving food waste segregation should be included in the remit of any future commercial food waste prevention and measurement initiatives. Such initiatives will not be fully effective without improvements to the current standards of food waste segregation in Irish businesses.

Restaurants and Food Services

The number of meals typically consumed by Irish people outside of the home is increasing. As a result, food service (including hotels, workplace canteens, bars, restaurants) is becoming an ever more important sector in relation to food waste prevention in Ireland.

The main sources and primary issues associated with food waste in this sector are typically related to:

- Unused, outdated and damaged stock;
- Food uneaten by customers;
- Prepared but unserved food;
- Preparation waste;
- Food cooked/prepared improperly.
- Large portions;
- Over-ordering by customers;
- Issues with stock control leading to spoilage;
- Over-ordering by kitchen staff (e.g. just in case ordering);

- Poor menu planning;
- Improper storage;
- Lack of communication internally and with customers;
- Poor preparation practices;
- Some food waste amounts going to the residual bin instead of the organic waste recycling bin.

Primary Production

Primary food production, including farming and fishing, is a major part of Ireland's economy.

Similar to many other countries internationally, there is very little quantified data on the levels of waste generated in these sectors. While primary food production is a very diverse sector, some of the common drivers of food waste include:

- Product specifications (e.g. size, cosmetic standards);
- Lack of access to market or processing facilities;
- Price volatility resulting in commodity price too low to cover harvest cost;
- Premature or delayed harvesting;
- Adverse weather conditions;
- Damaged or low grade product;
- Food affected by pests, animals or disease;
- Lack of storage facilities, including lack of cold storage;
- Spoilage due to inappropriate storage, treatment and handling;
- Harvesting technique.

Retail and other distribution of food

Distribution and retail are the sectors within the food system that connect food production and processing with final use. Due to this position, distribution and retail are influenced by and can influence the entire system, both up and downstream.

Some of the main types of food waste at the distribution and retail stage are:

- Recalled product;
- Damaged food;
- Spoilage;
- Unsold stock e.g. promotional/seasonal stock;
- Short-dated product.

In order to reduce wastes in the distribution and retail sectors, the specific reasons contributing to the generation of waste must be identified.

These reasons will vary but the following are some that are commonly encountered:

- Delivery issues (e.g. delays and oversized deliveries);
- Poor demand forecasting;
- Lack of a system for food donation;
- Regular replenishment of stocks, leading consumers to select most recent products.