Food Waste Charter

FOOD WASTE CHARTER

Implementation Report 2025

epa
Environmental Protection Agency
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil

Introduction
Promoting the Charter
Building knowledge & developing capacity
Networking
Food Waste Charter membership
Insights from member reports
Charter successes & challenges in 2025
To Find Out More

Introduction

The Food Waste Charter is a national voluntary agreement in Ireland calling on all businesses and State Agencies operating across the food supply chain to sign up and commit to reducing food waste. At the end of 2025, there were 90 Charter members.

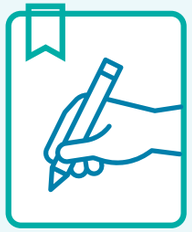
Charter members pledge to **measure** (monitor and track their food waste using standardised EPA measurement methodologies), **reduce** (identify and take at least one target-based action to reduce food waste) and **report** (to the EPA annually on progress towards measurable outcomes and achievements) on their food waste.

This is the second calendar year report on implementation of the Food Waste Charter.

Food Waste CHARTER



Signing the Food Waste Charter means you



PLEDGE

Commit to work together to reduce food waste.



MEASURE

Monitor and track the food waste and associated cost within your business' operations.



REDUCE

Identify appropriate interventions, set a target and take action to reduce food waste.



REPORT

Report annually to the EPA on your progress and achievements.

Click to view the Food Waste Charter website

Introduction
Promoting the Charter
Building knowledge & developing capacity
Networking
Food Waste Charter membership
Insights from member reports
Charter successes & challenges in 2025
To Find Out More

Promoting the Charter

The Charter was promoted through webinars, panel contributions and exhibiting at events including the following:

- Enterprise Ireland Food Innovation Summit
- Enterprise Ireland's webinar on Food Waste Reduction Strategies in Food and Beverage Processing
- Origin Green Knowledge Exchange
- Lidl Supplier Conference & Sustainability Summit
- IBEC Food Drink Ireland's Sustainability group
- Sustainable Tourism Network conference
- CATEX 2025
- Carlow Local Enterprise Office's food waste prevention networking event
- UCD M.Sc. in Food Business Strategy







SUSTAINABLE TOURISM NETWORK

Food Drink Ireland
Ibec

Introduction
Promoting the Charter
Building knowledge & developing capacity
Networking
Food Waste Charter membership
Insights from member reports
Charter successes & challenges in 2025
To Find Out More

Building knowledge & developing capacity

Measuring food waste is an essential starting point in preventing food waste as it helps identify where waste occurs and supports informed decision making to reduce it. The Food Waste Measurement Protocol was developed to help Irish food and drink companies measure food waste consistently, identify all food waste related flows, and compare current management practices against the food use and waste hierarchy. Without measurement, waste volumes can easily remain hidden and using the Protocol helps highlight issues and justify efforts required to reduce food waste.

Food Waste Charter members and other businesses from a variety of sectors have shared their experience using the Food Waste Measurement Protocol to reduce food waste in their business operations through case studies and testimonials.

Bakery Sector Case Study 1

Bakery Sector Case Study 2

Prepared Seafood Case Study

Prepared Food Case Study 1

Prepared Food Case Study 2

Prepared Food Case Study 3

Prepared Food Case Study 4

As a company that already tracks its waste, this process helped us identify gaps from a fresh perspective.

Was particularly useful for clarification on classification of food waste… subsequently helped with reporting to EPA

… you will only gain from the experience.

[The Protocol] is a valuable resource that helps validate existing processes while offering meaningful insights for optimisation and improvement.

Most of the data requested in the workbook could be taken from our monthly waste report.

Introduction
Promoting the Charter
Building knowledge & developing capacity
Networking
Food Waste Charter membership
Insights from member reports
Charter successes & challenges in 2025
To Find Out More

Networking

The EPA's **Forum on Food Waste** was held in June – the annual Food Waste Charter networking and knowledge sharing event. 75 people from 56 organisations attended.







CLICK HERE TO VIEW HIGHLIGHTS VIDEO





The EPA, representing Ireland, participates in the **EU Network of Food Waste Prevention Practitioners**, with representatives from The Netherlands, Greece, Hungary, Switzerland and the Nordic countries. The first in-person network meeting took place in The Hague in July over 2 days and provided an opportunity to share knowledge and case studies and delve deeper into the practical aspects of tackling food waste.



Introduction
Promoting the Charter
Building knowledge & developing capacity
Networking
Food Waste Charter membership
Insights from member reports
Charter successes & challenges in 2025
To Find Out More

Food Waste Charter membership

Food Waste Charter members by sector

At the end of 2025, there were 90 Charter members – 83 business members, representing 74,200 employees plus 7 supporting members.



2
Farming & Fishery



39
Food Manufacturing & Processing



3
Food Wholesale & Distribution



5
Food Retail



25
Restaurant & Food Service



9
Hotels & Accommodation



7
Supporting Member

CLICK TO VIEW CURRENT MEMBERS ON FOOD WASTE CHARTER WEBSITE

The Food Waste Charter is supported by two Government Departments and five State Agencies with a role in supporting and developing Ireland's food and drink sector businesses.

An Roinn Aeráide, Fuinnimh agus Comhshaoil
Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment

An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

BORD BIA
IRISH FOOD BOARD

BIM
Ireland's Seafood Development Agency

Enterprise Ireland

Fáilte Ireland

teagasc
Agriculture and Food Development Authority

Introduction

Promoting the Charter

Building knowledge & developing capacity

Networking

Food Waste Charter membership

Insights from member reports

Charter successes & challenges in 2025

To Find Out More

Insights from member reports

The table below provides insights from members' annual reports for reference year 2025.



MEASURE

Monitor and track the food waste and associated cost within your business' operations.

97% of respondents are measuring their food waste.

Measurement is central to the Charter pledge – identifying where and quantifying how much food waste is generated in the business lays the foundation for identifying actions to reduce food waste in line with realistic, measurable targets.

63% also measured the cost of food waste.

Linking food waste quantities to the economic cost provides a strong support for making the business case for funding food waste prevention initiatives in the business.

75% of respondents have established a baseline year or intensity target against which to measure food waste reduction.

To tackle food waste prevention in a meaningful way, food waste reduction must be benchmarked against a baseline year or an alternative target indicator to measure progress.

Introduction
Promoting the Charter
Building knowledge & developing capacity
Networking
Food Waste Charter membership
Insights from member reports
Charter successes & challenges in 2025
To Find Out More

Insights from member reports



REDUCE

Identify appropriate interventions, set a target and take action to reduce food waste.

90% of respondents have set a food waste reduction target.

Setting a target is a Charter commitment; once measurement has commenced and there is a baseline, it is easier to set the target.

87% reported that they had targeted food waste hotspots identified through measurement.

Identifying hot spots through measurement is a very positive step as it highlights where to target actions.

92% of respondents reported at least one food waste prevention initiative in 2025. The most common initiatives reported were staff training and awareness, identifying hot spots (and actions to tackle them), and redistribution of surplus.

Members should continue to focus on evidence-led actions that will prevent food waste in accordance with the food use and waste hierarchy for impact.

Focussing food waste prevention initiatives in identified hot spots for food waste generation in the business is most impactful.

62% of respondents reported collaborating with supply chain partners to reduce food waste.

Collaboration across the supply chain can be impactful as a food waste prevention measure. Examples reported included engaging with suppliers to receive deliveries in different formats and collaborating with retailers to reduce brand variation.

93% of respondents supported National Stop Food Waste Day, providing information to their staff and/or promoting it through their social media platforms. 97% reported more generally promoting the Charter, mainly through customer and internal communication channels.

Charter members who are building a culture of food waste prevention are influencing staff to prevent food waste at home and within the business.

Through their promotion of the Charter, members are helping to build momentum around the Charter and membership within their sector.

Introduction
Promoting the Charter
Building knowledge & developing capacity
Networking
Food Waste Charter membership
Insights from member reports
Charter successes & challenges in 2025
To Find Out More

Insights from member reports

REPORT

Report annually to the EPA on your progress and achievements.

74% of business members submitted their annual report for 2025.

61 business members reported; 22 did not. Members from the food service and hospitality sectors had the highest level of non-response.

97% of respondents provided food waste data.

A high number of members provided data but the quality and availability of data, while improved since 2024, was variable. Businesses need to maintain focus on data quality and use the EPA's Food Waste Measurement Protocol to ensure consistency of reporting.

Charter members must ensure that food waste measurement is given priority to meet their Charter commitment.

Introduction
Promoting the Charter
Building knowledge & developing capacity
Networking
Food Waste Charter membership
Insights from member reports
Charter successes & challenges in 2025
To Find Out More

Charter successes & challenges in 2025

SUCCESSES

The number of Charter business members increased in 2025 (+21 compared to 2024) and an increase in supporting members (+4).

- The EPA and supporting State Agencies (Bord Bia, Bord Iascaigh Mhara, Enterprise Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, Teagasc) will continue to promote the Charter and the benefits of addressing food waste to ensure high representation of food and drink sector businesses across the supply chain.
- There were 14 new Charter members from the manufacturing and processing sector in 2025. There are some manufacturing and processing sub-sectors with low membership uptake to date, e.g. dairy sector.

Charter members are reporting a wide range of food waste prevention initiatives, such as:

- Staff training and awareness.
- Behavioural interventions for production and service teams, introducing employee KPIs to drive behaviour, using staff champions.
- Working with competent authorities to obtain relevant authorisations for changes in processes or in use of materials.
- Introducing new products and repurposing in the food services sector.
- Engaging with suppliers to receive deliveries in optimised formats, collaborating with retailers to reduce brand variation, reducing waste from production line changeovers, and in relation to reducing school food waste, age-appropriate portioning and a pilot on data-sharing in relation to school absences.
- Food donations to FoodCloud.
- Investment in production equipment improvements and preventative maintenance.
- Adoption of digital and AI-based tracking technologies.

Introduction
Promoting the Charter
Building knowledge & developing capacity
Networking
Food Waste Charter membership
Insights from member reports
Charter successes & challenges in 2025
To Find Out More

Charter successes & challenges in 2025

CHALLENGES	**Some businesses need additional support to get started on food waste prevention. Members from the food service and hospitality sectors were the highest level of non-respondents in 2025.** • The EPA and supporting State Agencies will continue to engage and promote existing supports which are available to assist food and drink sector businesses in food waste prevention, and advocate for new supports, where required. **Keeping food waste prevention on the agenda at a strategic level within businesses can be a challenge as there are many competing priorities.** • Research has shown that businesses that invested in reducing food waste realised a 14:1 return on investment. Many members are now tracking the economic cost of food waste to support making the business case for prevention interventions. • This highlights the need to continue emphasising the cost savings, efficiency gains and competitiveness benefits associated with food waste reduction.



TO FIND OUT MORE

Email us: **foodwastecharter@epa.ie**

Check our website: **www.foodwastecharter.ie**

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