



Food Waste Charter Guidance: SEAFOOD SECTOR

THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY PROGRAMME
The Driving Force for Ireland's Move to a Circular Economy



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

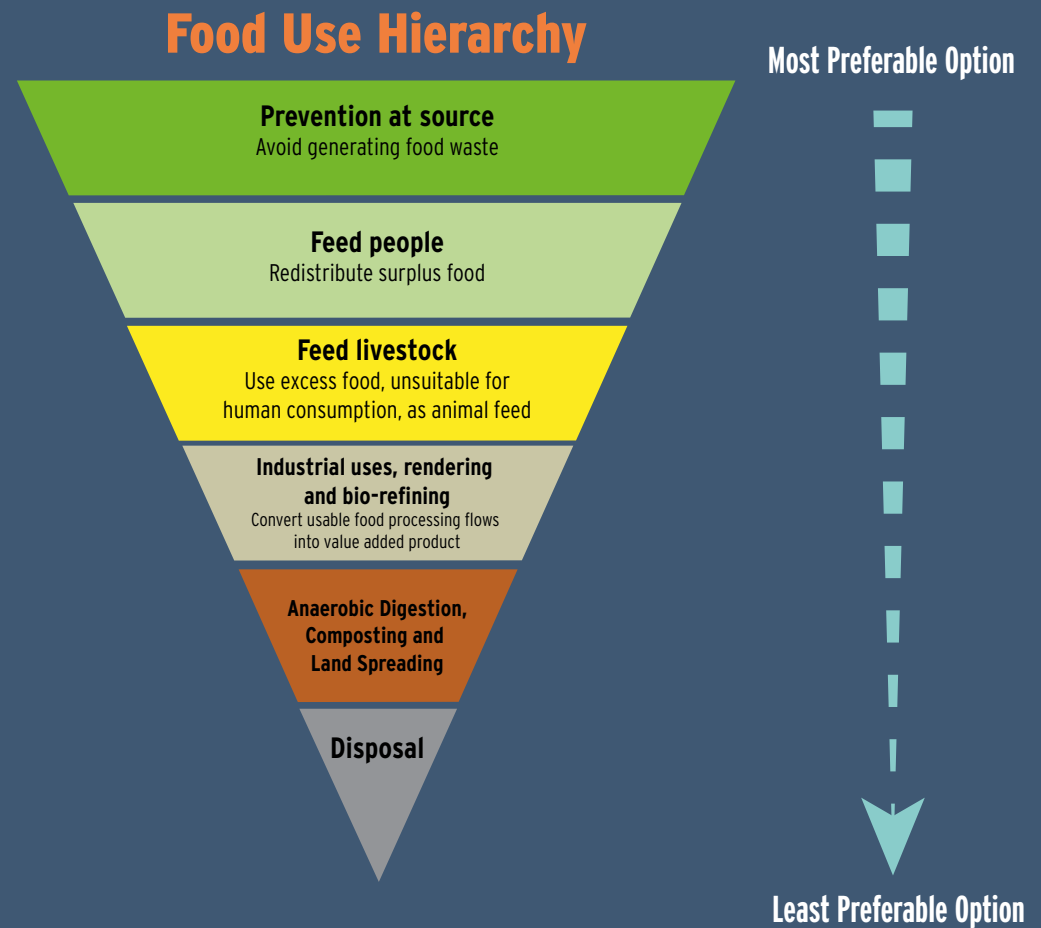
Tackling food waste is one of the key steps we can all take to help combat climate change and support Ireland's transition to a circular economy. This guidance provides a checklist of actions to help measure your organisation's progress in taking action to reduce food waste, along with some case studies to inspire you.

In the *National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap 2023-2025*, the Government has set out its strategy and identified key actions to meet Ireland's commitment to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030, in line with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12.3. *Food Vision 2030*, the stakeholder-led strategy for the Irish agri-food sector, also aims to halve the level of food waste per person by 2030 in accordance with SDG 12.3. Achieving this goal requires a collective effort from all businesses, aiming to prevent food waste by using raw materials as efficiently as possible. Doing so not only saves money but also reduces environmental impacts.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) leads the National Food Waste Prevention Programme, implementing activities to *drive change* across the food retail, distribution, processing and manufacturing sectors, as well as *reducing food waste* in the hospitality and food service sectors.

To understand our progress towards the 2030 target, we need to improve monitoring, measurement, and reporting of food waste across all sectors. To support this aim, the EPA has established the Food Waste Charter. The Charter is a voluntary agreement that asks food sector businesses to Pledge, Measure, Reduce, and Report on food waste. By signing the Charter, food sector businesses commit to measuring and reporting on food waste in a clear and consistent manner, and to taking actions to reduce it in accordance with national targets and associated milestones.

For more information and to sign the Charter visit <https://foodwastecharter.ie>



HOW RESOURCE EFFICIENT ARE YOU?

BUSINESS OF SEAFOOD:

If you are in the business of seafood then you will already know that your product has all the right stuff for it to become the preferred protein of the future – it's supported by nutrition and food systems research, consumer preferences, and global trends in health, technology, product delivery, and more.



Fish and seafood are comparatively sustainable to produce, and the sector provides an important contribution to the future of the planet. However, there is always room to turn good practice into best practice by ensuring your business is as sustainable as possible, particularly when it comes to reducing how much food is wasted.


Many businesses underestimate how much food waste is costing them (international studies estimate that it could be as high as **4% of turnover**). Reducing food waste has great potential to improve your business' turnover.

To start reducing wasted food and saving costs take the Food Waste Charter pledge, measure your food waste, take action to reduce it and report on your progress. Our checklist shows some simple actions to help you measure your progress. Tick off the actions on the checklist on the following page and give yourself a point for each tick to see how much you score.





ACTIONS CHECKLIST - see how you're doing



 PLEDGE	1	We have pledged our commitment to the Food Waste Charter to work together to reduce food waste.	
	2	The Food Waste Charter is a public commitment and as such we communicate our commitment to staff (e.g. via staff briefings) and externally with customers (e.g. via our website and social media).	

 MEASURE	1	We measure and record our food waste in line with the Food Loss and Waste Measurement Protocol. (https://www.foodwastecharter.ie).	
	2	We have a Food Waste Reduction (FWR) target.	
	3	We regularly (minimum monthly) track progress against our FWR target.	
	4	We report progress against our food waste KPI at monthly management meetings.	

 REDUCE	1	We minimise product waste in the supply chain, extending life through improved product and packaging design. We reduce supply chain lead times, to ensure that fish products have maximum product life when delivered and help meet our On Time In Full (OTIF) targets.	
	2	We work with our customers to maximise the "variable life" of the product. This ensures our products are at maximum quality in store with improved stock availability, which can help to lead to increased sales. We also consider smaller case sizes supplied more regularly.	
	3	We offer underweight whole fish, not suitable for filleting, as a "Catch of the Week". We use fish chunks/trimmings in other products e.g. fish cakes or pâté or we supply to another producer as an ingredient for their product.	
	4	Instead of sending by-products for disposal, we utilise existing markets such as the pet food market or the use of fish frames as flavouring. We explore new markets such as export opportunities, particularly to the Far East, where the market for fish heads can be exploited.	
	5	We seek opportunities to collaborate with other local producers to optimise collections or exploit market opportunities.	
	6	We develop markets for shell products, e.g. for use in aggregates, filter media and for decorative purposes.	

 REPORT	1	We report annually on our progress and achievements.	
	2	We publicly report annually on our progress and achievements.	
	3	We have produced a case study to showcase our progress and achievements.	

This score is just a first step.

Ideally you should use this checklist as an initial food waste action plan and aim to score a full 15 points. It is recommended you review your progress every 6 – 12 months. Once you have achieved a full score, the target should be to continue to reduce your food waste volumes, preferably measured as a percentage of your total food produced.

For more inspiration, please refer to the following Case Study



Company: Irish Fish Cannery

Goal: To systematically examine the fish production process with a view to reducing process waste.

The project used 'design of experiments' techniques to identify changes to optimise the factory processes and reduce waste. Using these 'lean' approaches, processes were examined to identify where waste streams were coming from and the reasons behind these wastes. This systematic assessment was conducted with the help of external expertise and the process prioritised which waste sources to look at. A mix of both technical and procedural changes were identified and implemented to achieve an **overall waste reduction of 26% per**

tonne of product produced. Sunflower oil used as an ingredient in some of the products was optimised through more accurate filling of cans, saving this valuable ingredient, and leading to less can rejections due to overfilling. Distribution of fish piece size was also addressed to reduce fish waste. Cook times and smoking times were also analysed and optimised. Canned product wastage was reduced, by examining and making changes to the filling process, adding an extra step to clear the can flanges before putting on the lids. This reduced can rejects, in turn saving on metal.



[*Irish-Fish-Cannery-case-study.pdf \(epa.ie\)*](#)

TO FIND OUT MORE:

Email us: foodwastecharter@epa.ie

Check our website: www.foodwastecharter.ie



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