

NESTLÉ IRELAND SUBMISSION TO FOOD WASTE PREVENTION ROADMAP

Introduction

Nestlé is the world's largest food and beverage company. With more than 2,000 brands, ranging from global icons to local favourites, we are present in 191 countries around the world.

Nestlé Ireland welcomes the opportunity to feed into this consultation looking at the proposed approach to prevent food waste, and as members of Food Drink Ireland (FDI), also associate ourselves with their submission.

We recognise that food waste is a huge issue as around a third of food produced annually is subsequently wasted. Given the global resources that are devoted to food production and distribution – in land, water, fertiliser and fuel costs, as well as greenhouse gas production – this has profound implications for the environment and the ability of the food sector to operate sustainably.

Nestle's ambition is to halve global food loss and waste by 2030, one of the key steps we can take in driving a transition to a more circular system. As this can occur at any point between where food is produced and consumed, our approach to preventing food waste involves the implementation of a number of practical, technological and educational initiatives. We also work alongside a range of stakeholders at all parts of the supply chain and have referenced our Irish partnerships and initiatives throughout this response.

We also support national and global initiatives including the Champions 12.3 coalition. This is a group of policymakers, businesses, internal organisations, research institutions, farmer groups and civil society dedicated to inspiring ambition, mobilizing action and accelerating progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 12.3 by 2030.

Consultation Questions

1. Do you think the approach as outlined in the draft Roadmap will deliver the reductions necessary to reduce Ireland's food waste by 50% by 2030?

Nestlé Ireland welcomes the ambition and intention of the draft Roadmap, and the overarching target to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030 aligns with our own global ambition. We have been working to reduce our food waste for more than a decade and in 2015 we achieved zero waste for disposal (including food waste) within our Irish operations.

As highlighted above, we recognise that tackling food waste requires a multifaceted approach and that all parts of the food chain share responsibility and have a role to play. As a business involved in both the Manufacturing and Processing and Retail and Distribution stages of the roadmap, we recognise that Nestlé has the ability to influence at various stages of the food supply chain to minimise food waste.

Within our infant nutrition production facility in Askeaton, Limerick we have undertaken a range of projects to tackle food waste. This includes putting strict controls in place to ensure raw material stocks are used before their expiry, assigning alternative uses to waste or raw materials (such as the production of biofuel from waste vegetable oil) and diverting any food waste to alternative recovery uses in line with the waste hierarchy.

We recognise that consumers are often confused by date labels, particularly Best Before End (BBE) dates, with research showing a majority of adults do not know that food past its BBE date is perfectly safe to eat. In 2021 we joined Too Good To Go's "Look, Smell, Taste, Don't Waste" campaign aiming to educate consumers to use their senses instead of purely following BBE labels. One year on from its launch, the campaign now has over 40 food and drink brand members and this messaging has now been rolled out on-pack across our whole Nestlé Cereals portfolio. Across our wider product portfolio, we have introduced a range of initiatives like resealable packaging to ensure products in larger formats remain fresher for longer for consumers.

In 2018 we entered a partnership with FoodCloud, a social enterprise that connects businesses with high quality surplus food to charities for redistribution. Nestlé Ireland became, and still is the first food supplier to make a financial contribution to FoodCloud Hubs for its surplus food redistribution. The company will provide a per pallet financial contribution to cover the costs to manage, store and redistribute any unforeseen food surplus.

Throughout the four years of working together we have prevented 69.1 tonnes of edible food from being wasted (221.1 CO2-eq avoided), in addition to financial contributions to the organisation totalling more than €110,000.

2. What additional actions do you think would be effective in helping Ireland reduce its food waste?

In 2019, Nestlé became one of the first manufacturers to report on its food waste and welcome proposals within the consultation for this to become mandatory within Ireland. This is one policy lever the Government can implement to drive progress in this area.

As supporters of the Champions 12.3 coalition and as a member of Repak and WRAP, we support the use of a robust methodology to measure progress in food waste.

3. What are the most effective awareness raising measures that could be taken to reduce food waste?

We recognise that alongside other actors in the food supply chain, consumers have a key role to play in tackling food waste and as such awareness raising of clear messages and actions they can take will be central to success in this area.

As highlighted above we joined with others across industry to support Too Good To Go's campaign which was launched recognising that understanding of BBE dates is low. Clear markings on products and raising awareness around this will be key in ensuring consumers know what actions they can take to reduce their own food waste.



4. Which sectors or stakeholders do you think should play a key role in the implementation of the Roadmap?

All sectors have a key role to play. Tackling food waste means working together with all stakeholders 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, processors, manufacturers, and retailers through to consumers themselves. Other food sector experts, research scientists, food banks and NGOs also play an important role.

The Government and the EPA also have a key role to play to ensure that consumers are educated on how to prevent food waste. The Government must also ensure there are supports for all sectors of the supply chain to implement food waste prevention initiatives, be that through training programmes, school initiatives or innovation and research.

- 5. Are you satisfied with the proposed Roadmap monitoring and evaluation arrangements? Nestlé welcomes the establishment of a Taskforce to monitor progress and we support the proposal to review the Roadmap every three years.
- 6. Have you any other comments or feedback on the content of the draft Roadmap?

 As a food manufacturer we encourage DECC to take a holistic approach to this issue, recognising that other factors interplay with food waste, such as packaging which plays an important role in extending the shelf life of food products. It will be important to ensure that there are no intended consequences from driving changes in packaging materials which may result in increased food waste by impacting food's shelf life or driving greater use of individual portions to ensure products stay fresher for longer.

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