

Draft National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap  
Public Consultation

Submission from the Regional Waste Management Planning Offices

**Q1: 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?**

Response:

While the approaches outlined in the draft Roadmap have merit, we believe that the Roadmap needs to articulate more details and specific actions in order to reach the ambitious targets of a 50% reduction in 2030. The Roadmap sets out much of what we need to do, but it is weak on some areas of implementation and these need to be strengthened for the final draft.

Many of the intentions set out in the roadmap, such as collaboration, stakeholder engagement, food waste awareness campaigns and so on are already happening and have not resulted in the desired degree of waste reduction.

Therefore the approach at this point needs to include some evaluation of the current efforts in order to identify possible gaps, a review of the elements already in operation, identification of additional actions that need to be taken or models being used elsewhere that would work well. In addition to setting out what needs to be done, the Roadmap needs to set out more detail about how it is envisaged that the various goals or intentions are achieved. Central to this is the issue of resources. The work required to achieve a 50% reduction in Ireland's food waste in just 8 years will need significant resources. To be effective, the roadmap must set out the level of resources needed and indicate how these resources will be allocated to the different stakeholders including at national and local government level as well as to the campaigns and projects to be initiated.

**Q2: What additional actions do you think would be effective in helping Ireland reduce its food waste?**

Response:

1. Our food production system is an area with a large untapped potential to develop the bio circular economy and this should be an explicitly stated focus of the Roadmap
2. A full stakeholder discovery exercise should be undertaken to ensure that the full range of stakeholders are included in the Roadmap implementation
3. Awareness raising needs to be scaled up dramatically if we are to reach these targets
4. Practical support should be considered for businesses, particularly small local businesses, involved in food production, preparation, retail etc. including sustainability training.
5. Sustainability training should be a prerequisite for businesses receiving enterprise funding. E.g., Initiatives such as The Food Academy, should at this point, only promote food businesses with a strong emphasis on sustainability.

**Q3: What are the most effective awareness raising measures that could be taken to reduce food waste?**

The two important cohorts (or audiences) for awareness raising in respect of food waste prevention are food businesses (particularly SMEs) and the public.

We would suggest developing a specific approach for SMEs and micro-enterprises involved in food production, preparation and retail. We would suggest considering any existing programmes such as the MODOS circular economy programme which could incorporate modules etc. specifically for food businesses.

Raising awareness and enacting behavioural change among the public are complicated processes – while they are separate processes, they obviously influence and enhance one another. We would suggest a well-executed national campaign on food waste prevention and food waste segregation, quickly followed by a Community Based Social Marketing (CBSM) initiative to increase understanding of the issue and then cement real change.

While the Stop Food Waste project has made some inroads in these areas, it has not had a lasting effect and this would be a good time to review it. We would suggest the use of well-resourced CBSM at local level, conducted by the local authorities to help enact behavioral change. A collaboration with Stop Food Waste could be useful here, updating the methods and activities with reference to models proving to be successful elsewhere.

**Q4: Which sectors or stakeholders do you think should play a key role in the implementation of the Roadmap?**

Food producers, processors, retailers, research community, catering colleges, local authorities (environment and enterprise sectors), EPA, bio economy actors, composting industry (e.g. Cre), waste industry, Bord Bia, farmers. The stakeholder group is diverse and this is why we would suggest undertaking a proper stakeholder discovery process and analysis prior to setting up the Food Waste Prevention Task Force.

**Q6: Have you any other comments or feedback on the content of the draft Roadmap?**

- The draft roadmap states that we all have a role to play, in terms of the Local Government Sector, the areas that we can influence are highlighted above. However we need to be specific in our approach, our teams are small we cannot expect significant change without more resources. The roadmap needs to consider extreme positive incentives which are more effective than negative incentives and have potential to trigger rapid change.
- Circular Economy/Resource Efficiency Officers could develop a programme for SME's at local level and target in particular restaurants & food services – but delivery of said programme would require additional resources to be provided in the Local Government Sector



- The EPA's household focused project (Stop Food Waste) has not yet made a significant lasting change to the level of food waste created at household level. Significant behavioural change, in our opinion only be achieved through a community based social marketing (CBSM) project, delivered nationwide, complimented by a communications programme. This would require significant resources.
- A collaborative commitment will require a change of attitude to communications. It has previously been argued that messaging can only cover prevention or segregation and not both. We challenge this and believe instead that the correct separation of food waste is the essential building block to monitoring and this applies to both the commercial and household sector. The pandemic has changed people's attitudes and behaviour with waste generation, which now requires fresh thinking from all organisations state or voluntary involved in communicating change. Additionally the current increase in the cost of doing business/living is bringing into focus for both SME's and households new opportunities to prevent waste and food is at the top of this for both SME's and households as it directly impacts budgets. There is significant opportunity here to capitalise at this time on food loss and food waste prevention.
- Communications alone will not deliver change and for households we believe the best approach is to lead with improved separation, followed quickly with CBSM projects to build peer to peer local knowledge and networks. Again, we stress that in a post pandemic context communication campaigns need to be updated to reflect changed consumer behavior.