



Public Consultation: National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap

Submission - TASC

28 March 2022

This submission is made on behalf of TASC, an independent think-tank whose mission is to address inequality and sustain democracy by translating analysis into action. TASC's Constitution presents its main objectives as:

- Promoting education for the public benefit
- Encouraging a more participative and inclusive society
- Promoting and publishing research for public benefit

TASC engages in research and public outreach concerning inequality, democracy, and climate justice in the current political, economic, and social environment. Through its work, TASC seeks to increase public knowledge of economic and social policy, improve working conditions, facilitate a just transition to advance climate action and protect livelihoods and communities, and more generally, contribute to positive social change in Ireland and the EU.

Consultation question 6: Have you any other comments or feedback on the content of the draft Roadmap?

Recommendations

As part of its climate justice stream, TASC is committed to tackling climate change in a way that protects the rights and livelihoods of workers. While TASC welcomes the development of the National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap, the transition to a circular economy and the overall

target to halve food waste in Ireland by 2030, we recommend that the draft roadmap go further to include the following areas:

- The interconnectedness of food poverty, food security and food waste
- Support for, and engagement with, community-led solutions to tackling food waste in Ireland

1. The interconnected nature of food poverty, food security and food waste

We recommend that the issue of food waste—specifically at the prevention stage—is examined alongside wider issues in our food system such as food poverty and food security. Broken food systems and their impact as a contributor to waste and climate change is well documented ([Alders et.al., 2016](#)) and should not be underestimated. For many, locally produced fresh food with minimal packaging is not an option, and perhaps this is felt most acutely now during this period of high inflation. As the price of basic goods continues to increase, seasonal, fresh produce is often more expensive than a heavily packaged, less fresh alternative that has been shipped from the other side of the world (Stop Food Waste.IE, 2022).

Furthermore, in the context of the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine, food security has become a national priority. In the last month alone, a National Fodder and Food Security Task Force have been implemented. This decision is a stark reminder of our overreliance on animal agriculture, and there is now an opportunity to examine food security, food poverty and food waste under one lens and focus on a shift away from intensification towards a diversification of crops within the framework of a Just Transition.

2. Support for, and engagement with, community-led solutions to tackling food waste in Ireland

Tackling the problem of food waste in Ireland will create benefits and burdens for society. In order for the transition to a circular and zero-emissions economy to be just and fair, it is imperative that the benefits created by the reduction of food waste in Ireland should be distributed equally across society. While we welcome prevention measures laid out in the draft roadmap such as “supporting innovative pilot projects to trial solutions to some of the challenges of preventing food waste”, the roadmap does not explicitly explore the potential for community-led solutions to the issue of food waste. While there is a clear emphasis on action at the household and individual level, community-level solutions and in particular, those that foster wealth-building in towns, villages and cities across Ireland are not referenced.

The *Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy*, however, does specify engaging with community-based networks and the need for a ground-up approach. In the section on food waste specifically, the *Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy* outlines solutions such as anaerobic digestion and composting. These solutions should be piloted and supported at a local level to understand the

opportunity for communities themselves to cooperatively own and sell locally generated energy and compost.

Furthermore, other community-led solutions to food waste such as community gardening, farmers' markets and food cooperatives pose a number of benefits in terms of waste prevention:

- Sourcing from local farmers reduces the likelihood of spoilage, in particular with regard to highly perishable goods.
- Reduced food miles will allow for reduced packaging requirements.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Regards,

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On behalf of

TASC

References:

Alders, R. et al. (2016) 'Approaches to Fixing Broken Food Systems.' in Good Nutrition: Perspectives.

Stop Food Waste.ie (2022) *5 Reasons to Eat Local, Seasonal Food*. Available at: <https://stopfoodwaste.ie/resource/5-reasons-to-eat-local-seasonal-food>. (Accessed 28 March 2022)