



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Review of the 2019 Food Waste Reduction Action Plan

January 2024

Contents

Executive Summary	3
1 Introduction	5
2 Our Progress: 2019 Action Areas and Measures	7
2.1 Improved monitoring and infrastructure	7
2.2 Sector Leadership	12
2.3 Public Engagement and communications	16
2.4 Supporting delivery of a new approach to food waste	19
3 Progress and Lessons Learned	23
3.1 Has progress been made against the FWRAP baseline?	23
3.2 What we have learned from progress so far	27
4 What we are proposing to do	28
4.1 What we need to do	28
4.2 Why we need to do it	30
4.3 How we will do it	31

Executive Summary

This document reviews food waste reduction activity in Scotland following publication of the Scottish Government Food Waste Reduction Action Plan (FWRAP) in 2019 and identifies lessons learned in order to inform future actions to tackle food waste.

The 2019 Plan set out how Scotland would meet the target to reduce food waste in Scotland by 33% by 2025, using 2013 food waste estimates as a baseline. Available evidence indicates that the need for effective action is increasing across Scotland. The latest data suggests that, in 2021, over 1.037 million tonnes of food was wasted in Scotland (equivalent to 189 kg per person per year) and this accounted for approximately 6% of Scotland's total carbon footprint in that year. In comparison to the 2013 baseline, this is a 2% per capita increase and a 5% increase on the volume of food wasted. Despite high awareness of the importance of reducing food waste, and a very small decrease in per capita household food waste, this increase is not sustainable. It does not support Scotland's statutory obligation to reach net zero by 2045 or our transition to become a circular economy to provide economic, environmental and societal benefits.

Since 2019, delivering food waste reduction actions was impacted by unforeseen circumstances. The COVID-19 pandemic, economic challenges and cost of living crisis have significantly impacted on businesses and communities and resources have been diverted to respond to these crises. As a result, while a number of commitments set out in the FWRAP have been delivered, others, like establishing a food waste hub, were paused. Some other activities, such as supporting food redistribution, have taken place despite not being a key action in 2019.



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The review sets out the lessons learned from activity to date and highlights clearly that food waste reduction is not happening at the speed or scale required to meet existing targets. The review highlights where there are opportunities to do more across all stages of the food system. The review also points to the lack of global success in achieving consistent, significant reductions in food waste; and the lack of legislative levers available to help reduce food waste at a national-level. The review makes these lessons, gaps and opportunities clear to help inform future work.

The review has informed the second consultation on the Scottish Government's draft Circular Economy and Waste Route Map which sets out proposed next steps on food waste as part of wider waste reduction activity. The Scottish Government, in collaboration with Zero Waste Scotland, will use the lessons learned from this review and any new evidence generated through the Circular Economy and Waste Route Map consultation and stakeholder engagement to finalise future measures to tackle food waste, which will be set out in the final Circular Economy and Waste Route Map, due for publication in the first half of 2024.



Food waste can be used for animal feed or in biorefining processes that traditionally use fossil-fuel based materials.

1 Introduction

Food waste is a global problem that has significant economic, environmental, and societal impacts. Tackling food waste is one of the most effective ways we can reduce the carbon impact of Scotland's waste. When food waste is sent to landfill it releases methane, a greenhouse gas many times more potent than carbon dioxide. Some of these emissions can be avoided by recycling food waste through processes like composting or anaerobic digestion. However, preventing food waste in the first place is far more beneficial as it also reduces the 'upstream' emissions, and costs, associated with growing, harvesting, processing, transporting and buying food to begin with.

The FWRAP was published in 2019 and set out a pathway to achieving the Scottish Government's ambitions to reduce food waste in Scotland by 33% by 2025, using 2013 food waste estimates as a baseline.

Since 2019, the importance of tackling the global problem of food waste and its impact on the climate crisis has only increased: the UN Environment Programme Food Waste Index Report 2021¹ highlighted that global food waste could be twice the size of previous estimates of 1 billion tonnes of food wasted each year, and not just restricted to high income countries².

Scotland's Climate Change Plan (Climate Change Plan: The Third Report on Proposals and Policies 2018-2032), published in 2018, set a target to reduce per capita food waste by 33% from 2013 to 2025. Scotland is also committed to working towards UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG); therefore, the 2025 target is intended to act as a step on the way to the UN SDG 12.3 of a 50% reduction in per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and a reduction in food losses along the production and supply chains by 2030.

UK research has suggested that achieving a 58% per capita reduction in food waste by 2050, would contribute up to 9.1 MtCO₂e to the 6th Carbon Budget³, the equivalent of removing 5.6 million cars from UK roads for the year in 2020, and reduce cumulative emissions by 143 MtCO₂e by 2050⁴.

¹ [UNEP – Food Waste Index Report 2021](#)

² [World Economic Forum – Global food waste solutions](#)

³ [Climate Change Committee – Sixth carbon budget](#)

⁴ [WRAP – Net Zero: Why resource efficiency holds the answers](#)

The 33% target is also one of Scotland's 5 ambitious waste and recycling targets set to drive progress towards a circular economy⁵. In 2022, the Scottish Government consulted on proposals for a Circular Economy and Waste Route Map in order to accelerate progress against these targets in a way that maximises emissions reduction⁶. The Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill was introduced in June 2023⁷ to establish the legislative framework to support Scotland's transition to a zero waste and circular economy. Reducing food waste will help Scotland achieve the 15% reduction of all waste by 2025 and the 5% of waste to landfill targets and the forthcoming ban on landfilling biodegradable municipal waste. Beyond waste targets, reducing food waste in Scotland can also help deliver our ambition to become a Good Food Nation, as outlined in the Scottish Government's forthcoming national Good Food Nation Plan, as well as helping businesses and households save money, which is increasingly important during a cost-of-living crisis⁸ and high food inflation⁹, where over a third of people are concerned about affording food in the next month¹⁰.

The Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill and proposals for the Circular Economy and Waste Route Map highlight the impact of food waste and set out a range of legislative and non-legislative measures to tackle it. We want to improve how we produce, purchase,

store, and cook food so that we waste less. This is a shared endeavour – everyone, from households to primary producers, can work together to reduce food waste. We also want to enable businesses to reduce their food waste by providing the infrastructure, expertise and support they need to implement food waste reduction activities and utilise food waste that cannot be prevented to create a circular bioeconomy.

This Review aims to reflect on the wide ranging activity undertaken in Scotland since 2019.

The review is divided into four sections:

1. The introduction reviews the changes in the Scottish, UK and global context since the publication of the FWRAP.
2. The second section reviews key actions from the 2019 FWRAP and describes the progress against those actions.
3. The third part describes what difference the actions have made to the amount of food waste in Scotland and the lessons learnt, 4 years on from the publication of the plan.
4. The final part reflects on the findings from the review to help inform our future approach.

⁵ [The Scottish Government – Delivering Scotland's Circular Economy consultation](#)

⁶ [The Scottish Government – Delivering Scotland's Circular Economy consultation](#)

⁷ [The Scottish Parliament – Circular Economy \(Scotland\) Bill](#)

⁸ [The Scottish Government – Cost-of-living support](#)

⁹ [Office for National Statistics – Cost-of-living insights: Food](#)

¹⁰ [Food Standards Scotland – Consumer attitudes towards the diet and food environment in Scotland research report](#)

2 Our Progress: 2019 Action Areas and Measures

The FWRAP set out the actions required to meet the 33% target, and committed to making the change required possible by working across the following interconnected areas:

1. Improved monitoring and infrastructure.
2. Sector leadership.
3. Public engagement and communications.
4. Supporting delivery of a new approach to food waste.

2.1 Improved monitoring and infrastructure

Our 2019 commitment

To reduce waste effectively, we need to improve our monitoring, measurement and reporting of food waste across all sectors. We will:

- Consult, by the end of 2019, on a mandatory national food waste reduction target and mandatory reporting of Scotland's food surplus and waste by food businesses.
- Develop the infrastructure to support the reporting of food waste.

Our Progress

- Consulted on and introduced Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill to Scottish Parliament, including proposed powers to require persons or businesses to make information publicly available which are intended to be used to introduce mandatory public reporting of food waste and surplus.
- 60 businesses operating in Scotland signed up to WRAP's 'Target, Measure, Act' approach to food waste reduction since launching the FWRAP.
- Development of a UK-wide Digital Waste Tracking System, due to be rolled out from 2024.
- The Scottish Government's £70m Recycling Improvement Fund is enhancing food waste recycling collections.

Progress has focused on action to support effective data collection. Some ongoing actions include sharing our knowledge and learning from international partners through forums such as the EU Platform on Food Loss and Food Waste. One ongoing action that will help significantly address data gaps is for businesses to report their food waste and further detail on this is provided below.

Mandatory Public Reporting of Food Waste and Surplus

The 2019 FWRAP committed to consult on mandatory public reporting of Scotland's food waste and surplus by food businesses. The Scottish Government consulted on this issue through its 2019 and 2022 consultations on proposals for a Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill, and the Circular Economy and Waste Route Map consultation in 2022. All three consultations generated strong overall support for the introduction of mandatory public reporting of food waste.

As part of the consultations, stakeholders have expressed a range of opinions on how public reporting of food waste should be implemented. Key considerations that were identified include the potential burden of reporting on small and medium enterprises, the potential different approaches to reporting on food waste across the UK, and how food waste is defined and classified.

The Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill was introduced to Scottish Parliament on 13 June 2023. It includes powers for Scottish Ministers to require businesses to make information publicly available about anything stored or disposed of by them. Subject to the Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill completing its Parliamentary passage, it is likely that food waste and surplus will be one of the first areas to be subject to mandatory public reporting, which would be implemented through secondary legislation, in order to enable businesses to take targeted action and promote transparency about the amount of food waste and surplus.

Improving Food Waste Data

The Scottish Government and SEPA have been working with other governments and regulators in the UK on the development of a Digital Waste Tracking Service. This will offer a step change in the quality and timeliness of waste data, including site-specific total volumes of food waste arising from businesses. This service will offer some of the granular detail necessary to facilitate the production of annual estimates of food waste in Scotland and potentially identify supply chain or geographical food waste hotspots. Digital Waste Tracking is expected to be implemented fully in 2025.

A previous national Waste Composition Analysis of household waste was undertaken in 2013-2015 and indicated that 23% of all household waste collected by local authorities was food waste¹¹. This waste goes to landfill where the food waste breaks down anaerobically, releasing harmful methane gas. An updated Household Waste Composition Analysis was commissioned by Zero Waste Scotland in 2021. This analysis was completed to understand if the requirements on separate collections of waste in the Environmental Protection Act 1990¹² (as amended by the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012) have helped reduce the amount of food waste in the residual stream, and if the other work described in this review has reduced the total amount of food wasted.

¹¹ [Zero Waste Scotland - The composition of household waste at the kerbside in 2014-15](#)

¹² [The National Archives - Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)

Data from 15 Local Authorities was sampled between 2021 and 2023, and the results of the analysis were published in October 2023¹³. The report indicated that there was an increase of 32,000 tonnes in the total amount of food waste collected at the kerbside (from 409,000 tonnes in 2013-2015 to 441,000 tonnes in 2021). Food waste is collected by local authorities in the residual bin, and through separate collections. Separate collections are either food waste only or mixed with garden waste. These separate collections allow the food and garden waste to be recycled through composting or anaerobic digestion. Between 2013-2015 and 2021-2023, food waste disposed of in the residual bin decreased from 332,000 tonnes to 330,000 tonnes, but the amount of food waste disposed of through separate collections increased from 77,000 tonnes to 111,000 tonnes. This increase in separate food waste collections accounts for the increase in the total amount of food waste. Food waste accounted for 24% of all household waste collected by local authorities, compared to 23% in 2013-2015.

The Scottish Government has been a signatory to WRAP's Courtauld Commitment 2030¹⁴ for the duration of the FWRAP. As part of this wider programme¹⁵, 300¹⁶ UK businesses are implementing the 'Target, Measure, Act' approach to food waste monitoring in their operations, which includes nearly a third of all large food businesses in the UK.

Of these 300 businesses, 60 have operations in Scotland. In 2022, the Scottish Government reaffirmed its dedication as a signatory, which has refocused its efforts towards the UN SDG 12.3. The food waste data reported by signatories to WRAP plays an important part of understanding food waste across the supply chain at a UK level and how this compares to Scotland.

Improving Infrastructure

Our engagement and consultation process on proposals for the Circular Economy and Waste Route Map suggests there is a public perception that recycling food waste does not contribute to food waste because the waste is being recycled¹⁷.

The aim is to prevent food from becoming waste in the first place, and strive to achieve the maximum value and minimum environmental impact from any remaining waste. The food waste hierarchy¹⁸ sets out the most preferable ways of minimising the impact of food waste if preventing it is not possible. It states that surplus food from producers, manufacturers and retailers that could become waste should be redistributed to humans if possible.

¹³ [Zero Waste Scotland – Household Waste Composition Analysis](#)

¹⁴ [WRAP – The Courtauld Commitment 2030](#)

¹⁵ The Courtauld Commitment is a voluntary agreement that aims to deliver reductions in food waste, greenhouse gas emissions and water stress across the whole UK supply chain.

¹⁶ [WRAP – Courtauld 2030 Food Systems Transformation Plan](#)

¹⁷ [The Scottish Government – Delivering Scotland's Circular Economy consultation](#)

¹⁸ [The Scottish Government – Food waste reduction: Action plan](#)

If this isn't possible, it should be sent to animal feed. If it cannot be fed to animals it could be used as a feedstock for biorefining process that can turn it into valuable materials that can be used in other processes that traditionally use fossil-fuel based materials or unsustainable materials. If none of the options above are possible then the food waste can be recycled through anaerobic digestion or composting. The Scottish Government is aware households may not be able to fulfil all of these actions. However, organisations and businesses across Scotland should be exhausting all of these options before considering disposing of food waste through incineration or disposal to landfill or sewer which have the most negative environmental impacts.

80% of households in Scotland now have access to food recycling collections, and although SEPA has reported a 107% increase in the amount of household food waste between 2011 and 2021, the results of the waste composition study indicate that there is still a significant amount of food waste in the residual waste that could be recycled¹⁹.

To break down the barriers to food waste reuse and recycling, the 2019 FWRAP committed to consulting on the rural exemption for food waste recycling collections and related separation requirements.

Significant preparatory work was done in late 2019. However, the consultation was delayed due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and the significant challenges the pandemic placed on local authorities, businesses and waste management services.

The Scottish Government is committed to working with local authorities and citizens to improve recycling from households and making the right choices the easier choices for households. The Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill includes provisions which will allow Scottish Ministers to publish a new statutory Household Recycling Code of Practice following co-design with local authorities and citizens in order to deliver better, more consistent recycling services and to maximise the amount of waste diverted from disposal. This includes increasing the collection and recycling of food waste by ensuring that as many households as possible have access to this service. The Scottish Government remains committed to consulting on the rural exemption for collections in order to inform the development of the Code of Practice and the co-design of waste and recycling services.

In 2021, the Scottish Government launched the £70m Recycling Improvement Fund, to help modernise local authority recycling infrastructure and services²⁰. Over £60 million has now been awarded to 21 local authorities to increase the quantity and quality of recycling across Scotland. The Fund is supporting a range of improvements, including more frequent recycling collections, the extension of food and garden waste collections, and local service redesigns to align with Scotland's Household Recycling Charter.

¹⁹ [SEPA - Waste from all sources: Summary data 2021](#)

²⁰ [Zero Waste Scotland - Recycling Improvement Fund](#)

These projects are multi-faceted, often addressing multiple types of waste and recycling, but several have included elements that deliver improvements to food waste collections. These projects are set out below.

The Recycling Improvement Fund runs until 2026 and remains open for applications. All of the projects are being evaluated to understand their impact on increasing recycling and reducing waste, including food waste.

Table 1. Recycling Improvement Fund food waste projects

Local authority	Project description
City of Edinburgh	As part of a wider project to implement a redesigned and improved waste service for properties served by communal bins, an additional 1,700 food waste bins were provided. It is not possible at this stage to identify specific value of food waste investments.
Midlothian	£132,085 to expand food waste recycling services to 1,800 additional rural properties.
Clackmannanshire	£29,503 to upgrade in-cab vehicle technology for all waste and recycling services, including an aim to increase the tonnage of food waste collected by 7%.
Western Isles	£66,410 to fund 2,500 bins for garden and food waste.
Perth & Kinross	£27,299 for the purchase and installation of food waste bins in Perth city centre.
Glasgow	Part of a major overhaul of kerbside recycling services, £80,000 of the total project budget is allocated to food waste caddies and liners.
Highland	£1,380,524 to expand food waste collections, including the purchase of food waste caddies, bins and collection vehicles.
Total	£1,715,821

2.2 Sector Leadership

Our 2019 commitment

Everyone in Scotland is expected to play their part in tackling food waste and reaching our target. We will support leadership, innovation, effectiveness and efficiency in Scotland's public, private and hospitality sectors by:

- Building skills, competency and knowledge on the management of food waste.
- Sharing expertise and best practice.
- Promoting consistent, transparent, and Scottish-specific reporting on food waste following the principles of 'Target, Measure, Act'.
- Working with leaders, forums, and professional and stakeholder groups to offer support and advice on reducing waste throughout the food supply chain; also creating 'champions' for the cause of reducing food waste.

Our Progress

- 250 food waste audits for Scottish businesses.
- NQ5 Food Waste and Sustainability course developed and included for all Level 5 culinary arts students at City of Glasgow College from August 2022.
- Creating accessible food waste reduction materials for the Scottish Ethnic Minority Deaf Community and Isaro Community Initiative²¹.

- Glasgow City Council and Zero Waste Scotland running a schools food waste reduction pilot.
- Hospitality Zero Project: a 30% reduction in food waste by the majority of participants.
- Including food waste reduction objectives in the development of the national Good Food Nation Plan.

The FWRAP has contributed to wider Scottish Government policies relating to food. This includes the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022 which provides an over-arching framework for clear, consistent and coherent future Scottish food policy. The Act places duties on Scottish Ministers, local authorities and health boards to produce Good Food Nation Plans and it means that any new food related policy will have to be considered not in isolation, but in the context of the national Good Food Nation Plan, working towards greater coherence across policy areas.

Engagement across sectors about food waste and FWRAP actions was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, progress has been made. The FWRAP has focused activity on driving transformative change in business practice throughout the food supply and value chain, and across all sectors.

²¹ [Isaro Community Initiative – Projects](#)

Both the public and private sectors need to adapt practices to innovate and influence others to reduce food waste, increase efficiency, reduce costs, and make Scotland a world leader in sustainable consumption.

Zero Waste Scotland has worked with a wide range of organisations to conduct pilot programmes and key actions across several sectors. These include:

Business Sector

- 49 food waste audits for Scottish businesses were conducted between 2019 and March 2020 through the Food and Drink Advice and Support Service²². This engagement identified 1,136 tonnes of food waste savings, potential carbon savings of 5,551 tonnes CO₂e and cost savings of £304,495. Since 2020 and the impact of COVID-19, the focus of this work shifted from completing audits to focussing on large scale exemplar case studies which included working with large businesses to establish new training and tools to reduce food waste. Some of which are mentioned below.
- Regular engagement with the UK's main retailers and food businesses was achieved through membership of WRAP's Courtauld Commitment 2030. The Scottish Government's ongoing support for WRAP has enabled it to produce world-leading research, such as on fresh produce, date labelling and plastic packaging.

WRAP's recent report in reducing household waste and plastic packaging recommended food retailers and suppliers sell loose produce, remove date labels and provide best practice guidance on storage for consumers²³. Such research can have significant impact, with, for instance, some large retailers announcing they will remove best before dates from hundreds of fresh food products to reduce food waste^{24 25}.

Hospitality Sector

- 134 audits were conducted for hospitality and food service businesses, with an additional 25 food waste reduction implementation projects.
- Two partnership projects, Hospitality Zero & Food Waste Reduction Challenge, supported 20 businesses to measure and reduce their food waste with food waste reduction action plans written for those participants in the Hospitality Zero project. The importance of measuring food waste is highlighted through the food waste reduction challenge project "71% of participants achieved a 30% reduction in food waste by measuring alone."
- Zero Waste Scotland, through its key sector engagement, has collaborated with a variety of stakeholders to deliver webinars (e.g., 'Hospitality Secret Weapon Series'), panel discussions and events to promote food waste reduction support, tools, and interventions (e.g., One Month Challenge).

²² [Zero Waste Scotland - Food Waste Reduction Business Support](#)

²³ [WRAP - Reducing household food waste and plastic packaging](#)

²⁴ [The Guardian - Waitrose removes best-before dates from fresh food to reduce waste](#)

²⁵ [Asda - Asda announces major change to help customers reduce food waste and save money](#)

Key stakeholders include:

- Visit Scotland
 - Highland Community Waste Partnership
 - Various Chambers of Commerce
 - Keep Scotland Beautiful
 - Visit Aberdeenshire
 - WRAP
 - Greener Kirkcaldy
 - Green Tourism
- Zero Waste Scotland has engaged in a behaviour change pilot project with a large caterer operating in an international conference venue to develop and pilot-test appropriate interventions. The final report, due in 2024, will highlight the successes and challenges of the methodology and learnings shared with similar food service/ events venues.
 - Supporting food waste reduction in the hospitality and food service sector is ongoing. Key, influential businesses have been identified through the business support service framework to pilot waste reduction interventions providing not only waste reduction but best practice to share in the sector.
 - Raising awareness of food waste reduction within the hospitality and food service sector is key and achieved through campaigns such as 'Grounds for Recycling'. This was a coffee themed hospitality and tourism campaign delivered during the, high profile, UCI Cycling World Championships. Over 140 Glasgow based food sector businesses (owners and key decision makers) were engaged with to highlight Zero Waste Scotland's business support and online resources.

Public Sector

- Glasgow City Council and Zero Waste Scotland ran a schools food waste reduction pilot to encourage learners to consider the scale and impact of food waste within their schools. Engagement was challenging during COVID-19 with only 2 out of 5 schools providing the necessary data. This data was analysed, but the project required a larger sample size. Findings were shared with the University of Glasgow to complement a similarly scoped behaviour change project in Glasgow schools.
- More recently, a schools food waste pilot, in collaboration with Glasgow City Council, began in Autumn 2021. Schools are establishing a baseline for food being wasted in the dining hall at lunchtime, will deliver learner-led campaigns and interventions based on the insights, and evaluate their progress towards a co-created target.
- Supporting City of Glasgow College to develop an NQ5 Food Waste and Sustainability course, which is now included for all level 5 students as of August 2022. The unit has been taught to over 150 students to date. It is also being verified with SQA and the unit will be added to the group award for Level 5 professional cookery for 2023/24. It includes a practical element, e.g., using seasonal and unused produce through preserving and other methods. The unit can be used as a generic course available to all Scotland's colleges; and it is also available globally through Canvas Commons Virtual Learning Environment.

- Collaborating with Developing the Young Workforce Dundee and Angus, The Food & Drink Federation Scotland, and Abertay University to develop a food waste project for secondary schools.
- Launching the Scottish Government Sustainable Procurement²⁶ tools website in 2020. Food waste prevention support has been provided to procurement teams in Scotland Excel and NHS Scotland. Procurement guidance has also been developed at sub-national level, for example, the Glasgow City Food Plan²⁷.
- Food for Thought programme – Partnership with Education Scotland to support the annual award of Food for Thought funding to the education sector in Scotland. The project enables engagement with over 150 schools annually to raise awareness of the impact of food waste with the education pack enabling teachers to then disseminate awareness with pupils.
- Supporting Keep Scotland Beautiful's National Lottery application to fund a 'Highland Waste Collective', which includes food waste awareness-raising and behaviour change intervention testing.
- Supporting the ISARO Community Initiative with the development of their food waste reduction cookbook, providing advice, expertise and PR support²⁸.
- Repurposing the Good to Go 'doggy bag' scheme during COVID-19 to ensure food reached groups that can use it for social good. 40 organisations were supported, helping rural and urban charities and community groups alike to prepare and share the equivalent of 26,000 meals.
- In response to the cost-of-living crisis, Zero Waste Scotland supported communities with a further tranche of repurposing the Good to Go legacy stock, offering this stock to ease the burden of redistributing meals.

Community Sector

- Adapting our 'Love Food, Hate Waste' training presentation for the Scottish Ethnic Minority Deaf Community (SEMDC), as well as food waste reduction videos and training sessions delivered in December 2019 and January 2020 to SEMDC members.

²⁶ [The Scottish Government – Sustainable Procurement Tools](#)

²⁷ [Good food for all – Glasgow City Food Plan](#)

²⁸ [Zero Waste Scotland – Scottish communities hold the ingredients to tackle food waste](#)

2.3 Public Engagement and Communications

Our 2019 commitment

We are asking Scotland's people to make changes in their choices and behaviours around food and food waste. We will deliver a sustained programme of communications designed to: raise people's awareness and understanding of the food waste problem; engage them in activities that address the problem and; create citizen advocates for food waste reduction.

Our Progress

- 'Food Gone Bad' and 'Save Food. Save Money. Save The Earth.' campaigns delivered in 2019 and 2022, encouraged Scottish households to reduce and recycle their food waste.
- Zero Waste Scotland Down the Drain campaign drew attention to the overlooked area of drink waste.
- Zero Waste Scotland and Rankin COP26 campaign highlighted food waste's impact on climate change to a global audience.
- 245 'Love Food Hate Waste' training workshops delivered, with 92% of attendees sharing learnings with others, driving behaviour change on food waste.
- Launched household behaviour change project with Fife Council, The London School of Economics and King's College London to identify effective food waste reduction interventions at household level.

Prevention is the highest priority in the fight against food waste and the focus of the Love Food Hate Waste Scotland consumer focused programme since its launch in 2009. Many of the most successful campaigns have focused on key periods of food waste like Christmas, Halloween, and Burns Night. The campaigns provide practical advice, educating and inspiring consumers with recipe ideas, shopping tips and storage guidance.

In addition, the Scottish Government, Zero Waste Scotland and Food Standards Scotland have delivered a number of awareness-raising campaigns, designed to encourage positive food waste reduction behaviours across Scottish households and businesses. These include:

- The Scottish Government and Zero Waste Scotland's 'Food Gone Bad'²⁹ campaign launched alongside the FWRAP in 2019, with a follow-up, 'Save Food. Save Money. Save the Earth'³⁰ campaign in February 2022. This encouraged more Scottish households to proactively reduce their food waste, with an online food waste reduction toolkit providing support; or to recycle the food waste they cannot prevent, with tips on how to make this as simple as possible for households.

²⁹ [The Scottish Government – Delivering Scotland's Circular Economy consultation](#)

³⁰ [The Scottish Government – Net Zero Scotland: Food Waste Toolkit](#)

- The Zero Waste Scotland x Rankin: Turning The Lens On Food Waste COP26 campaign³¹, which highlighted the massive impact of food waste on climate change during the climate conference in Glasgow in 2021. The campaign generated significant interest with key messaging seen by citizens, businesses and stakeholders. It also won 4 accolades including a “Best Environmental Cause Campaign” award at the prestigious Purpose Awards. Post COP26 evaluation also highlighted that the campaign was responsible for a 5% increase in public awareness of food waste’s contribution to climate change among those living in Scotland.



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- The Zero Waste Scotland Down the Drain campaign³² 2022, which tackled the topic of drink waste. 11% of food waste is actually drink. This campaign aimed to raise awareness of drink waste and urged everyone to drink responsibly in every sense of the word. The campaign generated 4.1 million online views.
- The 2023 Zero Waste Scotland CAN-paign campaign³³ was designed to aid households during the cost-of-living crisis by educating consumers and businesses on how to manage their food effectively, save money and reduce waste. This was achieved by a six-month ambassador led (Chef Julie Lin) campaign which sought to encourage the use of tinned food. The campaign featured considerable out-of-home marketing with a roadshow across Scotland appearing at several city centres, community fridges and music festivals. The campaign generated 8.6 million online views and post campaign evaluation has shown 55,000 more people in Scotland now make up most of their weekly shop with tinned food and view it as a safer bet for the environment – based on consumption of food and recycling the tin.



All images ©Zero Waste Scotland

³² [Zero Waste Scotland - Down The Drain: Tapping into drink waste campaign](#)

³³ [Zero Waste Scotland - Can-paign campaign](#)

- 245 'Love Food Hate Waste' cascade training workshops were delivered to 2952 attendees between the publication of the 2019 FWRAP and January 2023. This training delivered free, interactive workshops to organisations to inspire and encourage behaviour change in individuals to reduce food waste at home. 98% of attendees were likely to recommend the workshop to colleagues, friends and family and 92% said they shared what they learnt with others, suggesting the workshops may be influencing the behaviour of more than just those who attended.
- Between January and March 2023, Zero Waste Scotland piloted a new approach to the Love Food Hate Waste cascade training. 8 pilot workshops were completed with businesses and community groups to get feedback on the content and format of the workshops as well as road test our evaluation method to better measure the impact of the workshops and assess the spread of knowledge. A total of 75 attendees were offered different engagement strategies and levels of support depending on their skills and experience. A Love Food Hate Waste Digital Training Resource is being commissioned which will be hosted on the Zero Waste Scotland website.
- Food Standards Scotland also made available an online resource called 'Eat Well Your Way'³⁴. This resource is aimed at individuals to help improve their awareness on how to plan meals and choose healthier options, which can also play a role in reducing food waste.

2.4 Supporting delivery of a new approach to food waste

Our 2019 commitment

Driving effective change throughout the food supply chain needs a coordinated approach. Through a new Food Waste Hub, we will:

- Connect businesses seeking to reduce food waste with the funding, support and innovations that they need.
- Identify the skills that Scotland needs if we are to develop new ways of reducing food waste and optimising our use of bio-resources.
- Promote research and innovation in emerging bio-technologies and other solutions that will tackle food waste.

Our Progress

- 1,000 tonnes of food redistributed with £200,000 of support for FareShare's 'Surplus with Purpose' scheme in 2021/22.
- 856 tonnes of food redistributed with £150,000 of support in 2022/23.
- Food Redistribution Matchmaking Service launched in 2020.
- Mapping of food redistribution sector for Scotland completed.
- Two food redistribution research projects completed: bread and bakery surplus; and international best practice for food surplus redistribution.

In accordance with the waste hierarchy, the reuse of food waste resources is far more desirable and sustainable than its disposal. Therefore, all prevention and redistributions options must be exhausted.

Surplus Food Redistribution

Preventing edible food becoming wasted has an important part to play in our fight against climate change. This has proved particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic, with large amounts of food surplus entering the supply chain due to restaurant and hospitality closures through 2020 and 2021.

The Scottish Government supported food redistribution in Scotland, with funding of £200,000 to FareShare's 'Surplus with Purpose' programme in 2021/22 and £150,000 in 2022/23.

The 'Surplus with Purpose' programme works with farmers, growers and manufacturers to cover the additional costs involved with getting their unsold good-to-eat food onto people's plates³⁵. In 2021/22, 1,001 tonnes of good-to-eat surplus food was redistributed from Scottish growers to community food groups (the equivalent of 2.3 million meals), and in 2022/23, 856 tonnes were redistributed, equivalent to just over 2 million meals.

In 2021/22, all the surplus food redistributed under the scheme was fresh produce, specifically potatoes and carrots. In 2022/23, 93% of the surplus food distributed was fresh fruit and vegetables; the remaining 7% was protein. Had these not been redistributed, they would have gone to animal feed or been ploughed back into the field. Scottish potato company Albert Bartlett reported that this funding had helped them redistribute the equivalent of 5 million meals³⁶.

It is important to note that redistribution of food only reduces food waste if the surplus comes from a part of the supply chain that classifies it as food waste so that it contributes towards the 33% target.

³⁵ [FareShare - Surplus with Purpose](#)

³⁶ [Fresh Produce Journal - 5m FareShare milestone for Albert Bartlett](#)

The food redistributed through the 'Surplus with Purpose' scheme does not directly contribute to the target as the surplus came from primary producers. Redistribution is the highest level of the food waste hierarchy, so even if the surplus would not normally contribute to the target, ensuring it reaches people and communities is the best possible outcome other than preventing it occurring in the first place.

In response to the redistribution of food that continues to take place across Scotland and through community groups, Zero Waste Scotland launched its Food Redistribution Matchmaking Service in July 2020³⁷. This service looked to support the redistribution network and partner redistribution organisations with businesses who have surplus edible food that can be utilised by community food organisations. Stakeholder engagement to promote the service and redistribution continues. Zero Waste Scotland's redistribution guidance was also reviewed and updated in spring 2021, with support from Food Standards Scotland³⁸.

WRAP's Courtauld 2030 commitment on food waste reduction provides another forum through which to engage business on the Food Waste Reduction Roadmap, particularly through the Courtauld Redistribution Working Group and promotion of its outputs such as the 'Beyond Best Before' redistribution date label guidance³⁹. A training workshop on this guidance was delivered to the Perth Food Network in February 2021.

During 2020 Zero Waste Scotland also investigated the redistribution landscape in Scotland to identify the key barriers and opportunities facing businesses and communities regarding redistribution of surplus food. Following this, a study into bread and bakery surplus was carried out, due to it consistently being pointed out as a key challenge for community redistribution organisations. During November 2021 Zero Waste Scotland conducted an international best practice review to inform what levers and support could be introduced based on learnings in other countries. Findings from these projects will be used to inform our future approach to food redistribution.

Takeaway food boxes and reusable bags normally distributed as part of Zero Waste Scotland's Good to Go 'doggy bag' programme were repurposed and sent to community groups that prepare and share food for social good. As of September 2023, 180,750 food boxes and 209,750 reusable bags have been delivered to 260 organisations across Scotland. Monitoring with the recipients and evaluation of the impact produced are both still ongoing and a full report on the findings and recommendations is expected by January 2024.

³⁷ [Zero Waste Scotland – Food Redistribution Matchmaking Service](#)

³⁸ [Zero Waste Scotland – Surplus Food Redistribution](#)

³⁹ [WRAP – Surplus food redistribution labelling guidance](#)

In addition, the Community Fridges Pilot Fund was set up with the aim of providing additional support to food redistribution organisations to understand the role of fridges in preventing food waste. The aim was to provide additional capacity to redistribution organisations in Scotland to receive, store and redistribute perishable or short-shelf-life foods: 23 grant applications were received, and 17 grants were awarded either fully or partially with a total value of £40,290.16. It is estimated that the additional cold storage capacity provided during the pilot will prevent 45.6 tonnes/month of food waste, resulting in 170 tonnes/month CO₂e in emissions saving.

During 2023/24 Zero Waste Scotland is continuing engagement with national and local redistribution networks and agencies to build strategic partnerships. To date Zero Waste Scotland has engaged with FareShare Scotland, Hubbub Community Fridges Network, IFAN, The Trussell Trust, Scottish Pantries Network, WRAP, Courtauld 2030, Food Standards Scotland, Circular Communities Scotland, Education Scotland, and Early Years Scotland.



3 Progress and Lessons Learned

This section reviews what progress has been made since the publication of the FWRAP and what has been learned from this progress so far.

3.1 Has progress been made against the FWRAP baseline?

The 2019 FWRAP set out the measures to support delivery of the 33% food waste reduction target. A new national food waste estimate for 2021 was published in October 2023⁴⁰ and this provided the first post-2019 FWRAP data update.

The key findings from this are:

- Per capita food waste increased by 2% from 185 kg per person per year in 2013 to 189 kg per person per year in 2021.
- Over 1.037 million tonnes of food were wasted in Scotland in 2021, an increase of 5% from the 2013 baseline.
- Households generated 59% of the total, food and drink manufacturing generated 27%, and other sectors were responsible for 14%.

- Food waste tonnage from households increased by 2% against the 2013 baseline, but food waste per capita from households fell by 1%.
- There has been an increase in the food waste from households that is disposed of via separate food waste collections.
- Food waste tonnage from other sectors increased by 4% against the baseline⁴¹.
- Food waste tonnage from food and drink manufacturing increased by 13% against the baseline.

The estimate suggests that over 1.037 million tonnes of food was wasted in Scotland in 2021, generating over 4.7million tonnes of CO₂eq:⁴² approximately 6% of Scotland's total carbon footprint⁴³. This would be within the range of the estimate that 6% of global greenhouse gas emissions come from food losses and waste⁴⁴.

⁴⁰ [Zero Waste Scotland - 2021 Scottish Food Waste Estimates](#)

⁴¹ See section 5 of [Zero Waste Scotland - 2021 Scottish Food Waste Estimates](#) for a discussion on the limitations of the estimate for some sectors.

⁴² See section 2.3 of [Zero Waste Scotland - 2021 Scottish Food Waste Estimates](#)

⁴³ Scotland generated 75.9 million tonnes of CO₂eq in 2019 (the most recent figure available), according to [The Scottish Government - Scotland's Carbon Footprint: 1998-2019](#)

⁴⁴ [Our World in Data - Food waste is responsible for 6% of global greenhouse gas emissions](#)

At a UK level, WRAP estimate that 70% of food waste is edible⁴⁵, so can be prevented from becoming waste. If this is applied to the Scottish food waste estimate, 3.3million tonnes of CO₂eq could have been prevented from entering the atmosphere if the edible component of food waste was avoided. The remaining 1.4million tonnes of CO₂eq could have been mitigated if all household food waste was recycled, and businesses and organisations ensured their food waste was managed according to the food waste hierarchy.

The 2021 estimate indicated that food waste tonnage increased by 5% between the baseline year of 2013 and 2021. An estimate for 2018 was also calculated to investigate if the increase was due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2018 estimate was very similar to the 2021 estimate, suggesting that the increase is part of a longer-term trend and not due to the unprecedented effects of the pandemic.

The 33% reduction in food waste by 2025 target is per capita rather than absolute, to allow for changes in population. When measured this way, the 2021 estimate explains food waste increased by 2% per capita, from 185 kg per person per year during the baseline to 189 kg per person per year in 2021⁴⁶.

This means the overall reduction required to reach the 2025 target is to reduce our food waste by 65 kg per person per year.

The population of Scotland increased by 3% between 2013 and 2021, resulting in a 1% reduction in the per capita waste from households between 2013 and 2021. This small reduction in per capita waste from households was offset by increases in the amount of food waste generated by food and drink manufacturing and other sectors resulting in the overall increase of 2%. Therefore, households need to continue to reduce their food waste at a much faster rate, while food and drink manufacturing and other sectors need to reverse the increases in the food waste they are generating. More detail on how these changes have influenced the overall food waste levels generated in Scotland can be found in the 2021 estimate⁴⁷.

Regardless of how food waste is measured, the increase in food waste has made it harder to achieve the 33% target by 2025, requiring Scotland to prevent more waste from occurring in a shorter period of time. This will require a different approach to working towards targets. WRAP has identified the need for Governments, business, and individuals at a UK and sector-specific level to work together to step up our efforts to reduce food waste and transform the food system⁴⁸.

⁴⁵ [WRAP - Food surplus and waste in the UK: key facts](#)

⁴⁶ See section 3.1 of [Zero Waste Scotland – 2021 Scottish Food Waste Estimates](#)

⁴⁷ [Zero Waste Scotland – 2021 Scottish Food Waste Estimates](#)

⁴⁸ [WRAP – Food System Transformation: The Courtauld Commitment 2030](#)

This has been reinforced through Scotland's experience of delivering on the measures outlined in the 2019 FWRAP, and engagement with the food and drink sector and other stakeholders that has taken place as part of this Review. The Scottish Government's first consultation on the Circular Economy and Waste Route Map⁴⁹ also set out the need to increase the pace and scale of progress to help meet food waste and wider waste targets; and set out proposed priority actions to drive progress across these areas.

However, it is worth noting COVID-19 significantly disrupted all food waste producing sectors and therefore there is a lack of data needed to assess progress in 2019 and 2020, following the 2019 FWRAP publication. There was some evidence that the COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020 may have led to a 43% reduction in household food waste across the UK, but this appeared to rebound as lockdowns were relaxed⁵⁰. The cost-of-living crisis did not cause a similar reduction⁵¹ in household food waste, despite people adopting behaviours focused on saving money. Such self-reported trends did not translate to the household component of the 2021 Scottish food waste estimate, which saw household waste volume increase by 2% against the 2013 baseline.

The 1% reduction in per capita food waste generated by household is not at the levels self-reported by households, as cited above, but it is positive. When combined with results from the 2022 Waste Composition study⁵², it indicates that there may have been modest changes in behaviour. The waste composition analysis aligned with the results of the 2021 food waste analysis, indicating that the overall increase in household food waste was being disposed of through separate food waste collections rather than in residual waste. This reduces the carbon impacts of the waste, but not as much as preventing the waste in the first place, and it was also offset by increases in the amount of waste coming from food and drink manufacturing and other sectors. While there is a high degree of uncertainty around food waste data, it is clear, like other nations, that improvements are not being achieved at the speed and scale of change needed to meet Scotland's 2025 food waste reduction target⁵³. Food waste is a global problem and available evidence suggests other countries are also experiencing similar challenges. The World Resources Institute found evidence of food waste reduction from a handful of countries, all below the level required to meet the SDG 12.3 target⁵⁴ and Champions 12.3 could find no evidence of a country that has already halved its rate of food waste, and the countries actively trying to achieve the target at scale account for less than 40% of the global population⁵⁵.

⁴⁹ [The Scottish Government – Delivering Scotland's Circular Economy consultation](#)

⁵⁰ [WRAP – UK household food waste tracking survey Winter 2021: Behaviours, attitudes, and awareness](#)

⁵¹ [WRAP – The Impact of the Cost of Living on Food Behaviours](#)

⁵² [Zero Waste Scotland – Household Waste Composition Analysis](#)

⁵³ [WRAP – Reducing food loss and waste: Setting a global action agenda](#)

⁵⁴ See page 86 of the [Champions 12.3 2022 Progress Report](#)

⁵⁵ See table 1 in the [Champions 12.3 2022 Progress Report](#)

The 2021 Scottish food waste estimate and UK wide data from WRAP suggest that Scotland and the UK must step up action on food waste reduction in order to achieve the UN SDG 12.3 target of 50% by 2030⁵⁶. This applies to all parts of our food system. For example, in 2021 WRAP estimated that almost 40% of the UK's large food and drink businesses had signed up to WRAP's Food Waste Reduction Roadmap, but another 350 to 380 major food businesses need to reduce their food waste to achieve the UN goal⁵⁷. In 2022, another 33 businesses signed up which still means a further 350 are required. Although retail is well covered by the Food Waste Reduction Roadmap, with commitments from all the major retail chains covering 95% of total food waste from retail, hospitality and food service and manufacturing lag at around 10% and 55-60% coverage, respectively⁵⁸.

Public awareness of food waste's impact on the planet also presents a significant challenge in terms of meeting our 33% reduction target. Evidence from a recent Zero Waste Scotland survey suggests that 86% of people in Scotland are unaware that food waste can be an even bigger contributor to climate change than plastic waste⁵⁹. 78% of people in Scotland also reported in 2023 that they actively try to reduce their food waste most or all of the time⁶⁰, with those over 65 and those without children most likely to always reduce food waste.

At a UK level, awareness of food waste as an important issue was very high and increasing in 2022, with 81% of people agreeing that food waste is an important national issue, and 92% of people agreeing that everyone has a responsibility to reduce their food waste. However, there is still a gap between awareness, intention, and action, with 76% of individuals agreeing that food waste was a top priority for them, and 66% making more of an effort to reduce food waste⁶¹.

It is unclear if this intention to reduce food waste will result in significant reductions in the amount of food waste collected by local authorities, but it was not observable in the 2021 food waste estimate or the waste composition analysis. The next opportunity to understand whether the intention to reduce food waste is resulting in actual reductions or changes in behaviour will come from the WRAP kitchen and kitchen drain diary study, published at the end of 2023.⁶²

Taken together, the evidence described above indicates that, although there is some progress, there is not the required level of change across the whole food system⁶³ at the pace and scale that is needed.

⁵⁶ [WRAP – Courtauld 2030 Food Systems Transformation Plan](#)

⁵⁷ [WRAP – Food waste measurement roadmap 2021 Progress report](#)

⁵⁸ [WRAP – Food waste measurement roadmap 2022 Progress report](#)

⁵⁹ [Zero Waste Scotland – Food waste vs. plastic waste – which is worse for the environment?](#)

⁶⁰ See section 7.3 of [Food Standards Scotland – Consumer attitudes towards the diet and food environment in Scotland](#)

⁶¹ [WRAP – UK Household Food Waste Tracking Survey 2022](#)

⁶² [WRAP's Household Food and Drink Waste in the UK 21/22](#) - Published November 2023.

⁶³ The definition of the food system here is as referenced within the [United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 Scientific Group paper 'Food Systems – Definition, Concept and Application for the UN Food Systems Summit'](#) as "The food system includes the related resources, the inputs, production, transport, processing and manufacturing industries, retailing, and consumption of food as well as its impacts on environment, health, and society".

3.2 What we have learned from progress so far

Efforts to deliver the original FWRAP actions have provided insights that will help understand progress and inform future action. The first key insight is the scale of the challenge. Despite the range of work described in the previous sections, and the success in raising awareness of food waste as an issue, the reductions needed are not being achieved. The first consultation on the Scottish Government's Circular Economy and Waste Route Map⁶⁴ echoed these challenges. The Route Map is a vehicle to set out how the Scottish Government aims to deliver a system-wide, comprehensive vision for Scotland's circular economy; and for food waste, this means it will highlight priority actions people and sectors across Scotland must take to upscale delivery and reduce food waste.

In addition, it is clear that there needs to be more engagement with more businesses, organisations, communities, and households to build on the success of raising awareness of the impact of food waste on our climate, society, and economy. As well as awareness of the issue, more needs to be done to remove barriers and enhance the capability, opportunity, and motivation to take action. An example of a potential barrier could be when an individual is aware of the impact of food waste, but does not have the capability or space to store or freeze food appropriately.

To take appropriate action there needs to be clear data about how much food is wasted and why it is going to waste. Only then can effective actions be taken that actively reduce food waste.

The second lesson is to develop and deliver new actions that build on best available evidence and what has been learned so far. The original FWRAP identified that reducing food waste requires action from everyone, but working together will make that easier. Actions need to happen at scale and at speed if there are to be the significant reductions required at a national level.

The third lesson is that there is no clear globally recognised roadmap to deliver food waste reduction at the scale required. Monitoring how other countries are approaching food waste has provided good examples that Scotland can learn from; however, no country has demonstrated how to consistently reduce food waste on a sufficient scale. Scotland will continue to look for innovative ways to reduce food waste and develop and implement solutions at scale and pace. Knowledge and experience will continue to evolve and, therefore, we can adapt our approach going forward as new evidence emerges.

Finally, there is no single action or legislative lever that will achieve the target. There must be coordinated, collaborative, and sustained activity involving the full cross-section of businesses, organisations, communities, and households over the next decade to create the environment required to reduce food waste and maintain it at the lowest levels possible.

⁶⁴ [The Scottish Government – Delivering Scotland's Circular Economy consultation](#)

4 What we are proposing to do

This section reviews what is needed based on what we have learned, why it is needed and how we will develop a plan in collaboration with the businesses, organisations, communities and people who can help us to deliver our food waste reduction commitments at scale and pace.

4.1 What we need to do

The insights described in the previous section have confirmed the need to redefine our approach to tackle food waste prevention. It is evident action is needed to address key issues across all sectors and households for the short and long term. The development of the Scottish Government Circular Economy and Waste Route Map provides an opportunity to consult, engage and develop such actions.

The final Circular Economy and Waste Route Map is due for publication in 2024. It will set out how we intend to deliver our system-wide, comprehensive vision for Scotland's circular economy to 2030; this will include shorter and longer-term actions to accelerate progress on food waste reduction.

To inform the final version, a second consultation on the draft [Route Map](#) is now open. The second consultation sets out proposed priority actions the Government will seek to take, in collaboration with programme partners and stakeholders, to progress food waste reduction. These measures complement the findings in this review and build on responses to the proposals in the first consultation.

We believe prioritising shorter term actions to help address data gaps and behaviour change is part of the way forward. Specifically, we intend to: explore with stakeholders the most effective way to implement mandatory reporting for food waste and surplus by businesses and develop options for this by 2025-26; and deliver an intervention plan to guide long-term work on household food waste reduction behaviour change by 2025. Delivering these actions will provide new evidence and help build strong foundations for future work.

In addition, we know longer-term action is needed. As outlined in the draft Route Map, the Government intends to work with partners to: strengthen data and evidence; review the rural exemption for food waste recycling, as part of the recycling codesign process; investigate the feasibility of food waste reduction action plans; and deliver enhanced support for businesses. These measures will build on the success of the priority actions and enhance our evidence base to ensure food waste reduction support is impactful up until 2030 and beyond.

While we are confident in the shorter and longer-term actions set out in consultation, we appreciate our approach will evolve in response to new research and ongoing engagement with Scottish households, businesses and organisations. We recognise these ambitions will also be subject to the outcomes of current and future spending allocations, availability of Parliamentary time and support where relevant, and rigorous assessments to deliver value for money.

We will allow room for adapting our approach as needed, however it will likely remain centred on the need to gather evidence, create assets, collaborate, support, measure impact and create new policy as outlined in the table below.

Table 2. Summary of tools for an effective approach to food waste reduction

Gather evidence	Work with businesses, organisations, communities, and individuals to improve our evidence base through research and knowledge exchange.
Create assets	Translate our evidence base into tangible assets that we can share.
Share and collaborate	Share our evidence and assets with key partners who will help us reach as many businesses, organisations, communities, and people as possible.
Provide support	Support our partners, businesses, organisations, communities, and people to use the evidence and assets.
Measure impact	Work with our partners to identify what is working, why it works, and how much food waste it is saving.
Create policy and legislation	Explore new policies and legislation that help create the right environment and incentives that enable everyone to take action.

4.2 Why we need to do it

Reducing food waste is one of Scotland's waste targets, and it plays a vital part in combating climate change. This is because food waste reduction can contribute to the delivery of a range of other policies and plans, including the Climate Change Plan⁶⁵, implementation of the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022⁶⁶, Tackling the Nature Emergency – Scottish biodiversity strategy to 2045⁶⁷ and, subject to completion of its Parliamentary passage, the implementation of the Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill⁶⁸. Taking action on food waste at local and national levels can help deliver these wide ranging policies.

In addition to emission savings potential, food waste reduction provides a financial benefit to businesses in reduced waste management and material costs; and to households through reduced spending on food; and local authorities through reduced waste management costs. It should therefore be a key component of Net Zero plans for businesses and the public sector.

The first consultation on the Circular Economy and Waste Route Map set out why we need to deliver effective food waste reduction, and the key themes for achieving this. This ranges from addressing the whole food system, to resetting attitudes, enhancing the circular bioeconomy, gathering better data, and building resilience in the food system. More information outlining this background is provided in: Delivering Scotland's circular economy – route map to 2025 and beyond: consultation⁶⁹.



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⁶⁵ [Scottish Government – Securing a green recovery on a path to net zero: climate change plan 2018–2032 update](#)

⁶⁶ [Scottish Government – Good Food Nation policy: Food and Drink](#)

⁶⁷ [Scottish Government – Tackling the Nature Emergency – Scottish biodiversity strategy to 2045](#)

⁶⁸ [The Scottish Parliament – Circular Economy \(Scotland\) Bill](#)

⁶⁹ [Scottish Government – Delivering Scotland's Circular Economy consultation](#)

4.3 How we will do it

In 2019, the FWRAP included a call to action and stated that we all have our part to play. While businesses, organisations, communities, and individuals have taken action, we need a much more co-ordinated response from a much greater number of people. We need actions that have been co-developed by the people that will have to deliver them, and people who will take ownership and responsibility for delivering reductions in food waste.

Following publication of this review, the Scottish Government, supported by Zero Waste Scotland, will undertake an engagement process to work with key partners in each sector. We will identify the businesses, organisations, communities, and individuals who can help us to gather relevant evidence and create effective solutions. A key factor in working with partners will be their ability to influence others in their sector to take action on food waste.

This process will enable us to develop a new set of commitments and actions to deliver the food waste reduction potential of each sector.

This will build on engagement with SEPA, and wider stakeholders, through the Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill, the Circular Economy and Waste Route Map and the feedback received through the consultations. Responses to the food waste reduction proposals outlined in the second consultation on the Circular Economy and Waste Route Map are invited. Please see the [Route Map](#) for more information on how and by when you can respond to the consultation.

This collaborative approach is vital to make progress. It will enable us to listen to views, gather evidence and share information to make change, informed by the 2021 Food Waste Estimate analysis as a benchmark. Combined, this will ensure the final Circular Economy and Waste Route Map will focus on tangible actions everyone across Scotland can take to reduce food waste at the scale and pace required.





Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba





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