



The Food Waste
Reduction Roadmap

Questions & Answers

to support
implementation

January 2020



This document is intended to answer the most frequently asked questions that relate to the key elements of the [Food Waste Reduction Roadmap](#) and support its implementation. These are based on feedback gathered during the consultation process with the UK food and drink industry during 2018.

You should use these Q&As alongside the [Food Waste Reduction Roadmap Toolkit](#), the [UK Guidelines for Measuring and Reporting Food Surplus and Waste](#) (UK Guidelines) and the sector-specific guidelines for [meat and dairy processing](#) and [fresh produce businesses](#), [retail](#) and [hospitality and food service providers](#).

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1. Commitment to the Roadmap, SDG 12.3 and setting targets and baselines



What is the Food Waste Reduction Roadmap?

The [Food Waste Reduction Roadmap](#) is a ground-breaking, industry wide roadmap and toolkit that helps food businesses take targeted action to reduce waste in their own operations, their supply chain and from consumers. It allows businesses to measure and report consistently and with confidence. The Roadmap helps the UK deliver its part in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12.3 and helps the food sector deliver against Courtauld 2025 targets.



What does committing to the Roadmap and its principles mean?

Large businesses are asked to set a food waste reduction **target** for their own UK operations. They can adopt the Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 target to reduce food waste across their own UK operations by 50% by 2030 or set a target that contributes to SDG 12.3.

Businesses are asked to **measure** in a consistent way and share what they have learned to provide a narrative on progress. Food surplus and food waste should be measured using the UK template and guidelines in accordance with the international Food Loss and Waste Standard.

Finally, businesses are asked to **act** to reduce their own food waste. Using data to plan and deliver food waste reduction actions across their own UK operations, businesses should work in partnership with suppliers and engage consumers to reduce food waste from farm to fork. Results should be publicly reported and aggregate data should be shared with those responsible for tracking and facilitating progress (WRAP, trade bodies etc.) as appropriate. It is important to be as robust and transparent as possible.

Target. Measure. Act.



Is the 50% reduction target as per Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 absolute or relative?

At a global level SDG 12.3 aims to reduce food waste by 50% *per capita*, meaning that it is a relative target. When applied to a business the target should also be relative – a 50% reduction in the amount of food waste per tonne of food produced or sold (depending on the type of businesses). For example, if your baseline food waste is 2.4% of food produced, your target would be to achieve 1.2% by 2030. The same logic applies if a business sets an alternative target.



Do we have to set a 50% reduction target for our operations?

Businesses should adopt the SDG 12.3 target to reduce food waste across their own UK operations by 50% by 2030 *or* set a target for reducing food waste that contributes to SDG 12.3. Not all businesses will be in a position to adopt a 50% reduction target – for example where a business has made significant efforts in the past to reduce food waste but cannot fully quantify these. Alternative targets which contribute to SDG 12.3 should be ambitious and supported by evidence.



How should we calculate our relative target?

The recommended calculation is shown below.

$$\frac{\text{tonnes (food waste)}}{\text{tonnes (food product sold as intended + food waste + food sent to other destinations)}}$$

Example:

3 tonnes of food waste/(90 tonnes sold as intended +3 tonnes of food waste +0.5 tonnes to other destinations [e.g. redistribution to humans, animal feed, or bio-material processing]) = **3.20%**

Tonnages should exclude the weight of packaging. Best practice on calculating weight of packaging is to source this from your product database or weigh and record this for reporting purposes. If this is not possible then use the WRAP estimate of 15% of total weight (assume 15% of the weight of your packaged food waste is packaging). Please note this is based on finished product so may not be suitable for estimating bulk product or other packaging used in the manufacturing process. In this case use as accurate an estimate as possible.

If tonnes cannot be measured then provide an alternative percentage metric such as percentage by value, and explain the method used. A weight-based measurement is best practice and you should look to move to that as quickly as possible.



Does the target have to be set on total food waste including inedible parts?

The target can apply to total food waste which includes wasted food and inedible parts, or only the wasted food fraction (excluding inedible parts). This will be dependent on the availability of reliable data. For some types of business such as retailers, it may not be practical to separately quantify food from its inedible parts (and therefore any target will apply to both combined). For other businesses it may be more feasible and logical to obtain data on the two fractions and to set a target based on the food-only part (for example manufacturers of products with a high percentage of inedible parts for which prevention is difficult).



Our business is signed up to the Courtauld 2025 target. How does this align with SDG 12.3 and do we still need to adopt an individual target?

As a Courtauld signatory you have committed to take action to help deliver the collective national target of a 20% per capita reduction in food waste (2025 vs 2015). You have also committed to sharing your food waste data with WRAP (who will publicly report on sector progress in 2019, 2022 and 2026) and to identifying how you can help your suppliers and consumers to reduce food waste.

In order to ensure delivery of the Courtauld 2025 target (and then SDG 12.3), we are asking all larger businesses to **Target, Measure and Act** on food waste as described in the [Roadmap](#), which includes Courtauld 2025 signatories. To ensure that there is the necessary level of action and to be able to confidently demonstrate progress we are asking Courtauld signatories to go further. You can do this by setting a target for reducing food waste in your own operations that aligns with or contributes to the SDG 12.3 target of halving food waste by 2030. In other words, your business will have its own food waste reduction target in addition to your actions contributing to the Courtauld 2025 national target.

Action by individual businesses to reduce their operational waste and help suppliers and consumers to do so will contribute to the delivery of both the Courtauld 2025 and SDG 12.3 targets at the UK level. WRAP has [published](#) evidence to justify a 2007 baseline for the UK achievement of SDG 12.3 and sees this initiative as a key component of Courtauld 2025. Achieving the Courtauld 2025 food waste target would result in a ca. 40% reduction in the amount of wasted food (post farm gate) by 2025 compared to 2007*, against a target for a 50% reduction by 2030.

* Courtauld 2025 builds on progress made under previous voluntary agreements (Courtauld 1, 2 and 3 and the Hospitality and Food Service Agreement), and the 40% reduction would be compared to a 2007 baseline and be based on food only (excluding inedible parts) and expressed on a relative basis. If inedible parts are included, the reduction in UK post-farm gate food waste compared to the baseline would be 32% by 2025.



Do we have to set a target as soon as we commit to the roadmap?

No. Some businesses will need to carry out more robust data gathering prior to setting a target. This could involve undertaking a food waste audit (e.g. using the 'Your Business is Food; Don't Throw It Away' approach) or developing a detailed Food Waste Report. This would help to better understand the scale and causes of food waste which would then inform target development. An appropriate evidence-based target should be set as soon as you have robust data.



How far back can we go to set a baseline year?

There is no strict rule according to SDG 12.3. A business should set their baseline for a year where robust data is available, consistent with the recommended [UK Guidelines](#). This enables meaningful comparisons over time and means progress can be accurately monitored relative to a target.



Can we reset the baseline if our scope changes?

Yes. Where significant changes (structural changes to the organization, mergers, acquisitions, divestments etc.) or changes to your scope occur then your baseline should be reset. This must be made clear when you report your data. An example of a business doing this is when [Tesco reset its baseline](#) after aligning the food waste definition it had used with the WRAP one, removing food sent to animal feed from its baseline.



How is the target applied if we already have little or no food waste?

The target is for a relative percentage reduction on your baseline food waste levels. It should therefore still apply to any food waste that is produced even if this is a small amount (e.g. bread production waste that all goes into animal feed). If there is literally no food waste in your operations this should be communicated very positively. In these circumstances your business may focus on moving any food surplus you have up the food hierarchy (for example from diversion to animal feed to redistribution for people) and reducing the amount of food surplus arising in the first place (neither of these would contribute to waste reduction but would bring obvious business benefits).

You should work with your suppliers to help them reduce food waste through the development of Food Waste Reduction plans and explore what more could be done to help consumers reduce waste (see section 5 – [Engaging with consumers to influence their behaviours and reduce their food waste](#)).



What can we do as a trade body to support the Roadmap?

Trade bodies or other organisations that can support adoption of the [Roadmap](#) (or key elements of it) by promoting the Roadmap and the actions that need to be undertaken by businesses. You can promote these principles to your members and others in business that you can influence while advocating the use of the common [UK Guidelines](#) to measure and report food surplus and waste robustly.

You can also support the Roadmap by promoting and facilitating relevant Whole Chain or Sector Food Waste Reduction projects and by acting as a channel for the sharing and reporting of food waste data and progress, both publicly and to WRAP.

2. Food waste measurement guidelines



Most of the questions relating to measurement can be answered using the [UK Guidelines](#) and sector specific guidelines for the [retail, hospitality and food service sectors](#) and [meat, dairy and fresh produce production](#) – (guidelines for measuring waste to sewer are under development). This section covers some additional questions not answered by the above.



Do the guidelines cover measurement of food waste in Primary Production?

The current scope of the [UK Guidelines](#) is from the point that a crop or product is ready for harvest or processing*. Any loss that occurs on farm prior to that stage is not defined as food waste but can still obviously have financial and environmental implications. WRAP is carrying out more work on 'Food Waste in Primary Production' and will issue additional guidance in due course. The sector specific guidelines mentioned above also provide more clarification on this and WRAP have worked with LEAF to provide more simplified guidance that is aimed at smaller growers to be published shortly.

* The food waste definition states that if crops are ready for harvest/livestock ready for slaughter (at a stage where they would normally be harvested/slaughtered) but for whatever reason are not harvested or slaughtered/processed, and go to any of the eight destinations that fall within the scope of food waste, then this material would be defined as food waste and should ideally be included in your overall waste figures.



SDG 12.3 scope starts on farm. At what stage should we be looking to measure?

If crops are ready to harvest (at a stage where they would normally be harvested) but for whatever reason are not harvested, then this material would be defined as food waste and should be included in your overall waste figures where relevant. If including an estimate of food waste from unharvested crops is not yet possible for your operations this should be made clear in the scope of what you report.



Should the waste reporting for a product include all sub processing?

Processes that are part of your own operations should be included in scope. Where you have total control of a process and/or ownership of the material this counts as your own operations.



Are sister companies in scope?

You should include all parts of the business that you own but you may choose to report them separately.



We have businesses outside of the UK. Is the scope UK or global?

The roadmap has been developed to support the UK food industry however the recommended guidelines and reporting template are consistent with global standards. Please report food waste in your UK operations separately to those outside of the UK.



Is it okay to have exclusions in our boundaries?

Any facilities within your operational control should be included. Exclusions will need to be declared as part of 'boundary' under the scope section of your report. For example, it may not be possible for you to measure waste from staff catering on your premises. If this instance it should be clearly reported.



Should surplus material sent to produce pet food count as waste?

Material sent to produce pet food would not be considered as food waste as it would go to one of the destinations that are excluded in our definition of food waste. Such destinations include zoo animals, pets or biomaterials / biochemical processing (converting material into industrial products). It therefore should be excluded from any estimate of food waste from your operations. Best practice is to separately track and report the amounts of material diverted to animal feed production or bio-material processing including any pet food.

Please note that current legislation means no catering waste should be sent to zoo animals or pets as food.



How are frying oils classified?

Oil used in the preparation of food but not ending up as an ingredient in the final product would not itself be defined as food, and therefore any oil recycled or disposed of would not be included in the estimate of food waste from your operations. Oils used as an ingredient are in scope, as is frying oil where this is the product being manufactured.

As for other resources excluded from the definition of food waste, such as energy and water, there are good business reasons for measuring and reducing the impacts of used cooking oils. A business may choose to report on these resources, but not as part of food waste reporting.



How do we classify solids that are filtered from the oil?

If these solids are parts of the food that was fried, they should ideally be included in the estimate of food waste from your operations. However, if the amounts are relatively small and the potential to reduce their generation is low, you may decide not to include them (make this clear in your scope). An initial assessment of amounts and 'preventability' would be worthwhile, to help justify their inclusion or exclusion.



Should waste be defined in a business or physical sense?

In the context of food waste reporting it is the physical waste of food that should be included. This is defined as food that ends up going to one or more of the eight destinations that are included in the definition of food waste. Other areas of waste to the business such as discounted products, over fill etc. are obviously important for your business to address but should not be included in any food waste reporting.



Should water lost from food during storage, processing, cooking etc. be included as waste?

Water lost through evaporation or any other process that removes water as part of the cooking or preparation of the food (dehydration, salt-baking etc.) does not need to be included in any estimates of food waste. You should include the weight of any food that ends up as waste, including water or liquid that is contained within that food at the time that it is sent to one of the eight destinations that are included in the definition of food waste.



Do samples taken for QC or other tests and studies need to be included as waste?

If food samples are sent to one of the eight destinations that are included in the definition of food waste following any testing, then they should be included in your estimates of food waste.

3. Data capture and reporting



Do we have to report our data publicly as part of our commitment to the Roadmap?

You should publicly report your own UK company results, or work towards this best practice, and share successes and lessons learned. As a minimum you should share data with those responsible for tracking and facilitating progress, and publishing aggregate data as appropriate (e.g. WRAP, trade bodies). Be as robust and transparent as possible. Taking this approach allows you to share your progress and can be used to demonstrate your commitment to customers, shareholders, NGOs and the Government.

WRAP and IGD recognise that initially not all businesses will be in position to publicly report food waste from their own operations. Some businesses will require time to embed measurement techniques and build confidence in their data, and WRAP and IGD will provide support for this. However, all businesses should share data for publication by WRAP and/or sector bodies as soon as this is robust enough, and work towards individual company public reporting.



What should be included in our public report?

As a minimum we would recommend that you report your target and baseline year and how you are progressing against this on an annual basis. If possible, you should highlight the main areas of waste within your business (e.g. categories of product that are parts of the operation) and what action you are taking to reduce it. The recommended [reporting template](#) can be used as a technical addendum.



We are Courtauld 2025 signatories and already share our data. Do we need to do more?

As a Courtauld signatory you share your food waste data with WRAP (who will publicly report on sector progress in 2022 and 2026), but you should also report your individual company results publicly, or work towards this best practice and share your successes and lessons learned. Working towards this is an important aspect of the [Roadmap](#) and will ensure that there is the necessary level of action for your business to demonstrate progress.



Why is there an Excel template and a Word template?

We are recommending an Excel template for data collection as this will allow you to populate from internal systems and share the data in a structured way with third parties such as WRAP. The Word template is intended for reporting internally or business to business, for example to business customers.



What is Atlas and should it be used for reporting?

The Food Loss and Waste Atlas (or Atlas as it is known) was launched in New York at a special meeting of Champions 12.3; organised by the World Resources Institute (WRI). Atlas is the world's first universally accessible online tool to capture global food loss and waste data in one place. Developed between WRAP and WRI (and funded by the Walmart Foundation and WRAP), Atlas will allow progress towards SDG 12.3 to be tracked and enable companies and governments to publish and benchmark their

data, including businesses supporting the UK Roadmap. Atlas can therefore be used as the mechanism for reporting your data, and WRAP can advise on how you can submit your data.



Why do we need to report an intensity metric in addition to our actual waste tonnage?

As outlined in [section 1](#) businesses should set a relative target (percentage of food sold or produced). This will allow for a business to track and report progress against this target. Reporting against a relative target also allows a business to demonstrate progress in context of any significant change in operations (e.g. growth through expansion).



Can we express our food waste data on a dry weight basis?

No. To be compliant with the UK recommendations you should include the weight of any food that ends up as waste, including water or liquid that is contained within that food at the time that it is sent to one of the eight destinations that are included in the definition of food waste. Water lost through evaporation or any other process that removes water as part of the cooking or preparation of the food (dehydration, salt-baking etc.) does not need to be included in any estimates of food waste.



Should the weight of sludges spread to land or produced by waste treatment processes be reported as the total sludge weight or as product weight?

To be compliant with UK recommendations the reported weight must cover only the food product and ingredient weight in the sludge material (excluding added water beyond that contained in the product or ingredient). This is probably easiest obtained by weighing inputs to the process as the weight of sludge outputs is not a suitable measurement.



Can we use the waste data sent to the EA (e.g. EWC codes) to estimate our food waste?

IPPC data can be used to report against food waste. However, EWC codes report waste data in broad categories (animal tissue, plant tissue etc.) and might not give information around the type of waste arising. In addition, this will only cover large sites that are subject to IPPC requirements and wastes that exceed the reporting threshold volumes. Non-food components, such as packaging or wastewater, will have to be removed from the tonnage.



How do we verify or calibrate quantitative results through weighbridge data of waste?

Ask your waste management contractors how regularly they calibrate weighbridge sites used and whether these are functioning correctly. Recalibration should be carried out regularly to ensure the accuracy of the equipment. It is also good practice to test equipment regularly by using an object of known weight to ensure the equipment is working correctly.

If you think this is a source of uncertainty in your inventory, it should be stated as part of the UK reporting template [Section 2 Quantification methods and uncertainty](#).



Do we need to comply with a standard 12 month time period when reporting?

No. This can be done based on the calendar year or your financial year provided it is made clear when reporting.



How can we report our actions to help our suppliers and consumers reduce waste?

There is a supporting narrative section on the [reporting template](#) that allows you to summarise the key actions you are taking. We would also encourage you to share case studies with your peers via WRAP and your Trade body. For larger customers or suppliers it may also form part of joint business reviews.

4. Engaging with suppliers to adopt 'Target, Measure, Act' principles



Target
Measure
Act



Why is it important that we engage with our suppliers to help them to reduce food waste?

The scope of SDG 12.3 (and the Courtauld 2025 target) is from farm to fork. Working with your suppliers to help them reduce food waste in their operations is therefore critical to ensure there is widespread implementation of the actions needed to achieve the target at a UK level. This involves inviting them to implement the principles of **Target, Measure, Act** as outlined in [section 1](#).



Which suppliers should we be engaging with?

It is good practice is to gain a better understanding of food waste in your supply chain and focus supplier engagement accordingly. We would recommend that you initially prioritise larger or strategic suppliers, working overtime towards c. 50% of supply of key products/ingredients by volume, value or impact.

Whilst there is a harmonised approach to inviting suppliers to adopt '**Target, Measure, Act**', the nature of supplier engagement will vary depending on the business's operating model and its supplier base. [Whole Chain Food Waste Reduction Plan](#) may be developed between an individual larger business and key suppliers, or by consortia of businesses, trade bodies and others such as WRAP.

It may not be appropriate to engage with smaller suppliers in the same way. For example, in relation to agricultural suppliers, a trade body-led approach focused on specific categories or challenges may be more relevant, supported by larger business customers.



Should we be asking our larger suppliers to report their data back to us as their customer?

There is no requirement for you to do this, it is something that you should decide and agree for your individual businesses. As outlined in the '*Working with your Suppliers*' section of the [Food Waste Reduction Roadmap Toolkit](#) your key suppliers should work towards the best practice of reporting individual company results publicly. As a minimum they should share their data with those responsible for tracking and facilitating progress as appropriate such as WRAP and/or trade bodies.



How should we engage with our suppliers?

You should engage suppliers in a way that makes sense for your business. WRAP's good practice recommendation would demonstrate that the engagement is part of an ongoing dialogue rather than a one-off communication. It is important that you are acting in partnership with suppliers and have agreed actions, potentially within a [Whole Chain Food Waste Reduction Plan](#).



What does the term 'whole chain' mean?

This typically refers to the supply chain from farm (the point at which a crop or product is ready for harvest or processing) to the point of sale to the end retail customer. A Whole Chain FWR plan should be agreed with larger or strategically important suppliers focusing on the biggest hotspots/highest waste categories. For smaller suppliers (e.g. agricultural), a trade body led approach focused on specific challenges may be more relevant. Good practice would be to involve all partners along the chain to review where the biggest wastes occur and to identify the causes. This allows joint actions and solutions to be agreed and means you can avoid unintended consequences, such as shifting where food waste arises from one part of the chain to another.



Do we need to engage with our overseas suppliers?

The principles of 'Target, Measure, Act' would still apply to an overseas supplier. [The Food Waste Reduction Roadmap](#) and [UK Guidelines](#) have been developed for the UK Food industry and WRAP will be reporting data and progress at a UK country level. It is therefore recommended that you focus on suppliers based in the UK, however you may want to extend the engagement to both your operations and suppliers overseas but that is a decision for your business.

5. Engaging with consumers to influence their behaviours and reduce their food waste



Why is it important that we engage with consumers to help them reduce their food waste?

The scope of SDG 12.3 is from farm to fork so helping consumers reduce their food waste is important and will contribute to achieving the overall target. Household food waste makes up around 70% of UK (post-farm gate) food waste, with 'plate waste' out of home an important part of food waste from hospitality and food services.



How should we engage with consumers?

Whether you have direct interaction with consumers through your brand or via a customer brand there are lots of potential ways you can influence their behaviours, and also innovate around your product, its packaging and labelling as outlined in the *'Helping to reduce consumer food waste'* section of the [Food Waste Reduction Roadmap Toolkit](#). Your staff are also consumers, and engaging them on how to reduce food waste at home and out of home is one direct way you can contribute in this area.

6. Industry roadmap – tracking progress



How is progress measured against the Roadmap milestones and who does this?

WRAP is responsible for assessing progress against the roadmap milestones, progress towards the Courtauld 2025 food waste target and progress towards SDG 12.3. This is done on the basis of information provided to WRAP by businesses (including Courtauld 2025 signatories), trade bodies and any additional information in the public domain. WRAP will also carry out additional research necessary to assess progress such as measurement of household food waste, retailer surveys to monitor changes to products, packaging and labelling reviews and analysis of national datasets such as those from the EA.



When will progress against the Roadmap be reported?

WRAP will provide public updates on a six-month interim and annual basis each September, alongside reports on progress towards the Courtauld 2025 targets. There will be a final report on SDG 12.3 in 2031. In addition to this, WRAP will provide an annual update to UK Governments and Courtauld signatories.



What will businesses or trade bodies need to share with WRAP?

Businesses will be asked to share their own UK food surplus and waste data, using the common [Reporting Template](#) or [Data Capture Sheet](#). These templates enable you to generate a Food Waste Report that contains both data and important descriptive context (e.g. clarifying your scope and methods and providing narrative on your progress in reducing food waste).

Best practice is for the narrative section of your Food Waste report to include information on actions that your business has taken or is taking to work in partnership with suppliers to reduce food waste. This might include information on the number of whole chain Food Waste Reduction Plans you have in place, for example. Your report should also detail how you have engaged customers to reduce food waste, perhaps by adopting best practices for food date labelling and storage, testing new innovations or generally raising awareness.

Where trade bodies are collating food surplus and waste data on behalf of members, they will be asked to either submit individual Food Waste Reports (anonymised if required) or aggregated data in a consistent format to the [Reporting Template](#), or [Data Capture Sheet](#). To avoid double counting where a business reports via multiple channels, trade bodies will be asked to provide transparency on which businesses are represented within the aggregated dataset.

7. Further Questions



How can we reduce 'inedible parts'?

Reducing the weight of 'inedible parts' could be addressed through exploring options to send additional material, where legally permitted, to produce animal feed. You could also explore biomaterial processing (where relevant) and/or optimising the choice of raw materials (% inedible parts) or processing (reducing the amount of food that ends up being disposed of with the inedible parts). There may be new opportunities to create food products through material traditionally considered 'inedible parts.' You might be interested in the information on WRAP's website displayed [here](#).



How does moving material up the hierarchy count towards reducing food waste?

Redistribution to people, diversion to animal feed or biomaterial processing all count as food waste prevention and so moving material from lower down the hierarchy to any of these will reduce what you report as food waste. Moving material from lower down to higher up the hierarchy is likely to bring business benefits even if the material would still be defined as food waste, for example, moving material from landfill to AD. Similarly, there are social and business benefits from moving material up the hierarchy within redistribution, diversion to animal feed and use in biomaterial processing.



Is there a conflict between a focus on waste tonnage vs a focus on carbon?

SDG 12.3 calls for a 50% reduction in the weight of food wasted, which will deliver a significant carbon as well as financial benefit.



Are there any best practice examples of reducing food waste which might provide some inspiration?

There are a range of resources and case studies available from WRAP, IGD, the CGF and UK Hospitality that might prove inspirational. These case studies, along with a few others including retailer supplier networks as well as some useful links are provided in the [Food Waste Reduction Roadmap Toolkit](#).