

What Ireland thinks about food waste –

Raising awareness and motivating behaviour change to reduce food waste at home

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EU FLW Consumer FW sub-group, 8 July 2022



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National Food Waste Prevention Programme

- ▶ Household food waste
- ▶ Supply chain (manufacturing, retail, distribution)
- ▶ Hospitality and food services
- ▶ Data & evidence



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Stop Food Waste – national consumer campaign

- ▶ Awareness raising
- ▶ Behaviour change
 - ▶ Planning
 - ▶ Purchasing
 - ▶ Storage
 - ▶ Serving & using leftovers



STOPFoodWaste.ie

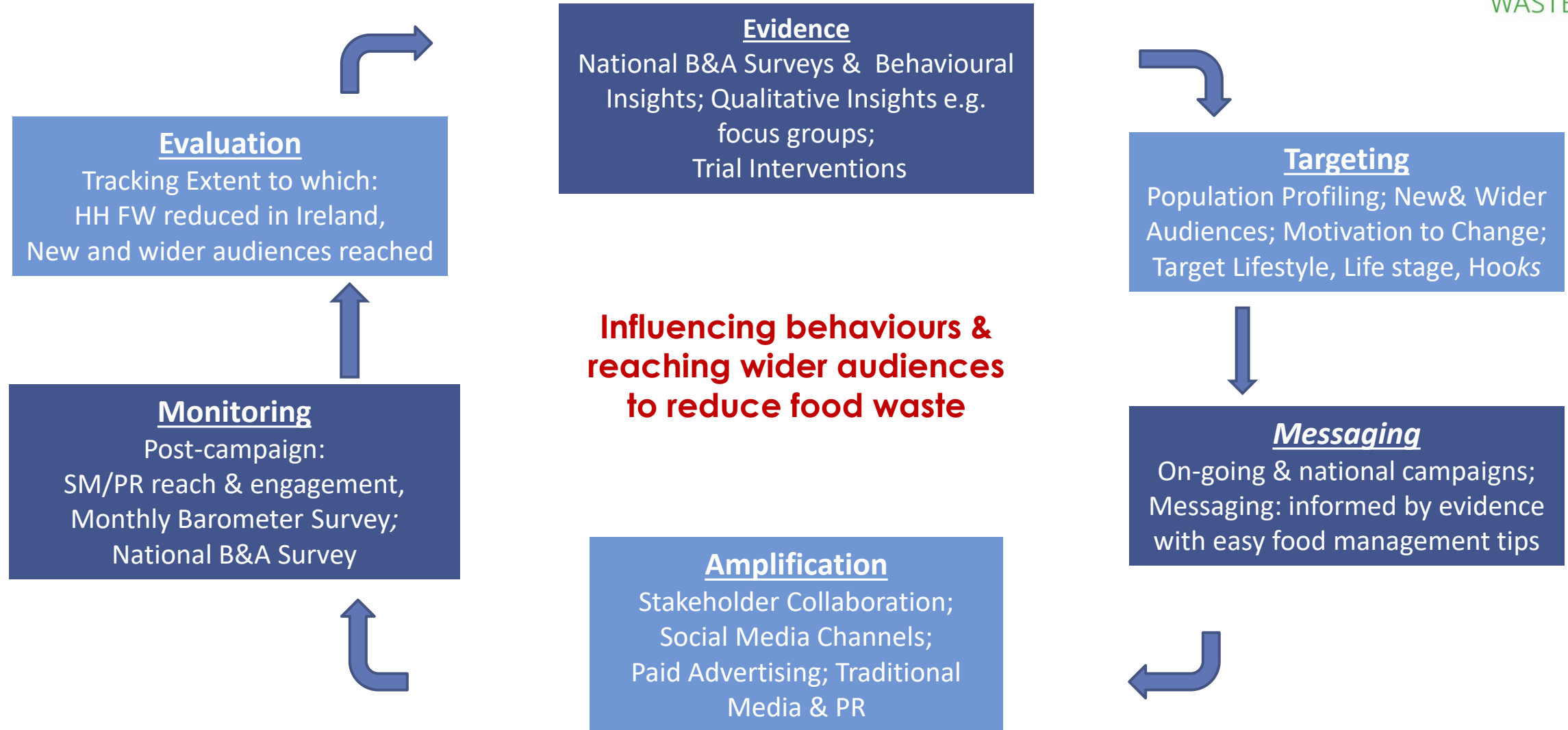


Stop Food Waste – awareness raising & behavioural insights

- ▶ Awareness raising linked to priority food waste types & audiences
- ▶ Evidence-based communications plan
 - ▶ B&A survey - establish baseline and key messaging
 - ▶ Segmentation - identify target audiences and approaches
 - ▶ Work with others to amplify the message and reach
- ▶ Monitoring and evaluation
 - ▶ Repeat surveys – changes in engagement & evaluation of activities
 - ▶ Waste characterisation to track changes in HHFW



Stop Food Waste – approach



Ireland's attitudes to food waste & food behaviours

- ▶ On-line nationally representative surveys (+1,000)
- ▶ September 2020 and Oct 2021
- ▶ Surveys designed with our input
- ▶ Topics:
 - ▶ Concern for food waste (Attitudes & awareness)
 - ▶ Managing food at home (Behaviours)
 - ▶ Response to Covid (Behaviour change)
 - ▶ Food dates (Spotlight topic)
 - ▶ Food Waste communications
- ▶ Demographic segmentation analysis





About **three in five** actively think about food waste, with highest active consideration amongst the 65 plus age cohort (three in four).



85% agree that food waste is an important national issue. However, only 1 in 10 see food waste as the most concerning food issue for them.



3 in 5 believe that they only **waste a small amount of food**. As such, getting people to adopt good food reduction behaviours will be challenging as many do not acknowledge it as a major problem for them.



Television is the primary medium in which people have seen or heard about food reduction (41%). A **multi channel media approach required in order to reach all sectors of society (visual channel is likely to be required)**



High concern for all issues, but **strongest response towards financial loss (47%) and remorse (e.g. people go hungry)**.



Strong understanding exists that multiple stakeholders have a role to play in preventing food waste. **Responsibility seems to be directed more towards the end of the value chain.** 9 in 10 believe consumers have a role to play.



Empty nesters throw away the **least amount of food overall with 22% saying they throw away no food at all.**

25-34 age cohort throw out the most and over index with fruit, vegetables, dairy, potatoes and meat in particular.



There appears to be a **lack of knowledge of how to reduce personal waste amongst the 16-24 and 25-34 age cohorts** (2 in 5 stating they would like to reduce food waste but that they don't know how).



High numbers of people are checking their fridge (81%) and making a list (70%) before doing a shop. Those who actively think about **food waste are more likely to check their fridge and are more likely to make a shopping list.**



Covid-19 did have some impacts on people's shopping behaviour and food consumption. During Covid, there **appears to have been a reported decrease in the volume of food waste in the home.** This is potentially due to an increase in food planning and a decrease in unplanned disruptions.



Price promotions causes all to buy more products. However, the people who claim to be wasting a 'moderate/large amount' of food are more likely to purchase items due to impulse, pester power and lack of product availability. They also appear to be less organised with nearly **7 in 10 (67%) often/sometimes buying items before checking if they are needed.**



There is high adherence to checking food dates on products when both shopping for food and preparing meals. However this behaviour is more common amongst females and amongst the older age cohorts. **About 9 in 10 understand what 'best before' means and 3 in 4 understand what 'use by' means.**

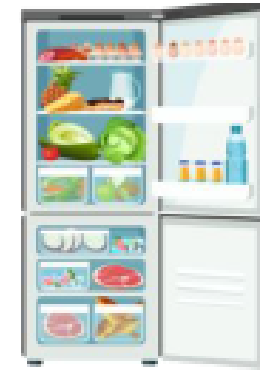
Tackling Food Waste – attitudes survey 2020



About **3 in 5 people** actively think about food waste, with highest attention amongst the 65+ age group and lowest amongst the 16-24 age cohort



The 16-24 and 25-34 age cohorts appear to have a lack of knowledge of how to reduce their food waste. **2 in 5 of younger age groups say they would like to reduce food waste but they don't know how).**



High numbers of people are checking their fridge (81%) and making a list (70%) before doing a shop. Those who actively think about **food waste are more likely to check their fridge and are more likely to make a shopping list.**



Strong understanding exists that multiple stakeholders along the food supply chain have a role to play in preventing food waste. **89% of people feel that consumers have a responsibility in preventing food waste.**



Main findings

- ▶ 9 in 10 agree that consumers have a role to play in preventing food waste.
- ▶ 3 in 4 people make a list before food shopping.
- ▶ Use-By dates (68%) and Best-Before (55%) dates expiring are the main reasons people throw out food
- ▶ A high number of people said that bread (41%), vegetables (39%), fruit (39%) and salad (32%) are the foods they throw out most often.
- ▶ And 62% of people forget to eat leftovers in time.



Key results

- ▶ Food waste is an issue of high concern for Irish people and they are willing to take action.
- ▶ Main reasons for waste are food passing its Use-By date and forgetting to eat leftovers in time.
- ▶ After bread; vegetables, fruit and salad are the foods that are thrown out most often in the home.
- ▶ During the Covid-19 lockdown, 29% of people reported wasting less food.








Demographic segmentation

- ▶ Understand motivations and identify target audiences & strategies
- ▶ Methodology - identify golden questions
 - ▶ Typical food behaviours (e.g. shopping online, throwing food away, making a shopping list)
 - ▶ Awareness of good food waste reduction behaviours
 - ▶ Attitudes towards food waste
- ▶ Methodology - analysis for cluster solutions



Food Waste Demographic Segmentation

Always/Regularly think about food waste

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
<p>19% of shoppers 711,000 individuals</p> 	<p>10% of shoppers 376,000 individuals</p> 	<p>27% of shoppers 989,000 individuals</p> 	<p>24% of shoppers 879,000 individuals</p> 	<p>20% of shoppers 754,000 individuals</p> 
<p>Little interest in food waste as an issue or in their own food waste behaviour.</p>	<p>Reducing food waste is not a key priority and does not fit into their busy lives, but some motivation to improve exists.</p>	<p>Poor planners who deprioritise managing their food for other worries in their lives.</p>	<p>Intrinsically motivated and a sense of duty to reduce their food waste. Good at planning and managing food portions.</p>	<p>Engaged with a multitude of environmental issues, including food waste.</p>



Summary



2020 campaign 'Eat It or Freeze It'

- ▶ 68% say 'passing use-by dates' is the top reason for throwing out food
- ▶ 75% understand use-by dates are a deadline
- ▶ 80% check dates to ensure food is still safe to eat
- ▶ 53% do not realise that you can freeze food right up to its use-by date

=> Simple message – freezing to make food last longer & you can freeze right up to use by date



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'Eat It or Freeze It'

- ▶ PR coverage: 4,571,725
- ▶ Social media advertising: total reach 769,000 (3.6 m impressions)
- ▶ 6,324 views of Stop Food Waste website (up 316%)
- ▶ Most visits to website from 25-34 group
- ▶ Added 403 followers on Instagram during week of main campaign, impressions 2.4m



Wasted food costing households as much as €700 a year
Up to 68% say main reason they throw out food is because it is out of date,



Waste costs Irish households €700 per year



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Group 2

10% of shoppers
376,000 individuals



Reducing food waste is not a key priority and does not fit into their busy lives, but some motivation to improve exists.

- 25-34 age group report they waste the most food overall
- 2 in 5 of this cohort say they would like to reduce food waste, but they don't know how.
- 62% of this segment rate themselves as good at keeping track of food in the vs 80% of total population
- 21% of segment say they *throw out food to make space for more recent purchases* compared to 7% total pop



ASSESS YOUR FRIDGE'S FITNESS
SET IT AT **4°C**

FREEZE FOOD FOR FUTURE GAINS

CREATE A SHARE SHELF IN THE FRIDGE

#StopFoodWaste

HOW FIT IS YOUR FRIDGE?



Thursday Easy Meal Night - Use up food in your fridge
Use up any perishable food you have. Whatever is not eaten can be popped in the freezer - right up to its use-by date.

GET FOOD SMART

First in; First eaten
New items of food should be placed behind 'old' ones until it's their turn to be eaten.

GET FOOD SMART

Take a fridge selfie
Going grocery shopping? Snap a pic of the inside of your fridge as an easy reminder of what you already have. This will help to avoid buying food you don't need.

GET FOOD SMART



WANT TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE?

BUT DON'T KNOW HOW?

REDUCE FOOD WASTE

THEN TELL EVERYONE HOW GREAT YOU ARE!



Stretch Out & Save – Making fresh food last longer

Group 3

27% of shoppers
989,000 individuals



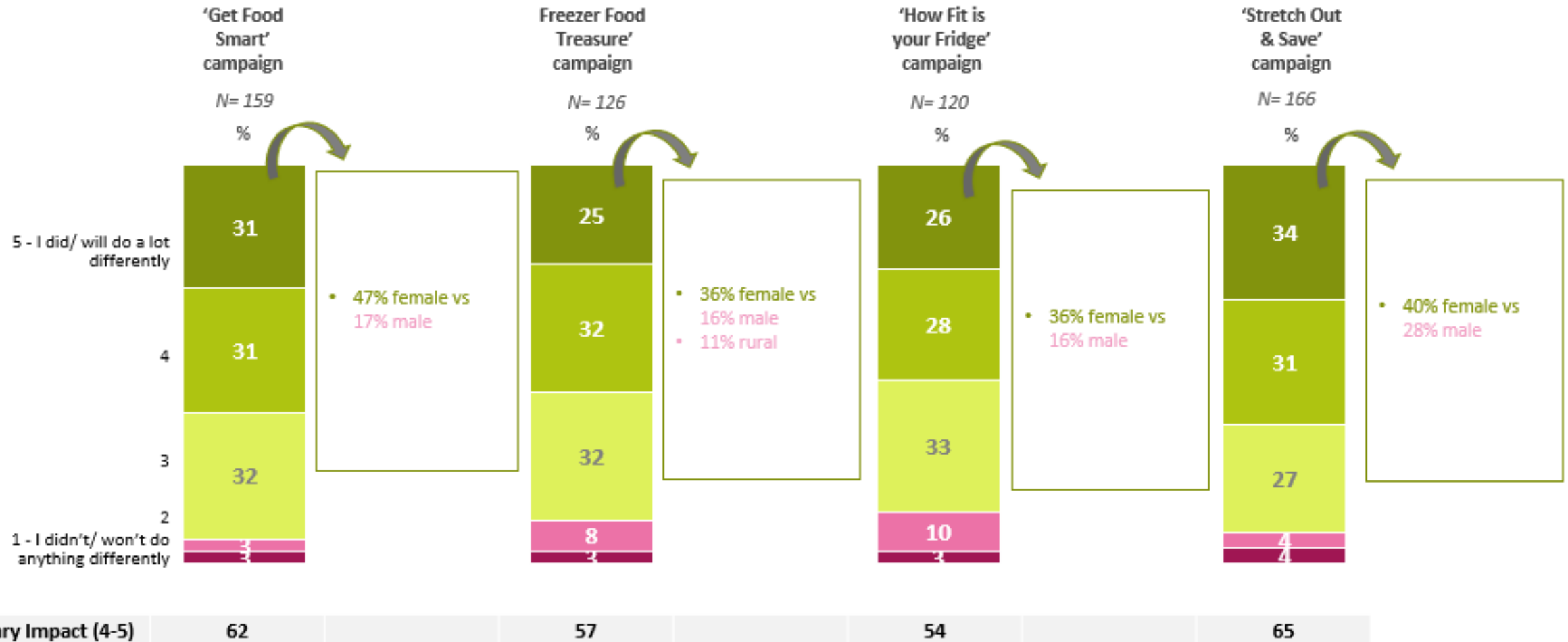
Poor planners who deprioritise managing their food for other worries in their lives.



- 50% say they waste a lot of fruit and veg (vs 39% total pop)
- are more preoccupied with how long fresh food lasts (48% compared to 41% total pop).



Response to campaigns in national surveys



The communications appear impactful in terms of encouraging a change in food waste behaviour.

Q.21 You said you have seen the following information campaign. On a scale of 1-5 to what extent has or will the campaign lead you to do something differently (where 1 = I didn't/ won't do anything differently as a result and 5 = I did/ will do a lot differently as a result?)

Looking ahead

Both the 2020 and the 2021 research show **some deep-rooted poor food management behaviours – lack of planning and management** around the use of food.

- ▶ *14% always plan dinners for week ahead*
- ▶ *12% always judge/weigh portions*
- ▶ *15% always organise the fridge*

2022 focus on planning behaviours



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Strategy



- ▶ Social norms (highlight positive food organisation behaviours)
- ▶ Multi-channel communications approach to reach the diverse audiences
- ▶ Using digital media for widespread reach
- ▶ Education for those who want to but don't know how



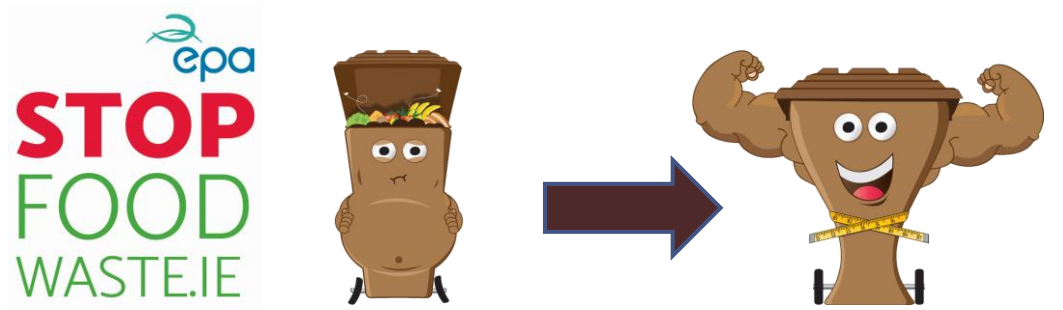
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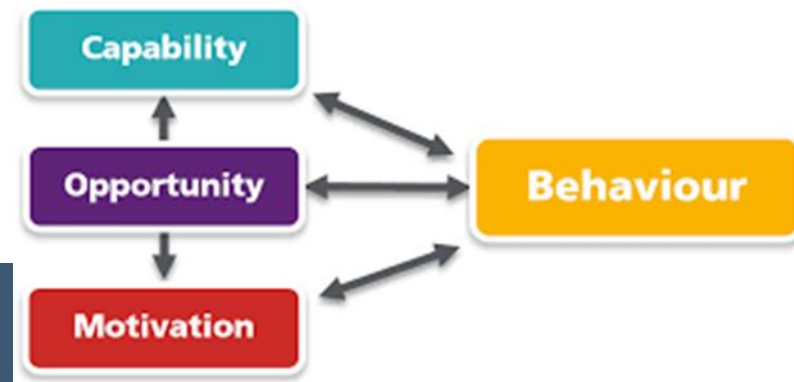


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Household FW principle



- ▶ Targeted awareness raising will lead to behaviour change:
 - ▶ ‘good’ food organisation behaviours followed by those more conscious of food waste;
 - ▶ need to make people aware of how much food waste they are producing; and
 - ▶ how they can take actions in their day-to-day life to reduce the food they waste.



Stop Food Waste – 3 year outcomes

- ▶ A 20% reduction in the reported amounts of food being wasted
- ▶ A measured increase in the number of people engaging on the topic of food waste
- ▶ A widespread public awareness of the issue, and solutions to help reduce it



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Stop Food Waste – monitoring

1. Tracking extent of which household food waste reduced in Ireland (Quantity)
2. Tracking extent of which consumers are aware of food waste as a problem (awareness)
3. Tracking extent to which consumers are performing good food management behaviours (behaviour)

=> Extent to which consumers feel capable, are motivated and have opportunity to reduce food waste



Thank you

To find out more:

Email: o.lebolloch@epa.ie

▶ <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/circular-economy/food-waste/>

EPA website, general info, policy developments, events

- ▶ Website: <http://stopfoodwaste.ie>
- ▶ Instagram: @stopfoodwaste.ie
 - ▶ Twitter: @Stop_Food_Waste
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