

CLIMATE ACTION GUIDE FOR HOTELS & GUESTHOUSES

An Introductory Guide
to Sustainable
Practices for Hotels &
Guesthouses



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Foreword

We are facing a climate change emergency and like all sectors of the economy, Tourism needs to do its part in helping Ireland meet its climate change targets. Doing this will require significant changes to all aspects of the tourism economy. In addition to the challenges that we must meet in this area, there are also opportunities if we provide a truly sustainable tourism offering.

Fáilte Ireland has called out **Driving Climate Action** as a Strategic Priority. Driving Climate Action aims to drive change at the level of the business and destination to deliver on the targets set by government and to ensure tourism plays its part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

This introductory guide for hotels & guesthouses explains sustainable tourism. In particular, it sets out the areas of Climate Action required for your business to reduce carbon emissions.

It focuses on the priority areas, explains the terminology and provides practical tips and advice on how to start and progress your journey.

Disclaimer: Examples are used in this guide for illustration of principles only. They do not constitute an exhaustive list and further case studies are being compiled by Fáilte Ireland over the coming months.

Part 1: Sustainability, Climate Action and your Business

The Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030

In 2015, world leaders came together to agree a global framework for Sustainable Development. These are known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UN Agreement that supports the goals is commonly referred to as Agenda 2030.

There are 17 goals in total and they apply to all countries. They are interlinked and they are intended to be achieved by 2030. The goals relate to areas such as climate action, community, biodiversity, equality, poverty, education, health and the economy.

The SDGs are about the need to work together on a global level to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

193 countries, including Ireland, signed up to Agenda 2030 and committed to playing their part in creating a sustainable future. Climate Action is one part of Agenda 2030.

According to the United Nations World Travel Organisation, Sustainable Tourism is:

“Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities“



Goal 13: Climate Action



“Climate action is understood as the efforts to measure and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen adaptive capacity to climate induced impacts.” UNWTO

SDG 13 relates specifically to Climate Action and calls on all countries to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. 196 countries signed the Paris Agreement in 2015, which commits them to working to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The Government of Ireland has committed to cutting Ireland’s greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030 and to achieving net zero emissions by no later than 2050.

The hospitality sector, along with all other sectors of society, has a part to play in Ireland achieving that goal.

WHAT ARE THE CLIMATE ACTION AREAS THAT DIRECTLY HELP REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS?

1. Managing energy more efficiently.
2. Switching to renewable energy.
3. Managing all wastes (especially food waste) and water efficiently.
4. Switching to renewable options for transport.
5. Creating more sustainable buildings.
6. Sourcing locally



Top Tip

Consult the list of conservation actions at the end of this document for inspiration on practical actions that your business can take.

The Business Case for Climate Action

Here are 5 key reasons that make climate action make sense for your business:

1. It demonstrates that your business is playing its part to tackle climate change. This boosts your business brand and reputation.
2. It reduces consumption and therefore reduces costs.
3. It helps reduce and avoid carbon taxes.
4. Guests, clients and employees now expect and even demand it.
5. It enhances your marketing and boosts sales. It is increasingly important for conference, meetings and events decision-makers.

According to 2021 visitor research from booking.com, 83% of global travelers now think sustainable travel is vital, with 61% saying the pandemic has made them want to travel more sustainably in the future.

This research also revealed that 84% want to reduce general waste, for example by avoiding single use toiletries. 83% want to reduce their energy consumption while on holiday e.g., through turning off air conditioning or lights when not in the room.



Top Tip

Marketing and communications activity should be a feature of every stage of your climate action journey. This is to ensure that your activity is successful in reducing emissions while also impacting positively on your brand reputation and brand value.

Part 2: Carbon Dioxide and Carbon Footprint

What is causing levels of carbon dioxide to increase around the world?

Energy	Transportation	Deforestation	Agriculture & Industry
To satisfy global demand for electricity, we burn fossil fuels such as gas, coal and oil to generate power. When fossil fuels are burned, they release CO ₂ , which is then expelled into the atmosphere as waste.	Burning petrol and diesel to power our vehicles has the same effect as burning fossil fuels to power our homes. It results in carbon dioxide being released into our atmosphere.	Trees absorb and store carbon dioxide during photosynthesis to produce energy. They then release oxygen as a by-product of this process. When we remove trees for agriculture or developments, we are eliminating the earth's natural CO ₂ sponges.	Agriculture is directly responsible for a large portion of global carbon emissions, through methane-producing animals and changes in land use and quality. Manufacturing industries require a lot of heat energy (from burning fossil fuels) to convert raw materials into useful products.

What is Carbon Dioxide?

It's a gas that is present naturally in the earth's atmosphere. It's a greenhouse gas (GHG), along with others such as methane, nitrous oxide and refrigerant gases. As a GHG, it plays a crucial role in heating the earth by absorbing energy from the sun and redirecting it back towards the earth's surface. It also plays a key role in plant-based photosynthesis, a process that is essential for plants to survive. This in turn is essential for humans and animals that depend on plants for food to survive.

Why is Carbon Dioxide so damaging?

Carbon Dioxide in natural atmospheric quantities is harmless and is in fact a good thing: we need it to keep the earth warm and to keep the conditions for healthy plant life. However, a build-up of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has led to too much of the sun's energy being trapped and the planet getting warmer. This can make conditions for living difficult for both plants and people. Because it is human activity that is leading to an increase in carbon dioxide and other GHGs, this is often referred to as man-made climate change.

What does 'Carbon Footprint' mean?

Footprint is the term used to describe the total impact that something has.

Carbon is shorthand for all the different greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming.

"Carbon Footprint" is the term used to describe the full climate change impact of your hotel or guesthouse.

How is Carbon Footprint measured?

The Carbon Footprint of your hotel is defined as the total amount of carbon emissions produced by your hotel or guesthouse in a calendar year.

Think of it as the greenhouse gas emissions caused directly or indirectly by your hotel or guesthouse.

Internationally, emissions are categorized as either **Scope 1**, **Scope 2** or **Scope 3**.

This is terminology we are likely to hear more of in the future.



Did you know?

You can measure your Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions accurately. They relate directly to the amount of energy you use and what the source of that energy is. All you need to know are your figures for annual consumption of fuel and electricity. You cannot precisely measure Scope 3 emissions, but you can still take actions to combat them.

Scope 1, 2 & 3 Emissions Explained

Scope 1:

Greenhouse Gas Emissions your business produces directly e.g., through burning fossil fuels such as gas and oil to run your heating system.

Scope 2:

Greenhouse Gas Emissions your business produces indirectly e.g., when you import electricity for your hotel which is produced by power stations burning fossil fuel.

Scope 3:

All the emissions not directly owned or controlled by your business, but that you are indirectly responsible for through your supply chain e.g., through the products you buy from suppliers such as food.

Checklist for reducing your carbon footprint:

SCOPE 1 ACTIONS

- ✓ Use less energy that is derived from fossil fuels.
- ✓ Implement energy efficiency measures – through staff training and more efficient equipment.

SCOPE 2 ACTIONS

- ✓ Switch to renewable electricity sources.
- ✓ Switch to a certified green electricity supplier.



Reducing carbon emissions reduces costs. It's good for the environment and it's good for business.

SCOPE 3 ACTIONS

- ✓ Minimise food waste.
- ✓ Conserve water.
- ✓ Reduce general waste.
- ✓ Source all/more food and other materials locally.
- ✓ Encourage and empower guests and staff to travel sustainably.
- ✓ Upgrade the insulation on your buildings.
- ✓ Support biodiversity.
- ✓ Only when you have done everything possible internally to reduce carbon emissions, consider buying carbon offsets which are credits purchased to negate a carbon footprint.

(There are mixed views on the credibility of carbon offsetting as a climate action. It should be considered as a last resort to address any remaining emissions that cannot be eliminated by other means.)

Part 3: A Step-by-Step Approach to Getting Started

Leading a Climate Action Plan

A Climate Action Plan is a formal way to describe your hotel establishing your current carbon footprint, committing to reducing future carbon emissions and then backing this up with a strategy, targets and actions that are monitored and measured periodically.

There are two factors that will determine the success of your endeavours:

MINDSET

Taking climate action is not a once-off or short-term project. It requires a mindset that's committed to continuous improvement across all business functions over the long term.

LEADERSHIP

Committed leadership from owners and senior managers is the essential first step. They communicate the mindset and create the culture that is needed. They can empower action.

Reducing carbon emissions is a journey. Staff need to be allowed the necessary time to implement changes. This can only come from top level management making a conscious decision to change and then creating the conditions for that to happen.

Step by Step Approach

1. Set up a Green Team

The Green Team will be responsible for implementing the Climate Action Plan. This will include gathering data to establish your starting point, and then monitoring consumption of energy and water as well as management of waste over time. The team can even create a Climate Action Plan for each department and can ensure the overall implementation of the programme. The Green Team also reports on progress and keeps all departments updated.

Who should be on the green team?

- ✓ A Green Leader or Green Champion.
- ✓ Managers and Heads of Department.
- ✓ The Head Chef and other chefs.
- ✓ Other staff as appropriate e.g., housekeeping for waste, kitchen porter or grounds maintenance team.

2. Gather & review data

The first task of the Green Team is to gather data on energy consumption, water consumption, waste generation and carbon footprint. It is important to establish where you are right now in terms of each one. This is your starting point or baseline. You will be able to compare all future performance against this starting baseline.

Much of the information needed can be gleaned from your service provider bills. They will tell you, for example, the total amount of energy consumed by your hotel as well as the total amount of money that costs.

Measure, measure, measure – especially before you begin! It's the only way to know you are making progress!



Top Tip:

Appoint a Green Leader or Green Champion for the team. Choose somebody who is respected, has some authority and who also has a natural passion for the area.

3. Identify improvement targets and actions for your business

Set targets for improvement for your business. Remember that it's a journey. Be realistic about how much can be achieved. Set stretching but pragmatic targets that you can measure and report on over time. The Green Team can identify potential actions that reduce emissions by:

1. Inviting suggestions from staff.
2. Reviewing the suggested actions in Part 5 of this document 'Inspiration for your Green Team'.
3. Looking at what other businesses are doing.

4. Prepare and implement a Climate Action Plan

- Your Green Team can create improvement plans for climate action areas such as energy, water, general waste, food waste, and greening the supply chain.
- You may choose to do these one-by-one or simultaneously. Be realistic in terms of the time and resources that are available.
- Remember! Not every action requires financial investment. You may identify many low or no cost actions.
- Decide who will do what and assign tasks and responsibilities along with implementation timeframes.
- Estimate expected costs and savings for each action. Establish what the payback time for any given action would be. Consider also other benefits such as reduction of carbon, reduction of waste and improved working environment for staff.



Success Story

The Falls Hotel & Spa in Co. Clare switched to hydro electric power in 2018. In the first year, this move resulted in a reduction in running costs of 60% and carbon emissions of 70%. The new system contributed significantly to the hotel achieving carbon neutral certification in 2021.

Part 4: Key Climate Action Areas and Approaches

Top 5 Tips for Climate Action

The following sections of this guide are jam packed with lots of ideas for climate actions that will help reduce your overall carbon footprint. Before you dive in, here are our Top 5 Climate Actions that you can prioritize to get a great start on your climate action journey.

TOP 5 TIPS FOR PRIORITY CLIMATE ACTIONS

1. Start to measure and monitor. Establish how much energy your hotel or guesthouse uses right now and commit to tracking this over time. Contact your service provider to get your annual consumption figures.
2. Wherever possible, switch to a Green Energy Supplier or a renewable energy source such as solar PV, wood pellet, bio-LPG, heat pumps or wind. You can learn more about becoming energy efficient through [SEAI's Energy Academy](#).
3. Introduce a strict policy of turning off all equipment when not in use. Provide staff training on this.
4. Focus on food and minimise food waste. See Part 5 for other practical ideas.
5. Switch to a local supplier for food or materials that you purchase regularly – not only does this reduce transport costs and emissions, but it also supports the local economy.

Conserving Energy in your Hotel

Energy is usually the priority area for hotels & guesthouses. It is the most costly area, both in terms of carbon emissions and business expenditure. There's a "win-win" in reducing emissions and costs by focusing on this area.

To get started:

1. Identify the biggest energy users, department by department. This allows you to prioritise action.
2. Consider each consumption category separately: lighting, heating, cooking, refrigeration and equipment,.
3. Observe how staff use energy appliances and equipment and consider where changes in behaviour could lead to significant savings.
4. Implement actions that have the lowest cost and highest impact first and progress from there.



Top Tip:

Consult the list of energy conservation actions at the end of this document for practical ideas on actions that your Green Team can take in the areas of lighting, heating, refrigeration, equipment and staff behaviour. [Click here](#)

ENERGY COST-SAVINGS IDEAS

Action	Why?
Take time to understand your energy bill and consult with your energy provider about how to reduce costs and consumption.	There is a lot of technical language on energy bills, and you need to understand every word and every charge. We tend to focus on the front page of the bill. However, the most important information is on the back of your bill. Make sure you are on the correct rate for your business and that you are not incurring unnecessary charges. Maximise savings through switching to night rates wherever possible.
Shop around for the best energy prices.	Prices of electricity, gas, oil can vary significantly among suppliers, so it is important to shop around on at least an annual basis and always when your contract with your energy supplier expires. Energy suppliers generally offer a reduced rate for contract period but increase the price when the contract expires without notification.
Review the cost of your energy source and change where feasible.	All energy sources can be converted to kWh and hotels & guesthouses can calculate the cost of all energy sources in terms of cent/kWh.
<i>Hotels & guesthouses use a range of different energy sources which include electricity from the grid, natural gas, bottled and tank gas (LPG), wood chip and pellet, renewable electricity generated on site through Solar PV, hydropower and wind.</i>	To understand the real cost of energy for your business it is important to understand the cost/kWh of each different energy source so you can compare them. There is significant variation in cost e.g. the cost of electricity from the national grid is usually about twice the cost of electricity from solar panels while using oil for heating is usually about twice the price of using heat-pumps.

Managing General Waste and Food Waste in your Hotel

Use a systematic approach to minimise and reduce waste produced in your business. Contact your service provider for an annual breakdown of how much waste was collected from your business and what it cost. Request a breakdown for each category of waste – landfill, food and recycling. Walk around your premises, have a look in bins and observe staff and guest behaviour to understand where waste is coming from and how people handle it. Once you have a clear understanding of those areas, select and implement strategies that improve performance. Here are some options:

1. Prevent waste entering your hotel wherever possible. Review packaging, discuss with suppliers, refuse where necessary and reduce wherever possible.
2. Implement a recycling system.
3. Implement a composting system.
4. Influence staff behaviour.
5. Influence visitor behaviour.



Top Tip:

Share the detailed list of Waste Action Ideas at the end of this guide with your Green Team to help inspire practical actions that could be implemented around the hotel. [Click here](#) 

WASTE COST-SAVINGS IDEAS

Action	Why?
Take time to understand your waste bill and consult with your refuse collection provider about how to reduce waste and costs.	There are multiple entries on most waste collection bills and it's important to understand what every charge is for. Make sure you are on the best rate for your business.
Monitor your bin collection area on bin collection days.	You will see opportunities to reduce your pick-up costs (usually charged per bin) by ensuring bins are full to the top rather than having 2 or more bins that are partially full.
Examine the number of collections and bins you are being charged for every collection day.	It is important to ensure there are no double entries due to human error.
Prioritise reducing food waste.	This reduces the costs from your waste collection providers and the cost of purchasing, storing and preparing the food.

Conserving Water in your Hotel

A great starting point for your Water Conservation Programme is to establish how much water is currently consumed by your hotel or guesthouse. Your water bill will give you that information, in cubic litres and in money. This is your baseline.

It's a good idea not to rely on your bill alone as you progress your journey. By regularly checking your meter and keeping a meter-reading log, you get more timely and more accurate information than your bill can provide. This will allow you to monitor patterns over different months, weeks and even days.

Type of equipment	Recommended flow rates/litres per flush
Public and restroom taps	2 - 4 litres per minute.
Toilets	4.5 – 6 litres per flush (dual flush)
Showers	6 – 8 litres per minute
Urinals	Managed not flushing automatically
Pot wash/kitchen	6 – 8 litres per minute

To get started:

1. Identify the biggest water users, department by department. This allows you to prioritise action.
2. Calculate the water flow rate for equipment. This is the speed at which water flows from a tap, toilet or shower, expressed in litres per minute. Compare these against good practice benchmarks in the table above. It will help you assess the impact of investing in equipment by comparing current flow rate against future predicted flow rate.
3. Walk around your premises and observe staff behaviour and general practices. Are there areas where changes in behaviour could lead to significant savings?
4. Ensure that you don't have any water leaks. An easy way to check for leaks is to read your meter at the close of business, switch all users (including toilets) off and read your meter again in the morning. If water is consumed, you may have a leak.

Supporting Biodiversity

Biodiversity or biological diversity is the variety and variability of life on Earth. It is all around us - trees, plants, animals, birds, and insects. Even in the heart of the largest cities, examples are to be found.

Biodiversity is essential for human existence. It provides us with the food we eat, medicines we take, the clean water we drink, produces the air we breathe and sequesters atmospheric carbon dioxide.

However, it is under pressure like no time before in human history, due in a large part to the impacts human activity is having on the climate.

Leading in your wider Community

Working on environmental projects is a great way to engage with your local community. Working with others to create and maintain a clean and attractive place to visit and live in has many advantages. It can boost staff morale, build teamwork, enhance relationships within the community and also impress visitors.

Here are a few other initiatives you could think about.

- Participate in wider community initiatives such as Sustainable Energy Communities and Better Energy Communities.
- Support local business networks and understand how experiences can be shared.
- Support employees to actively contribute to decarbonisation in work and their wider lives.
- Work with initiatives, such as Business in the Community Ireland, (e.g., the Low Carbon Pledge), or the EPA Stop Food Waste Programme.

Ideas for Hotels & Guesthouses:

- ✓ Borders of pollinating flowers
- ✓ Plant native trees
- ✓ Plant flowering and berry-bearing shrubs
- ✓ Keep wildflower meadow areas
- ✓ Install nest boxes and bird feeders
- ✓ Have nest box camera feeds on your website or on monitors in hotel.
- ✓ Keep bees.
- ✓ Buy locally produced sustainable food and drink products.
- ✓ Support local environmental projects.
- ✓ Sign up to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and pledge action.



Success Story

Hotel Doolin in Co. Clare is Ireland's first hotel to be certified as carbon neutral. The hotel plants 10 native Irish trees locally for every wedding celebration that takes place. Staff visit Hometree, a local biodiversity initiative, to help plant trees. This has helped secure bookings from carbon-conscious couples who have even promoted it on their wedding invitations!



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Part 5: Inspiration for your Green Team

Once you start seeing the carbon and cost savings resulting from your climate actions, you and your team will be inspired to keep going with this journey. The lists of ideas on the following pages can help ignite the creativity and enthusiasm of your Green Team. Use them to brainstorm actions for your hotel's Climate Action Plan.

In terms of investment, actions are categorized as low, medium or high, generally considered to be:

Low investment: pays for itself in less than a year.
 Medium investment: pays for itself in 1 to 4 years.
 High investment: pays for itself in 5 years plus.

Inspiring Energy Conservation Actions

LIGHTING		
Action	Why	Investment (High/Medium/Low)
Replace halogen and CFL bulbs with energy-efficient LEDs.	While LED lights are more expensive to buy initially, they work out less expensive in the long run as they use less electricity and last for five years or more, so fittings don't have to be replaced as frequently. Savings of up to 75% can be realised.	
Install motion and light sensors.	Motion sensors in little-used areas e.g., hallways, bathrooms, can reduce lighting requirements in these areas by as much as 50%.	
Eliminate unnecessary lights throughout your hotel and make the most of natural light wherever possible.	Less lights, less energy used.	



Low



Medium



High

HEATING		
Action	Why	Investment (High/Medium/Low)
Understand how your heating system works.	Allows you to take full advantage of built-in energy efficiency functions, including the correct setting of timers and sufficient, but not excessive, settings for temperature.	
Regularly service your boiler.	This can reduce consumption by 10% per year.	
Install thermostats. Train staff on operating the controls.	Thermostats control temperature. Modern heating systems (including wireless) allow a great degree of heating control e.g. via zones or even room-by-room.	
Consider the position of thermostats carefully.	Avoid draughty areas. These can lead to thermostat readings that make your heating system work hard to heat a space that is already warm enough.	
Install technology controls for heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems.	Improved controls help optimise energy use.	
Consider upgrading your boiler, switching to a biomass boiler or a heat pump.	New boilers will save up to 30% on heating fuel compared to an old inefficient boiler. Biomass boilers combust sustainable sourced wood pellets which are carbon neutral. Compare the running costs of your existing boiler with a new boiler in terms of cent/kWh – this will allow you establish how long it takes to recoup the initial investment.	 
Ensure radiators are kept clear.	Ensure radiators are not covered and that they are not being blocked by furnishings or other items so you can heat the space with minimal energy.	
Upgrade the insulation throughout your hotel.	This ensures less heating is lost and more is retained within your building.	



Low



Medium



High

EQUIPMENT		
Action	Why	Investment (High/Medium/Low)
Prioritise replacing equipment with high energy ratings.	Newer equipment generally has a lower energy rating and will result in lower running and energy costs.	Medium - High  
Generate your own electricity onsite using Solar PV, wind or hydro.	Renewable electricity is cheaper in the long-term, won't incur any carbon tax, minimises energy price increases and reduces your carbon footprint.	 
Consider a heat recovery system to harness heat generated by your business.	A heat recovery system takes hot extracted air from different sources and uses it to generate hot water for direct use or to supplement heating systems. Installation of these systems typically has a payback period of less than a year and the best thing about them is that they are using energy you have already paid for! (e.g., through extractor from kitchens, laundry exhaust, ventilation from swimming pool or gym).	 

INFLUENCING STAFF BEHAVIOUR		
Action	Why	Investment (High/Medium/Low)
Start a Switch-off Campaign and provide training.	Raise staff awareness of their responsibility to switch off equipment when not in use.	
Make On/Off Checklists for all equipment.	Establish if you can use major equipment a little less e.g. could your main oven be switched on one hour later every day?	
Place On/Off Stickers on equipment.	Stickers that convert consumption into euros will help team members be proactive about switching off.	
Train staff members on use of heating systems and thermostats.	This is not always intuitive, and the equipment and systems will only be as good as the people who operate them.	

TRANSPORT		
Action	Why	Investment (High/Medium/Low)
Install electric car charging points in your car-park.	To encourage and enable use of sustainable modes of transport.	
Make bike racks and simple bike repair and maintenance tools available to guests.	To encourage and enable use of sustainable modes of transport.	
Provide information on sustainable transportation options to guests in advance of travel and while they are with you.	To encourage and enable use of sustainable modes of transport.	
Introduce Staff Biking Days.	To encourage and enable use of sustainable modes of transport.	
Purchase an electric van or bus for transporting guests	To encourage and enable use of sustainable modes of transport.	



Low



Medium



High

Inspiration for Reducing and Managing Waste

REDUCING GENERAL WASTE		
Action	Why	Investment (High/Medium/Low)
Monitor your bins to identify the items that are most discarded in your business. Name your Top 5.	Identify your top waste challenges which are the ones where you can make the biggest and most immediate impact.	
Brainstorm with your staff how your Top 5 waste items can be eliminated, reduced, re-used or re-cycled.	Engage your team in prioritising actions and contributing to the overall waste reduction effort.	
Refuse unnecessary product packaging.	Eliminate packaging entering your business in the first place.	
Request re-usable or returnable containers.	Eliminate packaging entering your business in the first place.	
Buy in bulk.	Reduce volume of packaging coming into your hotel or guesthouse.	
Re-use items throughout your workplace.	Avoid waste going to landfill and contribute to the circular economy.	
Donate old items.	Avoid waste going to landfill. This can include soft furnishings, furniture, used candles.	
Commit to a formal recycling programme.	Avoid waste going to landfill. Recycling programme can include paper, cardboard, ink and toner cartridges, computers and computer accessories.	
Reduce single-use packaging.	Reduce volume of packaging and avoid guests feeling uncomfortable about personal contribution to waste.	
Ensure you have the right bins in the right place throughout your premises and that they are equally accessible.	Make it as easy as possible for staff and visitors to do the right thing e.g. if the recycling bin is in an unsheltered area, it's tempting to use a nearer bin on a wet day!	
Label bins clearly using images rather than words.	Make it as easy as possible for staff and visitors to do the right thing.	
Have a free water station for refilling water bottles.	Reduce packaging from water containers.	



Low



Medium



High

REDUCING FOOD WASTE

Action	Why	Investment (High/Medium /Low)
Examine your bills for the last 12 months and add up what it cost to collect food waste from your business in one year.	This will show you the level of direct costs incurred by your business just to throw food in the bin.	
Examine your bills for the last 12 months and add up how many kg of food waste was collected from your hotel in one year.	It is estimated that the cost of putting food in your bin in the hospitality sector is €3 per kg. This allows not just for the collection cost, but also for the cost of purchase, delivery, refrigeration and preparation. Multiplying total kg collected by €3 gives a better cost estimate of food waste in your hotel or guesthouse.	
Examine your food bins regularly and note the contents.	Establish the foods for which excess quantities are being purchased, where shelf-life is too short or that are most often not consumed by guests.	
Introduce a stock rotation system.	Avoid spoilage.	
Review portion sizes.	Find the balance between 'enough' and 'too much' for guest satisfaction.	
Involve your kitchen team in brainstorming creative ways to re-use food trimmings.	Engage the team to contribute to the overall waste management programme.	
Set up a composting programme.	Avoid food waste going to landfill.	



Low



Medium



High

INFLUENCING BEHAVIOUR		
Action	Why	Investment (High/Medium/Low)
Monitor your segregated bins to identify if staff and visitors are segregating waste.	Establish where changes in behaviour or practice – through training or awareness raising - could lead to better waste management.	
Document your waste management and waste reduction policy and detail the actions/standard expected. Provide training.	Get everyone on the same page and ensure staff understand requirements. For example, specify policies such as: segregate rubbish, fill collection bins to the top.	
Place stickers or posters on bins to clearly show what belongs in each bin.	Make it easy for people to understand how to segregate waste.	
Ask for staff ideas on how to eliminate or reduce waste. Consider a rewards system to incentivise participation.	Engage staff and raise awareness about being conscientious of waste management and waste reduction.	
Provide training to ensure team members are implementing policies.	To ensure a consistent and authentic approach across your business operations.	



Low



Medium



High

Inspiration for Conserving and Managing Water

EQUIPMENT		
Action	Why	Investment (High/Medium/Low)
Fix aerators to taps and showers to reduce the water flow rate.	Aerators make it possible to reduce the amount of water used without compromising the guest experience (by mixing air with water).	 
Replace traditional taps with mixer taps, lever taps or sensor taps.	Research shows that traditional twist taps are those most likely to be left running.	 
Replace older toilets with newer, more flush-efficient ones.	Reduce the amount of water used in each flush, which adds up to a substantial amount over time.	
Place a hippo bag or a brick in the cistern of older toilets.	These displace water on each flush. Useful where it is not possible to replace older toilets. Check to ensure flush remains strong enough.	
Install waterless or sensed urinals.	This ensures that water is only used when the urinal is used.	
Establish a rain-water harvesting system.	This allows you to collect water on-site for landscape irrigation.	
Install a water filtration system.	This allows water to be recycled and re-used again.	 
Install sub-meters in relevant parts of the hotel.	You can get more timely and accurate information for each department, such as pool and laundry.	



Low



Medium



High

INFLUENCING BEHAVIOUR		
Action	Why	Investment (High/Medium/Low)
Train staff to set equipment to specified energy-saving and water-saving cycles whenever possible.	Raise staff awareness of their responsibility to conserve water in their day-to-day work	
Document a water conservation policy and detail the actions/standard expected. Provide training.	This gets everyone on the same page and ensures staff understand requirements. For example, specify policies such as: wash only full loads, minimise water use when cleaning, use sink stopper when rinsing or washing, avoid tap-running in advance of cleaning.	
Review water use in gardening and landscaping and identify behavioural changes.	This raises awareness of how water can be conserved through actions such as: ensuring sprinklers are not sprinkling hard surfaces, watering early in the morning and late in the evening to avoid evaporation, selecting plants that require minimal watering.	 
Ask for staff ideas on how to conserve more energy. Consider a rewards system to incentivise participation.	This engages staff and raises awareness about the need to be conscientious in water use.	



Low



Medium



High

Useful Resources

Click on the arrow to bring you to the relevant resource.



Government Policy

[Climate Action Plan 2021](#) ↗

[Waste Action for a Circular Economy](#) ↗

(Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications.)



Waste

[For resource efficiency tools - Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) ↗

[A guide to managing waste in your business and posters for your bins – My Waste](#) ↗



Energy

[For business grants and supports – Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland \(SEAI\)](#) ↗

[Learn more about how to become energy efficient – SEAI's Energy Academy](#) ↗

[SEAI's energy saving tips and resources](#) ↗



Food Waste

[For fact sheets and resources – Food Waste Charter](#) ↗

[Calculate your food waste benchmark – Stop Food Waste](#) ↗

[Learn about the EPA's National Food Waste Prevention Programme](#) ↗



Water

[For water conservation tips – Irish Water](#) ↗



Biodiversity

[For actions to help pollinators – The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan](#) ↗



Community

[For examples of how businesses have positively impacted their local communities](#)

[– Business in The Community \(BITC\) Impact Map & Case Studies](#) ↗

[Learn about the SEAI Sustainable Energy Communities](#) ↗

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