



Working
with nature

Sustainability
Charter

Growing the success of Irish food & horticulture

Bord Bia
Irish Food Board



Origin Green Sustainability Charter

The Origin Green Sustainability Charter developed by Bord Bia is an ongoing voluntary programme that seeks to demonstrate the commitment of Irish food and drink manufacturers, both large and small, to operate in the most sustainable manner possible.

It offers a structure that allows individual companies to communicate key sustainability issues, set targets and regularly report progress in achieving short, medium and long term goals.

Customers will be directed to a web based portal containing independently verified information on the sustainability targets and improvements delivered by participants collectively as well as full details of member companies at www.origingreen.ie

What is the purpose of the Charter?

The overall purpose of the Charter is to promote best practice in the design, implementation and reporting of environmental and other sustainability practices operating in the Irish food and drink industry. It is also designed to promote shared learning within the industry as to what constitutes good performance.

The Charter is designed to:

1. Demonstrate the sustainability credentials of individual Irish food and drink manufacturers.
2. Enhance the reputation of Ireland as a source of sustainably produced food and drink products.

Why is it important?

The reasons for embracing sustainability are compelling. With the global population set to increase by more than two billion by 2050, the world will need to produce 70% more food from increasing limited resources in terms of water and land. This is leading to fears over the future of food supplies in many parts of the world and is leading to significant action by retailers and food manufacturers.

They are increasingly looking to suppliers to provide details of the sustainability impact associated with their products. For suppliers, this highlights the need to be able to credibly benchmark their performance and demonstrate improvement. Those that can proactively demonstrate strong credentials stand well placed to secure long term business relationships with leading retailers and food manufacturers.

What benefits does it offer?

Strong sustainability credentials offer the food and drink sector considerable opportunities – provided we can demonstrate that improved performance is being achieved. The Origin Green Sustainability Charter can act as the vehicle to prove our credentials.

At an individual manufacturer level, it has been proven that sustainable production practices can result in greater efficiency. Greater efficiency means reduced costs. A second benefit offered by embracing sustainability is its potential to deliver a point of differentiation in what remains an extremely competitive marketplace.

Why should you participate?

The Charter offers food and drink manufacturers a suite of credibility tools in the form of:

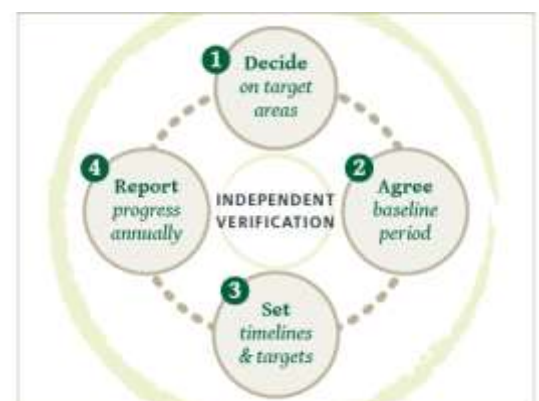
- A vehicle to demonstrate sustainability commitment to key customers.
- An independently verified programme to demonstrate your sustainability actions.
- A clear structure to allow reporting of progress towards short, medium and long term goals.
- An organisational focus on delivering continuous improvement.
- The potential to harness shared learning's from peers.

What is required of participants?

Demonstrating good environmental performance and achieving best practice is possible for all companies. Balancing the autonomy of the participant to define their specific plan with the need to have credible and verifiable progress achievement is critical to success.

The main requirement for companies to participate is the demonstration of a strong commitment at senior management level and throughout the organisation to deliver continuous improvement in their performance over time. This will require companies to demonstrate that it is embedded in the culture of the company.

Companies are being asked to sign up to developing and implementing an action plan covering a period of up to five years, which can be renewed/updated as appropriate at the end of the period. This action plan will need to clearly set out targets in the key action areas identified by the company. It will also require a commitment to deliver a progress report on an annual basis.





Structure of the Charter

The Charter is designed to allow companies, large and small, determine themselves what measures they wish to take to address sustainability issues.

Bord Bia believes that individual companies are best placed to determine which actions will have the greatest impact in improving their performance while also offering potential commercial benefits through either reducing costs and/or adding value.

Each company decides internally what areas they wish to focus on and how best to implement change so that specific targets are achieved. This will then be assessed by independent third party retained by Bord Bia.

To demonstrate progress over time it will be necessary to quantify a baseline position at a particular point in time, measure and report progress annually.

Bord Bia is of the view that formal certification of company actions is not appropriate in this case as it would entail publishing a specific standard that may be too narrow in scope given the range and scale of manufacturing processes that make up the Irish food, drink and horticulture sector. Instead, Bord Bia will publish participation and categorise companies relative to the progress they achieve against their stated targets.





Deciding on Target Areas

The Sustainability Charter for an individual company can include plans and targets under any of the following three action areas:

- Raw material sourcing with specific emphasis on primary products
- Manufacturing processes
- Local biosphere

Within the key action areas chosen, performance is categorised under the following issues:

Energy	Emissions	Waste	Water	Biodiversity	Animal Welfare	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reduction initiatives •Renewables Investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reduction of GHG emissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Initiatives to reduce waste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reduce consumption •Minimise contamination •Prevent Pollution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Conservation of ecosystems •Soil biology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Practices to enhance welfare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Health and Nutrition •Initiatives in community •Other to be selected

The multi-annual Sustainability Plan developed by each company must include at least one target area from energy, emissions and waste as well at least one other area to be selected from the list above.

For each target area, each company will need to set out a baseline, decide on short, medium and long term targets and commit to reporting progress on an annual basis.

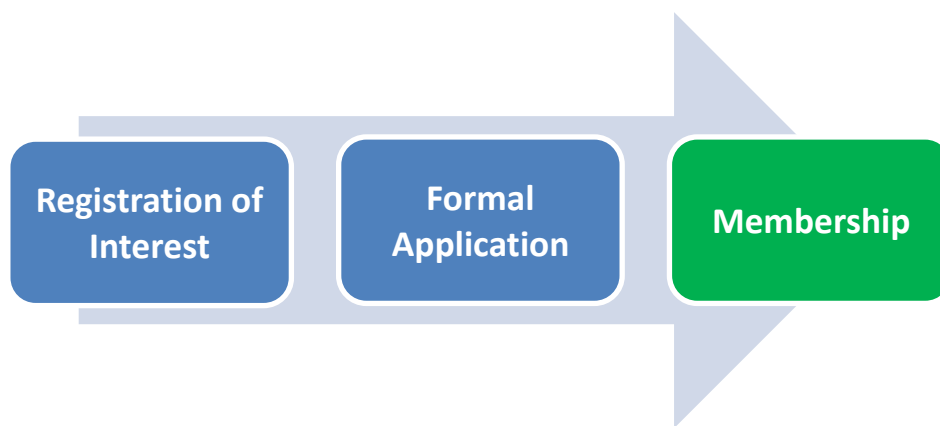
At least one issue must contain 'stretch' targets. By 'stretch' we mean an ambitious target that represents a significant increase on current levels of improvement. It will be at each company's discretion to decide which issue will fulfil this role. Companies will then need to justify why it is a 'stretch' target and how they intend to achieve it.



Joining Origin Green

There are three stages before full membership of Origin Green is achieved. Full membership requires each participant to articulate a plan that specifies actions to be taken to make a positive impact over a specified time period to achieve quantifiable targets in improving their sustainability performance.

How companies engage in the process and how progress is reported and vouched for is the principal challenge of implementation. Inclusion in the initiative will be in three stages: registration, application and membership. Company involvement at each stage will be made publicly available.



Registration of Interest

Registration is defined as the stage where companies commit to participating in the initiative. At this stage companies commence developing their plan, identify the issues they wish to address, begin to set targets, consider the resources required to achieve those targets and define the impact of their achievement.

Registrations will only be accepted on foot of a statement of commitment by the CEO/MD of the company. The name of the company and date of their registration will be published online by Bord Bia. Should a company not progress to the application stage within one year of their registration date they shall be withdrawn from this published list.

Formal Application

The application stage is where the completed Sustainability plan is lodged with Bord Bia for assessment. Identifying the baseline and the data collection requirements to facilitate progress reporting will be an important part of the preparation of an application.

Bord Bia will provide companies with guidance on developing their sustainability plan, including case studies from other companies, guidance on deciding on target areas and setting targets.



Once submitted, each application will be independently assessed by an external third party appointed by Bord Bia. This process may require the applicant to provide further details prior to approval. It shall be necessary to specify in detail the issues and the action areas being addressed.

It is permissible to choose a historical baseline year so that progress already achieved can contribute to longer term goals. Baselines will be acceptable for a period of two years prior to the date of registration.

The targets set out in the application must indicate the milestones to be reached at specific junctures. As with registration, the name of the company and the date of application acceptance will be published online by Bord Bia.

The content of each application will remain confidential unless a company chooses to release details themselves.

Membership

The membership stage will be the period where companies are working towards the achievement of their Sustainability Plan. Progress reporting will be a key requirement in order to retain membership status.

It will be possible to redefine targets if companies can demonstrate that the overall impact of their performance will be enhanced. Overachievement of a target in the short to medium term will be accepted. Failure to achieve targets within the timeframes specified could result in the withdrawal of the company from Bord Bia's register of membership. Members will be listed in terms of their progress along the timelines detailed in their applications.

Progress Reporting and Verification

To facilitate progress reporting Bord Bia will provide an internet platform whereby participants can securely upload their Sustainability Plan documentation.

Data collected and analysed will be submitted to Bord Bia to allow an assessment of target achievement. This process will allow links to be established to demonstrate achievement of third party certifications where relevant.

The assessment of satisfactory progress will be determined by a Bord Bia retained independent third party. A sample will be taken periodically to verify the authenticity of the progress reported.

It is not envisaged that any routine auditing will be required however random inspections to verify data provided may be undertaken at Bord Bia's discretion.



Communication of Origin Green

The ultimate intention for the Sustainability Charter is that it will deliver a strong evidence base to build the substance of the Origin Green brand. The evidence will form the foundations of the communication platform to demonstrate the sustainability credentials of the Irish food and drink industry in the marketplace. The development of an online portal for Origin Green will allow Bord Bia communicate the cumulative improvements delivered by participating food and drink manufacturers under each key heading over time. For example, we will be able to say that participating companies reduced electricity usage by xx kilowatts, emissions by x% etc.

Individual companies will be able to communicate to their customers that they are part of Origin Green and highlight the improvements that they have delivered in key areas.