



Retail & Foodservice Sustainability Charter

Origin Green Retail & Foodservice Sustainability Charter

Introduction

Origin Green, Ireland's National Sustainability Programme, aims to establish Ireland as a leading source of sustainably produced food and drink products. Origin Green is an ongoing voluntary programme that seeks to demonstrate the commitment of Irish farmers and food and drink manufacturers, both large and small, to operate in the most sustainable manner possible.

From the outset, the programme has incorporated sustainability measures at farm level through Bord Bia's Quality Assurance infrastructure, while manufacturers have committed to the development and implementation of multiannual sustainability plans for their business.

As part of the ongoing evolution of the programme, its scope is now being extended to incorporate the retail and foodservice elements of the supply chain.

Similar to the Sustainability Charter for manufacturers, retail multiples and foodservice distributors and operators with multiple sites are now being offered a structure that allows them to communicate key sustainability issues, set targets and regularly report progress in achieving short, medium and long term goals.

Interested retail multiples and foodservice distributors and operators are required to develop a sustainability plan for their business covering a minimum of three years. Once this plan has been independently reviewed and verified, the company will become a verified member of the Origin Green sustainability programme.

Eligibility Criteria

At this point in time, the eligibility criteria for participation in the Origin Green Retail and Foodservice Sustainability Charter will be multiple retailers, defined as those operating from more than 100 locations and foodservice distributors and operators with more than 75 locations or with a distribution facility of greater than 50,000 sq. ft. and/or a fleet size which exceeds 30 vehicles.

For those participating in this programme, the primary function of their operation must be food / foodservice related.

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 across the Irish food and drink sector. It is also designed to promote shared learning within the industry as to what constitutes good performance.

This charter is designed to:

1. Focus on the sustainability performance of food & drink retail multiples and foodservice distributors and operators.
2. Outline commitments over a range of areas to improve sustainability performance over time and provide a mechanism to track progress and promote continuous improvement.
3. Offer independent verification of plans and annual progress.

Why is it important?

The reasons for embracing sustainability are compelling. With the global population set to increase by more than two billion people by 2050, the world will need to produce 70% more food with less land, water and increasingly limited natural resources, whilst also reducing damage to the environment. This is leading to long term fears over the security of food supplies in many parts of the world.

The implications for all areas of the supply chain are clear. In response, retailers, foodservice companies and food manufacturers are outlining long term plans with clear targets to help improve the sustainability of their supply chains and internal operations. Retail multiples and foodservice distributors and operators can have a significant influence both up and down the chain in encouraging sustainable practices.

However, in order to be credible, they need to be able to validate and benchmark their current performance and demonstrate improvement over time. Those companies that can proactively demonstrate validate and benchmark their sustainability credentials stand well placed, over time, to enhance their reputation with customers and consumers alike.

What benefits does it offer?

Increasingly, consumers are becoming clearer as to what sustainability means to them and what they expect of producers, retail multiples and foodservice distributors and operators throughout the food and drink industry. Being able to demonstrate strong sustainability credentials presents the opportunity to create a point of differentiation and build reputation with a growing number of consumers who want to be able to 'do the right thing' when it comes to the food and drink products they purchase.

In addition, it has been proven that sustainable production practices can result in greater efficiency and potential reductions in operational costs.

The Origin Green Sustainability Charter can act as the vehicle to credibly demonstrate and verify your sustainability credentials.

Why should retailers, foodservice distributors and food service operators participate?

The Retail & Foodservice Charter offers food & drink retail multiples and foodservice distributors and operators with multiple locations the following:

- A clear structure to enable tracking and reporting of progress towards short, medium and long term sustainability goals.
- A vehicle to demonstrate their sustainability commitment to key customers and consumers.
- An independently verified programme to demonstrate the company's sustainability achievements.
- An organisational focus on delivering continuous improvement.

What is required of participants?

The Retail and Foodservice Sustainability Charter provides participants with a template within which they can identify the target areas that are most relevant to their business and which conform to their overall business strategy. Bord Bia offers independent verification of targets set out in each plan and the annual progress made towards reaching these targets.

A key 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 sustainability is embedded in the culture of the company.

Companies are asked to commit to developing and implementing a sustainability plan that covers a period of at least three years. The sustainability plan needs to clearly set out measurable targets in the key areas identified by the charter. It will also require a commitment to deliver a progress report on an annual basis.

1. Decide

on Target Areas

- Participating companies decide on relevant targets within the four target areas noted below.
- At least one 'stretch*' target area must be identified.

2. Agree

Baseline Year

- Companies must identify the baseline year from which improvements are to be measured.
- Baseline period of up to 2 years prior to registration is acceptable. Different baseline years are permitted for different targets.

3. Set

Timelines & Targets

- Short, medium and long term targets and initiatives set for each area.
- Justification for 'stretch*' target

4. Annual

Progress Report

- Sign commitment to report annually on each target area.
- Communicate progress in relation to targets being ahead, on schedule or behind schedule.

Deciding on Target Areas

The Retail and Foodservice Sustainability Charter for each participant should include plans that cover the following four target areas:

1. Sustainable Sourcing

2. Operations

3. Health & Nutrition

4. Social Sustainability

1. Sustainable Sourcing

Sustainable Sourcing is a key component of the sustainability strategies of leading retailers and foodservice companies globally. The issue of sustainable sourcing is equally relevant on the Irish market. As part of each plan, those participating in the retail and foodservice charter are asked to develop a set of commitments in relation to sourcing food and drink products. With more than 500 Irish manufacturers now registered for Origin Green and a significant proportion of these having verified sustainability plans in place, participating companies are encouraged to consider appropriate targets for sourcing from manufacturers that have a verified commitment to sustainability and can demonstrate commitment to suitably accredited schemes.

Similarly, the importance of farm level in relation to sustainable sourcing should be considered. Participating companies are asked to source from suppliers with recognised certifications in terms of Quality Assurance or broader sustainability measures. Where this is already the case, companies are asked to look at developing initiatives with suppliers over the period of the plan.

Targets under sustainable sourcing could include:

- Commitment to source from manufacturers that are verified members of Origin Green
- Commitment to source from suppliers with recognised certifications
- Development of Sustainability initiatives with suppliers (farm, manufacturing or packaging materials)

Plans must include at least one target under this heading

2. Operations

For the purposes of the Origin Green Retail and Foodservice Sustainability Charter, Operations incorporates distribution, storage, stores and packaging for own label products. This is the area that tends to be under the direct control of the retailer or foodservice distributor.

Some of the main areas for consideration include:

- Transport
- Lighting
- Refrigeration
- Food Waste
- Product packaging
- Emissions

Transport	Refrigeration	Lighting	Packaging	Food Waste	Emissions
Reduction in Fuel use.	Reduction in Energy use.	Change in lighting used.	Packaging reduction.	Reduction in food waste.	Emissions reduction.
Logistics management.	Refrigeration type.	Reduction in lighting based energy use.	Packaging materials used.	Alternative uses for products past 'best before' date.	Emissions offset.
Fuel source.	Source of energy.	Source of energy.	Increase proportion of recyclable packaging.		

Plans must include one Emissions Target and at least two others from the target areas listed in the table above.

3. Health & Nutrition

Defining a 'sustainable diet' is a complex issue and there are many factors to consider. As well as environmental, social and economic factors, a key factor is that food is a basic need. A healthy, varied diet provides the energy and nutrients needed for health, normal body function and physical activity. This emphasises the need for health and sustainability agendas to be considered in tandem, in order to achieve a sustainable and secure food supply for future generations that also supports public health.

With this in mind, Health & Nutrition is a core Target Area for Origin Green's Retail Sustainability Charter. The Charter aims to help deliver products that provide a nutritionally balanced and healthy diet.

Participating companies are required to include at least one Health and Nutrition target in their plan. Potential target areas within Health & Nutrition include reductions in fat, sugar, salt, colourings and portion size.

Plans must include at least one target under the Health & Nutrition heading.

4. Social Sustainability

Social sustainability captures a number of the broader components of Sustainability. The main areas for consideration under this heading include:

- Company role in their local community
- Employee wellbeing

The Sustainability Charter seeks to help participating companies formalise their contribution to the local community in which they are based and make commitments to continue or enhance this support over the lifetime of the plan. Similarly, most companies are significant employers and could help develop career development programmes for employees as well as other supports to help ensure employee wellbeing.

Plans must include at least one target under this heading

Stretch Targets*

At least one Target Area must contain a 'stretch' target. 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 fulfill this requirement. 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 verified is the principal focus for the implementation of Origin Green.

Company inclusion in the Origin Green programme involves a number of stages as outlined below:



Registration of Interest

Registration is defined as the stage where companies commit to participating in the Origin Green programme. 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 on the origingreen.ie website. Should a company not progress to the formal application stage within one year of registering, Bord Bia reserves the right to withdraw the company from the published list of participating companies.

Interested companies who fulfil the eligibility criteria can register their interest at www.bordbia.ie/industry.

Formal Application

The formal application stage involves the development of a sustainability plan relevant to the company in question and lodging it with Bord Bia for assessment.

Bord Bia will provide companies with guidance on developing their Sustainability Plan, including case studies from other companies, guidance on deciding upon 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. Applications will only become verified members when they have satisfied all criteria in the Charter and provided the relevant documentation to the third party verifier.

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 on the origingreen.ie website.

The content of each application will remain confidential unless a company chooses to release details themselves. Bord Bia encourages all member companies to share some of their key sustainability headline commitments on the origingreen.ie website to highlight the ambitious actions being taken and to improve the transparency of the programme.

Membership

The membership stage will be the period where companies are implementing their approved Sustainability Plan. Progress reporting on an annual basis 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.

Failure to show a clear commitment to deliver on the initiatives outlined in the plan within the timeframe outlined could result in the withdrawal of the company from Bord Bia's register of membership unless suitable justification is provided.

Progress Reporting and Verification

To facilitate progress reporting, Bord Bia will provide a web based portal where participants can securely upload their Sustainability Plan documentation.

The assessment of satisfactory progress will be determined by a Bord Bia retained independent third party.

Random on-site inspections will be undertaken to verify data provided at the progress reporting stage.

Find Out More

At the launch of Origin Green in June 2012, Bord Bia defined, against four milestones, how Ireland would become a world leader in sustainably produced food and drink. We committed to bringing everyone on the journey by 2016, farmers and food and drink manufacturers alike, measuring what matters, using internationally recognised standards and independent verification, and to making this a journey of continuous improvement.

Find out about our progress to date in our 2015 Sustainability Report available at <http://www.origingreen.ie/sustainability-report/>

Useful Websites

Bord Bia Website

www.bordbia.ie

Origin Green Website

www.origingreen.ie

Contact Us

Telephone: +353 1 668 5155

Email: origingreen@bordbia.ie