



Waste not, want not
A whole community approach to food waste
voice

Step-by-Step Guide: Launching a Green Wedding Initiative for Hotels & Hospitality



A Practical Framework for Low-Waste, High-Impact Celebrations

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Step 1 | Planning & Stakeholder Engagement |
| Step 2 | Action & Implementation |
| Step 3 | Continued Success through Ongoing Action |

Step 1

Planning & Stakeholder Engagement



Know your Why

When people connect with a purpose, such as preserving the environment or supporting those in need, it transforms the task from a simple act to a shared mission. This sense of purpose not only strengthens community ties but also fosters a collective responsibility to make a real difference.

According to the EPA, over 750,000 tonnes of food was wasted in Ireland in 2022, of which food businesses, from farmers and producers to restaurants and hotels, are responsible approx. 71%! In our online Asset Library (see Resource Section) you can find presentations, worksheets and websites to use when researching and trying to stimulate this discussion.



Step 1

Planning & Stakeholder Engagement



Scale & Scope

Before launching a green wedding initiative, it's important to first understand the scale and scope of what you're trying to achieve—whether it's within a single hotel or across an entire region.

Begin by assessing how many weddings typically take place in your venue/area each year and what resources are currently available to support sustainable practices.

Consider the diversity of stakeholders involved, from hospitality staff and suppliers to planners and local authorities, and explore how each might contribute to or benefit from the initiative.

This early scoping phase helps clarify the level of ambition, the potential impact, and the practical steps needed to move forward. Whether you're starting small or thinking big, defining the scope ensures your green wedding efforts are grounded, achievable, and tailored to your local context.

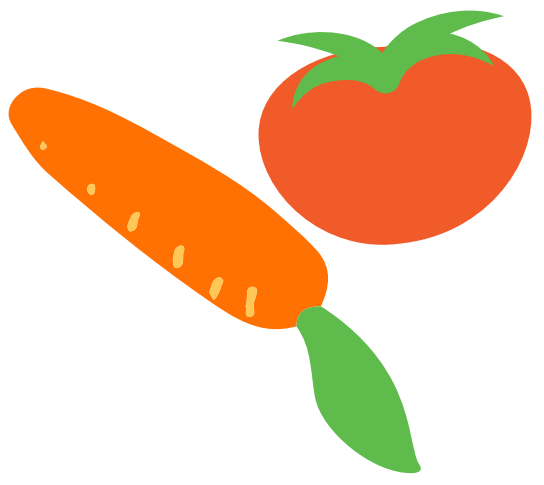


Step 1

Planning & Stakeholder Engagement

Map Your Stakeholders:

- List all relevant stakeholders:
 - Hotel management and staff
 - Local wedding planners and suppliers
 - Florists, caterers, photographers
 - Local government or tourism boards
 - Community groups and environmental NGOs
- Consider their roles, interests, and influence



Step 1

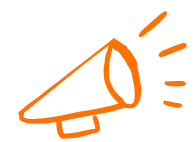
Planning & Stakeholder Engagement



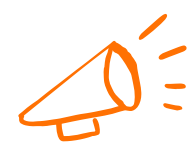
Host a Stakeholder Workshop to Start the Conversation

Before you begin planning your Green Wedding Initiative, begin by hosting a stakeholder workshop for potential partners and champions within your local area/hotel—such as event managers, chefs, sustainability officers, or general managers—who are passionate about environmental responsibility and operational innovation.

Bring these key players together for an initial meeting to explore the concept of offering low-waste, sustainable events and weddings. Use this session to discuss shared motivations, including reducing environmental impact, achieving cost savings, enhancing brand leadership, and responding to growing guest demand for eco-conscious experiences.



Organise a stakeholder session in a neutral, welcoming space, led by a skilled facilitator who can foster open dialogue and genuine collaboration. The aim is to create an environment where participants feel comfortable sharing ideas, raising concerns, and exploring opportunities together. This session should encourage collective ownership of the green wedding initiative and lay the groundwork for shared goals and practical next steps.



Goals for this session:

- ☐ Share the vision for green weddings.
- ☐ Share thoughts & observations of food waste.
- ☐ Identify opportunities and challenges.
- ☐ Build buy-in and gather ideas.



Use this session to co-create goals and values for the initiative.



Step 1

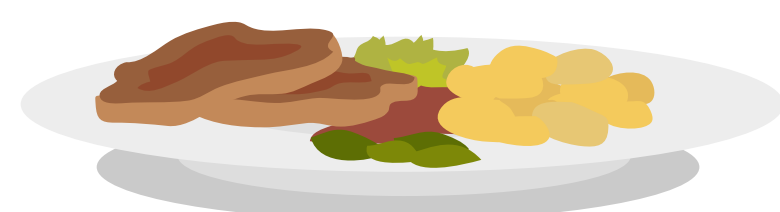
Planning & Stakeholder Engagement



Define Your Goals:

- Set clear, measurable objectives such as:

- ☐ Reduce food waste by 30% per event.
- ☐ Eliminate single-use plastics.
- ☐ Source 80% of food locally.
- ☐ Offer green wedding packages at all venues.

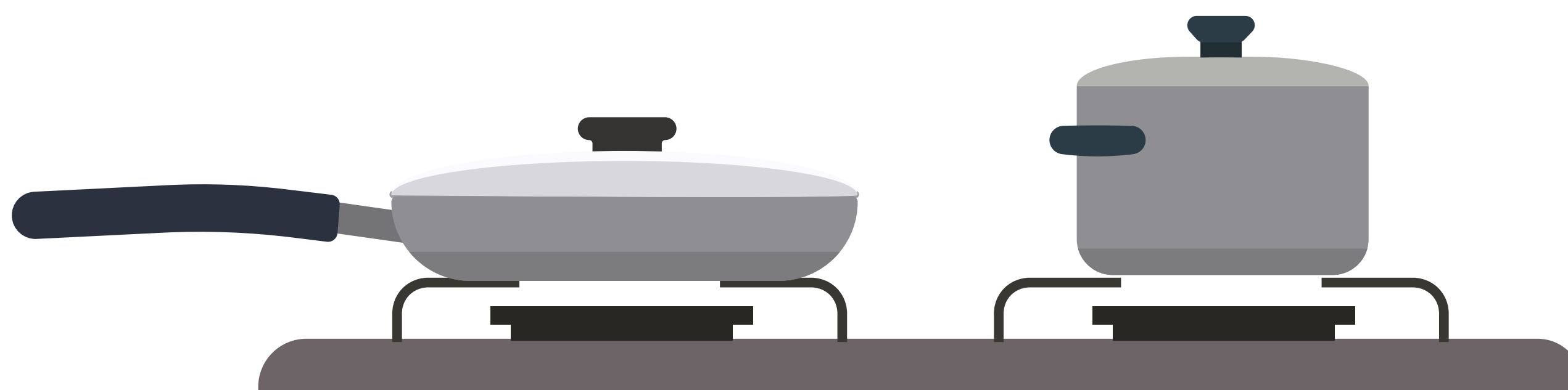


Audit Current Practices:

- Review existing wedding operations:

- ☐ Food sourcing and waste.
- ☐ Energy use.
- ☐ Decor and materials.
- ☐ Transport and guest logistics.

- We recommend using the audit guide provided in the 'EPA Food Service Pathway to less food waste & better margin' document. You can find this easily by searching 'audit' in our Waste Not, Want Not Asset Library (see Resources on the following page).



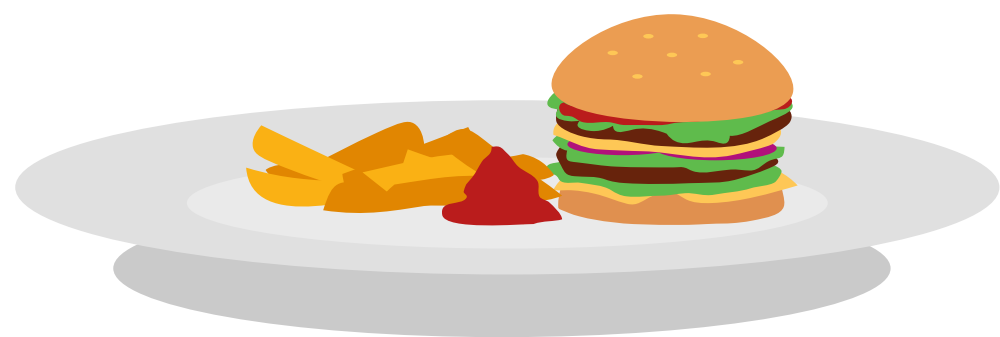
Step 1

Planning & Stakeholder Engagement



We have created an online resource kit that has presentations, statistics and shareable & editable social media assets. Visit www.voiceireland.org/wastenotwantnot and head to the Asset Library.

You will find most relevant assets in the 'business engagement' & 'business action' categories.



Waste Not Want Not - Asset Library



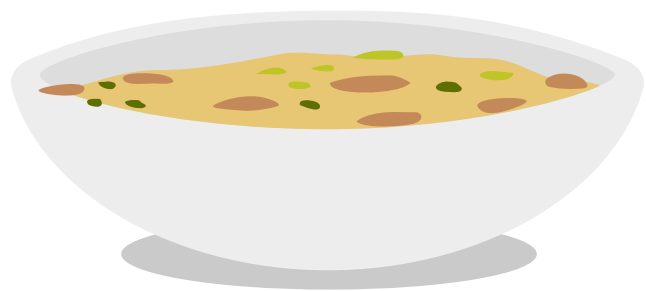
Step 2

Action & Implementation



Develop Green Wedding Packages:

Design wedding offerings that actively reduce waste and promote sustainability. Focus especially on food-related practices, which are often the largest source of event waste.

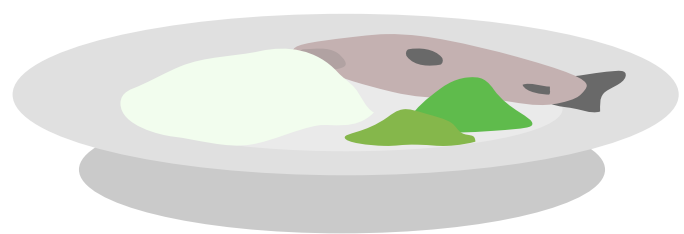


Food Waste Reduction Strategies:

Design wedding offerings that actively reduce waste and promote sustainability. Focus especially on food-related practices, which are often the largest source of event waste.



- Build menus around seasonal, locally sourced ingredients.
- Ask guests to pre-select meals to avoid over-preparation.
- Use plated or silver service instead of buffets or shared bowls of vegetables on table to control portion sizes.
- Start with smaller portions and offer additional servings.
- Offer smaller portion options for children and older guests.
- Train kitchen and service staff to monitor waste and adjust quantities.
- Avoid over-catering by using accurate guest counts and historical data.
- Let couples know which dishes are most sustainable and least waste-prone.



Additional Package Elements:

- Reusable decor options: lanterns, bunting, signage, tableware.
- Eco-friendly favors: seed packets, locally made crafts.
- Include a vegetarian option as one of the main meal options. Here is some sample text you might include in your promotion: "Why Vegetarian? A vegetarian option helps reduce our environmental impact. Plant-based meals use less water, land, and energy—and produce fewer emissions. It's a small choice with a big difference."
- Group transport coordination: shuttles, carpools, public transport access.



Step 2

Action & Implementation



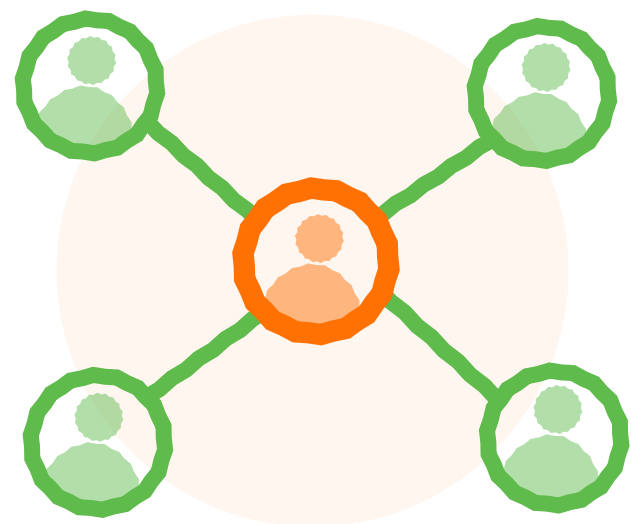
Communication & Training Your Team:

- Hold an initial meeting with all catering and service staff to let them know about the Green Wedding initiative.
- Encourage all staff to share observations and increase communication around food waste. Wait staff will have different observations than kitchen staff but may not feel comfortable or encouraged to share with management or kitchen staff.
- Provide training for staff on:
 - ☐ Sustainable service practices.
 - ☐ Communicating green options to couples.
 - ☐ Waste sorting and reduction techniques.



Build a Local Supplier Network:

- Partner with:
 - ☐ Local farms and producers.
 - ☐ Sustainable florists and designers.
 - ☐ Rental companies for decor and attire.
- Create a vetted directory for couples and planners.



Pilot a Green Wedding

- Select an upcoming wedding and consider offering the couple a discount or 'added bonus' in order to trial the initiative.
- Document the process, gather feedback, and measure impact.
- Use this pilot to refine your approach and build momentum.



Step 2

Action & Implementation



Promote & Celebrate:

- Share your green wedding offering through:
 - ☐ Website updates and brochures
 - ☐ Social media campaigns
 - ☐ Press releases and local media
- Celebrate milestones and success stories to inspire others

Use our online Asset Library:

- Visit www.voiceireland.org/wastenotwantnot and head to the Asset Library. Choose the 'Social Media' category to browse our Canva post templates that we have made available, ready for you to adapt to meet your needs.



Camus Farm Staff

Step

3

Continued Success through Ongoing Action

Be it a regional effort or a single establishment taking on food waste, it is important to keep momentum going after the initial project launches.



Create a Resource Hub:

- Develop a digital or print toolkit for venues, couples and planners
- Include checklists, supplier lists, and planning tips



Collaborate Regionally:

- Connect with other venues and towns to share learnings
- Consider forming a regional green wedding alliance



Monitor & Report:

- Track key metrics: waste reduction, local sourcing, guest transport
- Report annually to stakeholders and the public



Keep the Conversation Going:

- Host regular check-ins with stakeholders
- Update offerings based on feedback and innovation
- Continue to celebrate your efforts on your website, through local & social media and in your community



Best of luck!



Waste not, want not

A whole community approach to food waste

voice

Thank you to all the venues that participated in the West Cork Green Wedding Initiative and have provided photos for this toolkit: Camus Farm, Celtic Ross Hotel, Dunowen House, Dunmore House Hotel & Fernhill House Hotel.

*All Camus Farm photos credit Andy Gibson.



Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040



voice