



**ZERO
WASTE
SCOTLAND**

Food Waste Prevention

Co-development of evidence and
action

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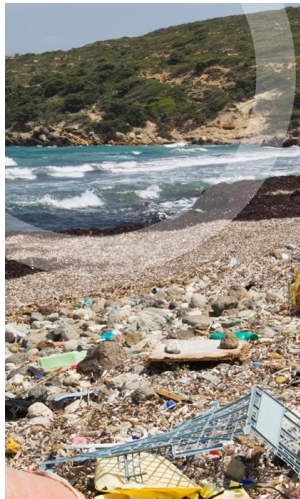
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Zero Waste Scotland: What do we do?



We exist to create a society where resources are valued and nothing is wasted.

Our goal is to help Scotland realise the economic, environmental and social benefits of making best use of the world's limited natural resources.



Snapshot



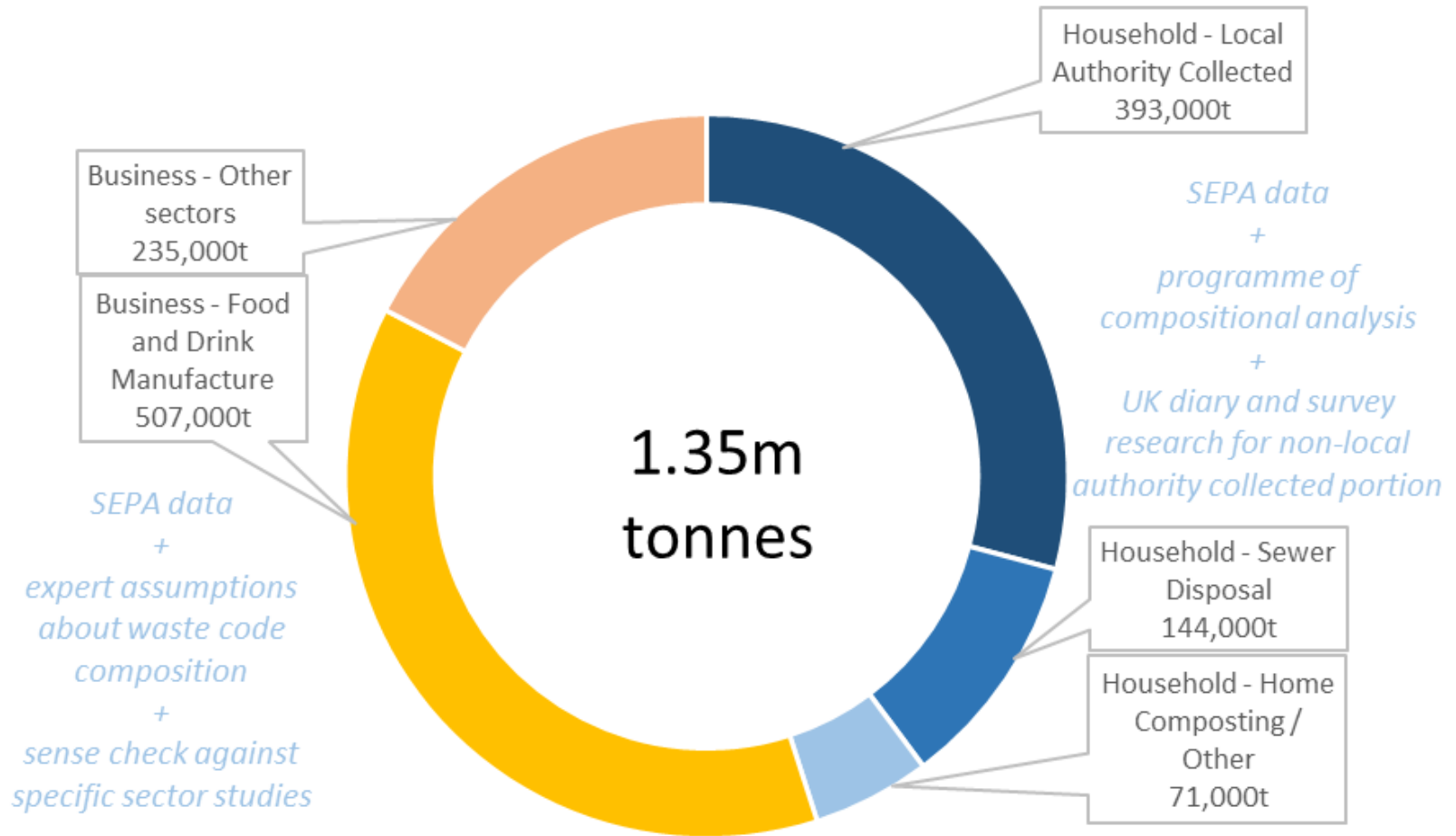
- Scotland set a food waste reduction target in 2015 – a 33% reduction by 2025, against a 2013 baseline
- This decision was made while European and international discussions were ongoing
- It was made with imperfect knowledge
- Multiple actors were thinking about the issue simultaneously – helpful, but messy!

Key questions in setting the target



- Edible and inedible waste?
- Which sectors?
- Do we follow existing waste measurement / categorisation? If so, what do we do about sectors / disposal routes that aren't measured? Or aren't measured consistently?
 - Primary production
 - Sewer/water disposal
 - On-site treatment
 - Valorisation
- How will we measure change?
- How will normalisation work?
- How does our target align with ideas elsewhere? How ambitious is it?
- Could the way we frame the target encourage perverse outcomes? How can we minimise this?

2013 Estimate

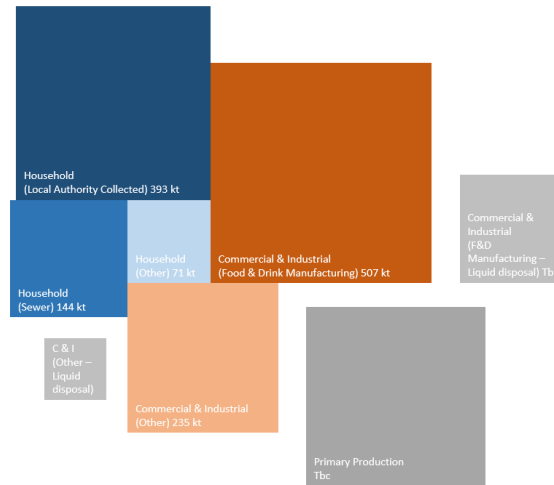




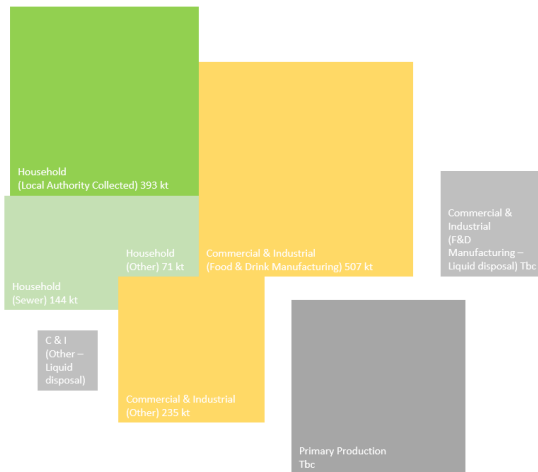
Meanwhile...

- New studies
- Fusions
- Other national targets
- EU Circular Economy Package / EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste
- Sustainable Development Goal
- World Resources Institute

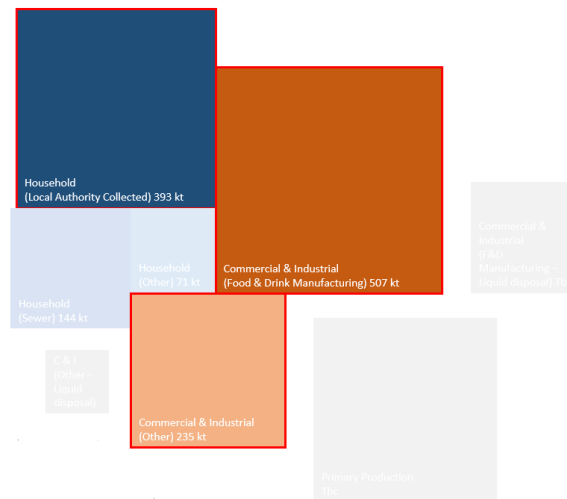
What does work elsewhere mean for us?



- Improving estimates



- Improving consistency



Dealing with uncertainty

- Actually there was lots of certainty –
 - very significant amounts of food are wasted, much of this can be prevented
 - the carbon and economic costs of this are big
 - prevention is possible – but requires action at many levels
- Tackle uncertainty head on
 - acknowledge what is not known, and identify what might be done about it in future
 - be really clear about you have and have not done
- What is the best available evidence? Do we know enough to **act** with confidence?
- Thinking about “accuracy” rather than “precision”?

What is a target for?

- As a researcher / usually want everything to be exactly specified, but...
- The most common stakeholder question about the target is “what is my sub-sector target?” **not** “what’s in scope?”, “what about liquids?”, “does that include inedible waste?”
- The target we have feels relevant to many actors, and can make sense to all of them in their own terms
 - But they may struggle to measure change, and won’t do so consistently
- Definitions and targets don’t effect what is economically and environmentally beneficial – we should build intervention and evaluation decisions around the benefits, not the target
- Can we futureproof our targets?



Where are we as evaluators?

- We should be honest about what ex-ante evaluation can achieve – and what it can't
- We do have a stake in the outcome - we want to see positive change.
- In evidence terms, we should not let “perfect” be the enemy of “good enough” – but our critical faculties are key to this.
- Choosing to intervene will usually improve confidence and knowledge – “learning by doing”. Great opportunity to embed evaluation in the policy cycle.



Contact / Further Information

Contact me:

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Selected food waste reports:

Scotland

[Scotland's Baseline](#)

[Scotland's Baseline Method](#)

[Scottish Household Food Waste Estimates](#)

UK

[WRAP website](#)

International

[Fusions](#) (Definitions Focus)

[Food Loss and Waste Protocol](#) (Reporting Focus)

Thank you.

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