



Sustainable Seafood Packaging Report Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

Sustainable Seafood Packaging Report

Project Objective:

Project Sustainable Seafood Packaging (SSP) investigates sustainable packaging options currently available to seafood processors.

The project explores the different categories of sustainable packaging including compostable, biodegradable, and recyclable options, and their suitability for fresh chilled seafood products.

The project demonstrates the market need to move to sustainable packaging outlining the demand from consumers, retailers, and legislation.

It outlines each packaging material category's infrastructure limitations and gives some costing examples.

Project SSP's purpose is to advise seafood processors on sustainable packaging options.

Introduction:

The purpose of sustainable packaging is to reduce the impact of packaging on the environment as:

Approximately 225kg of waste food packaging was generated per person in 2020 (Environmental Agency, 2021).

There are different variables to consider when choosing a packaging material, these include:

- **Cost:** What is the potential expense of switching to sustainable packaging?
- **Perceived sustainability:** What is the recyclability, compostability, or reusability of the packaging?
- **Performance:** Will sustainable packaging play the same functional role as the original packaging?
- **Sortability:** Can the packaging materials be sufficiently sorted in recycling and waste centres? (Leahy, 2020).

Global forces including material availability and increasing costs, climate change, consumer demand, retailer demands, and government regulations will continue to have an impact on sustainable packaging in the seafood industry.

Drivers for sustainable packaging



Retailers

- Retailers including Tesco, Lidl, Aldi, Musgraves, Carrefour, Mercadona, and many others have set out their commitments for their packaging goals on their websites, aiming to reach them by 2025. Most retailers want their packaging to be 100% recyclable, 100% reusable, or to reduce packaging volume by a certain percentage.
- Some retailers including Aldi and Musgrave want their packaging to be 100% recyclable, 100% reusable, or 100% compostable by 2025.



Consumers

- According to research conducted by Bord Bia in 13 markets in 2021, sustainable packaging and plastics were identified as a key issue for Irish customers
- In 2021, Bord Bia reported that in the past 12 months, 76% of Irish consumers have tried to buy products with less packaging
- 42% of Irish people associate sustainability with sustainable packaging over any other sustainability attributes
- 3 in 10 Irish consumers said sustainable packaging is influential when grocery shopping
- 37% of Prepared consumer food buyers say that sustainable packaging influences their choice, ahead of any other sustainability attribute (UK) (Bord Bia, 2021)



Legislation

- The UK packaging tax came into action on the 1st of April 2022. This tax applies to manufacturers or importers of plastic packaging which contain less than 30% recycled plastic. If the plastic packaging contains less than 30% recycled plastic there is a charge of £200 per tonne of plastic (Plastic Packaging Tax, 2021).
- The European packaging and packaging waste directive 94/62/EC set out ambitious targets in 2018 to be achieved by 2025 and 2030.

Conclusion:

Project SSP has looked at sustainable packaging from the perspective of packaging suppliers, Repak, and consumers, giving insights into seafood processors' packaging options. Sustainable packaging has become a prominent issue for consumers, retailers, and the EU which will continue to put pressure on processors. Consumers and retailers want to play their part by changing their activities to be more sustainable for a better environment.

Project SSP aims to advise seafood processors to make informed decisions on their packaging to ensure they are investing in the most suitable packaging types. For further information on sustainable packaging options please contact katie.healy@bim.ie

