



Aisling Kirwan

Positive Carbon

GOING FOR GROWTH PROFILE

NAME:

Aisling Kirwan

BUSINESS

Positive Carbon

POSITION

Co-Founder and COO

WHAT WE DO

We offer a fully automated food waste monitoring solution to help hotels and food businesses cut their food waste by 50%

CONTACT US

<https://positivecarbon.org/>

Aisling Kirwan is the co-founder and COO of Positive Carbon, which provides food waste data to commercial kitchens to enable them to cut their food waste in half, reduce waste collections and reach sustainability goals. With a BSc in Biochemistry and Cell Biology from Trinity College Dublin, Aisling had been working in the food waste sector for over eight years across Ireland, the UK, Australia, and Chile before establishing Positive Carbon with her former colleague, Mark Kirwan in 2020. The inspiration for the new start-up company came from Aisling's passion to make as big an impact as possible on the one million tonnes of food waste produced in Ireland each year.

From the start, Aisling and Mark's focus has been on the foodservice and hospitality sectors which, unlike the retail sector, had no technology solutions to the food waste problem. While not ideal to start a company during a pandemic, "we were in research mode and people had more time" says Aisling, "so we spoke to hundreds of Chefs, General Managers and Operation Managers to understand their pain points, and also understand the dynamics of a busy kitchen". They discovered that the need was twofold: firstly, visibility of the food waste, and secondly, nothing other than a fully autonomous solution would work. So, they created a tool that automatically monitors all the food waste in a business where sensors track and analyse every single item of food that is thrown in the bin. "All of this captured data is presented on our reporting dashboards where kitchen staff, operation teams and management can easily review daily, weekly and monthly waste reports" says Aisling.

Aisling's determination to focus on sustainable focused businesses was successful with Managing Director Matthew Ryan from The Grand Hotel, Malahide becoming the company's first customer. Recommendations followed and Positive Carbon's customer base has grown across the foodservice and hospitality sectors in Ireland. Customers include KSG, the third largest food service provider in Ireland as well some of the largest multinational companies and hotel groups in the country, helping them understand their food waste and save costs.

Positive Carbon received significant funding early on and is backed by some of Europe's most prestigious investors, including Berlin based venture capital company, APX as well as Enterprise Ireland.

Aisling participated in the 14th cycle of Going for Growth, with Fidelma McGuirk as her Lead Entrepreneur. "Starting a business is always a lonely place anyway", says Aisling, "but the pandemic exacerbated that feeling so the opportunity to be part of a closeknit peer group within Going for Growth was fantastic – our group phone calls were the favourite part of my month!" Aisling also participated in Starting Strong in 2021 and in Continuing the Momentum in 2023.

With another funding round imminent, the company is poised for further growth in Ireland as well as entering the UK market, its first export market. "Every year, one third of all food we produce goes into the bin, that equates to 1.3 billion tonnes of food, costing the economy \$1 trillion and contributing to 10% of all greenhouse gas emissions" says Aisling. "Food waste is a global problem, and we plan to be a global company that makes a tangible difference."

