



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Ireland's Future Waste Policy and Circular Economy

Briefing Paper for seminar "WEEE EPR in Action"

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Context

By 2030, under EU legislation, Ireland's householders and businesses must recycle at least 60% of our municipal waste and 70% of all packaging waste. Ireland must also reduce landfill to a maximum of 10% of municipal waste by 2035. In addition, Ireland has committed to the European goal of ensuring all plastic packaging is recyclable by 2030.

Inspired by the EU's Circular Economy Action Plan, our task is to transform our approach to waste in line with modern, circular economy principles. In doing so the Department will provide policy direction on issues ranging from waste prevention and landfill diversion to reuse and recycling, and will lead a reflection on how these principles can be embedded through our public policy frameworks.

Our new national policy will draw from the EU's Circular Economy Legislative Package (CELP) and Single Use Plastics (SUPs) Directive.

This journey will require a mind-set change from accepting waste to demanding the highest level of protection for our natural and man-made resources and the environment. Ireland has scope for major progress in all of the key areas of the waste hierarchy.

To achieve our goals we need to adapt our strategic approach and look beyond the end phase of waste management while bringing together stakeholders from across the entire value chain with national and regional Government and Agencies.

To ensure Ireland is well positioned to deliver on the Waste and Circular Economy targets in the Climate Action Plan a collaborative initiative is required.

Key Challenges

- Ireland and all other member states must achieve as a minimum the EU targets introduced by the Circular Economy Legislative Package and the Single Use Plastics Directive.
- Prevention is the most effective way to improve resource efficiency and to reduce the environmental impact of waste. Ireland must take measures to facilitate innovative production, and deliver business and consumption models that increase the lifespan of products while promoting re-use.
- In tandem with taking measures to prevent waste generation, Ireland will need to monitor and assess progress in the implementation of such measures.
- Among the potential measures to achieve these targets the European Commission has recognised that extended producer responsibility (EPR) can act as a major policy tool for accelerating the circular economy. In Ireland, EPR has been developed for a number of waste streams, based on the producer pays principle. The main areas are packaging, Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), batteries, end-of-life vehicles (ELVs), tyres and farm plastics. To date, these schemes have operated very successfully and have enabled Ireland to reach our domestic and EU recycling targets. However, the CELP and SUPs Directive introduce challenging amendments to the EPR model, including mandating all packaging producers to have EPR
- The amended Waste Framework Directive (WFD) introduced a new requirement for EPR schemes to modulate, where possible, the financial contributions paid by producers by 2023. The objective of this new provision is to provide an incentive to producers to design products that contribute to waste prevention and facilitate recycling by taking into account their durability, reparability, re-usability, recyclability and the presence of hazardous substances. EU guidance on modulated fees is expected later this year. Ireland must give consideration to how modulated fees are brought in to drive changes to ensure packaging is easily recyclable.
- EPR schemes form an essential part of efficient waste management. The EU has acknowledged that the effectiveness and performance of EPR schemes across the member states differ significantly therefore the amended WFD introduces minimum requirements. These requirement should improve the governance and transparency of EPR schemes and reduce the possibility of conflicts of interest emerging between organisations implementing EPR obligations on behalf of producer of products and waste operator that those organisations contract.

Delivery of New National Policy

Following on from a commitment originally made in the Climate Action Plan, a new national waste policy will be drafted in 2020. This new waste policy will include a number of actions to reduce waste and to manage our resources more effectively.

Waste and the Circular Economy

Action 135: Lead the transformation from waste management to circular economy practice through delivery of a new national policy			
Steps Necessary for Delivery	Timeline by Quarter	Lead	Other Key Stakeholders
Commence public consultation on waste policy	Q3 2019	DCCAE	
Review of submissions for development of draft plan	Q3/Q4 2019	DCCAE	
Development and publication of Circular Economy Action Plan	Q2 2020	DCCAE	

The policy is intended to ensure that Ireland can surpass the ambitious EU waste targets, as contained in the Circular Economy legislative package and in the Single Use Products Directive.

At the recent High Level Consultative Forum (16 September 2019), the discussion started on how this new policy can deliver on the ambitious targets. Further consultation will take place. Written submissions can be forwarded to wppr@dccae.gov.ie.



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Written Submissions to wppr@dccae.gov.ie