

# Other Initiatives which will Inform the Development of a Waste Policy in a Circular Economy

Listed below are a number of issues which will impact on the preparation of the new policy. This information may be useful to consider in framing your responses to the questions.

## Regulatory Framework

There is an array of national and European legislation governing the waste sector in Ireland, including the Waste Management Act 1996, Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992, EU directives on waste, landfill, Packaging and Packaging Waste, WEEE, Batteries and Accumulators and associated regulations. There is also legislation falling under the responsibility of other Departments such as planning, EIA, SEA etc.

## High Level Consultation Forum on Ireland's Future Waste Policy & the Circular Economy

Developing a new waste policy is another step on the journey to a circular economy in Ireland which can maximise our use of scarce resources. The High Level Consultative Forum which took place on 16th September 2019 at the Irish Management Institute gave stakeholders from industry, local authorities, waste collectors, NGOs and regulators an opportunity to discuss how a new Circular Economy Action Plan can deliver our ambitious targets. Stakeholders welcomed the chance to shape the future waste policy.

There were six breakout sessions on the day which generated lively debate and discussion. These discussions lead to a series of ideas and suggestions on how to tackle the challenges we face in three key areas.

- Food Waste
- Retail and Manufacturing
- Waste Management

## Waste Hierarchy

Waste Management in Ireland is predicated on the waste hierarchy, where the prevention, preparing for reuse, recycling and recovery of waste are preferred, in that order, to the disposal of waste. Promoting sustainable production and consumption and minimising loss of resources through development of a circular economy will be a central aim of the new policy.

## **Progress on a Resource Opportunity**

The Government's Waste Policy document '*A Resource Opportunity - Waste Management Policy in Ireland*' was launched in 2012 and runs until 2020. A progress report outlining progress to date on all measures is enclosed at Annex 1.

## **Progress against EU Targets**

Ireland is currently meeting all its targets under EU waste legislation. A list of targets with Ireland's performance is available at the [EPA website](#). The EPA is responsible for preparing national waste statistics. The agency compiles the data in line with reporting targets in EU legislation.

## **Measures in Climate Action Plan**

There are a number of targets in the all of Government Climate Action Plan which the Department in partnership with stakeholders will be responsible for achieving. A list of these targets is attached at Annex 2.

## **Legislative Framework on Waste (Waste Framework Directive, Packaging Directive, Landfill Directive, WEEE, End-Of-Life Vehicles)**

On 2 December 2015, as part of a number of proposals to accelerate transition towards a circular economy, the European Commission presented four legislative proposals. Inter alia, these proposals increase current waste-management targets and introduce some new targets, notably regarding reuse, recycling and landfilling. The proposals also strengthen provisions on waste prevention and extended producer responsibility, and streamline definitions, reporting obligations and calculation methods for targets.

After completion of the legislative negotiations between the EU institutions, the final acts were signed on 30 May 2018. Member States, including Ireland, are required to transpose the four directives into national law by 5 July 2020.

These new directives are:

- Directive (EU) 2018/851 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Directive 2008/98/EC on waste
- Directive (EU) 2018/850 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Directive 1999/31/EC on the landfill of waste
- Directive (EU) 2018/852 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste

- Directive (EU) 2018/849 of 30 May 2018 amending Directives 2000/53/EC on end-of-life vehicles, 2006/66/EC on batteries and accumulators and waste batteries and accumulators, and 2012/19/EU on waste electrical and electronic equipment

These directives are available to access [here](#). A full list of targets is available in Annex 2.

The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment is holding a [separate public consultation](#) on the transposition approach to these Directives.

### **New Advisory Group**

An Advisory Group of relevant stakeholders from the economic, environmental and social pillars has been established. The purpose of the Advisory Group, which the Minister will chair, is to harness the potential, capacity and creativity of the participants who will guide strategic thinking and decision-making in the preparation of the new policy. It is expected that the Group will meet on a monthly basis leading up to the publication of the new policy in mid-2020.

### **Plastics Policy**

On 16 January 2018 the EU Commission published the European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy. The strategy focuses on plastics production and use and sets a goal of ensuring all plastic packaging is recyclable by 2030. The strategy is built around 4 key actions:

- Improving the economics and quality of plastics recycling
- Curbing plastic waste and littering
- Driving innovation and investment towards circular solutions and
- Harnessing Global Action

It lists future EU Commission-driven measures and recommends measures to national authorities and industry for the attainment of its goals.

The consultation paper contains chapters on Single Use Plastics and Extended Producer Responsibility where we look at the legislative and other measures necessary for Ireland to be a leader in achieving these ambitions.

The UN, through the Basel Convention, is focusing on the international movement of plastic waste with a view to ensuring the global trade in plastic waste is more transparent and better regulated, while ensuring that it is managed in an environmentally sound manner.

## **PMG Reports**

As part of the phase out of flat rate fees, the Government gave a commitment to monitor prices for Household Waste Collection. The Minister established a Price Monitoring Group, which undertakes monthly monitoring of 26 service providers on an anonymous basis. Reports from the PMG are available on the [Department's website](#).

## **Waste Characterisation Campaign Reports**

The Environmental Protection Agency published Waste Characterisation studies on both household and non-household bins in 2018. The results show there is significant room for improvement in segregation of waste with almost 70% of the content of the black bins of Irish businesses being in the wrong bin and almost 50% of household organic waste still being disposed of in the “wrong bins”, i.e. recycling or black bin. Some infographics showing highlights of the characterisation studies are appended to this consultation and the full results are available [here](#).

## **Sustainable Development Goals – Particularly Goal 12 Sustainable Production & Consumption**

Goal 12 aims to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. Our global material footprint is growing rapidly. If the global population reaches 9.6 billion by 2050, the equivalent of almost 3 planets will be needed to sustain current lifestyles.

SDG 12 is supported by 11 targets in the Sustainable Development Goals, National Implementation Plan 2018-202, including tackling waste in an environmentally sound way, and managing and exploiting natural resources in a sustainably and efficiently.

These 11 targets stretch across a number of individual Government Departments.

Food waste, sustainable production reducing waste, recycling and reuse, green tendering and encouraging larger companies to adopt sustainable practices are amongst the levers for achieving these targets.

Full details of the individual Department and the respective targets are contained in Annex III SDG Policy Map of The Sustainable Development Goals, National Implementation Plan 2018-2020.

## Project Ireland 2040

Project Ireland 2040 is the overarching policy and planning framework for the social, economic and cultural development of our country. It includes a detailed capital investment plan for the period 2018 to 2027, the National Development Plan 2018-2027, and the 20-year National Planning Framework 2040.

By 2040 an additional one million people will live in Ireland, and an additional two-thirds of a million people will work here, and an additional half a million homes will be needed to accommodate this growth.

The level of investment and construction envisaged in the plan could have implications for the management of C&D waste in Ireland. Prevention of construction waste, use of recycled material, early planning of outlets and on-site segregation are all vital considerations. The adoption of best practice should be included in planning for all construction projects.

## Statement of Strategy

Goal 3 of the Departments [Statement of Strategy 2019-2021](#) sets out that we will use resources with care and responsibility, minimising the generation of waste and consistently enhancing our environment in all its dimensions. A number of outcomes are specified under this goal including:

### OUTCOMES:

Reduced waste

Increased recycling by 60%

Improved collection and segregation of waste

Using our natural resources sustainably

Measurable improvements in the state of the environment

## Capacity

Ensuring sufficient waste capacity has been an on-going issue since 2016. However, a lot of progress has been made in this area with the development of Quarterly Reports on the generation and management of municipal waste and the forthcoming Construction and Demolition waste report due by end 2019. The Department is continuing to work in

partnership with local authorities and industry to examine ways to provide contingency capacity for waste treatment.

### **Study on Achieving Target for Collection of Single Use Beverage Containers**

In 2019 the Minister announced a national study to consider how we can deliver a 90% collection target for single use beverage containers, including plastic bottles in Ireland. This review will also examine the possibility of introducing a Deposit and Return Scheme for plastic bottles (PET) and aluminium cans and how this might operate in an Irish context. This study is currently underway and is due for completion later in the year (Q3).

The government is determined to reduce the excessive use of plastics. A Deposit and Return Scheme is one option proposed for EU member states to consider as a means to increase the collection of plastic beverage containers and achieve the new 90% target for this waste stream identified in the Single Use Plastic Directive.

The study that has been commissioned will look at the current Irish waste collection system, international best practice in this area and how Ireland can bridge the gap from the targets already being achieved to the new 90% target. Once the review has been completed this will help inform policy development in this area and the actions that need to be taken.

### **Regional Waste Management Plans Implementation**

Ireland is divided into 3 regions for the purpose of waste management planning - Connacht-Ulster, Eastern-Midlands and Southern Region. The current set of regional waste management plans cover the period 2015-2021. The development of a new Circular Economy Strategy will be vital to the development of a new plan or set of plans in 2022.

### **Policy Proposals**

The Department is aware that a number of stakeholders have published or submitted policy proposals. The Department would still encourage all stakeholders to respond to this consultation.