

NESC Report: Moving Towards the Circular Economy in Ireland

The National Economic and Social Council (NESC) recently launched the report *Moving Towards the Circular Economy in Ireland*. The report finds that there is momentum in circular economy practices in Ireland, but action is needed to build on the early advantage. It highlights some of the leaders in the Irish circular economy, whose products and services keep resources in use for longer, extract the maximum value from them and recover products and materials.

The report includes ten case studies of businesses and social enterprises. The research, by Dr Simon O'Rafferty, highlights the opportunities available for businesses and social enterprises, while drawing attention to the regulatory and social challenges in facilitating the transition to a circular economy.

The NESC welcomes this research as providing fresh insights into the circular economy in Ireland through changes to product design, production processes, waste management, consumption, and procurement. At the report's launch, NESC Director Dr Rory O'Donnell said 'The research shows that there are surprising pockets of innovation and some very well established businesses at the frontier of the circular economy.'

The case studies highlighted in this report include a range of companies and social enterprises: recondition and remanufacture IT equipment; manufacturer peat-free compost; disassemble and recycle mattresses; provide education, community employment and training through reuse, repair and life cycle design in furniture, paint, bicycles and fashion; make polyester staple fibre from recycled

Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET); convert waste heat available in hot water into energy; create synergies between businesses that have surplus or unwanted materials; specialise in furniture design with particular strengths in applied human movement; match food retailers with surplus food with charities; and car-share.

The Council concludes, however, that the full potential of the circular economy for Ireland has yet to be identified. While resource efficiency and minimising waste are integral to a circular approach, it has the potential to be much wider than this. Many governments now see that the circular economy and bioeconomy are part of the transition to a low carbon economy and society. Insights from Scotland, the Netherlands and Finland point to the key role of innovative supports in unlocking new products, services and technologies. Strong central policy support is required to embed the circular economy into national policy priorities, including enterprise, regional, rural and climate action. A supportive approach to the circular economy in Ireland could help to gain Irish enterprises competitive advantage.

For further information and to read the full report, please go to their website www.nesc.ie



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Image: At the recent Green Business Seminar in Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, Kate Walsh, Co-ordinator of Tipperary Green Business Network presented Davie Philip of Cultivate, with one of the prizes at the event - a mirror made from upcycling materials by Revived & Retro.



Resource Efficiency Quick Wins Guide

The Southern Region Waste Management Office has published a Quick Wins Guide which has a list of easy tips that a company could easily apply as relevant to their business. The guidance covers waste prevention, energy and water.

In the guide, the following is the General Guidance that applies to all aspects of resource efficiency:

Quick Wins - General Guidance

There are general management principles that are relevant to achieving efficiencies in materials, energy and water usage. The following are some pointers that can be applied in equal measure to each of these areas, leading to reduced carbon footprint and with significant potential for cost savings:



- Lead by example
- Have a look at your utilities bill – know the main sources of costs – e.g. usage charge and flat charges
- Measure it to manage it
- Address the main aspects first – follow the 80 /20 rule where 80% issues are solved through focus on the main 20%.
- Involve your staff – promote awareness and ask them for ideas
- Communicate your achievements
- Apply general good housekeeping practices
- Avail of the resources and guidance available e.g. www.greenbusiness.ie, www.seai.ie
- Implement continuous improvement
- This guidance is then followed by specific useful tips on waste prevention, energy and water efficiencies.

The Quick Wins Guide can be accessed on www.southernwasteregion.ie.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

On September 25th 2015, countries adopted a set of goals to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years.



More information on <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>



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CSR Tool for SMEs

Corporate Social Responsibility

How well does your business engage in CSR activities?

The website www.csrhub.ie has a useful tool <http://csrtool.csrhub.ie/> to help SMEs to gain a baseline regarding where they are at in terms of the four pillars of CSR:

- The Community
- The Environment
- The Workplace
- Suppliers & Customers / The Marketplace



Upon completion of the basic survey, the participant company will receive a CSR rating (initial), and links to further resources and guidance.

The CSR Hub (www.csrhub.ie) is an initiative of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Stakeholder Forum. The Forum was established to implement the actions set out in Ireland's National Plans on CSR. The latest plan was launched in June 2017.

The CSR Hub is a one stop shop for information on all aspects of CSR in Ireland. It includes guidance and resources on taking the first steps towards CSR, Case Studies, latest news, minutes from the CSR Stakeholder Forum Meetings and more.

SMILE Resource Exchange

www.smileexchange.ie

PAKMAN AWARDS WINNER 2017

Waste Prevention Business of the Year

SMILE was delighted to bring home the Waste Prevention Business of the Year Award at the recent Pakman Awards 2017, hosted by Repak Ireland.

The Pakman Awards seek to recognise complete excellence in the environmental approach taken by a business, organisation or community group in all aspects of their operations, from recycling and energy use to waste management.

The awards ceremony took place at the InterContinental Dublin Hotel and under the watchful eye of MC Claire Byrne of RTE, saw 400 representatives from leading businesses, organisations and community groups come together to celebrate their positive impacts on our environment.

Other Winners at the Pakman Awards

RTE was the Overall Winner of the Pakman Awards. RTE also won the Award for the Commercial Services Category.

ReCreate: Environmental Education & Awareness Initiative Award

Thorntons Recycling: Waste Collector of the Year Commercial Award / Waste Recycling And Recovery Facility Of The Year Award

Clean Ireland Recycling: Waste Collector of the Year Household Award

Waste Matters: Innovation in Waste Management Award

Matthews Coach Hire Ltd: Green Transport of the Year Award

Lauralynn: The Battery Champion Award

Sligo University Hospital: Food Waste Management Award

SMILE's Recent Reuse Republic Event at Cork County Hall

To mark October Reuse Month, SMILE organised a Reuse Republic Event at Cork County Hall. There were twelve exhibition stands including many examples of re-use initiatives around Cork County.



www.recyclinglistireland.ie

New Recycling List for household mixed recyclables

In November 2017, the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Denis Naughten TD, launched the new National Recycling List for household mixed recycling.

The list will remove any confusion regarding what goes in the mixed recyclables bin. This will help to ensure better recycling and less contamination. The new website www.recyclinglistireland.ie shows clear graphics on what can be included. Containers should be rinsed clean, shaken to dry, and placed loose in the bin. Glass needs to be kept separate – glass bottles / jars can be taken to the local bring/bottle bank.

It continues to be the case that certain specified household waste streams, such as Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment (WEEE) & Batteries should be kept separate and taken to either retailers or the local Civic Amenity / Recycling Centre.

Recycling Ambassadors Programme

Minister Naughten also launched the 'Recycling Ambassadors Programme' which is being co-ordinated by VOICE Ireland. The Programme is funded by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, the Regional Waste Management Offices and REPAK. Under this initiative, recycling workshops are being run right across the country for various groups. Further information is available on www.voiceireland.org/rap



Recent Green Business Events

Presentations from recent events run by the national Green Business Programme are available on www.greenbusiness.ie

These include the events held as follows:

25th October in association with Zero Waste Cashel

26th October in association with Tipperary Green Business Network

28th November in association with Carlow County Council



Remember to check out the Resource Efficiency Tree – an online Tool for SMEs available on www.greenbusiness.ie.



Above: Annette and Dave Corboy of Revived & Retro at the Nenagh Green Business Seminar. A mirror made from upcycled materials was presented as a prize at the Cashel and Nenagh Green Business events. Other prizes were a free onsite Resource Efficiency Assessment by Green Business, and a free onsite Environmental Review by EcoMerit (www.ecomerit.ie)