

2. Introduction

The EPA compiles national statistics on waste generation and management in the Republic of Ireland. These figures are primarily collated to meet European legislative reporting obligations and in particular:

- Waste Statistics Regulation (2150/2002/EC as amended);
- Waste Framework Directive;
- EU Producer Responsibility Initiative Directives;
- Structural and Regional Indicators (eg the Sustainable Development Indicator on Municipal Waste and the Regional Environmental Questionnaire).

These data are subsequently published in the National Waste Report (NWR), or in bulletin format. This report covers the calendar year 2012 and includes data on municipal waste, hazardous waste and also particular waste streams subject to Producer Responsibility Initiatives (packaging, waste electrical and electronic equipment, waste tyres and end of life vehicles).

The EPA is moving to biennial publication of the NWR from 2014. This will align publication of the NWR with Ireland's submission under the EU Waste Statistics Regulation, which reports on waste generation across all economic sectors in the State, by waste type, as well as waste treatment within the State and information on selected waste infrastructure. In the intervening years, a waste bulletin will be published to provide a high-level overview of key trends for waste generation and management.

2.1 Survey Approach and Data Compilation

This National Waste Report presents waste data for the calendar year 2012. The following sources were surveyed by the EPA to collate the information presented:

- Local authorities, including the National Transfrontier Shipment Office at Dublin City Council;
- EPA licensed waste operators;
- Local authority permitted waste operators;
- EPA licensed Integrated Pollution and Prevention Control activities;
- Compliance schemes and self-complying producers (for Producer Responsibility Initiatives).

In addition, the EPA receives data on collected household waste from the National Waste Collection Permit Office (NWCPO) in Offaly County Council). This Office was established in 2012 to administer Waste Collection Permits (WCP) on behalf of all 34 local authorities. Its establishment has introduced significant improvements in the quality and availability of waste collection data.

Quality Assurance and Quality Control

All survey returns to the EPA were desk-top validated and 35 data verification audits were carried out covering three local authority functional areas and 32 waste operators. Data reconciliation visits were completed with the WEEE and packaging compliance schemes. The EPA provided webcasts on completion of the surveys, updated its online guidance manuals,¹⁷ and provided a helpline and dedicated e-mail address for waste operators.

The waste accounting method used in this and previous NWRs does not include material in transit or temporary storage as it is neither disposed nor recovered in the calendar year. Totals appearing in this report may vary by +/- 1 tonne due to statistical rounding.

¹⁷ See www.wastesurvey.ie.

Reporting Burden

Compilation of comprehensive national statistics is necessary to inform policy and to provide timely and accurate data for legislative EU reporting requirements. The EPA recognises the demands on waste operators associated with the multiplicity of waste reporting requirements, particularly in the first quarter of each calendar year.

The EPA is working at a number of levels to reduce this reporting burden. For example, the EPA uses existing data sources where possible such as waste collection and waste facility permit annual returns and Pollutant Release and Transfer Returns (PRTR). However, the complexity of EU reporting obligations often requires specific data that are not available from these annual returns. In addition, data on source of waste is key to reporting on municipal waste. As a result, EPA needs more detailed information from particular operators and especially those that are 'end-handlers' i.e., operators who undertake the final treatment (disposal or recovery) at their facility, or who are the point of export of the waste which calls for separate surveying of these operators. The lack of a national register of authorised waste activities and treatment capacity is also an ongoing data gap for the State.

The EPA is addressing the need to reduce multiple waste reporting obligations into the Agency with the aim to stream-line and harmonise waste reporting. This will require collaboration and co-operation with key data providers who will be informed of this project as it progresses. The EPA is also accruing benefits from collaboration on waste data collation and validation with other regulators and stakeholders such as Central Statistics Office, NWCPO at Offaly County Council, NTFSO at Dublin City Council, the regional co-ordinators for waste management plans and the compliance schemes, and will continue with these initiatives.

2.2 National developments and issues

12 |

This section reports on key developments in national and EU policy and legislation since publication of the last National Waste Report for 2011 published in March 2013.

2.2.1 Ireland's National Waste Prevention Programme

The EPA's *'Towards a Resource Efficient Ireland: A National Strategy to 2020'*¹⁸ incorporating Ireland's National Waste Prevention Programme was published in July 2014. This is the fourth iteration of the programme since its inception in 2004. Over the years the programme has evolved beyond an initial focus on preventing generation of solid wastes to a broader view of preventing wastage across materials, energy and water (primarily because of the integrated nature of relationships between each). The latest programme reflects this broad approach and highlights the key role for the programme in delivering on national priorities on competitiveness and green growth. It sets out the programme aims for the period to 2020.

The structure of the programme is shown in the diagram below, along with linkages to other relevant EPA activities. In particular, the publication of national waste statistics supports the successful implementation of the National Waste Prevention Programme by providing trends and information on waste generation and management and also context on the quantities and types of waste arising in the State. It informs the effective management and prevention of waste on a national and regional basis and enables the prioritisation of efforts to target the prevention, recycling and management of waste streams.

18 <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/waste/prevention/towardsaresourceefficientireland.html#.U7a1DaNOO70>



Figure 1 Structure of 'Towards a Resource Efficient Ireland: A National Strategy to 2020'

2.2.2 National Hazardous Waste Management Plan

A revised National Hazardous Waste Management Plan¹⁹ for the Republic of Ireland was published in June 2014 covering a six-year period from the date of publication (2014-2020). This third plan is a revision of the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2008 - 2012 and sets out the priorities to improve the management of hazardous waste, taking into account the progress made since the previous plan and the waste policy and legislative changes that have occurred since the previous plan was published.

| 13

The objectives of the revised Plan are:

- To prevent and reduce the generation of hazardous waste by industry and society generally;
- To maximise the collection of hazardous waste with a view to reducing the environmental and health impacts of any unregulated waste;
- To strive for increased self-sufficiency in the management of hazardous waste and to minimise hazardous waste export;
- To minimise the environmental, health, social and economic impacts of hazardous waste generation and management.

19 http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/waste/haz/nationalhazardouswastemanagementplan2014-2020.html#_U7q2LaNOO70

2.2.3 Regional Waste Management Plans

The Government's most recent waste management policy document 'A Resource Opportunity – Waste Management Policy in Ireland' includes provision for a reduction in the number of waste management planning regions from ten to three. During 2013, the composition of the three new waste management planning regions and the lead authorities were confirmed as set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Details of waste management planning regions

Region	Constituent local authorities	Lead authority
Connacht-Ulster	Cavan, Donegal, Galway City, Galway County, Leitrim, Mayo, Monaghan, Roscommon, Sligo	Mayo County Council
Eastern-Midlands	Dublin City, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal, Kildare, Laois, Longford, Louth, Meath, Offaly, South Dublin, Wicklow, Westmeath	Dublin City Council
Southern	Carlow, Clare, Cork City, Cork County, Kerry, Kilkenny, Limerick, Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford	Tipperary-Limerick Consortium

The lead authorities, as set out in the table above, gave notice of the intention to commence the preparation of new Regional Waste Management Plans in October 2013. The EPA has been inputting into the development of the regional waste management plans. In particular, input has been provided on the indicators chosen for the plans to ensure that they are measurable, consistently applied across the three regions and have existing (or planned) validated data sources. In addition, the EPA has input to the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment process.

2.2.4 Producer Responsibility Initiative (PRI) Review

A review of the Producer Responsibility Initiative model in Ireland was launched by the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government in July 2012. The main report of the review was published in July 2014 for public consultation.²⁰ This comprehensive report is the first to provide a scrutiny of the process whereby producers take responsibility for the products they place on the market at their end of life. The process of implementing some of the recommendations made in this report has started.

Priority was given to the publication of two reports on (i) End of Life Vehicles and (ii) Tyres and Waste Tyres which were published in November 2013 for public consultation. Following on from this review, two Working Groups for the Tyres and ELV sectors have been established to progress the recommendations in these reports.

2.2.5 Updated Producer Responsibility Initiative (PRI) Regulations

Three sets of PRI Regulations relating to End-of-Life Vehicles, Packaging and Batteries & Accumulators came into effect from June 21 2014:

- S.I. No. 281 of 2014 – European Union (End-of-Life Vehicles) Regulations 2014;
- S.I. No. 282 of 2014 – European Union (Packaging) Regulations 2014;
- S.I. No. 283 of 2014 – European Union (Batteries and Accumulators) Regulations 2014.

²⁰ <http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/Waste/PublicConsultations/>

These Regulations replace and revoke the following Statutory Instruments:

- S.I. No. 268 of 2008- Waste Management (Batteries and Accumulators) Regulations 2008;
- S.I. No. 798 of 2007- Waste Management (Packaging) Regulations 2007;
- S.I. No. 282 of 2006- Waste Management (End-of-Life-Vehicle) Regulations 2006.

It is intended to provide for fixed payment notices for certain breaches of Producer Responsibility Initiative statutory provisions in the forthcoming Environment Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2014, and as a consequence certain technical amendments to the Packaging, Batteries and End-of-life Vehicle Regulations were required to facilitate this. The new Regulations consolidate previous amendments made to them and have been made using one enabling provision (European Communities Act) and now contain explicit offence and penalties provisions. No other substantive changes have been made to the previous Regulations at this time.

2.2.6 Updated Waste Management (Facility Permit and Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2014

The Waste Management (Facility Permit and Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 (S.I. No 320 of 2014) were published in July 2014 and amend the existing 2007 Regulations (S.I. No. 821 of 2007) by strengthening conditions in relation to traceability of material, by putting an onus on proof of ownership and full traceability for material purchased at permitted waste facilities. This is in particular to address metal theft risks.

2.2.7 Regulation of Household Waste Collection

The performance of the household waste collection market will be crucial in achieving overall waste policy objectives and meeting national targets on landfill diversion as set out in *A Resource Opportunity - Waste Management Policy*. The July 2012 policy document set out a range of proposals to significantly revise the existing regulatory regime to ensure, *inter alia*, that waste collected is managed in accordance with the waste hierarchy; that mandated service levels are delivered, that pricing structures are put in place to incentivise waste reduction and source segregation by households and that Customer Charters are put in place by all waste collection providers. The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) published a discussion paper²¹ in November 2013 and there was a public consultation process on the environmental regulation of household waste collection to inform the detailed development of the new regulatory regime to strengthen the regulation of household waste collection. Ninety-one submissions were received from a range of stakeholders, the significant majority indicating support for the measures proposed in the consultation document. Work is now underway on preparation of a package of legislative measures to give effect to a wide range of changes to the existing regulatory structure including measures such as:

- a move to a pay per weight (by kilogram) system of charging, with standing charge to cover administration/provision of bins;
- introduction of a range of on the spot fines/fixed payment notices for households and operators;
- introduction of a three strike/one strike approach for serial offenders (operators);
- increase in the number of mandatory conditions to be applied to all collection permits (eg customer charters);
- application of household waste collection standards to pay to use (PTU) units.

Drafting legislation to implement these changes is underway and stakeholder consultation is ongoing by DECLG.

21 <http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/Waste/PublicConsultations/>

2.3 EU developments and obligations

2.3.1 Seventh Environment Action Programme

A significant policy development for environment protection generally and more particularly, resource efficiency, is the Seventh Environmental Action Programme (EAP)²². The programme identifies three priority areas where more action is needed: (i) protect nature and strengthen ecological resilience (ii) boost resource-efficient, low-carbon growth, and (iii) reduce threats to human health and wellbeing.

The focus on transforming the EU into a resource-efficient, low-carbon economy highlights the need, in particular, for significant improvements to the environmental performance of products over their life cycle and for reductions in the environmental impact of consumption, including cutting food waste.



Living well, within
the limits of our planet

2.3.2 Towards a circular economy: a zero waste programme for Europe

The European Commission published a new package of policy and legislative reforms for the waste area in July 2014. The package, *Towards a Circular Economy: A Zero Waste Programme for Europe*²³, aims to turn Europe into a more circular economy and boost recycling in the Member States. As stated in the publication of the Communication, turning Europe into a more circular economy means:

- boosting recycling and preventing the loss of valuable materials;
- creating jobs and economic growth;
- showing how new business models, eco-design and industrial symbiosis can move us towards zero-waste;
- reducing greenhouse emissions and environmental impacts.

As part of the circular economy package, the Commission adopted a legislative proposal to review recycling and other waste-related targets in the EU. The review to strengthen waste targets in existing directives is put in the context of an ambitious drive towards fundamental transition from a linear to a more circular economy. The legislative proposals refer mainly to the Waste Framework Directive, the Landfill Directive and the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive. In addition to the targets review, waste legislation will be simplified, and co-operation between the Commission and Member States will be stepped up to ensure better implementation. Minimum operating conditions for extended producer responsibility schemes will be laid down. Tailor-made approaches will be implemented for specific waste streams, such as marine litter, phosphorus, construction and demolition, food, hazardous and plastic wastes.

22 <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/newprgl/>

23 <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/>