

Preliminary Municipal Solid Waste Statistics for 2012

Introduction

The EPA produces national waste statistics on waste generation and management to meet legislative reporting obligations and inform national policy development.

This bulletin reports initial estimates of Ireland's tonnage of municipal solid waste (MSW) generated, disposed and recovered for the period 2006-2012. Final estimates for 2012 waste statistics, with comprehensive analysis, will be published in mid-2014 in parallel with EU reporting obligations.

Municipal Solid Waste

MSW consists of three main elements: (i) household (ii) commercial and other waste (e.g. non-process industrial waste) which is similar in nature or composition to household waste and (iii) street cleansings.

The tonnage of MSW generated peaked in 2007 and has decreased by 23% between 2007 and 2012. (see Figure A). This decrease is linked to a decrease in personal consumption as the economy contracted and occurred despite an increase in population over the same period.

Key Trends

- The disposal rate of MSW to landfill decreased from 64% of MSW managed in 2006 to 44% in 2012. Increases in the landfill levy resulted in diversion of MSW from disposal to landfill (see Figure B).
- The number of landfills accepting MSW for disposal decreased from 29 in 2006 to 19 in 2012 (and this further contracted to 11 in 2013).

- The recovery rate for MSW has increased from 36% of MSW managed in 2006 to 56% in 2012. The increase in use of waste as a fuel (energy recovery) has contributed significantly to increased recovery in recent years with Ireland's first MSW incinerator fully operational in 2012. Cement kilns are also accepting waste for use as a fuel. In addition, the export of refuse derived fuel has increased (see Figure B).
- Ireland's preliminary recycling rate of MSW managed in 2012 (38%) is lower than the EU 27 average (40%) in 2011 (latest data available).
- The tonnage of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) disposed to landfill decreased in 2012 (to 588,800 tonnes) which is below the 2013 Landfill Directive target of 610,000 tonnes. Meeting the 2016 target is at risk, particularly should economic recovery lead to increased generation (see Figure C).

tonnes	2012 (estimates)	2011	% tonnage difference
Generated	2,622,000	2,823,242	-7%
Managed	2,347,000	2,558,345	-8%
Landfilled	1,028,000	1,344,008	-24%
Incinerated without energy recovery	45	189	-76%
Incinerated with energy recovery	419,000	195,622	+114%
Sent for recycling (excluding composting or fermenting of biodegradable waste)	674,000	861,361	-22%
Composting or fermenting of biodegradable waste	226,000	157,165	+44%

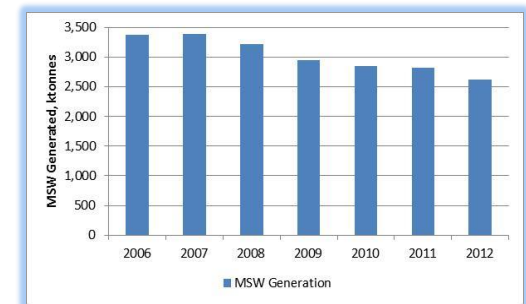


Figure A. MSW generated in Ireland 2006-2012

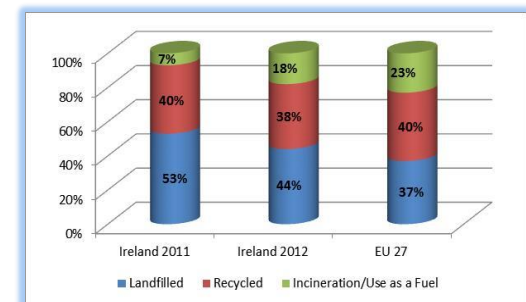


Figure B. Management of Irish MSW in 2011 and 2012 in comparison with EU-27 municipal waste

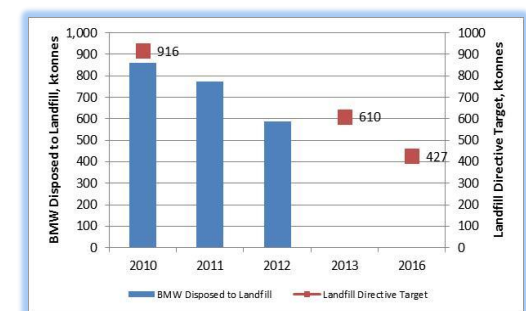


Figure C. Tonnage BMW in MSW disposed to landfill and Landfill Directive targets