

EPA Green Enterprise

Project: Service models for bulky item reuse

Organisation: CRNI - Community Resources Network Ireland

Reference: 2017-ET-CP-89

Project Objective: The purpose of this project was to design value-propositions and viable business model(s) for efficiently engaging Irish public sector bodies in diverting unwanted bulky items away from landfill and towards reuse activities and community recycling.

Amount Of Grant Aid Awarded: €38,621

Background:

Over 1.2 million potentially reusable bulky items are disposed every year on the island of Ireland:

- Their disposal presents environmental burdens;
- Many items could be reused as is, or require minimal reconditioning;
- Reuse would save money and potentially provide employment in social enterprises involved in the exchange of these items.



Bulky items, e.g. office furniture, are commonly assigned to waste at the “end” of their life. However, this “end” may be determined by aesthetics, or office redecoration rather than technical obsolescence. Hence an item’s lifespan has the potential to be extended. CRNI, a community reuse, repair and recycling network in Ireland, used this project to develop service models to facilitate reuse in the public sector.

Prolonging the lifespan of unwanted, but otherwise usable, items avoids environmental damage, reduces costs and potentially provides employment.

Project activities:

The potential routes to exchange bulky items focused initially on office equipment in the public sector. However, the project developed models that can be applied to other items and to the wider enterprise sector.

Models identified include:

- Internal reuse/exchange within a public sector body
- External reuse/exchange with the third sector
- Reuse/exchange within regional clusters
- Reuse/exchange for an office refurbishment or relocation project

Barriers to uptake include a lack of time and knowledge or support in setting up such a scheme, a lack of capacity in reuse organisations to deal with bulky items in volume, and a lack of storage space.



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Project Outputs and Outcomes:

The following resources are available from the project:

- A comprehensive “how to guide”, with
- A matching promotional infographic.

Using the “how to” guide, any enterprise, small or large, private or public sector, can start on the journey of minimising the waste of bulky items. A simple initial approach is explained that can be grown into an extensive programme if desired.



Next steps needed:

This approach needs to be widely promoted. Many small-scale applications of the approach will demonstrate its benefits and prompt a wider programme of item exchange.

Policy suggestions:

A strong policy driver, such as developing Green Public Procurement criteria along with targets would help to develop bulky item reuse.

For more on the EPA’s Green Enterprise programme visit [here](#)

For more on the project see [here](#) or contact: info@crni.ie



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