WEEE Statistics for Ireland

Introduction

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

This release reports information on the collection, reuse, recycling and recovery of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) in Ireland in 2013, the most recent reference year reported to the European Commission.[1]

WEEE is one of the fastest growing waste streams in the EU. An estimated 12 million tonnes of WEEE will arise per annum by 2020. There is high potential for reuse of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) and recovery of WEEE. There are many valuable materials in WEEE (metal, plastic, glass, rare metals) which need to be recycled rather than disposed.

Key points

- Ireland surpassed the EU targets for collection, reuse, recycling and recovery of WEEE in 2013.
- New ambitious collection targets come into effect from 2016 under the WEEE Directive recast.

Data collection

The EPA gathered data on WEEE collection and treatment in 2013 from waste recovery operators, the WEEE compliance schemes and self-complying producers of EEE.

Collection and Treatment of WEEE

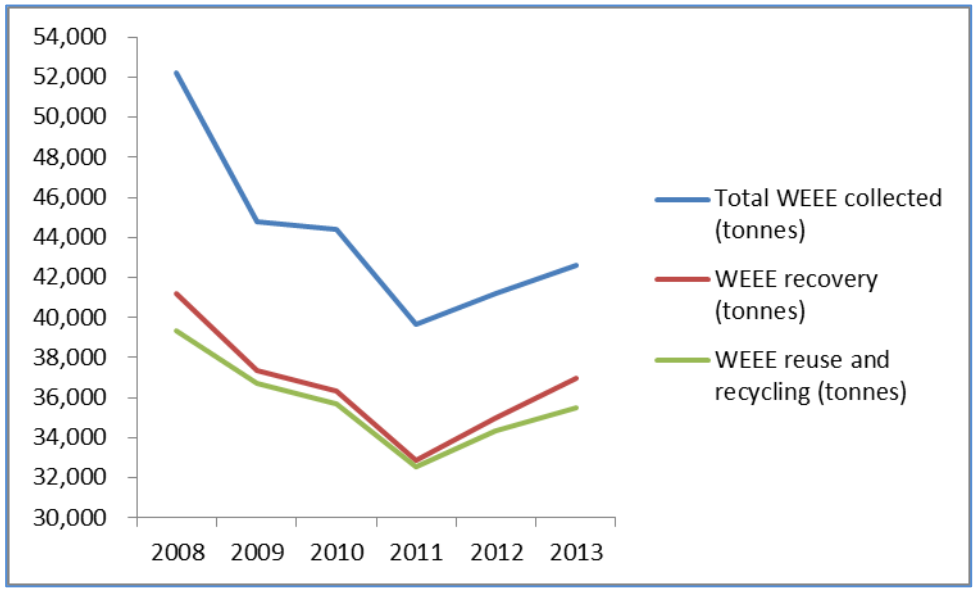
In 2013, 42,628 tonnes of WEEE were collected for treatment. Large household appliances (e.g. fridges and freezers, cookers, washing machines) provides the majority (by weight) of WEEE collected, followed by consumer equipment (e.g. TVs) and IT and telecommunications equipment. The tonnage collected includes 567 tonnes of pre-owned and used EEE which was reused (e.g. mobile phones and computers).

WEEE is designated as treated in Ireland if it is processed to such a degree that the materials will, in all likelihood, be recovered. Treatment typically involves removal of hazardous materials and separation of fractions (e.g. metals, plastics, glass, cables, and circuit boards). More than half of the WEEE collected in 2013 (65%) was treated in Ireland before being exported for further recovery. The WEEE treatment capacity in Ireland has increased in recent years. Of WEEE exported, approximately 99% was exported to treatment facilities in EU Member States.

[1] The deadline for reporting 2014 data to the Commission is 30 June 2016.

Figure 1 shows the trends in WEEE collected, WEEE recovered, and WEEE reused and recycled between 2008 and 2013. Between 2008 and 2011 the tonnage of WEEE collected decreased due to the economic recession, as householders and businesses were not replacing EEE as frequently. The tonnage collected has been increasing again however in 2012 and 2013.

Figure 1. WEEE collected, recovered and reused & recycled, 2008 to 2013



Targets

Each Member State is obliged to meet targets for the collection of household WEEE per person per annum, and separate targets for recovery, and for reuse and recycling, for each of the ten categories of WEEE. Ireland has met the targets each year since they came into force. In 2013, 7.2 kg of household WEEE were collected per person (EU target is 4 kg per person per annum).

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Table 1 provides information on Ireland's performance in 2013 against the EU recovery rates and reuse and recycling rates and lists the ten categories of EEE currently within scope.

Table 1. Ireland's recovery and reuse recycling rates compared to EU targets, 2013

Categories		EU recovery rate target	Ireland's recovery rate	EU reuse & recycling rate target	Ireland's reuse and recycling rate
1	Large household appliances	**80%**	84%	**75%**	82%
2	Small household appliances	**70%**	91%	**50%**	82%
3	IT and telecommunications equipment	**75%**	91%	**65%**	85%
4	Consumer equipment	**75%**	95%	**65%**	92%
5	Lighting equipment	**70%**	94%	**50%**	86%
5a	Gas discharge lamps	**N/A**	92%	**80%**	92%
6	Electrical and electronic tools	**70%**	90%	**50%**	82%
7	Toys, leisure and sports equipment	**70%**	91%	**50%**	82%
8	Medical devices	**70%**	90%	**50%**	82%
9	Monitor and control instruments	**70%**	89%	**50%**	81%
10	Automatic dispensers	**80%**	83%	**75%**	81%

Legislation

The WEEE Directive (2002/96/EC) aims to prevent the generation of WEEE and sets targets for the collection and treatment of WEEE in an environmentally sound manner. The Directive was transposed into national law in 2005.

WEEE Directive 2002/96/EC was replaced by Directive 2012/19/EC, and the 'recast' WEEE Directive was transposed into national legislation in 2014. The 2012 Directive introduces a stepped increase in collection targets that will take place in 2016 and 2019. These collection targets will be based on the average annual weight of EEE placed on the market in the preceding three years. From 2018, the definition and number of categories of EEE will change, and the present restricted scope will extend to all categories of EEE.

Producer Responsibility Initiative

The WEEE Directive is a Producer Responsibility Initiative (PRI) Directive, where the producers of EEE (manufacturers, importers, resellers) have responsibility for the environmentally sound management of products at their end of life.

Between 2012 and 2014, the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government reviewed the PRIs operating in Ireland. The WEEE PRI model was found to be operating effectively, enabling Ireland to meet the WEEE Directive targets. There are two WEEE compliance schemes for household WEEE: WEEE Ireland (www.weeeireland.ie) and ERP (www.erp-recycling.ie).

Figure 2. WEEE in cages awaiting treatment

More information

An Excel file with data linked to this release is available, see http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/waste/stats.

For more information on EU statistics on WEEE, see http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Waste_statistics_-_electrical_and_electronic_equipment