

# Overview of national waste prevention programmes in Europe



**Ireland** 

October 2016

Photo: © DrAfter123



# Waste prevention programme

This **country fact sheet** was produced in the context of reviewing national and regional waste prevention programmes across Europe. The [Waste Framework Directive](#) (Directive 2008/98/EC), Article 29, requires that Member States adopt their **waste prevention programmes** by 12 December 2013. Article 30(2) of the Directive invites the European Environment Agency (EEA) to carry out an annual review of progress in the completion and implementation of the programmes. Within the waste hierarchy, the overarching principle behind EU and national waste policies, waste prevention is considered the most desirable option.

## IRELAND FACT SHEET

	<p><b>GDP</b> EUR 189 billion (1.4 % of EU-28 total in 2014)</p> <p><b>Per person GDP</b> EUR 36 800 (in purchasing power standard) (134 % of EU-28 average per person in 2014)</p>
	<p><b>Use of materials</b> 99 million tonnes DMC (1.5 % of EU-28 total in 2014) 21.5 tonnes DMC/person (165 % of EU-28 average per person in 2014) Resource productivity 1.83 EUR/kg (92 % of EU-28 average in 2014)</p> <p><b>Structure of the economy</b> Agriculture: 1.6 % Industry: 27.0 % Services: 71.4 % (2014 est.)</p>
<p>Source: Eurostat</p>	<p><b>Surface area</b> 69 900 square kilometres (1.6 % of EU-28 total)</p> <p><b>Population</b> 4.6 million (0.9 % of EU-28 total)</p>

## Waste prevention programme

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1.	Coverage	National
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2.	Type of programme	Separate programme
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3.	Title of programme and link to programme	Towards a Resource Efficient Ireland – A National Strategy to 2020 <i>incorporating Ireland's National Waste Prevention Programme</i> (NWPP) <a href="http://www.epa.ie/waste/nwpp/">http://www.epa.ie/waste/nwpp/</a>
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4.	Duration of programme	From 2004 to date; current strategy to 2020.
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5.	Language	English
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6.	Contact person	Odile Le Bolloch, <a href="mailto:o.lebolloch@epa.ie">o.lebolloch@epa.ie</a> , +353 539160690 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Ireland, Resource Efficiency Unit, Office of Environmental Sustainability <a href="http://www.epa.ie/">http://www.epa.ie/</a>
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7.	Waste prevention objectives of the programme	<p>The overarching objective is to implement EU and national policy on resource efficiency to break the link between economic growth and environmental impact. More specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• reduce wasteful consumption of material, water and energy resources by changing behaviours in businesses, households and the public sector;</li><li>• enhance competitiveness and reduce business costs by delivering programmes that stimulate resource efficiency and the circular economy;</li><li>• support sustainable growth and employment in the green economy - including re-use enterprises;</li><li>• minimise generation of hazardous wastes through efficient practices and use of safer alternatives;</li><li>• manage hazardous substances in products through efficient regulation;</li><li>• inform and influence evidence-based decision-making by compiling and publishing high quality data on waste.</li></ul>
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8.	The means used to break the link between economic growth and the environmental impacts associated with the generation of waste	<p><b><a href="#">Are the measures/means specifically mentioned in the waste prevention programme?</a></b></p> <p>Yes. See point 7.</p>
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9.	Sectors covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture;</li> <li>• construction and Infrastructure;</li> <li>• healthcare;</li> <li>• manufacturing &amp; industry;</li> <li>• retail;</li> <li>• transport;</li> <li>• households;</li> <li>• service activities;</li> <li>• hospitality;</li> <li>• public services (including procurement).</li> </ul>
10.	Prevention of waste types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food/organic;</li> <li>• construction and demolition waste;</li> <li>• hazardous waste;</li> <li>• household/municipal waste;</li> <li>• packaging;</li> <li>• waste electrical and electronic equipment /batteries;</li> <li>• manufacturing waste;</li> <li>• bulky waste;</li> <li>• water wastage;</li> <li>• other miscellaneous wastes.</li> </ul>
11.	Quantitative targets	All projects undertaken under the National Waste Prevention Programme have built-in metrics. Indicators are quantitative where possible and qualitative where appropriate.
12.	Measures on quantitative prevention	No differentiation between qualitative and quantitative waste prevention is made in the programme.
13.	Measures on qualitative prevention	No differentiation between qualitative and quantitative waste prevention is made in the programme.
14.	Prevention measures covered as referred to in Directive 2008/98, Annex IV: Examples of waste prevention measures referred to in Article 29 (1–16)	<p>The Irish national waste prevention programme has developed a number of prevention initiatives targeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• business (the Green Business Initiative, the Green Hospitality Award, SMILE, the Green Enterprise programme, local authority prevention network (LAPN));</li> <li>• households (Livegreen.ie, Stop Food Waste, LAPN);</li> <li>• hospitals (green healthcare programme);</li> <li>• retail (green business programme, Stop Food Waste, LAPN);</li> <li>• packaging (packaging waste prevention programme);</li> <li>• local authorities (LAPN, Stop Food Waste);</li> <li>• communities (LAPN, Stop Food Waste, LiveGreen.ie).</li> </ul> <p>1., 3., 6., 8. and 12.</p> <p>The Local Authority Prevention Network (LAPN) is a collaborative network of local authority personnel undertaking waste prevention and resource efficiency activities with communities, businesses and other organisations across the country. The EPA co-ordinates the network and provides financial assistance, training, technical assistance and networking opportunities to each of the 31 local authorities. A key output from the programme is a fully searchable online catalogue</p>

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[\(http://repository.localprevention.ie/\)](http://repository.localprevention.ie/) drawing together all the waste prevention/resource-efficiency tools, techniques, materials, templates, case studies, etc., developed over time by the programme and an associated toolkit to assist any local authority looking to implement waste prevention initiatives in their area.

4., 5., 7., 8., 9, 10 and 14.

The Green Business Initiative is aimed at the business community in Ireland, with an emphasis on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It provides support and methodologies to help organisations make financial savings by looking at their resource use, thus also helping the environment.

2., 4., 5., 8. and 16.

The Green Enterprise programme (partner to Green Business) provides funding to organisations (business and third sector) to develop innovative projects that respond to resource and circular economy drivers.

5., 6. and 12.

The Stop Food Waste programme run by the EPA provides advice and tips on how to reduce food waste in the home through better buying, savvy storage and canny cooking, and also on how to compost any food waste that cannot be prevented. Stop Food Waste delivers local community-based initiatives by working in partnership with local authorities and other networks to build capacity for food waste prevention at local level. The Stop Food Waste Challenge is a series of workshops for communities to enable food waste reduction, and recording average food waste reductions of 35-45%. The programme also provides benchmarks and guidance for businesses wishing to reduce their food waste and collates best-practice case studies.

12.

The recently-launched LiveGreen.ie portal contains consumer-friendly information about waste prevention, water conservation, energy efficiency and health and community projects, as well as tips and ideas on how families can make small and common sense steps towards becoming more environmentally conscious in the home.

The EPA-funded Freetrade Ireland website provides a free of charge service for members of the public to share/exchange pass on and pick-up unwanted household items (e.g. furniture, toys, garden equipment).

1. and 15.

Preventing and managing hazardous waste is an important priority for all national waste prevention programme projects. A range of specific projects are under way to help implement the revised national hazardous waste management plan.

4., 6. and 8.

The packaging waste prevention programme aims to assist Irish businesses in developing positive and practical ways to reduce packaging and in promoting those achievements to a wider audience.

16.

The SMILE project is an industrial symbiosis project designed to facilitate the exchange of resources between businesses to reduce usage of virgin raw materials and also disposal of process wastes. There were 85 successful synergies recorded in 2015 equating to over 5 000 tonnes of material actually diverted from landfill to recovery/recycling; or diverted from recycling/recovery to reuse/remanufacturing. In total, these synergies combined represent actual costs saving for businesses of over EUR 1.2 million.

Additional information can be found in the most recent annual report on measures within the programme:

<http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/waste/prevention/>

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15. Other prevention measures not covered by Annex IV	<p>The national waste prevention programme recognises the critical importance of a collaborative approach within a national context, which is essential for the uptake of prevention behaviours. This approach has led to joint initiatives with national enterprise support agencies, industrial development agencies, business representation groups and the national energy authority.</p> <p>There was also a need to develop an integrated resource web page for the national initiatives. This common landing page for all the main programmes and programme outputs is available at: <a href="http://www.epa.ie/begreen/">http://www.epa.ie/begreen/</a></p>
16. Indicators proposed	<p><b>Does the programme define indicators for waste prevention?</b></p> <p>Yes. Prevention is measured at a project level with indicators used in the national waste prevention programme. Available data are verified as appropriate and aggregated by sector or by other means to indicate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the amount of resources conserved (tonnes of material, cubic metres of water, kilowatt-hours of energy), with measurements made before and after the intervention;</li> <li>• the quantity of waste prevented (tonnes of waste generated), with measurements made before and after the intervention;</li> <li>• money saved (the difference in euros in waste, water and/or energy costs after the intervention or change).</li> </ul> <p>Examples of other indicators include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• production of residual waste per person;</li> <li>• cost of projects, such as waste prevention and treatment projects, and timescales;</li> <li>• number of businesses contacted by the different waste prevention programmes, or participating in them;</li> <li>• number of homes or communities contacted by the different waste prevention programmes, or participating in waste prevention or recycling; participants at events.</li> <li>• number of support materials distributed.</li> </ul> <p>Quantitative indicators of this nature are, however, only part of the story and cannot measure or represent all the potential benefits of spending public money on waste prevention projects. An example of this would be the support of the Community Reuse Network that fosters social enterprises which has impacts that go beyond financial and environmental reporting.</p> <p>For the purposes of waste management planning, Ireland is divided in to three regions (Southern, Eastern-Midlands and Connacht-Ulster). The regional waste management plans for 2015-2021 contain a target for a 1 % reduction per annum in the quantity of household waste generated per capita over the period of the plans. The NWPP collaborates and provides funding and support for waste prevention activities by local authorities in these regions through the LAPN.</p>
17. Evaluation and monitoring of the programme	<p><b>Is the programme evaluated (midterm, etc.)?</b></p> <p>Yes. Every 4 years. In addition, the EPA publishes annual reports on the national waste prevention programme.</p>
18. Target groups	<p>No specific priority target groups are identified. The programme takes a sectoral approach and targets organisations and other stakeholders within those sectors. Overall the whole programme has a focus on actor orientation.</p> <p>The following are examples of groups targeted by specific programmes: hospitality and catering managers, business managers, healthcare sector managers, farmers, small business owners, householders, consumers and communities.</p>

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19. Involvement of stakeholders

**Does the waste prevention programme describe the involvement of stakeholders in the development of the programme?**

Yes.

**Does the waste prevention programme describe the involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of the programme?**

Yes. At the outset, the Minister for the Environment established a [National Waste Prevention Committee](#) which includes a broad stakeholder group. This committee meets periodically to provide strategic direction for the EPA in implementing the national waste prevention programme.

Closer strategic partnerships have also been formed with stakeholder groups to assist and enable the implementation of the programmes, for example:

- a guide for businesses and institutions on the support available in Ireland for developing resource-efficient practices, the [Green Enterprise Guide](#), was produced in partnership with five state agencies;
- a novel waste prevention & resource efficiency initiative for farmers (Smart Farming) is successfully working with the Irish Farmers' Association and Bord Bia (the Irish Food Board);
- a 'Green Retail' guide was produced to assist retailers in achieving savings based on low-cost resource efficiency actions. This was launched and promoted through retail trade associations in Ireland;
- EPA sponsors a staff post within the Irish Business and Employers' Confederation to promote green business to their 7 000 members;
- funding is provided to the Community Reuse Network (CRNI), an all-Ireland representative body for community-based reuse, recycling and waste prevention organisations and social enterprises.

In the most recent Irish Government policy document, *A resource opportunity*, local authorities are required to prioritise waste prevention in their regional waste management plans and it is stated that they are expected to participate in the LAPN, one of the key capacity-building programmes within the national waste prevention programme.

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20. Other comments

**Are the costs/savings of waste prevention measures stated in the programme?**

Project-level information on investment and cost savings is provided in the national waste prevention programme's annual reports (<http://epa.ie/pubs/reports/waste/prevention/>).

*Other comments:*

*Development of the NWPP:* As early as 2004, Irish policy documents recognised the need to reverse the trend towards increasing waste generation and to decouple waste generation from economic growth, in line with developing policy at European level. To achieve this broad goal, a Core Prevention Team was established within the EPA and given a mandate to develop and implement a national waste prevention programme.

Prior to the establishment of the Core Prevention Team, a number of waste prevention initiatives had been carried out in Ireland. The national waste prevention programme set out to build on existing initiatives, knowledge and experience, with the objective of promoting waste prevention in a consistent manner as part of an integrated programme, including demonstration, dissemination of information, assistance (both technical and financial), education and awareness-raising. Inter-organisational liaison was recognised as important to avoid duplication and enhance cooperation. The first outline work plan for 2004–2008 proposed a number of activities for developing a national waste prevention programme. The second work plan for 2009–2012 was published early in 2009 following a stakeholder consultation, taking into account the

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requirements of the new Waste Framework Directive.

The current plan, *Towards a Resource Efficient Ireland – A National Strategy to 2020, incorporating Ireland’s National Waste Prevention Programme*<sup>1</sup> was published in 2014 and sets out the programme aims for the period to 2020.

Since its inception in 2004, Ireland’s NWPP has successfully delivered solutions for individuals and organisations that recognise the costs of wasteful consumption (both excess purchasing and final disposal charges); along with the critical need to manage our finite natural resources to maintain our quality of life into the future. 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 title of this document is intended to reflect this broad approach and to highlight the key role for the programme in delivering on national priorities on competitiveness and green growth.

During this period, work will focus on four thematic priorities:

- promoting efficient use of resources in business (water, material, energy);
- minimising food waste and promoting efficient water use in homes and communities;
- maximising re-use & recovery of resources and preserving natural capital.

Encouraging behaviour changes to normalise resource efficiency innovations and developments in the programme include:

- establishment of a research fellowship dealing with behaviour change challenges and solutions;
- securing sectoral co-funding for support of resource efficiency programmes - Advocacy for the development of a national Raw Material Strategy;
- working with facilities regulated by the EPA to adopt resource efficient behaviours;
- increased emphasis on re-use activities to preserve natural capital;
- expansion of the ‘whole of activity’ Smart Farming programme;
- transition of well-developed projects from grant-aid funding to self-sustaining programmes;
- funding research to build knowledge in support of implementation;
- examining new business models to stimulate a circular economy and achieve resource efficiency;
- working in partnership with the newly-established Waste Management Planning Regions;
- promoting a ‘help people to help themselves’ approach through sectoral champions/ambassadors.

Major conclusions from experience gained so far in the national waste prevention programme are:

- since 2004, the EPA-led national waste prevention programme has developed a portfolio of concrete projects each aimed at demonstrating waste prevention and resource efficiency to a target audience. The key elements for continued success are:
  - a strong policy push, such as that provided by the new circular economy package;
  - incorporating waste prevention activities into the broader theme of resource efficiency ensures maximising the effectiveness of such interventions;
  - recognising that prevention is primarily about people and their behaviour, and secondarily about applied science and

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<sup>1</sup> The Environmental Protection Agency – Towards a Resource Efficient Ireland, A National Strategy to 2020: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/waste/prevention/towardsaresourceefficientireland.html>

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engineering;

- acknowledging that working with people (at home, in their leisure time or at work) takes time and is resource intensive;
  - realising that it is the active participation of people, organisations and sectors and their engagement with the projects to effect the desired changes in behaviour that results in waste prevention;
  - understanding the need for proactive recruitment of companies to ensure the success of the Green Business Initiative. Awards need to be for continuous improvement, as opposed to being awarded on a one-off basis.
- Each prevention initiative should be expanded nationally as the pilot phases are completed and suitable mechanisms, including funding and human resources, be made available to achieve this.
  - Setting national targets for waste prevention, source-segregated collection and pre-treatment of the residual streams would provide strong incentives for support to the national waste prevention programme.
  - Reuse needs greater emphasis, in particular for waste electrical and electronic equipment, and construction and demolition waste. The above mentioned Regional Waste Management plans have identified numerous reuse initiatives that will contribute increasing reuse activities.
  - Achieving prevention in practice is considered particularly challenging, because, as in relation to climate change, significant individual and societal behavioural changes are needed now, and these changes provide few immediate, personally tangible benefits, apart perhaps from some cost savings.
  - Implementing programmes on waste prevention, producer responsibility, integrated product policy and sustainable consumption and production in an increasingly competitive and globalised open free-market economy is an ongoing challenge for all stakeholders in society.
  - With the appropriate resources and the willing participation of all stakeholders, the ongoing national waste prevention programme will ensure that Ireland makes good progress in relation to resource use efficiency. This in turn will contribute to national competitiveness and progress towards the green economy, climate change and sustainable consumption and production policy agendas in Ireland.
  - The full implementation of the Green Public Procurement Action Plan (<http://www.etenders.gov.ie/Media/Default/SiteContent/LegislationGuides/13.%20Green%20Tenders%20-%20An%20Action%20Plan%20on%20Green%20Public%20Procurement.pdf>) will contribute significantly to the uptake of resource-efficient consumption and production behaviour. Organisations operating resource-efficient behaviour recognised through, for example, membership of the green hospitality, green business or EcoCert schemes, should have a significantly greater chance of meeting criteria necessary to tender for green public procurement contracts. A guidance document<sup>2</sup> has been developed to assist the public sector to implement and maintain procedures for green public procurement.
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<sup>2</sup> Environmental Protection Agency – Green Procurement Guidance for the Public Sector, <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/other/corporate/olg/greenprocurementguidanceforthepublicsector.html>