



Waste Action Plan Consultation,
Waste Policy and Resource Efficiency,
Department Communications, Climate Action & Environment,
Newtown Road,
Carricklawn,
Wexford,
Y35 AP50.

By email only to Wastecomments@DCCAIE.gov.ie

20th February 2020

Re: Public Consultation on the Proposed Waste Action Plan

Dear Sir/Madam,

Further to your call for consultation on the above-referenced subject, I offer the following responses and comments on behalf of the Irish waste Management Association (IWMA). The IWMA is comprised of 41 members that operate 49 waste companies.

Our website, www.iwma.ie , provides details of our members. Note that some members have acquired other companies in recent years and therefore trade under several brand names.

Our members handle household, commercial, C&D, liquid and hazardous wastes and are involved in the following waste management activities:

- Waste Collection
- Waste Transfer
- Recycling Operations
- Composting
- Anaerobic Digestion
- Hazardous Waste Management
- Specialist Treatments (such as Sterilisation)
- Soil Treatment and Recovery
- Waste to Energy
- SRF Production
- Landfill Operations
- Export of Waste for Treatment Abroad

It is clear that the IWMA represents a broad spectrum of waste management activities, so we have no inherent bias towards or against any particular waste management options. Our main

goals are to raise standards in the industry, to promote compliance with all legislation and to assist Ireland in meeting the targets set by the EU in a variety of Directives. All our submissions are available publicly on our website.

Opening Comments

The IWMA supports the existing privatised waste management market in Ireland and we believe that it offers fair and open competition. We recognise that the Irish State has obligations to meet EU targets and must influence the behaviour of consumers, businesses and industry to meet those targets. We agree in principle with using fiscal measures to achieve those ends.

We also recognise that the State needs funding to support public awareness initiatives, waste enforcement, waste planning and the provision of civic amenity sites / bring banks. We accept that levies are a good source of such funding and we recommend that the Environment Fund is ring-fenced for these purposes and is used effectively to assist Ireland with meeting the challenging targets set by the EU.

We also acknowledge the provisions around Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and we see that as a significant contributor to funding waste prevention, reuse and recycling activities in Ireland in future years.

Specific Questions

2.0 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

2.1 How are the current institutional waste prevention and management arrangements working and how could they be improved in your opinion?

The IWMA supports the current institutional arrangements, with some reservations as detailed in response to the next question. There have been many positive improvements in the last 10 to 15 years in our view, including the following:

- The setting up of the NWCPO which has led to much greater consistency and efficiency in the management of the waste collection permitting system. In recent years, the NWCPO has also introduced greater transparency in terms of returns from permitted waste facilities and we would welcome even greater transparency in that regard, as transparency makes it very difficult for criminals to hide their illegal activities. The NWCPO has been very proactive with regard to information technology and now looks to be in a position to introduce waste tracking that will help the enforcement authorities to expose criminal activity, which we very much welcome.
- The setting up of the NTFSO has led to greater consistency and efficiency with regard to exports and imports of waste. The NTFSO has also introduced greater transparency with regard to waste movements in and out of Ireland and we very much welcome this.
- The setting up of the Regional Waste Planning Offices has been a great success in our opinion. The Regional Offices have worked closely with the IWMA in areas of mutual interest over the past few years and we hope to continue to work closely together to achieve our common goals of providing the highest standard of waste

management in the world and meeting the very challenging targets set by the EU in the suite of current waste management legislation.

- The reduction from 10 waste management plans to just 3 was also welcomed by the IWMA. The 3 regional plans are fully consistent in their targets and goals, so we effectively have one national waste plan, which we welcome.
- The setting up of the WERLAs has brought some consistency in enforcement, which we welcome. However, we do have some reservations regarding consistency and focus in enforcement in the waste sector and we elaborate on those reservations in response to the next question.
- The EPA operates to a very high standard and has succeeded in raising environmental standards across Ireland over the past 3 decades. We find that EPA enforcement is very strong and operates without fear or favour, which we welcome. We suggest that certain parts of the EPA requires greater resources and/or better streamlining. We address this in response to later questions in the consultations, including the Article 27 and End of Waste sections.
- We support all the Extended Producer Responsibility Schemes in Ireland. We believe that they have achieved great success in meeting the targets set by the EU, which is their main function.
- The CCPC has a very limited role in the waste sector and we do not see a case for extending that role. Many of the consumer protection issues that were raised in the 2018 CCPC report on the '*Operation of the Household Waste Collection Market in Ireland*' have now been incorporated into waste collection permits by the NWCPO, with the support of the IWMA. Any other issues of concern in that regard could be managed by the NWCPO, as the effective regulator of all waste collection in Ireland. The NWCPO works closely with the WERLAs and the wider enforcement network, so the enforcement tools are in place to implement any measures that are required for the purpose of consumer protection.
- The current structure of the household waste collection market is working very well for consumers and for performance in waste management and resource efficiency. With incentivised charging and weighing of every bin, householders in Ireland have a greater choice of options for management of their waste compared with their EU counterparts and are financially incentivised to prevent and recycle waste. This is a major advantage with the Irish system for both the householders and the environment. Other EU countries are now looking at Ireland and learning from our experience, with a view to introducing payment systems that incentivise households in their countries to prevent and recycle waste.
- Ireland has arguably the most advanced system of kerbside household waste collection in the world, with the following advanced features:
 - Every bin is weighed and the weights reported to the customer and the authorities.
 - Charges are incentivised to promote waste prevention and recycling.
 - Materials accepted in the mixed dry recycling bins are consistent across the country.
 - Customer charters are mandatory and the details are specified by regulation.
 - Collectors maintain direct communication with customers by email and/or text messages.

- Some collectors have developed apps to provide data to their customers including recycling performance.
- Split body vehicles are used to enhance the efficiencies of collection in many rural and low-density areas.
- Collectors all employ environmental management systems including a customer complaint management system.

2.2 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

2.2.1 Regulation

For about 20 years now, the IWMA has repeatedly called for consistent regulation of all waste facilities and for a greater focus on ‘under the radar’ criminal activities. Our members believe that the two-tier system that comprises EPA regulation and Local Authority regulation puts too much focus on licensed sites, inconsistent enforcement of permitted sites and too little focus on unregulated waste activities, where the criminals can be found.

Many local authorities perform their enforcement functions very well, but the system falls down when some local authorities take a below-standard approach to regulation and enforcement of waste management activities. This has left a gap for criminal activity that harms the reputation of the waste sector.

The IWMA has previously called for a single entity, such as a fully resourced EPA to regulate and enforce all waste management activities, without fear or favour. As a minimum, we suggest that the EPA should have strengthened powers to step in and take over a case when a local authority is not able or willing to enforce unauthorised or criminal activity.

2.2.2 Improving Waste Management Practices

The IWMA suggests that the institutions are in place to greatly improve Ireland’s resource efficiency and waste management practices, but the public could do a lot more in this area and needs to be encouraged and incentivised to do so. This requires awareness, education, financial incentives and penalties.

The IWMA is working on a number of initiatives in this regard and we are aware of other worthwhile initiatives that are being developed by other bodies (Regional Planners, NWCPO, WERLAs, etc.).

It is critically important that the State invests financially in these initiatives to a much greater extent than heretofore. A budget of between €5 million and €10 million per annum is now required for awareness and education alone, in addition to the waste enforcement budget. Investment is needed now to avoid financial penalties from the EU in the event that Ireland fails to meet future waste management and resource efficiency targets. The future MSW Recycling targets are not on track currently and will require a major step change in the next 5 years to avoid failure and financial penalties.

3.0 MUNICIPAL (HOUSEHOLD AND COMMERCIAL) WASTE

Municipal Waste Questions:

3.1 What further measures should be put in place by Government, regulatory authorities (EPA, local authorities, etc.) and industry stakeholders in order to promote and incentivise waste prevention and improve proper segregation and recycling of waste by both households and businesses?

3.1.1 *Passing the Recycling Targets to the Waste Collectors*

The IWMA is strongly opposed to the Government proposal to pass on the MSW recycling targets (55%, 60% & 65% by 2025, 2030 & 2035 respectively) to the collectors of municipal waste, for the following reasons:

- Kerbside collection is just one part of the system of collecting and managing MSW. Bring banks, civic amenity sites, textile collections, WEEE take-back, specialist collections from commercial premises, reuse, drop off points for biodegradable wastes, bottles collected from pubs & restaurants, etc. all have a part to play and kerbside collection will inevitably have the lowest recycling rates within that system as that is where the bulk of the residual waste is managed.
- Waste collectors cannot control the actions of the citizens of this State. Waste collectors must provide the tools by way of different bins, information, encouragement and incentivised charging but cannot be held responsible for the behaviour of customers that manage waste badly. As the saying goes, *'you can bring the horse to water, but you cannot make it drink'*. The responsibility for meeting the EU recycling targets falls upon all stakeholders, including every citizen of the State.
- The majority of Member States will fail to meet the future MSW recycling targets. When the recycling targets were set in the CEP, it was thought that Germany was recycling 66% of MSW, Austria at 59%, Slovenia at 58%, Belgium at 54%, Netherlands at 53%, etc. Hence the 55% to 65% recycling targets appeared achievable. However, we understand now that the calculation system that will be used going forward will reduce those recycling rates dramatically. Germany will be at 52% (if not lower), Belgium will be at 50%, Austria and Slovenia at 48% and the Netherlands at 47%. This is based on data received from the German Waste Management Association (for Germany) and based on a Eunomia report for the other countries. If the highest recycling rate in the world is now measured at 52% or less, then the MSW recycling rates set in the CEP cannot be achieved by any member state in the timeframes that have been set, particularly the 60% and 65% targets. In these circumstances, we suggest that the Irish Government should call for a mechanism to review the performance of Member States that fail to meet the MSW recycling targets, rather than taking action against them. The review should consider household waste generation (comparing like with like, so household rather than MSW), improvement in waste management performance over time, residual waste generation and management (recovery v disposal), life cycle comparisons (local recovery v long haul recycling), level of unauthorised waste activities, etc. The Member States that perform poorly in an overall scoring methodology should receive the most attention with respect to EU enforcement. We believe that Ireland is performing almost as well as the best performers in the EU, yet with a 42% MSW recycling rate we appear to be in the second division and could be hammered with fines from 2025 onwards for many years. The only difference between Ireland and Germany is the collection and recycling of biodegradable garden and parks waste. We suggest that it will be embarrassing for

the EU if most member states miss the target and there is no Plan B, so the EU should be responsive to the call for such a mechanism as part of the Circular Economy Action Plan.

- Passing the targets to the waste collectors is merely 'passing the buck' and will inevitably put waste collectors in non-compliance with their permits. All stakeholders need to work together to meet the targets, not just the waste collectors. Passing the buck in this way will only lead to conflict between the authorities and the industry that will take the focus away from the task at hand. A collaborate approach between the State and the waste industry is needed at this critical time.

3.2 What measures or practices are currently in place that could be improved?

3.2.1 Awareness and Education

The awareness and education campaigns will need much larger budgets if Ireland is to increase recycling rates. Those working in the sector understand the system and are aware of the need to manage waste better. The majority of the public can be convinced to manage their waste better, but need to be constantly fed with information, encouragement and incentivisation. Waste management is a low priority issue for many people in Ireland. We need to make it a high priority for the majority of people if we are to have a step change in waste management performance in the country.

3.2.2 Bring Banks

The density of bring banks is an important factor for achieving higher recycling rates. We suggest that more bring banks are needed in Ireland for the collection of glass and textiles.

3.3 What other new measures or practices could be put in place?

3.3.1 Enforcement of households and businesses

We welcome the proposal to increase enforcement of householders and businesses and we urge the Government to put the necessary resources in place for that task.

3.3.2 Street Recycling

We also welcome the proposal to install recycling litter bins on streets and at commercial premises. The public needs to be constantly reminded that recyclables must be kept separate from residual wastes and this will help in that regard. The colour and messaging on these bins should be consistent across the country.

3.3.3 Additional Recycling Infrastructure

We support the provision of existing recycling infrastructure across the country in a general sense. We expect that the waste industry will provide sorting facilities, where required and the State will provide more civic amenity sites and will facilitate sites for bring banks. Additional reprocessing infrastructure, where feasible, would also be supported by the waste industry. Reliance on international markets (particularly in Asia) is clearly problematic, particularly in terms of paper and plastic recycling.

3.3.4 Quality Waste Management Assurance Award Scheme

The IWMA would welcome and support such a scheme.

3.3.5 Biodegradable Garden and Parks Waste

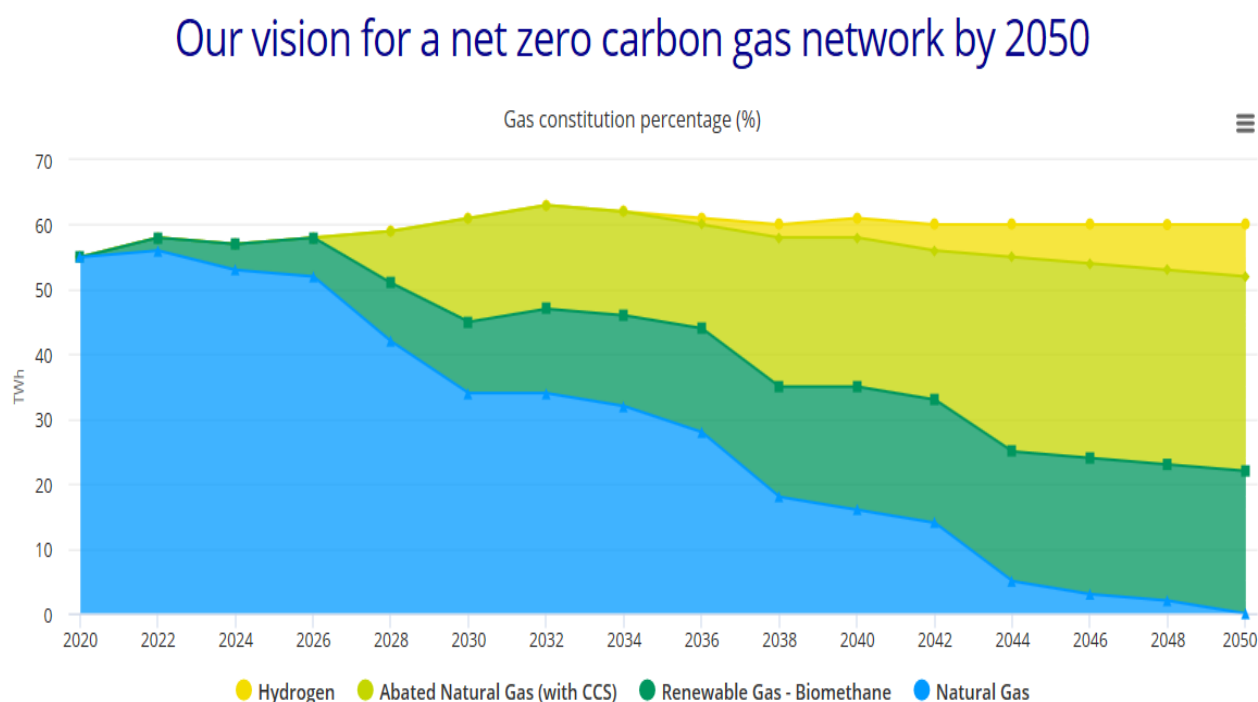
The big difference between Ireland and the countries with the highest recycling rates in the world, such as Germany and Wales is the collection and recycling of biodegradable garden and parks waste (a.k.a. green waste). In Ireland, 1.8% of MSW comprises recycled (composted) biodegradable garden and parks waste. That figure is 10.9% in Germany and 10.4% in Wales. Details are provided in the SLR Report that was commissioned by the IWMA and is attached to this submission. The following extracts from that report provide a summary here.

“Ideally, Ireland should try to reach the future MSW recycling targets without increasing waste generation, but if this proves impossible, collecting additional green waste for recycling may be necessary to avoid EU fines.

If Ireland collects and recycles an additional 250,000 tonnes of green and garden waste, it would boost the MSW recycling rate to 50%. If half of this additional waste was sourced from households, with the rest from municipal parks and commercial premises/developments, golf courses, sportsgrounds, etc, Irelands household waste generation figure would increase to 343kg per capita, which is still well below the EU average of 419kg per capita. This change would have little impact on the residual waste figures for Ireland, so that performance would still be ranked amongst the best in Europe.

In particular, consideration should be given to the collection of biowastes for the production of biomethane to generate renewable energy. We understand that Gas Networks Ireland has major plans to feed large quantities of biomethane into the national gas network and feedstock will be required for the AD plants that will generate that biogas. The graph below from GNI’s website¹ is very informative in that regard and shows a very aggressive plan that will require a strong drive and serious resources.

Figure 3-1 Gas Networks Ireland Plans to Replace Natural Gas with Renewable Gas



¹ <https://www.gasnetworks.ie/vision-2050/net-zero-carbon/>

Technologies have evolved or been adapted in Ireland that facilitate the breakdown of woody material in anaerobic digestion plants, so garden and parks waste can be used as a feedstock for biogas production. It may be more environmentally sustainable to collect garden and parks waste for this purpose rather than to use productive agricultural land to generate feedstock for the new AD plants that we expect to be developed in response to GNI's initiative.

The cost of collecting or delivering the garden and parks waste to these AD plants will be an important factor and may require subsidisation or some form of incentives. However, two national environmental priorities (recycling and renewable energy) could be advanced by such a move, so it will be in the Government's interest to at least consider this option. It is interesting to note that the collection systems for green and garden waste in Germany are funded by the German climate action funding program, as mentioned earlier in this report.

In 2019, the Irish Parliament declared a Climate Emergency and funding for worthwhile initiatives should follow. Financing the collection and recycling of green/garden waste could be as simple as a fiscal measure that makes biomethane more attractive at its cost of production compared to natural gas, i.e. a tax on natural gas that is used to subsidise biomethane production."

Biodegradable garden and parks waste are also suitable for composting plants and produce excellent compost. Our members have capacity for acceptance of this material and would particularly welcome efforts by local authorities to capture such material from parks and sportsgrounds for recycling at compost and AD plants throughout the country.

3.4 What do you see as the barriers/enablers to these measures?

3.4.1 Additional Materials in MDR Bins

We note the proposal to expand the list of materials to be accepted in the mixed dry recycling (MDR) bins. We need more information on that measure and an analysis of available outlets before we can comment on it. Additional materials in the MDR bins with no recycling outlets would present more problems to the management of wastes in Ireland, so further detail and analysis is needed.

3.4.2 Brown Bin Roll-Out to Rural Areas

We note the proposal to extend the provision of brown bins to all households in the State. The IWMA has mixed views on this measure. We support additional capture and recycling of biodegradable municipal wastes, but we fear that the full roll-out could lead to increased prices for kerbside collections in rural areas, including villages and could have some negative environmental impacts in terms of carbon footprint if more trucks are required to collect waste in rural areas. There is also the possibility that some people would drop out of the service in response to increased charges and we fear that their waste could be mis-managed as a result.

We therefore recommend a pilot-scale trial of this proposed measure before it could be introduced. The trial should:

- Quantify the additional cost of the service to each house and pass that cost to the householders in the trial.
- Count the number of households availing of the service before and afterwards.
- Quantify the gains in recycling due to the roll-out of the brown bins.
- Quantify additional environmental impacts due to additional waste collections. (most trucks operating in rural areas are split body trucks designed for two-bin collections, so a third bin could mean a second truck)

- Assess the possibility of switching to three-way split body trucks for three-bin collections in rural areas and consider the likely lead-in time for such a changeover.
- Follow up on any households that drop out of the system to analyse the environmental impact.
- The trial should be consistent with a full roll-out, i.e. information provided in a way that can be scaled up to all rural areas (e.g. door to door calling to all houses would not be realistic for large scale roll-out, but other forms of wider communication would be possible).
- The trial should be carried out over a long enough period to include renewal time, to analyse any dropouts from the service.

We are aware that some IWMA members are already collecting brown bins in rural areas, so data from those collections could also be analysed as part of a cost-benefit analysis for this proposed measure.

We suggest that participation rates for brown bin usage in urban areas (>500 agglomerations) is poor in many areas. Therefore, we suggest that this needs to be addressed as a priority, whilst trial are carried out on the roll out of brown bins to rural areas.

We suggest that the State authorities should analyse the existing situation with regard to householder participation in the areas that have already been served with brown bins. Anecdotally, our members are frustrated by the number of brown bins that have been delivered and are not currently in use. We strongly recommend that the enforcement authorities visit houses that have a brown bin and do not use it or send letters to those houses informing them of the legal obligation to put food waste in the brown bin and not in the other two bins. We suggest that this action could have a greater impact compared with delivering brown bins to all households in rural areas.

The IWMA members are open to discussions with respect to part-financing the inspection and enforcement of households that do not avail of a kerbside waste collection service and those that do not avail of the brown bin service in agglomerations of more than 500 people. The inspections could be carried out by a private company, with relevant approvals and follow up enforcement carried out by the local authority enforcement personnel.

3.4.3 Colour Coding of Bins

We recognise that consistently coloured bins would assist education and awareness, so it would be nice to have, but our members are very concerned about the costs involved in transitioning from the current situation. A variety of bin colours are currently used in both household and commercial waste collection, as there has never been a legal requirement to use any particular colours.

Our members have rolled out residual waste bins over the past 30 years and whilst the majority are grey/black, many are other colours such as green, purple, red, etc.

The MDR bins were rolled out over the last 20 years. Many of our members chose blue rather than green as green bins are used for green waste in many countries, whereas blue was associated with paper and the MDR bins were mostly paper at that time and are still 40% paper now. These decisions were made in consultation with the local authorities in many cases, so there was no suggestion in many parts of Ireland that the MDR bins should be green.

As the roll out of the food waste bins is more recent and was directed by legislation and waste policy, these bins are mostly brown in colour.

The costs of changing bin colours would have to be paid for by the State, as it would be very unfair to expect individual companies to take on such costs and if they did, it would result in unfair competition as some companies would have to recoup those costs from their customers, whilst other companies would avoid that burden. There would also be a dispute between blue versus green for the MDR bins as there are very large numbers of both in circulation today.

We have surveyed our members to determine the costs involved in replacing bins. The cost of a new 240L bin is about €26, but that is only part of the cost, as the bins need to be delivered and the old ones removed. Another factor to consider is that it can be difficult to access bins as they are not always put out on collection day, so several visits will be needed to many customers. The replacement cost is higher in lower density areas. Our members have suggested that the replacement costs for household bins are in the range of €30 to €60 per bin.

We estimate that c.1 million bins (including household and commercial) would have to be replaced to meet the suggested colour scheme, so the total cost of replacing all bins with new branded and chipped bins is estimated at c.€50 million, based on the figures provided by our members. The bins taken back would have little or no demand and would mostly be scrapped. This would represent a poor environmental outcome and would be difficult to justify in waste management policy.

Alternatives, such as replacing the bin lids or attaching a coloured plastic wrap around the bin were also considered by our members. The plastic wrap is not a good option as it is very labour intensive and requires calm and dry weather conditions to carry out in situ. Also, the wrap will get badly damaged when the bin hits the ‘shaker’ bar as it is emptied.

Replacing bin lids could be an option, but our survey of members suggested that this would cost about €27 million, which may not be good value for a partial solution.

Phased replacement of bins, based on new customers and damaged bins, would also be problematic. Companies would have customers with different coloured bins for each waste type and that would make communications between the company and its customers very difficult.

There are also dangers associated with changing the existing bins in relation to confusing customers that have followed the rules imposed by their service provider for many years or even decades. For example, there are many green bins currently used for residual waste. Telling customers that the green residual waste bin is now the green recyclable waste bin would undoubtedly lead to serious problems in those areas.

In summary, we consider it to be a ‘nice idea’ to standardise the bin colours but not an option unless the Government is willing to spend €50 million on this exercise. We suggest that the money would be better spent on awareness, education and enforcement of those that do not manage their waste correctly.

We need to accept that there are a variety of bin colours in use and refer to the bins as ‘waste’, ‘recycling’ and ‘food/compost’ or some other agreed terminology. We advise against using the term ‘recovery bin’ as many people, outside of the waste sector, do not know the difference between ‘recovery’ and ‘recycling’ and the terminology could get confused. We surveyed our members that collect kerbside household waste to see what terms are currently known to household customers. Here are the results:

1	Waste	Recycling	Compost or Food
2	Waste	Recycling	Food

3	General Waste	Dry Recycling	Food
4	General Waste	Mixed Dry Recycling	Compost or Brown
5	General Waste	Mixed Recycling	Food Waste
6	Waste	Recycling	Compost
7	Waste	Recycling	Food or Brown
8	Waste	Recycling	Organic
9	Residual	Recycling	Compost
10	Waste	Recycling	Food
11	General Waste	Recycling	Food
12	Waste	Recycling	Food
13	Waste	Recycling	Compost
14	Waste	Recycling	Compost or Food
15	General Waste	Dry Recycling	Food
16	Waste	Recycling	Organic

Any decision by the DCCAE on consistent terminology must consider the terminology that is currently used in communications between waste collectors and household customers. Trying to find technically correct terms is not always the best solution when dealing with non-technical citizens.

From our survey, it appears clear that the public will understand the terms 'waste bin' and 'recycling bin' without any problems. The word 'dry' could be placed before recycling without confusing the public but may not be necessary if a shorter term is preferred.

We do not favour the term 'food recycling bin' as used by the Regional Planners, as repeating the word 'recycling' for two different bins could add to confusion. Some of our members only want food waste in the brown bin caddies and others want garden waste as well as food waste in their wheelie bins (140 or 240 litre). We therefore suggest that the brown bin could be nationally referred to as the 'food/compost' bin and locally collectors could use either 'food' or 'compost', depending on their individual situation.

Our customers know which bin to use for dry recycling, which bin to use for food waste and which bin to use for residual waste, we just need to agree on consistent terminology across the country to facilitate national awareness campaigns and labelling by producers.

3.5 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

No further comments.

Consultation Questions – Household Waste

3.6 Is incentivised charging working in your opinion? Are households being financially incentivised to prevent waste and recycle correctly through the 3 bin system?

We need to compare year on year data to analyse the effectiveness of incentivised charging, so it is probably too early to form a definitive view. Anecdotally, we are getting mixed views from our members on the effectiveness of incentivised charging to date.

We suggest that the NWCPO should analyse the data from each company that collects household waste to see if the charging system is really incentivised and is getting results. Companies should be informed of this analysis and a mechanism put in place to enforce companies that are not providing sufficient incentives for their customers to change their behaviour in favour of waste prevention and recycling. The mechanism should be discussed and agreed with the IWMA as a collaborative approach is likely to be most effective.

3.7 Would an incentive scheme which compared your performance on how you generate and recycle your household waste with your area / county etc change your waste management behaviour?

This question appears to be directed at householders, rather than the waste industry. The IWMA supports this type of scheme and a number of our members are trialling it.

3.8 What role should Civic Amenity Sites (local recycling centres) play? Should there be a standard service across all Civic Amenity Sites (CAS), such as the waste streams they accept? Should CAS accept general waste or only recyclables? Should CAS be used to provide more reuse opportunities, e.g. areas dedicated to exchange and upcycling? If so, how should this be funded?

Civic amenity sites play a very important role in recycling in Ireland and the IWMA would welcome the development of more CA sites. Some of our members have developed CA sites co-located with transfer stations and we suggest that the new waste policy should encourage that type of development.

We would prefer if CA sites did not accept residual waste, but if that waste type is accepted, it should be at a high price as it reduces the efficiency of kerbside household waste collection and should not be a cheap alternative. Any customers availing of residual waste disposal at CA sites should be registered as a customer of the CA site and should have to justify that they do not have access to a kerbside collection service.

Where a customer has access to a kerbside collection service but claims that the service is too expensive for their needs, the NWCPO should have a facility to hear such claims and to seek a resolution with local waste collectors. In the event of a failure to resolve the issue, the householder could be allowed access to the CA site with residual waste.

We also recommend that any residual waste accepted at CA sites should be weighed as it is deposited, in the same way that all household kerbside bins are weighed. The weights should be assigned to the customer's account and can be analysed in the same way that kerbside customers can be analysed for waste prevention and recycling performance.

We support the provision of additional reuse opportunities at CA sites, in principal. That has the advantage of a recovery/disposal route for any items that are not reused within a specified timeframe. Items should be priced attractively and the price reduced each week until they are sold or become obsolete. This would help with the funding to some extent.

The Government proposes to introduce additional levies that will significantly bolster the Environment Fund. The IWMA, in our response to that consultation, has supported most of the proposed levies. We suggest that CA sites should be part-funded from the Environment Fund.

We also suggest that the further development of Extended Producer Responsibility schemes should contribute to the funding of CA sites, particularly in terms of reuse efforts. All producers of products should have responsibility for the post-consumer management of their products and should have to contribute to waste prevention, reuse and recycling in line with the principles of the Circular Economy. There should be funding from this source to develop more CA sites and to expand the services on offer in the existing ones.

3.9 What can be done to improve recycling (including organic waste) in apartment complexes?

We understand that Dublin City Council, with the support of IWMA members, are working on trials at apartment complexes to introduce food waste recycling and we await the results of those trials.

Waste management at apartment complexes is arranged by the management company and the cost is invariably more important than the recycling and waste prevention outcomes. That dynamic needs to be tackled by the State, with the support of the waste collectors.

It should be mandatory to charge for each waste type by weight and to provide incentivised pricing to encourage waste prevention and recycling. There would then be an incentive for the apartment management company to inform, encourage and incentivise the residents to use the system correctly.

The Quality Waste Management Assurance Award Scheme, suggested in the consultation document, could be applied to apartment complexes. The scheme should involve the inspection of records and inspections of bins by independent auditors. It would be ideal if this was somehow tied to a financial reward and/or penalty system such as rates or water/wastewater charges and the savings/charges passed on to the apartment dwellers via their service charges. This could lead to peer pressure and self-policing by the residents.

3.10 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

No further comments.

Consultation Questions – Commercial Waste

3.11 How could pricing structures for commercial waste collection be improved to incentivise better segregation and recycling of waste? For example, should pay by weight be introduced for commercial waste?

Yes, we recommend the introduction of mandatory pay by weight for commercial premises to better incentivise waste prevention and recycling. Charging by weight will also provide better data that will better inform future measures, plans and policy.

3.12 What further incentives could be put in place to encourage business to recycle more?

We recommend the introduction of a ban on placing food waste, garden waste and recyclable wastes in residual waste bins at commercial premises accompanied by enforcement.

We also recommend the introduction of mandatory material separation for different types of commercial premises. For example, wastes generated at offices should have separate paper bins, whereas a distribution warehouse should have separate collection of cardboard, pallet wrap, pallets, etc. The work carried out by The Clean Technology Centre for the EPA Waste Characterisation study should assist in this regard. A series of guidance documents could be prepared and distributed via business organisations such as IBEC, SFA, ISME, etc.

We also recommend a properly funded, strong awareness campaign to inform business owners and the general public of their waste management obligations at home and at work.

3.13 Should a certification scheme be introduced for businesses to demonstrate that businesses are managing their municipal waste correctly (e.g. using the mixed dry recycling and organic waste bins properly)?

We support the Quality Waste Management Assurance Award Scheme, suggested in the consultation document. We suggest that the scheme should be linked to commercial rates with discounts applied based on performance. The companies should have to pay independent accredited auditors to rate their performance, thereby reducing the enforcement burden on the local authorities.

3.13.1 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

No further comments.

4.0 FOOD WASTE

Consultation Questions – Food Waste

4.1 What are the underlying causes of food waste in Ireland?

Some food waste such as peelings and inedible parts of food products are inevitable. However, we recognise that food waste also contains a lot of out-of-date and uneaten products at household and commercial premises. The main underlying cause is poor management by the householder and/or the commercial premises. It is difficult to completely avoid wasting food, but there is a lot of room for improvement in Ireland, as in other countries.

4.2 Should Ireland introduce a national prevention target in advance of a possible EU target?

The targets in the Circular Economy Package are very challenging, particularly the MSW recycling targets, so we advise against additional measures that would make the EU targets even more challenging.

4.3 How can Ireland become a 'farm to fork' global leader in food waste reduction?

The EPA and others are doing a lot of good research in this area and we recommend that the lessons learnt from that research be passed to the public in the State's education and awareness campaigns.

4.4 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

The Quality Waste Management Assurance Award Scheme, suggested in the consultation document, could be applied to restaurants, hotels, supermarkets, etc and food waste management be included as one of the criteria used in the rating system. Good management of food waste could include donations of surplus edible food to local charities, just before its 'use by' date and upon reaching its 'best before' date.

5.0 PLASTIC AND PACKAGING WASTE

Consultation Questions – Plastic and Packaging Waste

5.1 How can we make it easier for citizens to play a role in delivering on our targets?

The provision of MDR bins to all households with a kerbside waste collection service is an excellent first step in terms of convenience for citizens.

The second step is to develop further awareness and education to ensure that all citizens have the required knowledge on what material to put in each bin and what should go to bring centres, CA sites, take-back shops, etc.

The third step should be better labelling on packaging products. When a citizen is deciding whether a packaging item is recyclable or not, they are likely to look for information on the item. The labelling is generally confusing and not helpful in that regard. In fact, non-recyclable complex products such as crisp packets displaying the REPAK logo can mis-inform citizens into thinking that the item is recyclable and should be placed in the MDR Bin. That leads to contamination of the MDR bin and can impact on the quality of the paper. We therefore suggest that recyclable items should have a message that says, '*place in dry recycling bin*' or '*place in food waste bin*' or '*place in bottle bank*', etc. Non-recyclable items should have a message that says '*non-recyclable, place in general waste bin*'.

The fourth step should follow logically from the third step. Any packaging items that are non-recyclable should be levied to make them more expensive than recyclable alternatives. Alternatively, they could be made to pay much higher eco-modulated fees as part of their producer responsibility obligations.

5.2 Do waste collectors have a role to play?

Yes, in a number of ways, as follow:

- Waste collectors need to keep informing their customers of the items accepted in each bin and what to do with items that are not accepted at kerbside,
- Waste collectors need to charge in an incentivised manner that encourages citizens to prevent and recycle waste at home, at work and everywhere else.
- The incentivised charging system must not have weight or volumes allowances that are too large to be effective in changing behaviour.

5.3 What is the role of retailers?

Retailers can:

- manage their stock in a manner that minimises waste;
- encourage reuse amongst their customers;
- educate their staff to segregate their waste correctly, including signage;
- select products for sale that have less packaging / recyclable packaging, rejecting products that use non-recyclable packaging.

The Quality Waste Management Assurance Award Scheme, suggested in the consultation document, could be applied to retailers.

5.4 What is the role of manufacturers?

See third and fourth steps in response to 5.1 above. Manufacturers should be obliged to label their products to identify whether they should be placed in recycling, food waste or general waste bins. They should also pay higher levies or eco-modulated fees if their packaging is not recyclable.

5.5 Is there a role for voluntary measures (individual or by sector) and if so, what might they be?

Possibly, but if they prove to be ineffective, they should be replaced with mandatory measures.

5.6 Are there targets other than EU that we should be striving towards?

Yes, we recommend that we strive towards the following targets:

- The elimination of non-recyclable packaging in Ireland
- The elimination of 100% virgin plastic in all packaging placed on the market in Ireland

5.7 Is the introduction of eco modulated EPR fees sufficient to eliminate excessive or difficult to recycle plastic packaging? If not, what other measures are necessary?

It may be enough if it is managed well and set at the right levels. Time will tell.

5.8 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

No further comments.

6.0 SINGLE USE PLASTIC

Consultation Questions – Single Use Plastics

6.1 What measures could be considered to reduce the amount of single use food containers we use, taking the provisions of the Packaging Directive into account? Should a ban on non-reusable cups be explored?

Single use food containers are inevitable to a large extent as food must be protected during transport and storage. However, we recommend that all food containers should be easily recyclable and should be labelled in a way that makes it easy for consumers to segregate them correctly.

A ban on non-reusable cups would undoubtedly be challenged by the coffee shops and could attract strong public opposition, so a meaningful levy on single use cups would have more chance of an effective outcome in the short term.

6.2 Are there measures already in place that could be strengthened by legislation – for example, obligating retailers to give a reduction to consumers who use re-useable ware?

Yes.

6.3 Do retailers have a role to play in exploring viable reusable food containers for on the go consumption?

Yes.

6.4 Are there additional products that are suitable for consumption reduction?

No comment.

6.5 What data is necessary for measuring consumption reduction of these specific products and any new products suggested?

No comment.

6.6 The role of levies in reducing our consumption is well documented. However, in the case of plastic bags the levy was applied to a commodity which had previously been available for free. Given the range of prices involved for commodities sold in SUP food containers and beverage cups, do you believe a levy would affect behavioural change?

Yes, if the levy is applied at a higher level on non-recyclable food containers.

6.7 Are there other SUP items that cause litter and for which there are sustainable alternatives available, which Ireland should consider banning?

No comment.

6.8 What are the challenges faced by industry in ensuring caps are tethered on all beverage containers by 3 July 2024?

No comment.

6.9 What are manufacturers doing now to ensure all beverage bottles contain 30% recycled content?

- **What, if any, are the obstacles to achieving this?**
- **Is there sufficient supply of recycled plastic content to achieve this ambition?**
- **To what extent is price a factor?**
- **Is there scope for Ireland to be more ambitious and go beyond 30%?**

We support this measure and support more ambitious targets in principle, but we do not have to expertise to comment further at this stage.

6.10 Can our current co-mingled collection model be enhanced in order to deliver a collection rate of 90% for PET beverage containers?

The co-mingled collection model is very effective in separating out PET beverage containers. We need to focus on encouraging and incentivising the consumer to place these items in the mixed dry recyclable bins and we need to extend those bins to the streets and public places as well as houses and commercial premises.

6.11 Would you use a segregated bin just for the responsible disposal of single use PET containers?

There is greater need for source segregation of paper than plastic as paper is a much bigger fraction and more difficult to achieve good quality and secure outlets. Given Ireland's low population density and high level of housing in rural areas, our demographics are not suited to additional bins and additional waste collections. We therefore argue that the current 3-bin system in urban areas and 2-bin in rural areas is best placed to service the customers and to collect recyclable wastes.

6.12 What role can an Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme play in delivering on these targets?

The State needs to tackle the producers in terms of:

- the recyclability of products placed on the market,
- the labelling of those products with respect to waste management and
- the awareness and education of the consumers of those products.

This can be done through the various producer responsibility schemes.

6.13 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

We understand that a report has been commissioned by DCCAIE and prepared by Eunomia that gives consideration to the development of a deposit and return scheme (DRS) for plastic beverage bottles in Ireland. We have not seen this report yet as it has not been published.

The IWMA commissioned SLR Consulting to prepare a report on the likely impact of a DRS on waste management in Ireland. We attach that report to this submission for your consideration. The following extracts from the Executive Summary of that report summarise SLR's findings in this regard.

“Deposit and Refund Scheme

A DRS for PET bottles and aluminium cans is currently under consideration by the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Communications, Climate Action and the Environment. The Waste Reduction Bill 2017 promotes the idea of a DRS in Ireland.

In parallel, the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and the Environment has stated publicly he will commission a review which will consider how we can deliver a 90% collection target for single use plastic bottles in Ireland. This review will also examine the possibility of introducing a DRS and how this might operate in an Irish context. Eunomia has been appointed to carry out that review.

International Examples

In this report, we have looked at examples of similar schemes in each of the States in Australia, where SLR has good waste management expertise. SLR’s review found that the DRS schemes in Australia were largely introduced to reduce litter. A secondary element was to increase recycling rates. In particular, the South Australia DRS was targeted at increasing recycling rates as it pre-dated kerbside collections.

In the schemes that have been introduced in recent years in Australia, efforts have been made to work in tandem with kerbside recycling, rather than to compete against it. The New South Wales scheme pays deposits to MRFs for relevant materials that are recycled. This should be considered if a DRS is introduced to Ireland as the impact of a DRS on the MRF gate fees could have wider consequences in terms of the overall viability of kerbside recycling.

Potential Impact on Kerbside Recycling

SLR consulted with each of the MRF Operators in Ireland to see what impact the removal of plastic bottles and aluminium cans would have on the Material Recovery Facilities in Ireland. The MRF Operators estimated that this would have a €20 to €40 per tonne impact on gate fees at their facilities. Some of the MRF Operators also commented that there would be other impacts to be considered, such as:

- Without good quality materials, such as plastic bottles and aluminium cans, it is difficult to move lower quality materials such as plastic pots/tubs/trays and plastic films. Reduced recycling of these materials would impact negatively on Ireland’s recycling performance.
- The processing lines at the MRFs would have to be re-configured to manage the changes to the input materials.
- A DRS is likely to impact on all REPAK subsidies, as the producers of aluminium cans and plastic bottles would not provide subsidy for MRF operations, so the existing subsidy could be reduced for all materials.

Based on the tonnages and values of these materials as reported by the MRF Operators, SLR independently analysed the potential impact on the MRFs from a successful DRS. The results are shown in Tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 2 Expected Revenue Losses at MRFs if DRS Materials Removed

Material	Volume Handled (t/a)	Average Value of Material including REPAK subsidy (€)	Loss of Revenue (€)
Aluminium Cans	4,444	915	€ 4,066,260
PET Bottles	11,227	247	€ 2,773,069
Estimated Cost due to Loss of Beverage Containers			€ 6,839,329

Material	Volume Handled (t/a)	Average Value of Material including REPAK subsidy (€)	Loss of Revenue (€)
HDPE Bottles	7,283	415	€ 3,022,445
Estimated Cost due to Loss of Beverage Containers and HDPE Bottles			€ 9,861,774

Table 3 Expected Increase in MRF Gate Fees for Household MDR if DRS Materials Removed

Material	Revenue Loss (€)	Household MDR Handled in 2016 (t/a)	Household MDR Handled after DRS materials removed (t/a)	Loss of Revenue per Unit / Potential Gate Fee increase (€)
Loss of Beverage Containers	€ 6,839,329	253,328	237,657	€ 28.78
Loss of Beverage Containers and HDPE Bottles	€ 9,861,774	253,328	230,374	€ 42.81

The increase in gate fees at the MRFs could have very serious consequences on kerbside recycling in Ireland as the incentive to collect recyclables at kerbside would be reduced to a point where it would favour rogue operators that collect household waste with no source segregation.

Likely Increases in Recycling Rates

It is widely accepted that a DRS would have a positive impact on litter and that has been the focus of many DRS systems across the world. In particular, a DRS with a high value deposit of c.25 cent is expected to attract litter pickers.

However, the impact on recycling rates is not so clear. In countries that do not have a kerbside collection system for recyclables and have a low recycling rate, the impact of a DRS on recycling rates will be greater than in countries with well advanced systems for collecting recyclables.

SLR examined the quantities of beverage containers already recycled in Ireland and assessed the impact on MSW recycling and packaging waste recycling of an increase to 90% recycling of those materials. The results were as follows:

PET Bottles:

- Total on the market = 25,490 t/a.
- Uplift from 60.7% to 90% = 29.3% = 7,469 t/a extra recycled.
- 7,469 t/a out of a total MSW generation of 2.8 million t/a = **0.27%**

Aluminium Cans:

- Total on the market = c.11,456 t/a.²
- Uplift from 73% to 90% = 17% = 1,948 t/a extra recycled.
- 1,948 t/a out of a total MSW generation of 2.8 million t/a = **0.07%**

Total Uplift in MSW Recycling rate = **0.34%**

² REPAK's annual report states that 8,363 tonnes of aluminium cans were recycled in Ireland in 2018. Later data from REPAK given to the IWMA and to Eunomia states that 73% of aluminium cans are recycled, so we calculate that 11,456 t/a are placed on the market. REPAK has also stated that 9,427 t/a of aluminium cans are placed on the market by REPAK members in ROI, so the additional tonnage is likely to be imported (e.g. Northern Ireland shopping) or placed on the market by non-members of REPAK.

The data suggests that a successful DRS would only increase overall MSW recycling rates by 0.34% which would do little to assist with the WFD requirement to increase MSW Recycling rates from the current 41% rate to 65% by 2035, with intermediate targets for 2025 and 2030.

The extra tonnage of PET bottles would increase the plastic packaging recycling rate from 34% to 36.5%, still well short of the 50% target by 2025 and the 55% target by 2030.

It appears that Ireland has already exceeded the 2025 and 2030 targets for aluminium packaging recycling, so the uplift in that category would be welcome, but is not of greatest concern at this time.

The effect of a successful DRS on the overall packaging recycling targets would be about 0.7% increase in the recycling rate from 65.6% to 66.3%.

A DRS would undoubtedly increase recycling rates for PET bottles and aluminium cans and would assist Ireland in meeting the SUP Directive targets for 2025 and 2029 but would clearly have very little impact on the other recycling targets that are currently not on track.

Costs of a DRS in Ireland

We also estimated the likely costs associated with developing and operating a comprehensive and successful DRS in Ireland. These are rough estimates that are detailed in the main body of the report and are comparable with other estimates that we reviewed in DRS related reports. Rather than consider capital and operational costs, we spread the capital costs over 10 years to view all the costs as 'annual costs'. We summarise these costs as follows.

Table 4 Overview of Potential Annual Costs of DRS in Ireland

Item	Description	Estimated Cost per annum millions
1	Installation of RVMs & Storage Room (spread over 10 years)	€ 25.0
2	Development of 3 Regional Depots (spread over 10 years)	€ 3.8
3	Set-Up costs (spread over 10 years)	€ 2.1
4	Ongoing labour and space costs at stores	€ 6.3
5	Logistics Costs	€ 22.4
6	Counting Centre Costs	€ 3.2
7	Central Administration Costs	€ 2.7
8	Labelling & Security Markings	€ 7.7
	Total Estimated Annual Costs (Gross)	€ 73.2
	Added Value of Additional Beverage Containers Captured	€2.6
	Total Estimated Annual Costs (Net)	€ 70.6

In light of these estimated costs and considering the additional tonnages of beverage containers likely to be captured and recycled by a DRS, we estimate that the cost of recycling the additional tonnage works out at **€7,497** per tonne. To put this figure in perspective, we calculated the cost of kerbside recycling at just under €500 per tonne and the cost of CA Site recycling at about €240 per tonne.

In order to meet future targets, Ireland needs to recycle a large amount of additional materials and we expect that 'recycling at any cost' is not a financially sustainable policy for Ireland. Using a modest 2% growth rate, we have calculated that Ireland needs to recycle an additional 1 million tonnes per annum by 2030 and 1.75 million additional tonnes per annum by 2040. It is clear from the data that recycling costs of €7,497 for every additional tonne is not viable for the Irish State as it would cost more than €168 billion over the next 20 years to meet the targets."

7.0 CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Consultation Questions – Circular Economy

7.1 What are the areas with greatest potential for transformation in Ireland under the Circular Economy?

No comment.

7.2 What measures are required to increase understanding of Circular Economy principles and their uptake by relevant actors?

No comment.

7.3 What might be a meaningful national waste reduction target and how could it be achieved?

No comment.

7.4 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

No further comments.

8.0 CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT – AWARENESS & EDUCATION

Consultation Questions – Citizen Engagement

8.1 What campaigns would better assist householders and businesses in preventing and segregating waste properly?

We suggest that a consistent and prolonged media campaign is needed to fully inform citizens of their obligations and their options with respect to waste management. This should be linked to climate change and plastic pollution, both of which are currently high on the agenda of most citizens. Citizens should be exposed to consistent messages about recycling and waste prevention in work, at home and when they are out and about.

8.2 Should this be funded by Government or should the sector play a role in funding campaigns?

The waste collectors have obligations in their waste permits to inform their customers about segregation of wastes and the proper use of the various bins. That is where their resources should be spent.

The wider campaign should be funded by Government using the Environmental Fund, which should be bolstered by new levies that are currently under consideration and largely supported by the IWMA.

EPR puts an onus on manufacturers to contribute to recycling and waste prevention. We suggest that their resources should be focussed on product design and on simple relevant labelling that makes it easy for the citizens to segregate waste correctly.

8.3 Waste Collectors have a condition in their permits to maintain on-going communication with their customers in accordance with their customer charter. Do you agree that collectors are giving sufficient information to their customers in relation to separating waste into the 3 bins?

The IWMA and REPAK funded an initiative last year to print and deliver bin hangers to all household customers with information on what materials to place in the MDR bin.

The IWMA will continue to encourage and support additional communications with customers that can improve recycling and waste prevention performance.

8.4 Do you think information stickers for bins showing what's accepted in each bin should be rolled out to all households?

The IWMA chose to roll-out bin hangers last year as it is difficult to apply stickers if the bins are wet or dirty. Also, bins cannot be accessed if they are not put out for collection.

It may be possible for waste collectors to deliver stickers to houses for the customer to apply themselves to the bins. However, there is a risk that the customers with the least interest in their waste will just bin the stickers and these are the customers that need to be convinced to change their habits. If good incentives and/or penalties can be applied, customers will take more interest in source segregation of wastes and can easily find the information that they need on several websites, such as Mywaste.ie, iwma.ie or their collector's website.

Another issue with stickers is that changes to the list of acceptable materials cannot be easily changed as stickers would have to be replaced.

8.5 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

No further comments.

9.0 CONSTRUCTION & DEMOLITION WASTE

Consultation Questions – Construction and Demolition Waste

9.1 What other measures need to be put in place to encourage all players to prevent and recycle waste from construction?

It should be mandatory to charge by weight for mixed waste materials collected from C&D sites in order to encourage greater waste prevention and recycling. This would also reduce the over-loading of skips, which can be dangerous. Source segregated skips could be exempt from the mandatory weight charging, thereby encouraging on-site separation of recyclable materials.

9.2 What existing measures are in place that could be improved?

Planning compliance for construction and demolition projects requires a C&D waste management plan to be submitted to the local authority. Those plans should be scrutinised by a person or persons in the local authority that has adequate expertise in the area of C&D waste management. Training should be provided as necessary. The plans should indicate if any materials are likely to be declared as by-products and any later declarations of by-products should not be allowed without revision of the plan and approval of the local authority of the revised plan.

Once the C&D waste management plan has been agreed with the local authority, there should be inspections and enforcement to ensure that the plan is carried out as described.

In this context, we welcome the proposal in the consultation document to ‘*Revise the 2006 Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Waste Projects.*’

9.3 What changes could be made to environmental and/or planning legislation to facilitate more recycling of construction waste?

Planning permission for C&D projects should always require C&D waste management plans to be agreed with the local authority in advance of commencement of development.

We recommend that legislation should be introduced to require minimum recycled content to be used in building materials, such as aggregate and other materials.

9.4 What incentives could be introduced to increase the use of recycled materials?

In this context, we welcome the following proposals in the consultation document:

- *“Develop national end of waste decisions for specific construction and demolition waste streams.*
- *We will develop a ‘best available techniques’ document for the Construction Sector.*
- *DCCAE will seek to work with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government to produce Section 28 Planning Guidelines on Construction Waste to further drive the prevention and recycling of C&D waste.*
- *Incentives will be put in place to encourage the use of recycled materials.*
- *Implement and monitor Green Public Procurement specifications for public construction contracts to use recycled material and for the design of buildings to allow their future demolition in such a way as to facilitate reuse/recycling of the materials.*

- *Development of reuse and recovery targets for plastic from the construction and demolition sector.”*

In addition, we recommend that National Standards should be developed for recycled materials derived from C&D waste to allow these materials to be used in construction projects.

9.5 Should levies be applied to the use of virgin material where a recycled material is available as an alternative?

Yes, and the money ring-fenced to assist recycling and to assist the development of secondary raw materials, including product specifications and standards.

As an alternative to imposing levies on virgin materials, consideration should also be given to the requirement of a mandatory percentage of recycled content in materials used in construction.

9.6 How can site managers be encouraged to ensure more on-site segregation? What financial incentives / penalties could be introduced to encourage better waste management practices?

This should be required as part of the C&D Waste Management Plans for all C&D developments, to be agreed with the relevant local authority under planning compliance and should be adequately enforced.

9.7 What are the best approaches to raising awareness and education?

We recommend a strongly funded awareness and education campaign in the national media for all waste management.

We also recommend training for site managers in C&D waste management and that could be included as a planning condition for C&D projects. It could be included as part of the condition that requires the submission of a C&D waste management plan to the local authority. Certified training courses would follow on from such a move and it would be incumbent upon construction companies to ensure that their site managers have the appropriate certificate in C&D waste management.

9.8 What are the barriers/enablers to these measures?

We expect that all these measures can be put in place if there are adequate resources applied and with some minor changes to legislation in some cases.

9.9 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

In recent years, Ireland has successfully complied with the 70% target for recovery of C&D waste, set in the Waste Framework Directive. However, this has been largely facilitated by the need for engineering materials at municipal waste landfills. C&D fines have been used as landfill cover and recycled aggregates have been used for landfill berms and roads. Now that Ireland is landfilling a lot less municipal waste, the 70% target will have to be reached in different ways, so much greater effort is required by the relevant stakeholders to find more sustainable recovery options for C&D materials. This will require work in the areas of ‘end of waste’, specifications/standards and legislation to require minimum recycled content and/or levies on virgin materials.

10.0 TEXTILES

Consultation Questions – Textiles

10.1 What measures would best support the successful collection of household textiles?

We recommend increasing the density of bring banks where textiles can be delivered.

We also recommend an investigation into 'door-to-door' textile collections with appropriate enforcement, if necessary. There are legitimate charities collecting textiles from householders and also some bogus collectors masquerading as charities. Citizens are generally unsure of the legitimacy of such collectors and are nervous that their textiles could be collected by criminals, masquerading as charities. This is confounded when textiles are left at the kerbside in labelled bags for legitimate charities to collect and they are collected by another party in an unmarked van.

We also recommend that clothes retailers should be obliged to accept old clothes for recycling at their stores. These could be donated to registered legitimate charities free of charge and should not be a financial burden on the retailers.

10.2 What measures would best support sustainable consumption of textiles by the general public?

No comment.

10.3 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

We have serious concerns in relation to the proposal to *'Ban textiles from the general waste bin, landfill and incineration.'*

Householders generally put their residual waste in black plastic bags, tie them and then place them in the residual waste bins. Waste collectors do not know what is in those bags in those bins, yet they could be held responsible for any textiles found upon inspection by an enforcement officer and could be prosecuted. That would be very unfair and would criminalise all waste collectors.

We suggest that education, awareness, encouragement, incentivisation, along with making it easier for citizens to recycle textiles by developing a higher density of bring banks and better regulating door-to-door collections, would be a more appropriate response to this issue.

11.0 WASTE MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Consultation Questions – Waste Management Infrastructure

11.1 Should one national waste management plan be produced in place of the 3 current plans?

We recognise and welcome the progression from 10 regional plans to just 3 and we also welcome the consistency in the 3 plans, which gives us a national plan in all but name. The 3 regional plans if not replaced by a national plan should not create artificial boundaries with respect to waste management.

11.2 Should the regional offices be set up on a statutory basis?

No comment. More information is required on this.

11.3 Should the State assist in funding the development of indigenous waste recycling facilities? If so, how should this be funded?

The waste industry has provided transfer stations, Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs), composting plants, anaerobic digestion plants, Waste to Energy (WtE) plants and landfills. There is no requirement for the State to assist with the development of additional facilities of that nature. However, we see a role for the state in the following way in relation to the provision of recycling facilities:

- Providing more sites for bring banks;
- Developing more Civic Amenity (CA) sites; and
- Subsidising and promoting the development of indigenous recycling infrastructure that is not viable without Government support and would not compete against similar facilities developed by the private sector. For example, the Government should support the development of a paper mill in Ireland as there are none currently in the country and the international market for recycled paper is very volatile and problematic. Mixed soft paper collected in the MDR bins in Ireland is a product that is at the mercy of international markets. The future of MDR recycling in Ireland could depend on controlling our own destiny in that regard.

The funding of such interventions should come from the Environment Fund and a Climate Action Fund, which we expect to be established if the Irish Government is serious about tackling Climate Change. Those Funds should be boosted by appropriate levies that are targeted to change consumer behaviour in favour of the Environment and Climate Action.

11.4 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

We are concerned about the following proposal in the consultation document :

“Legislation to strengthen the powers of the regulatory authorities to ensure that collectors have contingent capacity in place and that waste can be directed by the regulatory authorities to be introduced.”

The IWMA is strongly opposed to the State directing waste to facilities and any legislation that would give that power to the State would have a devastating impact on investment in waste management infrastructure. Investors need to be confident that facilities can compete fairly in the marketplace and are wary of any legislation that would undermine the free flow of waste to privately owned recycling and recovery facilities. Directing waste to a higher tier in the

waste management hierarchy has been accepted by the IWMA in the past but directing waste to particular facilities has been successfully challenged and we will continue to oppose such a move in the future.

We welcome the concept of providing contingent capacity to cover issues that arise from time to time. However, it is not practical for transfer stations or most other infrastructure to provide that capacity without reducing the effectiveness and the viability of that infrastructure. Therefore, we recommend that emergency measures should be put in place and be easy to implement quickly in the event of a serious issue. The existing operational landfills are best placed to take additional waste in the event of a short-term emergency and that option should be fully explored.

We would also welcome emergency powers that would allow the short-term storage of dry recyclables such as paper or plastic in sheds when there is a serious problem with outlets for those materials. The sheds could be leased short term and would not have authorisations other than that applied by the emergency powers, in full consultation with the relevant authority (DCCA, EPA, etc).

We welcome the following proposal:

“Legislation and procedures regulating the development of waste infrastructure to be examined to see if processes and timelines can be streamlined.”

The processing of applications by the EPA is far too slow and is a hindrance to the provision of necessary waste management infrastructure. This has been the case for many years and rarely improves. The EPA needs to urgently allocate more resources to this area.

We suggest that all licences should be issued in less than 12 months and amendments to licences should be facilitated in a process that takes a few months rather than several years. The current system is just not fit for purpose and urgently requires attention. The industrial emissions licensing regulations include statutory timelines for decisions, but the EPA is not complying with those timelines and is constantly seeking consent from the applicants for more time. So the issue requires more than legislative changes.

We suggest that the legislation surrounding Strategic Infrastructure Developments (SID) should be reviewed and revised. The 6-month timeline for processing a SID application by An Bord Pleanála is meaningless when the Board does not have to accept an application until it is ready. There is no time limits on the pre-application process and we can see that this is used by the Board to buy time.

Also, the threshold for waste facilities under the Strategic Infrastructure Act is too low and should be reconsidered. A 100,000 t/a waste facility is relatively modest in the current context and we are aware of several facilities that have been designed to be less than the threshold to avoid the Strategic Infrastructure process. That is a poor indictment of a process that was designed to fast-track and streamline the development of strategically important infrastructure. We suggest that the applicant should have the option of going down the standard planning route with their local authority, regardless of the size of the development.

We also recommend that there should be an option to engage in SID for changes to facilities that are above the SID threshold, but are operating with an historical planning permission that was achieved through the conventional planning system, prior to the introduction of the SID process.

12.0 BY-PRODUCTS

Consultation Questions – By-Products

12.1 How do you think the By-product process could be improved?

We would welcome more EPA resources in considering Article 27 By-product decisions in a shorter timeframe. The 10-week standstill period advised in the new guidance for soil and stone declarations is too long in our view.

Also, as it is only advisory to wait for the EPA decision, we are concerned that large volumes of material will be moved without waiting 10 weeks and we may end up with large scale unauthorised dumping if the EPA decides that such material is waste and not a by-product.

12.2 Do you support the introduction of fees to assess by-product notifications?

We would not oppose a reasonable fee being applied for faster EPA decisions in response to Article 27 Declarations, but the two would have to be linked. The EPA previously considered a 4-week period to make initial decision on Article 27 declarations and we believe that this is a much more reasonable timeframe to expect people to wait for a decision.

12.3 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

We are aware from EPA feedback that a large number of Article 27 Declarations provide insufficient information for the EPA to make a decision. In these cases, the EPA requests further information and in many cases that information is not provided.

We are concerned that this may be a loophole exploited by unscrupulous operators that move inappropriate material and make a substandard declaration. That can then lead to a stalemate where no decision is made by the EPA and the inappropriate material is not properly assessed by the enforcement authorities.

We recommend that the EPA declares material to be a waste if the economic operator does not respond in a satisfactory manner to a further information request within a 4-week timeframe from the date of the EPA request.

13.0 END OF WASTE

Consultation Questions – End of Waste

13.1 Should the Government seek to establish a group to apply for national End of Waste decisions for appropriate products e.g. Aggregates, Incinerator Bottom Ash?

Yes. We would very much welcome the State seeking national ‘end of waste’ decisions for appropriate materials.

If yes:

- **what expertise would be necessary for such a team,**

A group of experts with a combined understanding of waste legislation, environmental science and product standards/specifications.

- **who should be represented,**

A steering group could comprise the DCCAE, EPA, Local Authority personnel, NSAI, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and the waste industry (IWMA). However, the work involved requires a dedicated team of experts, such as consultants and/or academics.

- **are there other materials which you believe are suitable for national end of waste decisions?**

Yes. This should be discussed and considered by the steering group rather than put forward in the policy document. There may be materials that are not currently produced from waste, so the process should be flexible enough to introduce new materials for consideration.

13.2 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

‘End of waste’ decisions are important. We suggest that the EPA should put more resources into this area to facilitate a shorter timeframe for such decisions. We would not object to the EPA charging a reasonable fee for ‘end of waste’ applications, so long as that was tied to an acceptable statutory timeframe for making determinations on these applications.

We also advise that ‘case by case’ decisions are important for many of our members, so resources are needed to advance both national decisions and ‘case by case’ decisions.

We note the proposal to:

‘give local authorities a role in terms of assessing End of Waste applications from facilities authorised by the local authority.’

We are concerned that such a role could lead to inconsistencies between facilities located in different counties and also inconsistencies between licensed and permitted sites. We have observed some local authorities being too lenient on local waste companies and observed others being too strict. This issue is important from a fair competition perspective, so consistency is critically important.

We also believe that the EPA is better placed than the local authorities to have and to maintain the necessary expertise to facilitate analysis of 'end of waste' applications.

We therefore recommend that all final decisions should be made by the EPA and the Agency should be fully resourced to do this within acceptable timeframes.

14.0 EXEMPTIONS

Consultation Questions – Exemptions

14.1 Are there particular waste streams which you think might be suitable to the ‘exemption’ approach described above, for example, the on-site controlled incineration or deep burial of Invasive Alien Plant Species? Which other waste streams could or should be considered in the context of an ‘exemption’ approach?

The existing Certificate of Registration process effectively exempts some small-scale waste management activities from the requirement for a permit or a licence. Consideration could be given to further use of the registration system as an alternative to exemptions.

14.2 In your opinion, what are the dangers/risks or advantages associated with an ‘exemption’ approach?

There should be an opportunity for stakeholders, such as the IWMA, to comment on any specific proposed exemptions in advance of their implementation. We have no view on the on-site treatment of Invasive Alien Plant Species but feel that this should be explored with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, as the leading authority and stakeholder in this area.

14.3 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

No further comments.

15.0 EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY (EPR)

Consultation Questions – Extended Producer Responsibility

15.1 How is the new EPR infrastructure going to impact on Ireland's existing EPR structures?

No comment.

15.2 How do we ensure Ireland's existing producer responsibility initiatives are in a position to adapt in response to the EU legislative changes for EPR models?

No comment.

15.3 How do EPRs help Ireland achieve our targets?

In our experience, the EPRs are very effective in producing data on obligated materials and in encouraging the collection and recycling of those materials.

15.4 How do we influence decisions made at the product design stage to ensure circular design principles are put in place?

By implementing a system of labelling as mentioned earlier in this submission and then introducing levies that hit materials that cannot be recycled easily within the system available in Ireland. We suggest that recyclable items should have a message that says, '*place in dry recycling bin*' or '*place in food waste bin*' or '*place in bottle bank*', etc. Non-recyclable items should have a message that says '*non-recyclable, place in general waste bin*'.

15.5 How could modulated fees be best introduced to drive change and transform our approach to waste in line with modern, circular economy principles?

The most effective way to introduce this in the short term is via the existing producer responsibility schemes. If this proves ineffective, then further measures such as levies could be considered.

15.6 Primary focus is on introducing the new EPR schemes as outlined in the SUP Directive but are there other waste streams that would fit with the EPR model?

No comment.

15.7 Is there a role for voluntary agreements with industry?

Possibly, but if they prove to be ineffective, they should be replaced with mandatory measures.

15.8 What mechanisms will bring the entire supply chain and waste management systems together to share solutions?

The introduction of labelling and levies as mentioned above and earlier in this submission would draw attention to materials that are not accepted for recycling in Ireland. This should result in discussions between the producers, the retailers and the waste industry on the development of alternative recyclable products.

15.9 Looking at the example of WEEE, retailers now play an increased role in collection, is this approach suitable for other potential EPR waste? If so, what areas?

Yes. This could be applied to a wide range of retail outlets. For example:

- Clothes shops could be obliged to accept old clothes for recycling and could donate those clothes to reputable charities. This should not be a financial burden.
- The retailers of gas cylinders should be obliged to take back empty cylinders (some do, but many do not, including industrial gas cylinders)
- Shops that sell paint could be obliged to take back used and partly used paint cans.
- Coffee shops could be obliged to accept single-use tea and coffee cups for recycling or composting, regardless of the origin of the tea or coffee cups.
- Petrol stations and garages could be obliged to accept waste oil for recycling.
- Etc, etc.

15.10 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

No further comments.

16.0 WASTE ENFORCEMENT

Consultation Questions - Waste Enforcement

16.1 What, in your view, are the factors leading to waste crime (please tick one box)

Ineffective enforcement by the authorities

16.2 What measures are required to respond to the links between waste crime and other forms of serious criminal offences, such as organised crime?

The IWMA recommends the establishment of an Environmental Crime Unit to address the serious criminals and crime gangs that are active in burning and illegally dumping waste. We believe that these serious criminals are being supplied with waste by rogue waste collectors and rogue skip operators. The Environmental Crime Unit could be a small unit consisting of armed detectives, waste management enforcement personnel and forensic accountants.

We understand the dangers associated with local authority and EPA personnel tackling serious criminals, so we believe that this requires the involvement of trained and armed Gardaí with the technical back-up of waste management experts and others. We also recognise that this is not a 9 to 5, Monday to Friday job, as the criminal activities in the waste sector normally occur outside of office hours.

16.3 What changes could make the regulatory or industry response to serious and organised waste crime more effective?

As above.

16.4 Are the penalties available under the Waste Management Act appropriate?

No comment.

16.5 What other penalties could be considered for illegal dumping by households/members of the public

This is a serious offence and should be prosecuted in the courts.

16.6 Are there examples of existing good practice to prevent illegal dumping?

No comment.

16.7 What contribution to the cost of the enforcement system should the waste industry make?

The waste collectors within the IWMA are open to discussions on part-financing the enforcement of households that do not avail of a waste collection service and those that have a service but still mis-manage their waste by not using the system correctly, e.g. not using brown bins or contaminating MDR bins.

In terms of enforcement of criminal activity, the waste industry has to compete against criminals that engage in unauthorised waste activities and is entitled to the support of the State to apprehend and prosecute such criminals.

Any charges levied on the waste industry to address this issue would have to be passed on to customers, which is not a progressive form of taxation, as those that manage their waste in a responsible manner would be asked to pay for those that do not.

The State is responsible for law and order and cannot credibly pass that responsibility to legitimate businesses that are providing essential services to the public.

New environmental and climate change levies could be used to support enforcement activities and would be much more progressive in terms of changing the behaviour of citizens. Also, higher fines for illegal dumping and court decisions requiring guilty parties to cover the State's costs in the legal action would help to reduce the State's burden.

16.8 Should financial provision be a requirement for permitted waste facilities?

That depends on the risks associated with any particular facility. It should be consistent with licensed facilities, so there should be collaboration between the EPA and the local authorities in this regard and a fair and consistent system applied.

16.9 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

Transparency is very helpful in terms of identifying criminal activity in the waste sector. Legislation should be introduced that ensures that all waste facility annual environmental reports are available to view on-line. More eyes on waste reports will help to identify the false data that hides criminal activities.

17.0 WASTE DATA AND WASTE FLOWS

Consultation Questions - Waste Data

17.1 Do you believe it would be beneficial to have all/most waste data available on at least a quarterly basis?

No, annual data is adequate and should be transparent.

17.2 What resources are needed to validate this data more quickly and what are the barriers?

The IWMA made a detailed submission to the NWCPO in June 2018 in response to a proposal to increase the frequency of reporting waste collection data. The following extracts from that submission are relevant to this question:

“We are strongly opposed to the suggested requirement to provide monthly reports on kerbside household waste collection.

- *IWMA members stated that monthly reporting would be very time consuming and a significant burden on business. The data is not readily available in a form that can be collated quickly and easily. The person collating the data needs to check local authority areas and needs to verify large quantities of data before it is fit for submission to the NWCPO. This would be a full-time job, even in a small company, if monthly reporting was required.*
- *It was suggested that the WERLAs could target companies that are under investigation and they could require more frequent reporting by that company during the course of their investigation, rather than targeting the whole industry in this way.*
- *The datasets currently used by our members do not include fields identifying each local authority area, so a detailed verification process is undertaken by each waste collector before a report is submitted to the NWCPO. It would require a lot of work for this to be applied retrospectively to 1.2 million household customers (including non-IWMA collectors), so we consider this to be a significant burden on business.*
- *Apartments are often considered to be commercial customers by our members as they are arranged by way of commercial contracts with the management companies. Hence there is a lot of verification work when these are included as households in the annual returns. This would be increased 12-fold for monthly reporting and we consider this to be an unnecessary burden on business.*

In addition, written feedback from members includes the following comments.

Time and resources – *at present our members collect waste from approximately 875,000 households and a large number of commercial customers. All waste data is recorded using the relevant software and report templates have been prepared to allow annual return data to be collated. However, data is often run at a site level to facilitate EPA licence requirements. The waste collection data forms part of wider datasets that need to be manually screened and analysed to pull out the required information. Whilst the suggested requirement for monthly data may be limited to domestic customers, the same amount of data validation is required to separate the domestic collected tonnage data from the commercial.*

It typically takes 3 months to prepare and validate annual data. Some of our members are large multi-facility companies and even our medium sized members have more than one facility. Annual returns are primarily collated by the compliance team with additional support from individuals at each waste facility as well as the central logistics team. It is not as simple as running a report – the report must be

reviewed by weighbridge staff and validated as accurate. If we were to move to monthly or even a quarterly reporting regime, the resources required would be crippling to site and compliance operations.

NWCPO and Enforcement Resources – We find it hard to believe that the NWCPO and the enforcement authorities have the resources to examine and analyse data from 1.2 million houses on a monthly basis. We suggest that it would be a better use of their time if they targeted a specific waste collector by conducting onsite audits to gather live data in real time.

In short, placing this burden on business would inevitably cost our members millions of euro in additional human resources.

It would also require significant additional human resources to be put in place by the State to manage that data and to use it for enforcement purposes. We are currently working off national waste data that is 4 years old and we have not seen the publication of a National Waste Report (NWR) since 2012. We respectfully suggest that the State would do better to put additional resources into the National Waste Report team in the EPA to prepare more frequent and more current NWRs.

We also respectfully suggest that the enforcement authorities would be more effective if they regularly conducted spot checks at waste collectors' offices, rather than attempting to gather an unmanageable amount of data.

Regulatory and Administrative Burdens on Business

In 2008, the IWMA engaged with a 'High Level Group on Business Regulation' that was tasked with reducing regulatory and administrative burdens on business. The work was commissioned by the Tánaiste & Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Employment³ and culminated in a report published in July 2008.

That report recognised a number of regulatory burdens in the waste sector and was instrumental in the streamlining of waste collection permits, which eventually led to the establishment of the NWCPO.

Section 2.1.6 of the report recognised an administrative cost saving of €8 million due to the streamlining of the waste collection permitting system. From 31st March 2008 it was possible to apply to a single authority for a National waste collection permit and this was a major move forward for all concerned.

We suggest that the requirement for monthly reporting would overturn those savings and would introduce a major administrative burden that would be contrary to the efforts of the work carried out by the High-Level Working Group on behalf of the Tánaiste & Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Employment. This would also add to the cost of household waste collection, which would inevitably be passed on to the consumer.

In Section 6 of Appendix B, the report noted that, in the consultation process, the IWMA had requested that "Information required for licensing and enforcement should be necessary and only collected once".

In response, the authors of the report stated that "There should be scope to reduce. The EPA is looking at risk-based approaches." And under Action items, the report stated "Being explored by the EPA. The High-level Group will be kept up to date."

³ Now the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI)

It is clear that the Irish Government is concerned about unnecessary administrative burdens on business and is doing all in its power to remove or reduce any such burdens. In the event that more frequent reporting is mandated by the NWCPO & WERLAs, despite our opposition, we reserve the right to challenge it and to seek the support of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation in that challenge.”

17.3 How would you balance the need for validated reporting data for EU reporting against the desire for more up to date statistics?

The IWMA considers that annual data is ideal. EU reporting is every second year (biennial), which we consider too infrequent and the NWCPO now requires quarterly reporting for kerbside household waste collection data, which we consider to be overly onerous and a burden on business.

17.4 Do you believe that all waste should and could be tracked from site of creation to final destination?

We would need to see details of this before commenting. If it can be done without adding a significant burden on business and improves enforcement, then we might be in a position to support it.

17.5 Are there confidentiality or other issues for industry in reporting on waste flows?

Yes, but this must be balanced against the greater good in combatting illegal waste activities. Citizens and businesses need to be able to see where waste companies send waste to make informed decisions on which company to engage for their waste management needs.

17.6 What changes need to be put in place to facilitate better reporting?

Firstly, there should be stronger enforcement of waste companies that do not make annual returns, as required by law.

Secondly, there should be better engagement between the various authorities to seek data in a consistent format. The NWCPO appears best placed to advance that goal.

17.7 What uses can be made of having more detailed, accurate, timely data?

We can better understand progress to targets and focus resources where they are needed most. Annual data is adequate to achieve this.

17.8 What penalties should be in place for the non-provision of data?

Strong penalties, including prosecutions.

17.9 Should there be voluntarily reporting on particular waste streams and its treatment destination prior to legislative changes being put in place?

No comment.

17.10 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

No further comments.

18.0 RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Consultation Questions - Research & Innovation

18.1 What are the research areas you would consider to be important in developing a circular economy?

No comment.

18.2 What new research programmes/initiatives do you think could be put in place?

No comment.

18.3 What do you see as the main barriers/enablers to fostering a positive research culture around the circular economy?

No comment.

18.4 Do you think research on waste, resource efficiency and the circular economy could be better publicised and more readily accessible? How?

No comment.

18.5 What further incentives could be put in place to encourage research?

No comment.

18.6 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

No comment.

19.0 CONSUMER PROTECTION & MARKET MONITORING

Consultation Questions - Consumer Protection & Market Monitoring

19.1 The CCPC recommended the establishment of an economic regulator for household waste collection.

- In your opinion, should an economic regulator be established? In considering your reply it is recommended you consider the detailed rationale set out in the CCPC report, available [here](#).
- If a regulator was to be introduced what powers should the office have? Should they be confined to economic powers?
- Should a new office be set up or should the powers of existing regulator be broadened?
- What alternatives are there to setting up a regulator, for example, improved regulatory oversight for customer's complaints?

We do not believe that an economic regulator is needed. Many of the consumer protection issues that were raised in the 2018 CCPC report on the '*Operation of the Household Waste Collection Market in Ireland*' have now been incorporated into waste collection permits by the NWCPO, with the support of the IWMA. Any other issues of concern in that regard could be managed by the NWCPO, as the effective regulator of all waste collection in Ireland. The NWCPO works closely with the WERLAs and the wider enforcement network, so the enforcement tools are in place to implement any measures that are required for the purpose of consumer protection.

The IWMA reviewed the CCPC Report and found it to be biased and seriously flawed. Our critique of the CCPC report is attached to this submission.

19.2 Do you believe the information currently available on kerbside waste collection pricing could be improved, and if yes, how?

The IWMA does not engage with members on issues of pricing other than to advise that all pricing must incentivise waste prevention and recycling. We suggest that the NWCPO should work with the enforcement authorities to analyse pricing structures to ensure that waste prevention and recycling is incentivised. That analysis should not be limited to just kerbside household waste collection but should be a broad rule across the sector.

19.3 Do you believe that the information prepared by the Price Monitoring Group is useful? If No, what changes would you like to see?

Yes, very useful.

19.4 Given that the last time flat rates fees were identified was July 2018, do you believe the work of the Group should continue?

Yes, as it provides confidence that prices are responding to competition and are not constantly increasing, as is the case in other utilities.

19.5 Would you support the Group undertaking whole of market monitoring including publishing prices for household waste collection for all collectors in all areas?

No. Firstly, the PMG work shows that there are a wide variety of ways in which householders are charged in an incentivised manner for kerbside waste collection, so comparisons between companies' prices are not easily made. In fact, many companies offer a number of different

price plans that are designed to be attractive to a range of different sized households, which makes it even more complicated for price comparisons.

Household waste collectors are obliged to charge in a manner that incentivises waste prevention and recycling. The PMG ensures that prices are fair and not escalating. These are the two most important factors.

Publishing all prices is likely to turn kerbside household waste collection into a popularity contest. The problem with that is that fixed charges are popular with the public but not good for the environment. Any such move would put undue pressure on collectors to reduce the variable charging to a minimum and to maximise the fixed element of the charge.

There is a clear conflict in waste collection between maximum competitive forces and maximum environmental performance. We suggest that waste collection needs to move towards maximum environmental performance, whilst maintaining fair prices, as observed by the PMG. Otherwise, we have no chance of meeting future EU targets.

So long as prices are demonstrated to be fair, reasonable and not escalating, there is no need for the State to focus on the introduction of measures that are designed to encourage people to switch service provider, just because that is a theoretical measure of competitive forces in a market. The real measure of competition is provided by the PMG reports on the market and those reports have not suggested that there is a need for further interventions at this time.

19.6 Do you believe there needs to be further oversight of the waste sector from a consumer rights perspective?

No, but the IWMA would not object to an ombudsman or other body that would handle consumer complaints relating to the waste sector. It would make sense for such a body to be attached to the NWCPO.

19.7 Do you believe that a consumer complaints body should be put in place?

No.

19.8 If yes, what powers would such a body have?

If such a body was put in place, it should be attached to the NWCPO and its powers could include reviews and revocations of waste collection permits, as well as fixed penalty notices for breaches of certain conditions of the waste collection permits.

19.9 Should it be included within an existing body e.g. CCPC or the National Waste Collection Permit Office?

The NWCPO, for the reasons given above.

19.10 Is further regulation from a consumer perspective of the sector needed?

Recent changes to the waste collection permits have introduced new regulation from a consumer perspective, with the support of the IWMA. The IWMA is open to any further discussions of that nature.

19.11 If yes, what measures do you see as necessary for further regulation or what legislation needs to be strengthened?

No comment.

20.0 GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Consultation Questions - Green Public Procurement (GPP)

20.1 What are the barriers to public authorities using GPP?

No comment.

20.2 How can business support more widespread use of GPP?

No comment.

20.3 What % target should apply to the use of GPP in Ireland?

No comment.

20.4 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our green public procurement practices?

No comment.

21.0 HOUSEHOLD BULKY WASTE

Consultation Questions - Household Bulky Waste

21.1 What supports do consumers require to prevent bulky waste?

There needs to be easy options for householders to bring bulky waste to reuse centres. The higher the density of such centres the easier it will be for consumers.

21.2 Are consumers willing to pay more to ensure appropriate end-of-life disposal for these products?

Probably, but we suggest that a survey is needed.

21.3 Should Government support investment in the recycling of large plastic items that are not suitable for domestic recycle collection?

Yes.

21.4 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

No further comments.

22.0 BIOECONOMY

Consultation Questions - Bioeconomy

22.1 What kinds of activities to increase the financial support for bioeconomy development in Ireland?

No comment.

22.2 Are current policy options in relation to innovation & enterprise policy instruments suitable or sufficient to address the development of systemic and cross-cutting bioeconomy approaches, business models and new value chains?

No comment.

22.3 How best to develop a value chain approach to link bio-based actors, value chains and territories?

No comment.

22.4 Have you any other comments or suggestions on how you would like to see Ireland transition to a more resource efficient and circular economy by improving our waste management practices?

No comment.

We hope that this submission is helpful and we look forward to further positive engagement with the DCCAE on this and other waste policy issues.

Yours Sincerely,



Conor Walsh
IWMA Secretary

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Attachments:

1. 'Likely Impact of a Deposit & Return Scheme on Waste Management in Ireland', SLR Consulting for the IWMA, January 2020.
2. IWMA Critique of CCPC Report on 'The Operation of the Household Waste Collection Market', November 2018.