

IRELAND

CIRCULAR ECONOMY 2-PAGER, APRIL 21 2021



POLICY LANDSCAPE

EU LEVEL

In 2015 the European Commission adopted the **Circular Economy Action Plan**, which included comprehensive measures addressing waste management. The EU laws set minimum recycling, landfilling, material recovering and renewable energy consumption targets. The **New Circular Economy Action Plan** adopted in March 2020 aims at normalizing the circular economy as the new standard economic model.

Currently main targets include:

- min. 65% of municipal waste to be recycled by 2035
- min.70% of all packaging waste to be recycled by 2030
- max. 10% of municipal waste to be landfilled by 2035
- certain types of single use plastic products will be prohibited to place on market as of July 2021
- min. 32 % of the Union's gross final consumption of energy to originate from renewable sources by 2030

NATIONAL LEVEL

Climate change has risen to prominence as a key priority for the Government of Ireland. Key milestones include the 2017-2018 Citizen's Assembly on Climate Change, the publication of a National Climate Action Plan (2019), which acknowledged circular economy as key to decarbonization, and the publication of the new climate action law (2020), legislating for a target of carbon neutrality by 2050.

IRELAND'S CLIMATE ACTION GOALS BY 2030:

- Cutting greenhouse gas emissions by at least 30%
- Reaching a target of at least 32.5% energy efficiency
- 50% reduction in food waste
- Delivering 70% renewable energy

FACTS & FIGURES

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

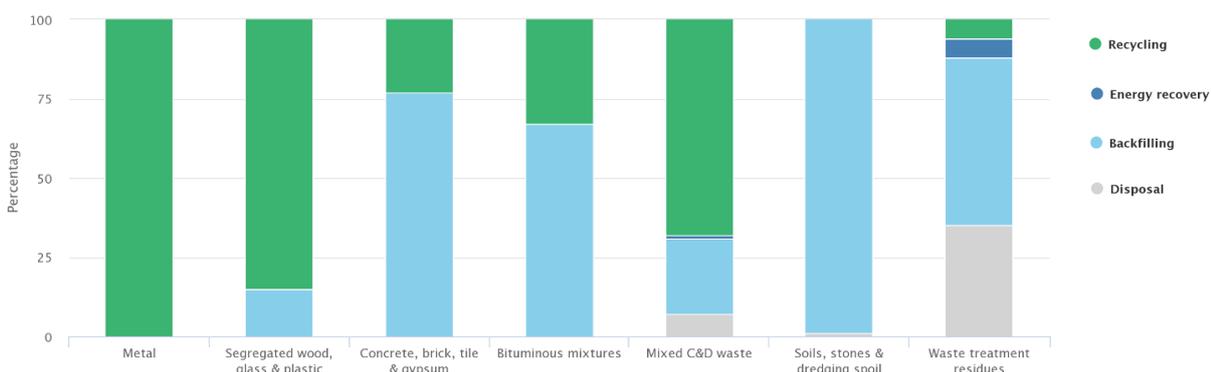
- Population 2021: 5.1 million
- GDP per capita (+ ranking): €63,700, 9th
- Corporate tax rate: 12.5%
- Purchasing power 2019: €80,504
- Export from the NL: €2019: 4.5 billion
- Economic growth 2019: 5.8%
- Ease of doing business 2020: 24/190
- Unemployment rate 2019: 5%
- Currency: Euro €
- Time difference with NL: -1:00

CE INDICATORS

- Innovation Index rank 2020: 15th
- MW recycling rate (2018): 37.6%
- Circular material usage rate (2019): 1.6%
- Share of energy from renewable resources (2019): 11.9%

GRAPH: TREATMENT OF CONSTRUCTION & DEMOLITION WASTE STREAMS IN IRELAND

Source: EPA (2018)



RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY SUPPORT SCHEME

To support electricity production from renewable sources, including solar photovoltaic and wind the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme was introduced in 2020. It will enable Ireland to reach its national target to transit away from fossil fuels and achieve a share of 70% of renewables in its electricity mix by 2030 while contributing to the EU renewable energy target.

WASTE ACTION PLAN FOR A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The development of the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy (2020) is a key policy activity related to increasing the circularity of materials and products in the Irish economy. As a result, a cross-departmental Circular Economy Unit has been established to develop an All of Government Circular Economy Strategy.

SELECTED PRIORITY AREAS

AGRO-FOOD

Agriculture, food and beverage products represented almost 10% of Ireland's exports in 2019, the sector also counts for 7.1% of national employment. Ireland generates over 1 million tons of food waste yearly, and that excludes food packaging waste. Some leading industry examples of circular economy in this sector include **Heineken Ireland** who have embraced a 360 sustainability model along their supply chain, ensuring local sourcing, water efficiency and CO2 reduction commitments. Another innovative example of circular economy in the brewing sector is a collaboration between Irish companies Panelto Food and St Mel's Brewery who produced a limited-edition beer in 2020 '**SymbioBeer Project#1**' which utilizes surplus bread as a material substitute for malted grain.

OFFSHORE WIND

Ireland is prioritizing its commitment to reach its green energy goals, aiming to source 70% of the nation's energy from renewable sources by 2030. The existing share in 2019 was around 12%, and one of the main methods to reach this goal is by offshore wind. In early 2020, Dutch **XELLZ** secured land at the port of Rosslare, Ireland to be dedicated for supplying offshore wind components. This area, called The Europort Business Park "will become a hive of activity where businesses directly related to the future Offshore Wind Farms can establish their companies" according to XELLZ. Offshore wind is expected to deliver at least 3.5 GW in support for reaching the country's 70% goal. Given the projected growth of this sector, the **RE-WIND** Network is an interesting initiative that has explored wind turbine blade repurposing solutions starting with piloting a pedestrian bridge constructed from old blades in Ireland.

CONSTRUCTION & DEMOLITION

Project Ireland 2040 and The National Planning Framework Envision lay down a roadmap for building a better Ireland. Achieving this vision will require a lot of building, whether it be housing, urban development, road networks, or other infrastructure construction. Throughout 2015 until 2019, roads and housing alone had the share of 35% of the nation's public spending. In order to keep up with this growth, circular practices must be imbedded from the planning phases of such projects. Construction and demolition (C&D) waste is usually made of useful materials that can be circulated, including wood, glass,

and metals. In 2018, only 9% of recovered C&D waste in Ireland was recycled, 89% was recovered by backfilling. **Bam Ireland** gives a good example for circular economy commitment in the construction field, as in 2018 the company managed to recycle or recover 99% of its waste.

REPORTS & LINKS

Reports

- [Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy](#)
- [Realising the opportunities for enterprise in the bioeconomy and circular economy in Ireland](#)
- [Moving Towards the Circular Economy](#)
- [Focus on Energy, Sustainability, and Natural Resources](#)
- [Focus on Biopharmachem](#)
- [Focus on Agri-food and Beverages](#)
- [Renewable Energy in Ireland 2020](#)
- [Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects](#)

Links

- [Facts about Ireland](#)
- [Irish bio-economy foundation](#)

Events

- [The Future Food Factory Expo, 4 Nov 2021](#)
- [Circular Economy & the Built Environment 2021 series; March – December 2021](#)

RELEVANT NETWORKS

CE THINK TANKS & RESEARCH INSTITUTES

- [CIRCULÉIRE – Ireland's industry-led innovation network and Circular Economy Hotspot](#)
- [Irish Manufacturing Research](#)
- [Department of Environment, Climate & Communications](#)
- [Environmental Protection Agency](#)
- [Mywaste.ie](#)
- [Repairmystuff.ie – Ireland's Online Repair Directory](#)

BUSINESS NETWORKS

- [CRNI – Ireland's Network for Community Based Re-use, Repair & Recycling Organisations](#)
- [IDA Ireland](#)
- [Rediscovery Center, The national center for the circular economy](#)

EMBASSIES & RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

- [Embassy of Ireland in The Netherlands](#)
- [Netherlands Embassy in Dublin](#)