



Comhshaol, Oidhreachta agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Heritage and Local Government



Draft Statement of Waste Policy - For Consultation

1. Introduction

This draft policy statement for consultation outlines the key principles and actions which it is envisaged will inform Irish waste policy for the coming decade and beyond. Its core objective is to put sustainability at the core of Ireland's resource and waste management policy. It presents a paradigm shift in the approach to waste management in Ireland towards resource management with significant potential to add value and create jobs in the economy. Using all appropriate legislative and fiscal measures, our aim is to move away from traditional landfill and mass burn incineration, towards higher levels of recycling and mechanical/biological treatment. Solid recovered fuel produced through such treatment methods can be used to displace fossil fuels, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting Ireland's contribution to the global efforts to address the very significant and pressing challenge of climate change.

This draft statement builds on the commitments in the Programme for Government agreed in 2007 which clearly flagged a future for waste management that would seek to take advantage of the development of technologies such as Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT), to ensure the achievement of maximum environmental performance. These commitments were reinforced in the Renewed Programme agreed in 2009 which undertook to use a resource management approach to waste and embed resource recovery and sustainable production and consumption systems in waste policy, leading to increased employment and new opportunities for business.

In 2008, a team of consultants, made up of Eunomia Research and Consulting Ltd., Tobin and Co. Ltd., Technisches Büro für Umweltschutz GmbH, Öko-Institut e.V., Arcadis and Scuola Agraria del Parco di Monza, was selected to undertake a comprehensive study of the waste sector, to underpin the overall review, and to cover a wide range of issues to help identify how best to proceed with further efforts

to reduce waste levels, improve recycling rates and deliver equitable and cost-effective sustainable waste management solutions. The recommendations and analysis of the International Review¹, which was published in November 2009, are at the heart of this draft statement of waste policy and, together with input from key stakeholders, will form the basis for the finalised policy statement to be put in place following the public consultation process. This draft statement is being published to provide an opportunity for all interested stakeholders to engage in the process leading up to its finalisation.

Significant changes to existing waste management legislation would be required to support the implementation of the finalised policy statement. In line with best practice, effective implementation will be promoted through further significant stakeholder consultation and engagement at that stage, including through the Regulatory Impact Analysis process.

2. Background

Over the past decade, a number of policy documents have been produced which have mapped the journey from an almost entirely disposal driven approach to waste management, to a more recycling-oriented and sustainable society.

The 1998 policy document "*Changing Our Ways*", began a fundamental shift in how Irish society dealt with waste. Citizens in partnership with local authorities, the EPA, businesses and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG), delivered on most of the targets set; indeed some of the targets were delivered well ahead of the date envisaged in 1998.

¹ <http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/Waste/ReviewofWasteManagementPolicy>

“Delivering Change”, published in 2002, examined how a range of specific waste streams should be managed at end of life with an emphasis on recycling, prevention and the application of the producer responsibility approach. This was followed by *“Taking Stock and Moving Forward”* in 2004, which measured how far Ireland had come and, just as importantly, how far we had yet to travel in modernising our management of waste. In particular, it introduced the National Waste Prevention Programme. It also noted that thermal treatment with energy recovery had “a role to play as one element in the integrated approach to waste management;”, rather than as a single or predominant replacement option for landfill.

In April 2006, a *National Biodegradable Waste Strategy* was published. This provided the roadmap for meeting Ireland’s targets for the diversion of biodegradable municipal waste from landfill under Directive 1999/31/EC. It stressed the need for the introduction of the “brown bin” segregated collection of such waste, its appropriate treatment and the opportunities for the development of a composting industry to create wealth and jobs in the economy.

The most recent available data shows the progress made in recent years, with the municipal waste recovery rate increasing from 28% in 2003 to almost 38% in 2008. However, it also places in context the scale of the challenge to be addressed in achieving the step change in performance envisaged in this refocused policy framework.

While the policies of the past provided a strong foundation for significant improvement of the waste management landscape in Ireland by reference to best practice prevailing at the time, the intervening period has seen a significant evolution in the waste management sector and in international best practice in waste and resource management. In particular, the theme of “Sustainable Production and Consumption” has moved centre stage at European level and the *Europe 2020 Strategy* recently agreed by the Heads of State and Government of the 27 EU Member States sets out the importance of resource efficiency for

improving competitiveness, reducing emissions and contributing to job creation. In addition, at OECD level, the concept of managing “end of life” wastes is increasingly giving way to approaches characterised by sustainable materials management.

It is essential that Irish waste management policy recognises this evolution and is reshaped significantly, if our approach is to deliver the step up required to achieve an ambitious high value, high quality resource and waste management objective.

Much of the groundwork for this step change has already been put in place. As indicated earlier, the Programme for Government 2007 prioritised the establishment of ambitious performance targets for the prevention, re-use and recycling of waste and committed to carrying out the international review of waste management plans, practices and procedures, which was subsequently undertaken by the Eonomia Consulting led consortium. These commitments were reinforced in the Renewed Programme for Government agreed in 2009.

3. Objectives

The key objectives of the approach to waste management outlined in this policy statement are to:

- implement a sustainable production and consumption approach to waste management;
- minimise raw material and energy use, particularly where these involve the use of non-renewable resources;
- maximise economic benefit, including the revenue that can be gained from maximising the resource potential of waste;
- maximise opportunities for enterprise in reuse, remanufacturing and reprocessing;

- minimise waste generation and the hazardous nature of certain wastes;
- minimise climate impacts;
- minimise pollution, including eliminating or restricting emissions of persistent organic pollutants in line with the Stockholm Convention;
- protect and promote public health.

A substantial programme of change will be required to fully achieve these objectives. The purpose of the policy statement, when finalised following public consultation, will be to provide the framework within which Ireland will meet, and where possible exceed, EU targets for environmental performance in waste management. It will seek to achieve this by ensuring that:

- Ireland has an effective framework to guide an efficient and sustainable waste management sector;
- all citizens receive high quality waste management services;
- waste arisings are continually reduced;
- the value in terms of the creation of industrial opportunities and jobs derived from the resource management, recycling and recovery sectors of the waste management industry is maximised;
- there is a consequent reduction in the requirement for residual waste management capacity.

It is essential that the waste sector contributes to significant reductions in Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions. This policy statement will provide a more effective framework for achieving this, through reducing waste generation, extracting value from that which is generated in ways which contribute to a reduction in carbon emissions and by maintaining flexibility in the waste management system to take advantage of new and emerging technologies.

The International Review report estimated that the potential annual benefits by 2016 of the policies mentioned (relative to 2007 performance in respect of recycling and composting, and relative to the situation where all residual waste is treated prior to landfilling) would amount to 1.42 million tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent per year, comprised of;

- a reduction of the order of 0.9 million tonnes CO₂ equivalent from the increased recycling of dry recyclables;
- a reduction of slightly over 0.2 million tonnes CO₂ equivalent associated with food waste prevention;
- a net contribution of around 0.24 million tonnes CO₂ equivalent from biowaste treatment; and
- avoided emissions from residual waste treatment of the order of 0.46 million tonnes CO₂ equivalent .

4. Irish and EU Waste Management Policy

It is important that Irish waste management policy is informed by domestic policy goals, EU and wider international policy and practice, and EU legislation and commitments, particularly the revised Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC) and the associated waste hierarchy set out in Article 4.

This draft policy statement for consultation has been informed particularly by the experience of European best practice identified in the International Review. For example, the use of mechanisms such as residual waste targets as applied in Flanders and Wales has the potential to be adapted to the Irish context.

Equally, the application of sustainable procurement targets in the Netherlands and Austria could contribute to the development of such

policies in Ireland. In the Netherlands, the Government set a target of 100% of its purchases to be sustainable by 2010, with a target of 75% for municipal authorities. Austria has set numerical Green Public Procurement targets to be reached by 2010 for 5 product groups: IT - 95 %, electricity - 80 %, paper - 30 %, cleaning products - 95 % and vehicles - 20 %.

Ireland is seeking to become one of the leading countries in new, green technologies, delivering associated jobs and economic added value. The proposals in this document seek to underpin the contribution of the waste management sector to economic recovery as outlined in the Report of the High Level Group on Green Enterprise. In particular, they will support this development through the provision of regulatory certainty and the promotion of reuse and recycling technologies. This draft policy statement recognises the importance of setting more ambitious targets for the movement of waste upwards in the hierarchy contained in the Waste Framework Directive, moving away from an overemphasis in the past on the management of large quantities of mixed residual waste.

A comprehensive National Waste **Prevention** Programme has been in place since 2005 and has been recognised as a model for such programmes, with its Green Business Initiative included in the EU Commission's Best Practice Factsheets on waste prevention. This programme will continue to provide a significant contribution to the development of waste prevention and minimisation practices supplemented by complementary measures, including the use of appropriate economic instruments. In particular, a focus on food waste reduction is being prioritised in order to contribute to the achievement of a significant reduction in the volumes of such material being landfilled.

While significant progress has been made in relation to recycling specific waste streams, particularly through Producer Responsibility

Initiatives, there will be a greater emphasis on **reuse** in these areas, in line with the overall policy direction of moving the approach to waste management further up the hierarchy. Accordingly, reuse policies in relation to specific waste streams, such as Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment and construction and demolition waste, will be developed.

While performance in **recycling** has improved in the past decade, moving from 9% in 1998 to almost 38% in 2008, it is imperative that even more substantial strides are now made in a shorter period, if Ireland is to achieve its ambition as a top performer in Europe. The approach now proposed for consideration in this draft policy statement seeks to recognise the economic value of resources which in the past have been seen as waste.

The development of an enhanced awareness of the resource value of waste and a strong recycling industry will support sustainable economic activity. Ireland's future prosperity will be based on sustainable development principles and, given the global challenge of climate change, the endurance of our economic recovery will be dependent on the transition to a low carbon economy.

Given recent significant economic changes, expected waste arisings are lower than heretofore. However, it is now essential that we seize the opportunity, through the measures proposed in this document, to influence significantly the future levels of waste arisings and to provide a clear framework for moving the approach to waste management significantly up the waste hierarchy.

5. Recent Policy Implementation

A number of policy initiatives were already in train in parallel with the preparation of the International Review and this draft policy statement for consultation, and have since been implemented.

An issue of paramount concern for the Government, and one which is addressed also in the International Review, is the essential requirement to meet Ireland's targets for the diversion of biodegradable municipal waste from landfill under the Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC). As a significant contribution to supporting the achievement of these targets, and following both a stakeholder and public consultation, new requirements have been introduced since 1 July 2010 under the Waste Management (Food Waste) Regulations 2009. These regulations relate to food waste arising in premises engaged in the supply of food to consumers and cover a broad range of commercial outlets, including shops, supermarkets, hotels, restaurants, pubs and office canteens. Producers of food waste at these premises are now required to segregate such waste, ensure that it is collected by authorised waste collectors and then recovered at an authorised recovery facility.

The diversion from landfill is also being supported by the 50% increase in the Landfill Levy to its current level of €30 per tonne, and further significant increases are to commence in 2011.

The International Review also recommended that backyard burning of waste be made explicitly illegal. This issue was already of concern and prior to the delivery of the Review report, the Waste Management (Prohibition of Waste Disposal by Burning) Regulations 2009 were introduced, making more explicit the offence of disposal of waste by uncontrolled burning and prohibiting various activities, including such disposal within the curtilage of a dwelling. Failure to comply with the new regulations is an offence and fines of up to €3,000 are applicable for summary offences brought to court.

A recommendation in the International Review concerning the application of VAT to waste services provided by local authorities has also been addressed. Provisions introduced in the Finance Act 2010 followed a European Court of Justice finding and will contribute to ensuring a level playing pitch where local authorities are competing with the private sector for the provision of waste management services.

6. Proposed Policy Measures

6.1. Waste Management Planning

Planning of waste management has taken place in recent years on a regional basis. The regions were created through decisions of local authorities to group together to achieve improved economies of scale. However, as an island economy, the Irish waste market is peripheral in European terms and is relatively small in scale. Accordingly, planning of waste management requirements, in particular in relation to infrastructure, would be better achieved if supported by a national framework plan. It is proposed that this plan would set out the essential requirements to inform the delivery of services for both householders and businesses alike.

The framework plan would be designed to establish a national strategic framework that would support the prioritisation of the foregoing principles in the waste management plans required under the Waste Framework Directive, which would continue to be developed and delivered at regional level. The model for the interaction between the national framework and regional waste management plans would be initiated in the Dublin region in the context of the new mayoral structure, in respect of which legislation is to be published shortly. The future regional configuration for waste management planning outside Dublin and the distribution of responsibilities within those regions will have regard to developments in local authority regional structures currently under consideration in the context of the reform programme for local government.

The development of the national waste management planning framework will be the responsibility of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. As part of the process of developing the framework, a consultative forum may provide a useful vehicle for engaging with key stakeholders.

6.2. Household Waste Collection Market

The organisation of the market for household waste collection is a key issue requiring urgent action, in light of the need to achieve more uniform service quality, recent court judgements and issues of compliance with the EU Services Directive.

In recent years, many local authorities have withdrawn from the provision of waste collection. While this has, in some locations, led to active competition for the business of individual households, the International Review raised the issue of the possible existence of local monopolies.

Another issue of concern is the variation in the quality and level of service provided across local authority areas by both public and private waste collectors. In particular, it is of concern that only 21% of households were reported as having a brown bin collection in 2008². One of the options for addressing these issues would be to make local authorities responsible for collection of household waste. This would provide a framework, through which they, or one or more agents acting on their behalf following the completion of a tender process, would be able to deliver high quality services, while affording operators the economies of scale provided by such an organisation of the market. Legislation amending the Waste Management Acts would be required to give effect to such a change.

Delivery of the changed market structure would be achieved through a competitive tendering process. Where local authorities wish to compete alongside the private sector for such markets, an independent assessment process would be required to facilitate the tender competition and adjudication of the award of contracts.

Savings achieved through these more competitive arrangements might be expected to reduce the average household waste bill, particularly

² National Waste Report 2008, p viii EPA

when accompanied by high quality source segregated collections. This approach would in turn facilitate the delivery of a public service obligation including universal service and provision of waivers for customers of both public and private sectors, ensuring that the cost of such provision is borne in an equitable manner. Equally, environmental standards, which would be set nationally and would take particular account of the importance of driving waste to the top of the waste hierarchy, will be applied to all such tenders for the market. This approach would also provide greater certainty to operators in the waste sector to progress their plans for the infrastructure required to extract the maximum value from the material collected.

It is envisaged that a change in the organisation of the market structure would be delivered following expert procurement analysis. Given the magnitude of the proposed changes, it is intended that a phased introduction of the alteration to the market would take place, with a view to its completion by 2015.

6.3. Waste Management Regulation

Ireland has made significant progress in its regulation of waste management activities in the past decade with significant contributions being made by local authorities and the EPA. In particular, the establishment of the Office of Environmental Enforcement in 2003 has been a key contributor to improved compliance with environmental legislation. The EPA has a role both as a regulator of certain facilities, e.g. landfills, and as a capacity builder, working with local authorities who are charged with the enforcement of a range of waste management and other environmental legislation.

Local authorities provide a range of licensing, enforcement and other services in the area of waste management. For example, local authorities are charged with the issuing of waste facility and collection permits, they enforce regulations in relation to backyard burning and they provide recycling facilities and, in some instances, waste collection services to the general public.

During previous public consultations on the future regulation of the waste management sector, many detailed submissions were made addressing the range of complex issues arising. There was general agreement that the maintenance of the existing regulatory framework was not tenable and needed modernisation but there was no consensus on the precise form that revised regulatory arrangements should take.

However, in the context of the EU Services Directive and to ensure uniformity of approach across the country, consideration is now being given to the rationalisation of the waste regulatory functions of local authorities into a single nationally administered arrangement. Any changes will only be made following consultation with the key stakeholders concerned and with the objective of ensuring continued high levels of compliance with waste management legislation.

6.4. Direction of Waste

Consideration is also being given to the introduction of measures to ensure that no local authority should enter into any contract for treatment or disposal for quantities of waste which would exceed those that they or their agents might reasonably expect to control. It is envisaged that any provision as to the direction of waste may only be made to ensure the maximum extraction of materials from the waste concerned and to derive maximum environmental performance. This will give greater freedom to the market to develop cost-effective and environmentally efficient waste management solutions, thus driving down costs for business and householders. In addition, a series of residual waste treatment levies would contribute to ensuring that waste is driven towards environmentally preferable and value added treatments such as composting, anaerobic digestion and recycling; this is addressed in more detail in section 6.8 below.

6.5. Level of Service

6.5.1. Collection Services

It is proposed that minimum standards of service will be required of all those providing a household waste collection service, which may include the following specific requirements:

- A collection of paper and card for recycling at least fortnightly, and no less frequently than the collection of refuse;
- collection of textiles for recycling at least monthly;
- collection of food waste at least weekly;
- collection of steel and aluminium cans at least fortnightly, and no less frequently than the collection of refuse;
- collection of plastic bottles at least fortnightly, and no less frequently than the collection of refuse;
- either a collection of glass containers at least fortnightly, and no less frequently than the collection of refuse, or a network of bring banks with a density of at least 1 per 600 inhabitants.

It is also intended that implementation of source segregated collection of domestic biowaste and home composting schemes will be urgently accelerated, supported by appropriate regulations. Reflecting the need for significant early progress in this area, draft regulations to require the provision of separate household food waste collections are being published for consultation in tandem with this document. The costs associated with collection of packaging waste materials will be addressed through producer responsibility requirements.

6.5.2. Civic Amenity Sites

It is proposed to introduce regulations to ensure that all household waste recycling centres are operated so as to provide a high level of service to the public and are equipped with facilities for the separate collection of garden waste and textiles. It is considered appropriate that all civic amenity sites should also be required to charge for the

delivery of unsorted residual waste in line with the principles of pay-by-use.

6.6. Obligation to Use Waste Services

Should local authorities be fully charged with responsibility for household waste collections, either directly or through procured agents, it is proposed to introduce measures to ensure that all householders deal with their waste in an environmentally responsible manner. This would include requirements to avail of services where provided, although it would also have regard to particular circumstances to ensure no diminution of existing collection and recovery arrangements.

6.7. Targets and Incentives for Residual Waste

In line with a move away from overemphasis on residual waste management, it is also proposed that targets would be set under which local authorities would be required to secure reductions in the amount of residual waste generated by households in their areas. In the event of such targets not being achieved, a charge would be applied to excess tonnage generated. The proceeds of any such charges would then be redistributed to reward the local authority areas delivering a performance considerably in excess of the targets. It is envisaged that the charge might be set at circa €50 per tonne generated in excess of the targets set out below.

It is envisaged that targets would be met through a number of measures including greater emphasis on waste prevention, the provision of high quality source segregated collections to householders by local authorities or agents acting on their behalf, and through the application of pre-treatment techniques to ensure maximum extraction from the residual stream of recyclable/ recoverable resources.

It is also intended to build on the success of the recycling infrastructure which has been developed in the past decade through the acceptance

of a wider range of materials for recycling. The targets envisaged for residual waste are:

1. less than 250kg per capita by 2011;
2. less than 200kg per capita by 2014;
3. less than 175kg per capita by 2017; and
4. less than 150kg per capita by 2020.

In the context of this new approach to residual waste management, a parallel consultation on a Ministerial Direction to place a cap on incineration capacity is now to be reopened.

6.8. Waste Facility Levies

Ireland has had a residual waste levy in place for a number of years in the form of the landfill levy which is currently charged at a rate of €30 per tonne. Clear indications have previously been given of the need for greater flexibility in the setting of this levy and the Government, as previously announced, has agreed that the levy will rise to €50 per tonne in 2011 and to €75 per tonne in 2012, following the introduction of new legislation.

In order to ensure that waste that might otherwise be recycled is not drawn to treatment processes lower down in the hierarchy, the introduction of a levy on incineration has also been announced. This has been the subject of a recent public consultation and legislation is currently being finalised in light of the submissions received. It is proposed that the levy will not include charges in respect of emissions as outlined in the International Review as it has been decided to address this proposal in the broader context of air quality controls.

It is intended that the introduction of levies in respect of other types of waste management facilities and technologies will be reviewed in 2014, when Ireland's performance against our landfill diversion target for 2013 will be known.

6.9. Incinerator Bottom Ash

In line with the recommendation of the International Review, the classification of incinerator bottom ash as hazardous will be examined in conjunction with the EPA which is charged with the licensing of such facilities. In particular, the application of ecotoxicity testing to the material will be examined.

6.10. Recycling Targets

It is proposed to set a range of recycling targets to further drive waste away from residual management to management methods higher in the waste hierarchy. Moving material into those tiers concerned with recycling will contribute to the creation of jobs and the development of industries such as composting and anaerobic digestion. A recent report examining the composting and anaerobic digestion sector identified the potential for the creation of up to 1,500 jobs directly in those industries with a further 10,000 indirectly employed, with a job created for every 800 tonnes of capacity³. The International Review estimates that over 300 jobs would be created on foot of the municipal waste changes alone.

The targets under consideration are set out below.

6.10.1. Commercial Waste Recycling Targets

- 55% in 2010
- 60% in 2012
- 65% in 2014
- 70% in 2016.

It is proposed that minimum standards of service would be established for all commercial waste collectors to facilitate the achievement of these recycling targets.

³ Market Report on the Composting and Anaerobic Digestion Sectors – Intertrade Ireland 2009

6.10.2. Construction and Demolition Waste Recycling Targets

- 75% in 2010
- 80% in 2012
- 85% in 2014
- 90% in 2016.

6.10.3. Packaging Recycling Target

- Recycling target for packaging waste of 75% in 2013.

6.10.4. Deposit and Refund Study

In the light of the recommendation of the International Review that deposit–refund schemes require further study, the Minister intends to commission a dedicated study in this area, particularly in respect of costs and of the environmental benefits which might be derived from such an approach.

6.11. Producer Responsibility

The Polluter Pays Principle is a core principle underpinning environmental protection, requiring that waste producers should pay the full costs for the provision of waste management services including collection, treatment and disposal. Responsibility for the costs of waste management focuses attention on the implications of waste generation and also provides a direct economic incentive for waste prevention. Application of the principle also ensures that the waste management costs arising during and at the end of the life of a product are internalised in the price charged to consumers.

Reflecting these principles and in line with the Waste Framework Directive approach to enhanced producer responsibility, it is proposed to make a number of changes to producer responsibility schemes in Ireland.

Where producer responsibility measures are in place, producers would be expected to be fully financially responsible for delivering the services required to meet their obligations. Existing measures will be

reviewed to ensure that the financial responsibility of the producers reflects their obligation. In particular, consideration is being given to the abolition of the existing *de minimis* exemption under the Packaging Regulations in order to ensure that all producers of packaging waste contribute to its management. As part of this process, enforcement will be prioritised to ensure that all producers meet their obligations and that free-riders endeavouring to evade their responsibilities face substantial sanctions.

Consideration will also be given to the extension of producer responsibility initiatives to newspaper and magazines, as well as junk mail and other forms of direct marketing.

It is the intention that the following substantial construction projects would be subject to specific producer responsibility requirements:

- New residential developments of 10 houses or more;
- Other new developments, including institutional, educational, health and other public facilities, with an aggregate floor area in excess of 1,250m²;
- Demolition/renovation/refurbishment projects generating in excess of 100m³, in volume, of C&D waste;
- Civil Engineering projects producing in excess of 500m³ of waste, excluding waste materials used for development works on the site.

It is proposed to introduce compliance bonds for developers of such projects as a guarantee of a specified level of environmental performance, with certain requirements to be met if such bonds are to be redeemed. It is also intended that a site waste management plan would be mandatory for such projects, and that the implementation of the plans should demonstrate that the following recycling targets have been met:

- 80% in 2011
- 85% in 2012
- 90% in 2014
- 92% in 2016

New targets for the collection and recycling of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and restrictions in the use of hazardous substances in such equipment (RoHS) will be introduced in line with those to be decided as part of the recasting of the respective EU Directives which is currently underway.

Consideration will also be given, in consultation with the relevant stakeholders, to the extension of product levies for those disposable items forming a highly visible or significant portion of residual waste quantities.

It is proposed that arrangements for monitoring the performance of producers in meeting the targets set out above would be put in place. Should it emerge that producers are failing to deliver in respect of targets, consideration will be given to the application of economic instruments, such as levies, to improve performance.

6.12. Waste Prevention

The National Waste Prevention Programme will be resourced as necessary to prioritise reductions in the volumes of waste occurring in Ireland with a view to building on its success to date. In particular, in accordance with the importance attributed to prevention in the revised Waste Framework Directive, the DEHLG will work with the EPA, which delivers the programme, and all relevant stakeholders to design an effective range of measures which supports those homes and businesses seeking to reduce their production of residual waste.

successful initiatives of the National Waste Prevention Programme (NWPP). A dedicated STOP Food Waste Programme has already been established by the EPA at www.stopfoodwaste.ie as an integral part of the NWPP. The initial focus of this Programme has been on the householder and is designed to provide comprehensive information on food waste prevention that will empower consumers to reduce food waste by rethinking how they should shop, store, cook and re-use food.

Reflecting European waste policy, producers will be expected to incorporate lifecycle thinking and minimisation techniques in product design to contribute to the development of resource efficient products. Progress in relation to producers' contribution to waste prevention will be monitored and assessed against the meeting of their obligations for the management of their products at end of life and measures will be considered to ensure that the design of products does focus on the reduction of environmental impacts and the generation of waste in the course of the production and subsequent use of products.

6.13. The Environment Fund

Consideration will be given to a recommendation in the International Review regarding the opening of the Environment Fund to bids from the private sector for financial support in respect of the development of facilities which will contribute to meeting Ireland's landfill diversion targets. This will be explored in the overall context of the Fund's capacity and the existing demands on it. Any such financial assistance would also be subject to EU State Aid rules. The introduction of new levies and the income accruing to the Fund from such levies will also be taken into consideration in relation to this recommendation.

6.14. Economic Development

The International Review also addressed the need for supports for the green economy. The *Report of the High Level Group on the Green Economy* is now finalised and it will be used in conjunction with the International Review underpinning this draft policy statement to encourage the development of new industries.

In particular, both reports stress the need for the development of green procurement. The DEHLG is working with other Departments to develop a National Green Public Procurement Policy as a matter of urgency. Green procurement forms a key element of the RX3 Market Development Programme for Waste Resources, which is being driven by the DEHLG.

A public consultation has now been initiated on a discussion document "*Towards a National Action Plan on Green Public Procurement*". The document outlines some of the key issues that could be addressed by a National Action Plan and proposes six priority product groups for which the public sector should have Green Public Procurement criteria in their tendering processes. These six product groups are construction, cleaning products and services, food and catering services, uniforms and other textiles, paper and electricity. The discussion document poses a number of questions to provide for a structured consultation process with interested stakeholders. The consultation period will last until the end of August 2010. Details are available at the link below⁴:

The Market Development Programme (RX3) will also contribute significantly to the development of indigenous markets for recycled material through the promotion of innovative technologies to create new products from recovered materials. A Sustainable Innovation Forum, held recently in Dublin as part of the RX3 programme, demonstrated the wide range of products currently being developed by entrepreneurs using these materials. This will in turn support the requirement for high grade recycling through source segregation in commercial and household collections.

The restructuring of the market as envisaged by this document is expected to lead to more efficient collection systems and when taken together with a review of producer responsibility, is expected to deliver a more cost effective service for households and businesses alike. A

⁴ <http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/SustainableDevelopment/ConsultationGreenPublicProcurement/>

greater emphasis on waste prevention and minimisation would also enable and support both businesses and households in reducing their need for residual waste collection.

The DEHLG will also engage with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources to ensure that the benefits of the use of bio-gas and energy generation from anaerobic digestion are recognised and that procedures for the provision of gas and electricity from such facilities to the respective national grids are clarified and, where possible, made more accessible.

Given the policy approach underpinning this draft statement, which is designed to support a step change in the effort to move waste management further up the hierarchy, industry can be expected to deploy technologies such as MBT to extract the maximum value and resources from residual waste. The resultant fuel provides a significant resource which can be used to displace existing fossil fuel usage, contributing to secure, sustainable and competitively-priced national energy supply with reduced greenhouse gas emissions. There will be engagement with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation and with other stakeholders to ensure that this potential is fully exploited.

7. Conclusion

Ireland has made significant strides in the past decade in its environmental performance in the area of waste management. This success has come through the work of the public and those in both the public and private sectors involved in waste management.

However, further significant progress remains to be achieved and a step change is now required to achieve the ambition of making Ireland a

leader in waste management internationally. In that context, of particular concern is the lack of facilities for the treatment of biodegradable waste which will be required for Ireland to meet its landfill diversion targets. The introduction of greater landfill levies, when taken together with the introduction of the Food Waste Regulations and other measures proposed in this document, will contribute to meeting these targets and providing certainty for the developers of such facilities.

However, it is crucial that we also lay the foundations for progress beyond the Landfill Directive requirements. The measures set out in this draft statement of policy are designed to deliver a sustainable, efficient and cost effective waste management sector in Ireland. It provides an opportunity to all interested parties to contribute to the finalisation of the policy framework to underpin this – and to shape the transformation required to make the leap from seeing waste as a problem to focus on realising its potential as a valuable resource.