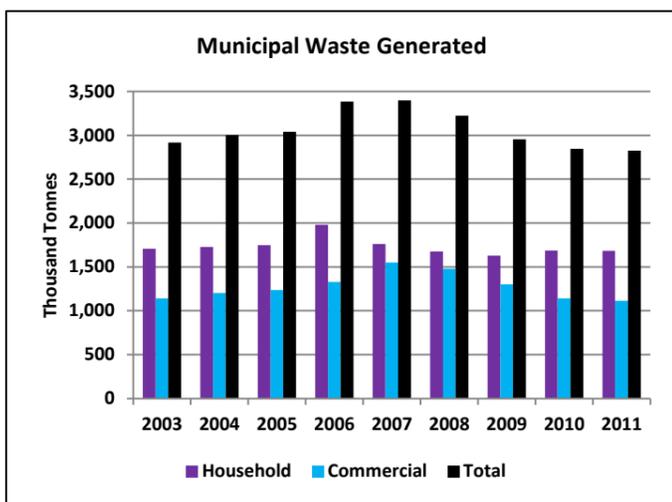


The Green Economy: Waste/Recycling

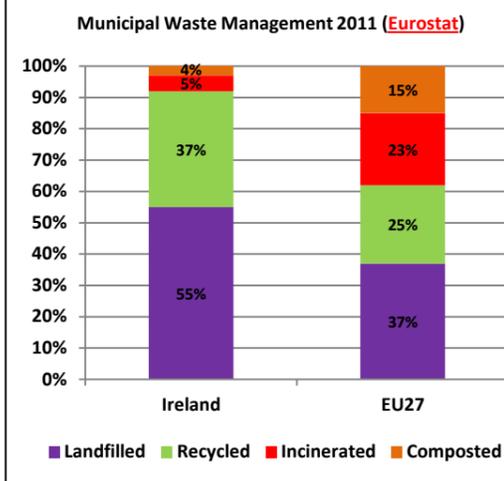
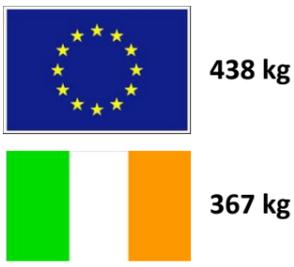
The noughties saw a big increase in recycling rates (EEA)



Recycling materials is an excellent way to reduce our use of raw materials and curb our ever growing carbon footprint!



Household Waste Generation Per Capita 2011 Average (EPA)



Ireland must reduce landfilled waste even though our waste recovery from landfill has been increasing year on year (42.6% in 2011)

State of Play

High export rates are effectively denying long term, sustainable jobs at home in Ireland. The graph below shows employment in the area for the last 16 years.

By improving our indigenous waste reprocessors' ability to recycle an increased share of recovered waste, benefits would be seen in a number of areas.

Recycling plants are also having to import waste to fulfil their needs. In 2011, 60,000 tonnes of plastic were exported but 64,000 tonnes were imported.

Still not enough! In 2011, Ireland exported 73% of recovered waste (metals, paper, cardboard and glass).

Employment in the waste & recycling sectors peaked in 2007, just under the 13,000 mark. It is safe to assume we had not reached optimal efficiency in the sector 7 years ago.

By improving infrastructure to cope with most plastics and becoming more self sufficient in waste management and recovery (reducing exports), Ireland has the potential to significantly increase employment in the waste/recycling sector.

Recycling Facts

Glass

Recycling 1 tonne of glass saves over 300kg of CO₂ emissions.

Recycling just ONE glass bottle saves the same energy as...
 100W For an HOUR OR For 15 mins

If all the glass collected by one such Irish Company, *Rahab Glassco*, was laid end on end...
 It could circumnavigate the Earth twice!

1.2 tonnes of raw materials are preserved for every tonne of recycled glass used in the manufacture of new glass!

Aluminium/Steel

50,000 Cans To make just 1 tonne!

Just 1 can Saves enough energy... For 3 hours

Also, recycling a can compared to making a new one requires...
 Only 5% of the energy. And only 5% of the CO₂ emissions.

Producing steel from recycled material saves 75% of the energy needed for steel made from virgin material!

Paper/Plastic

~17 trees are used to make 1 tonne of paper!

~34% of household waste we throw away is paper and card, of which half is made up of newspapers and magazines, most of which can be recycled.

We use over 500,000 tonnes of paper and cardboard every year - ~8.5 million trees!

Recycling just one plastic bottle saves enough energy to power For 6 HOURS! 60W

It takes just 25 two litre plastic bottles to make one adult size fleece jacket. Recycled plastic can also be used in the making of sleeping bags lining.

Companies

KAAK METALS-RECYCLING

Company which has highlighted the growing opportunities and competitiveness within the green economy.

The Offaly based firm payed over €70,000 to earn the right to dismantle and recycle 7,600 e-voting machines; 4 of the 6 competing firms would have required a fee themselves to carry out the project.

The company also modified the machines casings, which are now used around the country for Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) collection.

WiseTek Solutions Ltd.

Cork-based company which has recently signed an agreement with computer giants, Microsoft to handle all of their redundant hardware. The components are sold or broken down and valuable constituents such as gold are retrieved.

This company highlights a growing trend, one which is based on embracing the growing green economy - where once it was the norm for society to be based on waste and excess, a new breed of companies are seeing niches where an open mind to sustainability and waste reduction can bring big dividends.

Future

Ireland needs to act fast and secure its long-term, sustainable future in waste management. A greater investment in our recycling infrastructure will increase our self sufficiency and:

- **REDUCE** our need to export the majority of our waste.
- Encourage the **RE-USE** of these materials, alleviating the strain on our environment.
- Create jobs and spur innovation in the **RECYCLING** industry, leading to long-term economic growth.