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My suggestions on the Circular Economy Strategy.

Questions 1. Do you agree with the draft Strategy's proposed key objectives? In your view, are there further or alternative objectives that should be included?

Yes, on the whole I would be in agreement however we need to move away from GDP as economy's primary measure of progress in order to be able to have a truly circular economy. The fixation with growth (even mentioned in "To support and promote increased investment in the circular economy in Ireland with a view to delivering sustainable, **regionally balanced economic growth** and employment; ") is an outdated neoliberal approach and there are now frameworks such Doughnut Economics as that put forward by economist Kate Raworth which we need to move to. As a country we need to shift away from the fixation with economic growth and instead look at meeting the needs of humanity **within** the needs of the planet. This new economic system would be far more suitable to a circular economy

2. Do you agree with the overall level of ambition set out in the draft Strategy? If not, is further ambition needed or is the draft Strategy overly ambitious?

I would be pushing for circularity in **all** goods and services.

3. Should Ireland measure its progress in achieving a more circular economy relative to its European Union peers? If not, what alternative benchmark should Ireland adopt and why?

Measure our progress relative to Europe but let's be ahead of Europe. We have done such things before with a ban on smoking in pubs and with the tax on plastic bags. Let's make Ireland stand out as a shining example of a circular economy.

4. Would you rate Irish public awareness of the circular economy as high, medium or low? And how important do you think raising public awareness is to further developing the circular economy?

Low. Very important - we need a cultural shift away from throwaway culture. To truly work it needs to be accessible, affordable and available.

5. What are the most effective awareness raising measures that could be taken under the Strategy?

Why not use the same level of advertising as we hear for television licences or for Covid for example. People buy a kitchen or garden appliances from shops such as Lidl which lasts no time. They think they have saved money but then have to keep replacing when they break. Maybe the credit unions could be encouraged to run a campaign to encourage people to save up for items which appear to be more expensive but will last.

6. Are you satisfied with the proposed stakeholder engagement arrangements in the draft Strategy? Which additional stakeholders (if any), not already part of the Waste Action Group, do you think should be included in the Strategy's implementation?

7. What do you see as the major barriers towards a more circular economy in Ireland, so that environmental improvements also provide economic and social opportunities, and vice versa?

The move from Globalisation to Localisation is needed and goes hand in hand with circular economy. More local jobs, more jobs for those who are marginalised in society. Why do we tax jobs in this country - it has never made sense to me.

8. What do you see as the major regulatory barriers to the further development of the circular economy in Ireland? In answering this question please feel free to address economy-wide issues or those affecting your sector in particular. Circular economy is more labour intensive and therefore the government needs to subsidise or at least not penalise jobs (ie. don't tax jobs) in this area.

9. What do you see as the major non-regulatory barriers to the further development of the circular economy in Ireland? In answering this question please feel free to address economy-wide issues or those affecting your sector in particular.

See my answer to 1 above

10. How important do you consider Green Public Procurement is in supporting the development of new circular goods and services?

Extremely important - government must walk the walk. It should be considered in every purchase made.

11. What would be the most effective action Government could take to promote/support and incentivise the further development of the circular economy?

Give proper support to those businesses which are involved in activities that promote this. I can think of 2 such businesses or projects which have closed. One was a cobbler, fixing soles, heels and zips on footwear. He received no support in this little business and he employed 1 person. Small but important. The second was a not for profit which took old mattresses, Broke them down into component parts, for recycling. They closed due to lack of funding and now this service is gone from the Munster region. These are examples where funding could have saved them. It is also very important to train people to do these kind of jobs. There needs to be subsidies for innovation in this area. At the moment there is a move towards electric cars - instead of new cars being produced we should be encouraging manufacturers to convert existing cars to electric.

12. Which sectors do you think can make the biggest contribution to making Ireland's economy more circular?

All sectors need to contribute. Clothing, technology, transport

13. Do you broadly agree with the policy areas listed for future development in the draft Strategy? If not, which areas would you remove/add to the list?

14. Any other comments?

Banning single use plastics is great however the list misses out some of the worst culprits for littering which is now masks and gloves. My local petrol station has single use glove dispensers - the gloves of lightweight plastic are pulled out multiples at a time and they blow around the forecourt and down into the local bay. Used masks are thrown down - apart from the littering they could also potentially have covid on them. This new waste makes no sense.

We are now seeing a massive increase in take aways and some of these are compostable but if thrown in ordinary public waste bins they just become more general waste. This needs joined up thinking. Segregated bins and education on their use and the importance of their use. Obviously reusable containers are ideal so perhaps a reduced tax for those who bring their own coffee cups and containers ?

"The DRS being introduced will focus on plastic bottles and 14 aluminium cans because too few of these are being captured for recycling by our current system and too many are being discarded as litter". My understanding is that

only a small percentage of what we 'recycle' actually gets physically recycled. I may be missing it but where are these recycled plastic bottles going for recycling - we learnt from China's refusal to take our plastic that we can't just send it away. I would suggest that return for reuse would be a much better system - as was the case up to the 1980s - milk bottles returned to dairy (this should include organic milk), glass soda bottles returned for reuse.

Great to see the idea of circular economy - lets see it put into practice with full circular thinking

