

anois

ireland's circular transition



cork, ireland

21st february 2020

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now is the time for ireland be a circular leader again

Ireland has a strong track record of implementing progressive environmental and health legislation (e.g. high recycling rates, plastic bag ban, smoking ban). Ireland has an even more impressive track record of leading the way on circular solutions, having the **first ever deposit and return scheme** implemented through A & R Thwaites in 1799. The question is can Ireland be a circular leader again?

The European Commission (EC) has set the Circular Economy as a key enabler of its 2050 Carbon Neutral Plans. Transitioning to a Circular Economy over a generation (25 years), will enable Europe to reduce its carbon footprint by 50%¹. With only 12% of the European economy currently circular, implementing an incremental change approach to move from the current linear model to a circular one will be vastly insufficient to achieve the EC's Green Deal ambitions. Although these circular ambitions will not be achieved over night, they do require a monumental and radical shift within the next decade. This will require a fundamental change for industry, citizens and the public sector in how we manage and utilise material resources.

We know that **disruption to the current linear economy is guaranteed**. Guided by strategic policy making and implementation and carefully targeted interventions **Ireland needs to take circular action now to ensure this circular shift does not adversely affect or even collapse the economy**. Change on this scale takes time. However the right foundations need to be in place within 5 years or Irelands economic ambitions could be in tatters.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en



Unfortunately, the proposed “Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy” lacks the required ambition, foresight and fundamental understanding of the Circular Economy to safeguard Ireland’s economy. Simply it does not go far enough.

*“The circular economy is a transition. And it is meant to be a rather harsh and at times **disruptive transition, it is meant to leave companies doing things the old way simply going out of business**”²*

A Circular Economy needs to be a sustainable economy, i.e. an economy that is economically viable and socially and environmentally responsible. By 2030 only **‘safer, circular, and sustainable products should be placed on the EU market’**³. To make this a reality the EC is committing **1 trillion euros investment** to support countries, communities and companies in making the necessary circular transition.

The proposed “Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy” misses many outstanding opportunities the Circular Economy presents. The global case for embracing business sustainability and circularity has never been clearer. **The business case has never been stronger. It makes regulatory sense. It makes financial sense. It makes resource sense. It makes market sense.** Citizens want and are demanding that businesses and their goods and services become circular and sustainable.

² Kęstutis Sadauskas - European Commission director for circular economy and green growth
³<https://www.euractiv.com/section/circular-economy/news/leak-eus-new-circular-economy-plan-aims-to-halve-waste-by-2030/>

To achieve a successful transition to a Sustainable and Circular Economy the Irish Government needs **to establish Ireland as global leaders in ecodesign, circular design, responsible value chains, circular business models, repair, reuse and remanufacturing.**

IBEC’s recent survey⁴ of over 200 Irish CEOs demonstrates how far behind Irish companies are in this transition to a Circular Economy. This raises question marks over the ability of Irish companies to transition sufficiently in the next decade. However, we believe with the right policy measures and carefully targeted interventions they can. As a word of caution it is widely accepted that companies that do not adopt embrace sustainability and circularity will not be around in 10 years’ time.

To support this transition process we advise the Irish government to urgently implement Action 138 of their Climate Action Plan:

- Support the development of eco-design and circular economy opportunities for Irish enterprises to reduce waste over the full lifecycle of products.⁵



⁴<https://www.ibec.ie/connect-and-learn/media/2019/08/14/new-ibec-survey-shows-just-half-of-businesses-understand-the-circular-economy>

⁵<https://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/climate-action/publications/Pages/Climate-Action-Plan.aspx>

resources not waste

The Circular Economy is not about waste. Yes, reusing and recycling waste is a part of the circular philosophy. But better waste management is not a circular philosophy. The Circular Economy moves beyond waste to a holistic and systems perspective of resource and material efficiency. It is about **how we source raw materials, produce products (e.g. design for sustainability, responsible value chains) and how business take responsibility for their products post-production (e.g. circular business models).**

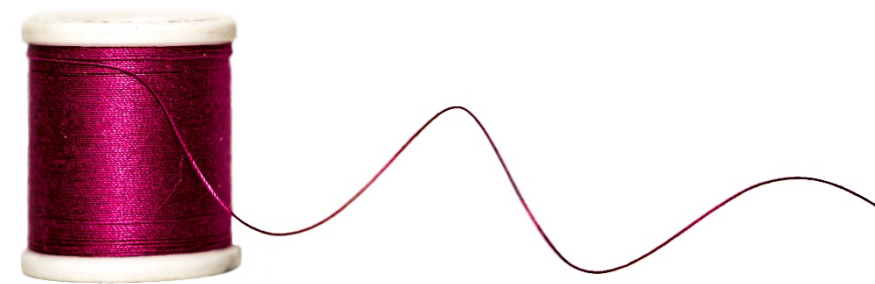
Saying that, we also need to reduce our waste and the only waste reduction target in the proposed waste strategy is reducing the amount of Municipal Solid Waste sent to landfill by 10% by 2035. This pales in comparison to the **EC's ambitions to half material use and half waste production by 2030.** If increasing Ireland's recycling rate to 60% by 2030 "will require radical action" how realistic is it that Ireland can achieve a 50% reduction in waste and material use within the same timeframes?

"Ireland's material consumption is well above the EU average, and continues to rise"⁶. Most of Ireland's resources are imported, a whopping 89 billion euros worth of imports in 2019⁷. Combined with Ireland's reliance on exporting non-landfilled or incinerated waste we are literally importing resources just to export again at a much lower value, often after a single use in a relatively short space of time. This represents a lost opportunity and has significant potential to become a massive drain on the Irish economy if the right circular actions are not taken now.

⁶ <https://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/climate-action/publications/Pages/Climate-Action-Plan.aspx>

citizen assembly

We advise to Irish Government to have an open public consultation rather than a targeted consultation with stakeholders across Government, industry and communities towards the development of an All-Sector Circular Economy Strategy for Ireland providing long term policy direction. The impact of the radical transition to a Circular Economy demanded by the EC will greatly affect all citizens and companies in Ireland and therefore all sectors of Irish society must be actively consulted. In addition, **we recommend the Irish Government hold a Citizen Assembly on making Ireland a Circular Economy leader.**

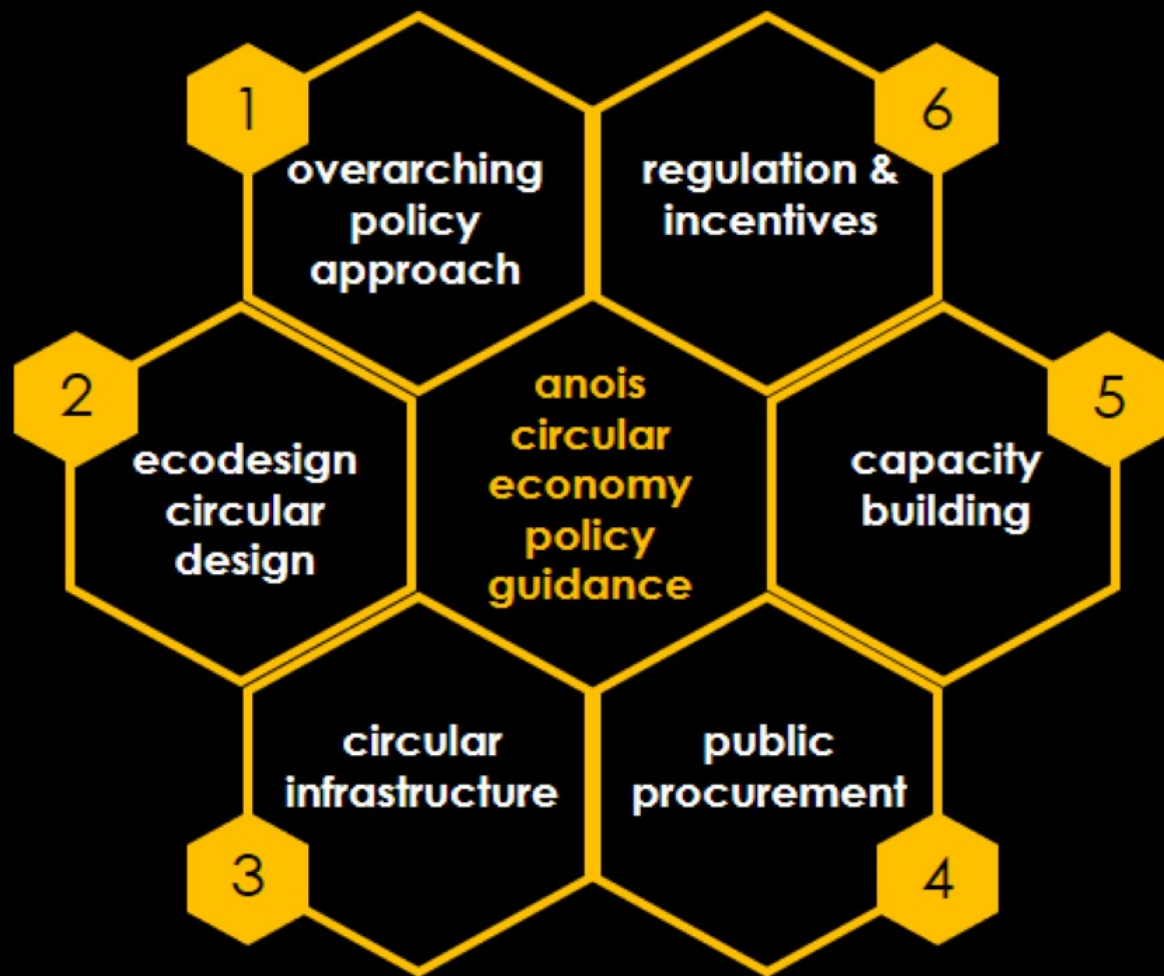


⁷ <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/externaltrade/goodsexportsandimports/>

anois circular policy recommendations

We are vastly experienced in policy development and implementation for the circular economy, having advised policy makers across the globe over the past 15 years. Our experience and expertise is truly unique.

We are very concerned about the lack of ambition, urgency and direction in Ireland in the Circular Economy. We are offering our services to the Irish Government to help guide circular policy development and implementation over the next 5 to 10 years to ensure a progressive and successful transition to an Irish Circular Economy. To start this process our 6 key building blocks for circular policy development are introduced on the following page. We look forward to hearing from you in due course and exploring how our services can be employed to make Circular Ireland a reality.



- 1 authentic leadership, clear vision & timescales, international best practice
- 2 application of eco/circular design principles to all products
- 3 infrastructure to support reuse, recovery, remanufacture, repair & recycling
- 4 create & stimulate market demand for supply of sustainable / circular goods
- 5 build competencies, capabilities & capacity in public, private & third sector
- 6 reward circular activities, remove legislative barriers & tax linear economy

anois experience

anois is a leading global design agency creating value through design for sustainability and the circular economy. Having successfully worked in most industrial sectors anois has proven expertise and experience in the co-creation of responsible brands, products, packaging, business models, policies and strategies. anois provides specialist training and development and capacity building programmes, stakeholder engagement, consultations, communications, horizon scanning & forecasting. The anois team have worked across Asia, Africa, Europe and Americas with recent clients include large and small companies, the European Commission, United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, national governments, industry associations and higher educational institutes. Operating from a core team of 10, with headquarters in Ireland, and operations in the UK and the Netherlands, our network-based structure enables us to bring the right people together, with the right attitude, at the right time, for the right result. All projects are carefully tailored towards the precise needs of our clients, and underpinned by research, analysis & synthesis.

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- award-winning global expert & thought leader on ecodesign, design for sustainability & circular economy
- 30 years working across the globe on design, strategy & policy challenges with all types & sizes of organisation & sector
- designer, strategist, speaker, mentor, evaluator & writer
- unique specialist expertise & experience in government policy, business practice & education
- founded & led the award winning Ecodesign Centre, an International Centre of Excellence
- mixed discipline background, including a Masters in Advanced Manufacturing, a post-graduate in Management & a PhD in Ecodesign

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- international expert & thought leader on ecodesign, sustainable design & circular economy
- designer, maker, project/operations manager, evaluator, trainer & speaker
- worked across large & small companies in a diverse range of roles & sectors
- former operations lead at the award winning Ecodesign Centre, an International Centre of Excellence
- created the first city MakerWalk, piloting the approach in Bristol, Glasgow and Manchester
- awarded Bachelor's Degree in Industrial Design & Master's Degree in Environmental Management

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