



eastern - midlands  
waste region

# ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16



“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

– Brundtland commission

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## Foreword

Welcome to the first Annual Report of the Eastern Midlands Waste Region [EMWR]. It has been an eventful 12 months, nationally and internationally.

In Ireland, pay by weight and disposal capacity issues have been to the fore, with construction and demolition waste concerns also looming. On the international front, the re-launch of the EU's Circular Economy Package in December 2015 was an important highlight. Although there is still a significant amount of work to be completed on some of the key elements, it is clear that Ireland will face some challenges in achieving recycling targets and in the transitioning process to a more circular economy.

The establishment of the Regional Waste Office [RWO] structures in 2015 was a significant milestone. The RWO, with the overall objective of co-ordinating the implementation phase of the Regional Waste Plans [RWP], will ensure ongoing dedicated resources to place a focus on achieving the various policy actions and targets along with providing support to the 12 Local Authorities [LA] and other stakeholders.

Finally; I would like to thank the staff in the RWO, the 12 LAs, the Southern and Connacht Ulster RWOs and indeed all our partners and stakeholders for their ongoing assistance and co-operation over the last 12 months and I very much look forward to our continued engagement as we positively embrace the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Hugh Coughlan  
Eastern-Midlands Regional Waste Co-Ordinator



## Introduction

### The Eastern-Midlands Regional Waste Office [EMRWMO] is responsible for the overall coordination of the implementation of the Waste Management Plan [WMP] 2015 – 2021.

This plan is underpinned by National and European waste legislation and the work carried out will ensure the continued management of waste in a safe and sustainable manner. The EMRWMO is managed by Dublin City Council [DCC], as the lead authority for the waste region. This region stretches from Dublin in the east, Louth in the north, Wicklow in the south and covers a total of 12 local authorities. The region may cover only 21% land mass of the country, which is a mix of urban and rural, but, this region holds almost half of the country's population and is dominated by the most populous area in the country; Dublin City.

The vision for the plan is to reconsider our approach and attitudes towards managing waste. The primary focus will be to view waste as a valuable resource in conjunction with making better use of current resources along with the reduction of leakage of material, to include energy, as we make the transition from a linear to a circular economy. While there will be many areas to cover and many crossovers within the implementation of the plan the eight Strategic Objectives within the plan will see an overall achievement of the outlined goals.

THIS ANNUAL REPORT PRESENTS THE ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN EACH OF THE POLICY ACTIONS DESCRIBED UNDER THE EIGHT STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES WITHIN THE PLAN.

This Annual Report presents the activities and achievements in each of the policy actions described under the eight Strategic Objectives within the Plan. This report predominantly covers the period May 2015, when the Plan was launched up to and including May 2016. Statistics presented within the report pertain to data collected from 2014, as these are the most recent validated available.

#### Overall Performance Targets

- 1% reduction per annum in the quantity of household waste generated per capita over the period of the plan
- Achieve a recycling rate of 50% of managed municipal waste by 2020
- Reduce to 0% the direct disposal of unprocessed municipal waste to landfill [from 2016 onwards] in favour of higher value pre-treatment processes and indigenous recovery practices



# KEY STATISTICS 2014

full set of metrics  
on [www.emwr.ie](http://www.emwr.ie)

Total Household  
Waste Managed  
for the EMR

**722,541  
tonnes**

Total Household  
Waste Managed  
Directed to  
recycling/recovery

**72%**

Total Household  
Waste Managed  
disposed

**28%**



% of households  
with a collection  
service

**84%**



% of households  
availing of a  
collection service  
that have 3 bins

**45%**



Household  
WEEE for  
recovery per  
inhabitant

**6.05kg**





Total Household  
Waste Managed  
per household

**0.914**  
**tonnes**



Total Household  
Waste Managed  
per inhabitant

**0.327**  
**tonnes**



Civic Amenity  
Sites  
numbers

**31**

quantity  
collected

**70,569**  
**tonnes**

Bring  
Banks  
numbers

**597**



quantity  
collected

**36,147**  
**tonnes**



## 2016 / 2017 Priorities & Goals

### Moving the Waste Hierarchy in the right direction

The principle of the waste hierarchy is to move upward in the direction of prevention and reuse rather than consumption and disposal. Driving behavioural change amongst the 2.2 million persons living in the EMR is a key challenge. The shift towards a circular economy requires action driven by education and awareness across all sectors. Initiatives such as the introduction of incentivised charging systems and the Reuse Month campaign are examples of key drivers of behavioural change in this upward shift.

### Pay by Weight

The introduction of Pay by Weight sought to encourage positive environmental behaviour by promoting the correct segregation of waste at source, increasing and improving recycling levels and allowing households to potentially save on their waste collection charges. Pay by Weight was also expected to yield a decrease in waste generation; whilst the timescale for its implementation is not certain it is clear that incentivised charging mechanisms are still critical to achieving the overall performance target of 1% reduction per annum in the Regional Waste Plans.

### Segregation – Awareness & Education

Contamination levels are on the increase. The incorrect segregation of waste at source leads to materials being placed in landfill or incinerated, consequently reducing recycling levels. In order to achieve our target of 50% recycling by 2020 a consistent education and awareness programme at local, regional and national level is required which needs to be supported and promoted by all stakeholders.

### Construction & Demolition Waste [C&D Waste]

As the output from the building sector is increasing, so too has the volume of C&D Waste. There are limited outlets for this waste stream which is particularly problematic in highly populated urban areas. Because of its nature, C&D waste cannot be readily transported long distances; therefore a need for more conveniently located C&D waste facilities is anticipated. As an initial response the ROs are commissioning a National Capacity Report, which is due for publication in December 2016.

### Residual Waste Capacity

There have been difficulties for the waste sector in accessing disposal outlets in 2016. Emergency capacity was activated by the RWO on behalf of the LAs in March 2016. The RWOs, who are members of a National Capacity Oversight Committee, will continue to monitor the situation on an ongoing basis to ensure sufficient capacity for 2016 and beyond.





# SUMMARY OF POLICY ACTION PROGRESS UP TO MAY 2016





# POLICY ACTION A – POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

The region will implement EU and national waste and related environmental policy, legislation, guidance and codes of practice to improve management of material resources and wastes.



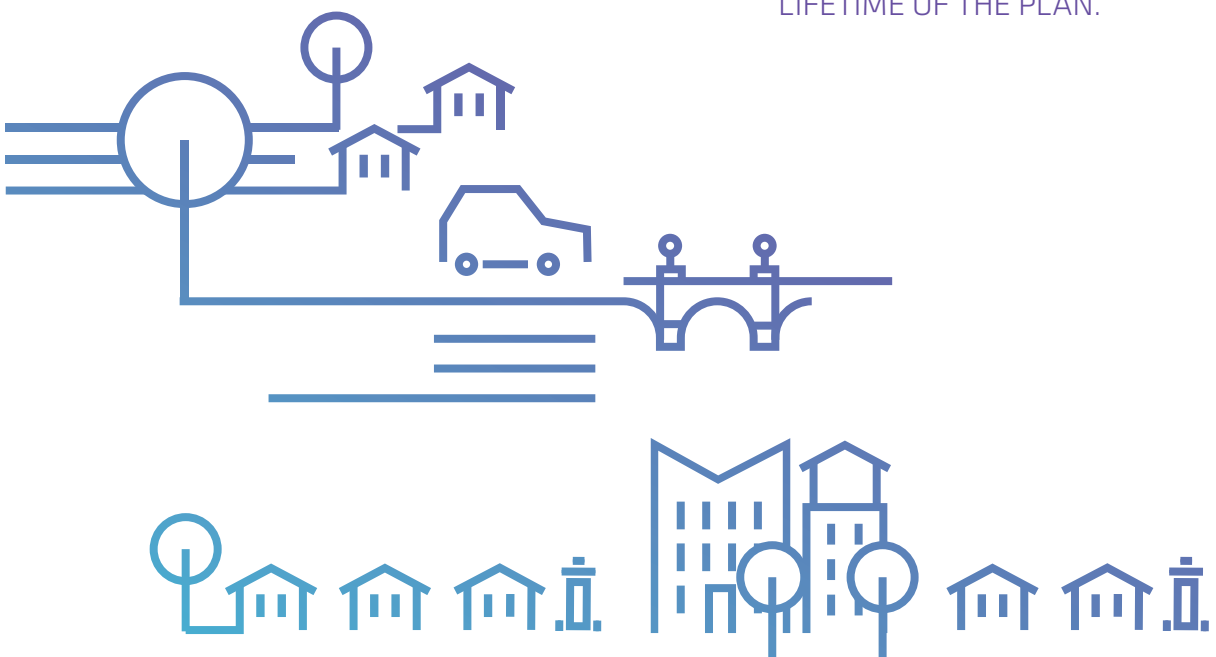
The Eastern-Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan [EMRWMP] takes account of the large body of waste legislation and regulations, both national and European. The policy and legislative actions set out under the plan consist of a range of implementation measures adhering to core principles underpinning this waste legislation and regulation, such as the European waste hierarchy and the polluter pays principal.

One of the 3 plan targets stipulates the reduction and eventual elimination of unprocessed municipal waste going to landfill over the 6 year lifetime of the Plan. With this in mind, the EMWR's submission to the National Waste Collection Permit Office [NWCPO] proposed the inclusion of this national target as a condition in all waste collection permits. While the proposed condition was not included, the Department of the Environment indicated that the issue could be dealt with under the landfill licensing process. A response from the Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] is currently pending in relation to the inclusion of the target in landfill licenses. The development of a portal by the NWCPO during 2016

to allow all local authority authorised facilities submit on-line data for 2015 will allow the EMWRO to monitor and report on the capacity of these authorised facilities on a geographic basis.

Measuring progress is a vital part of any implementation process and the Plan has set out a well-considered list of key performance indicators (KPI) to track its advancement. The complete set of KPI metrics for the plan is available at [www.emwr.ie](http://www.emwr.ie).

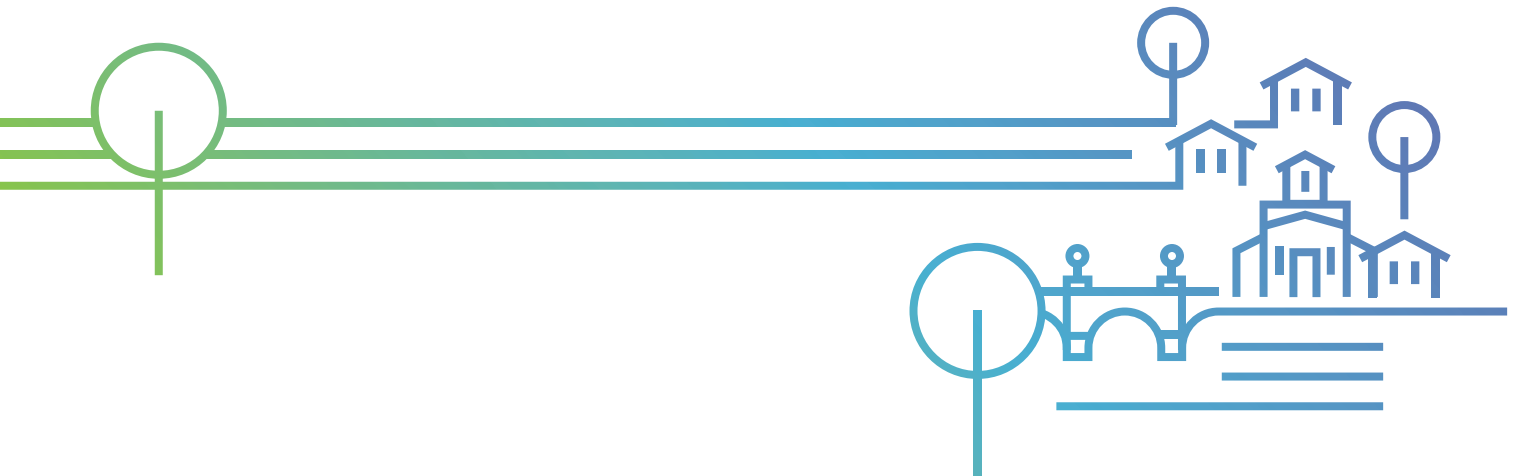
ONE OF THE 3 PLAN TARGETS STIPULATES THE REDUCTION AND EVENTUAL ELIMINATION OF UNPROCESSED MUNICIPAL WASTE GOING TO LANDFILL OVER THE 6 YEAR LIFETIME OF THE PLAN.





# POLICY ACTION B – PREVENTION ACTIONS

Prioritise waste prevention through behavioural change activities to decouple economic growth and resource use



## Resources

Waste prevention at regional and local level is dependent on resources provided by the 12 LAs in the region. The work of LAs, and in particular that of their Environmental Awareness Officers [EAOs], is pivotal to the waste prevention programme of the EMR. The Region has a total of 12 EAOs who together form the backbone of the waste preventive actions of the Region. LAs in the area are committed, under the RWMP, to set aside €0.15 per capita of population per annum for waste prevention activities.

## Projects

The RWO worked on a number of collaborative projects in 2015 / 2016. One such project was the Local Authority Prevention Network [LAPN] programme, an initiative funded by the EPA, coordinated by the RWO and executed by the EAOs. 2015 saw a range of LAPN projects taking place to tackle waste streams such as food, plastic bottles, single use items and hazardous waste. This partnership between the RWO, the EPA and the LAs will continue in 2016 to build capacity within the LAs and communities in the Region.

## Waste Prevention in Local Authority Headquarters

Leading by example through the reduction of waste in the LA buildings in the Region is an important policy action within the RWMP. A baseline of the waste produced by twelve local authorities was established for 2015 and this will serve as the basis to measure waste prevention within local authorities over the lifetime of the plan, this will see a targeted 10% reduction by 2020. In year one the EMRWO will focus on the enhanced implementation of the 3 bin system. While this is being carried out there will be presentations, demonstrations and a poster campaign in order to educate and achieve success. Waste arisings in each of LA will be monitored and this will allow for the identification of areas which may need particular attention.

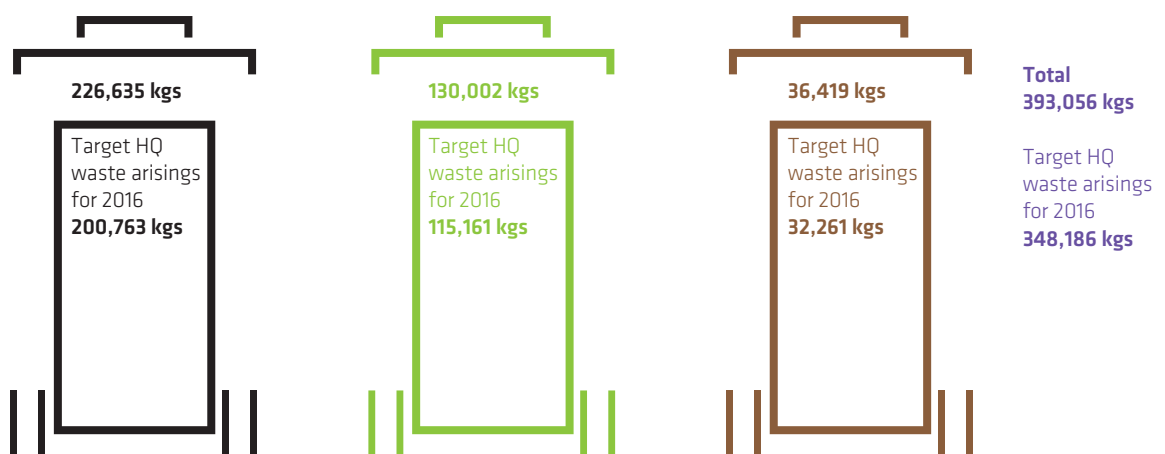
## Reuse Month

The RWOs will coordinate a nationwide campaign of events which will run annually throughout the month of October 'Reuse Month'. The principle behind this initiative is to promote reuse and reduction in the production of products, which will in turn help to decrease the amount of materials going to landfill and being recycled. The aim is to instil behavioural and attitudinal changes through the promotion of pass it on, repair, refurbish, re-purpose, maintain and lend, all of which are ways that can give a new lease of life to the items we own. Reuse Month will bring about the realisation of many policy actions in the Regional WMPs.

## Hazardous waste streams

Hazardous waste can be difficult and dangerous for householders to handle, store and discard. In addition, accessing information about the management waste presents a challenge for most people. The web site of each LA in the region provides clear, accessible information about hazardous waste and the disposal of such substances. The LAs in the Region provide frequent collections of household hazardous waste. Many local Civic Amenity (CA) Centres accept hazardous waste but where this service cannot be provided, LAs in the EMRO facilitate the organisation of hazardous waste collections free to householders in the area. During 2015, free hazardous waste collections for householders took place in Dun Laoghaire, Wicklow and Longford. In each case, the collections were intensively publicised to ensure maximum uptake of the service.

Waste stream Local authority HQ waste arisings for 2015





# POLICY ACTION C – RESOURCE EFFICIENCY & CIRCULAR ECONOMY



The region will encourage the transition from a waste management economy to a green circular economy to enhance employment and increase the value recovery and recirculation of resources



The role of Regional Resource Efficiency Officer was filled in June 2016. This will provide an invaluable resource to EAOs and Local Enterprise Officers promoting Green Business in their county and working on the general promotion of resource efficiency as a waste preventative method.

### EcoMerit

EcoCertive's EcoMerit Programme provides environmental support and advice to businesses and organisations in all sectors. EcoMerit is a very cost-effective way of achieving savings in energy, waste and water costs, and at the same time participants in the programme benefit from an environmental certification. The RWO is providing financial support and promoting EcoMerit as a tool to encourage SMEs and industry to realise the environmental and economic benefits of resources efficiency at a practical level with further opportunity to expand. The resource efficiency officer will continue to work with EcoCertive throughout the lifetime of the plan in order to increase membership.



A TRULY CIRCULAR ECONOMY  
REQUIRES THE CONTRIBUTION  
OF A BROAD RANGE OF  
STAKEHOLDERS

### Building a Circular Economy Network

Achieving a truly circular economy requires the contribution of a broad range of stakeholders including commercial interests, public service and social economy actors. The EMR works to engage and support strategic partners already operating within circular economy models in the reuse or recycling space.

The Community Reuse Network Ireland (CRNI) is the national representative body for reuse organisations, will play a significant partner role in the planned Reuse Month. The CRNI are preparing a White Paper on a Reuse Policy and the RWO has been asked to provide support and consultation before submission. In addition the region continues to promote various reuse initiatives by CRNI members.



Industrial resource exchange project, SMILE, facilitates the exchange and reuse of waste / secondary materials between businesses i.e. industrial symbioses. The EMRWMO supports and promotes the project to businesses in the area.



The EMRWMO has also partnered with Free Trade Ireland (FTI), an online platform designed to allow the general public to share and exchange items for free. To date over 100k items have been exchanged and reused through the Free Trade Ireland website.



The FTI team is currently developing a similar online platform called PREP.ie for use within the public service. With this new online service, items that are no longer needed in one state section or department can be taken and used somewhere else in the public service, thus using state resources wisely and saving money for the tax-payer. This is due to launch in the fourth quarter of 2016.

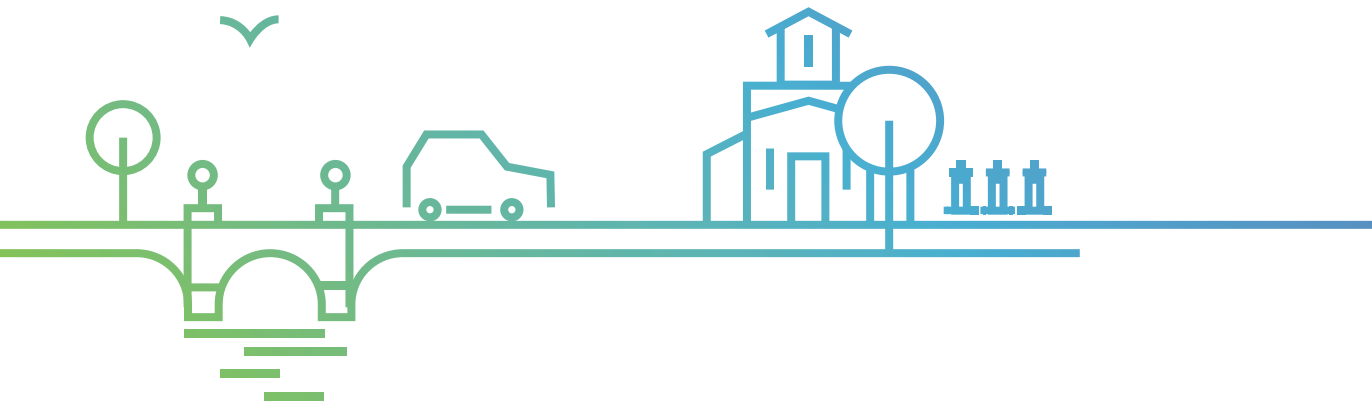




# POLICY ACTION D – COORDINATION ACTIONS



Coordinate the activities of the regions and work with relevant stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of objectives



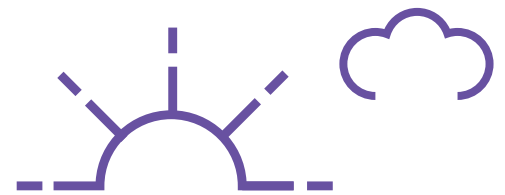


## THE RWO IS COMMITTED TO FORGING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER AGENCIES, ORGANISATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

During 2015, the office of the EMWR was established by the DCC as the lead authority and funded by all 12 LAs in the region. The office has a full-time staff including a Regional Coordinator, Regional Waste Prevention Officer, Regional Resource Efficiency Officer and a Technical Officer as well as the requisite administrative support.

Successful Implementation of the RWMP necessitates the office staff to connect with and coordinate the actions of a myriad of stakeholders. The RWO is committed to forging relationships with other agencies, organisations and institutions, both private and public, to collaborate on waste prevention activities, policy integration and research. The EMWR has representatives on a number of salient committees and steering groups including the National Co-ordination Committee for Waste Planning, National Waste Prevention Programme Committee, the National Industrial Symbioses group and also reports regularly to the County & City Managers Association (CCMA). The office works with these groups to develop programmes and initiatives that work towards waste prevention and resource efficiency that progress the tasks set out under the RWMP. In working with other agencies, the RWO ensures that messaging on waste prevention across national communication platforms, remains prominent and consistent.

The RWMP is far-reaching and diverse and therefore, building capacity in terms of knowledge and skills of relevant LA staff throughout the region is an essential element of its implementation. Working as part of the LA Services National Training Group (LASNTG), the RWO identifies and prioritises salient training for regional and local authority personnel. A number of training courses were organised during 2015 / 2016 including technical skills training, training on environmental legislation and IT training.





# POLICY ACTION E – INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

The region will promote sustainable waste management treatment in keeping with the waste hierarchy and the move towards a circular economy and greater self sufficiency



## C&D WASTE GENERATION IS ANTICIPATED TO INCREASE CONSIDERABLY OVER THE NEXT NUMBER OF YEARS

There are 29 policy recommendations in the waste plans directed at the waste sector to deal with future development of waste infrastructure so that outcomes are in keeping with the waste hierarchy.

During 2016 there was a national waste infrastructure deficit due to the lack of suitable outlets for municipal residual wastes. All LAs, with the coordination of the Regional Waste Management Planning Offices, simultaneously signed Section 56 Orders, under the Waste Management Act 1996, to prevent a situation of uncollected waste.

Arrangements were made with Drehid and Knockarley Landfills to increase their capacity for a defined period until June 2016. The RWOs, who are members of a National Capacity Oversight Committee, will continue to monitor the situation on an ongoing basis to ensure sufficient capacity for 2016 and beyond.

In terms of thermal recovery a decision on a 200,000 tonnes / year municipal residual waste thermal recovery plant in Cork is due in Feb 2017. Three cement manufacturing companies are engaged in the planning process to replace fossil fuels with waste fuels for cement production.

A number of biological treatment facilities are also in various stages of development.

C&D waste generation is anticipated to increase considerably over the next number of years in line with predicted economic growth. Because of its high volume and mass, it is not feasible to transport C&D waste for long distances, therefore facilities are required to be located within a reasonably short distance from source. In addition the 3 Regions have commissioned a National Capacity Study to analyse the current status and future need for C&D waste facilities. There are currently 62 active authorisations for soil and stone recovery in the EMR, including 5 active licensed facilities, with the other facilities having waste facility permits or certificates of registration.

There are capacity deficit issues at present in the Greater Dublin Region and the RWO is currently engaging with relevant stakeholders, however it is clear that an immediate requirement for significant additional active licensed capacity is required.





# POLICY ACTION F – ENFORCEMENT & REGULATION ACTIONS

The region will implement a consistent and co-ordinated system for the regulation and enforcement of waste activities in cooperation with other environmental regulators and enforcement bodies.

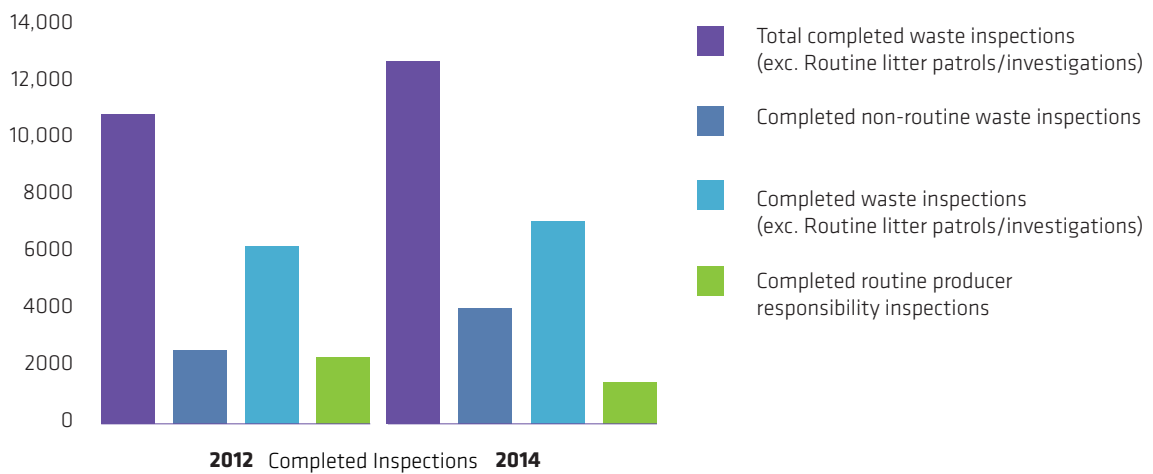


IN EXCESS OF 12,700 WASTE INSPECTIONS WERE CARRIED OUT ACROSS THE EMR IN 2014.

Since 2007 the LAs within the EMR have prepared inspection plans in accordance with the Recommendation 2001/331/EC for the Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI) adopted by the European Parliament and the Council. The purpose of the inspection plans is to strengthen compliance and ensure consistent implementation of environmental legislation.

In excess of 12,700 waste inspections<sup>1</sup> were carried out across the EMR in 2014. Figure below shows the breakdown of waste inspection activities. Local authority RMCEI returns for 2014 highlight an increase in the number of inspections across the region when compared to 2012. The returns indicate an increase in the total number of waste inspections and routine / non-routine waste inspections regionally.

In October 2015 DCC was appointed as the Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authority (WERLA) for the EMR. The role of the WERLA is to co-ordinate activities to drive effective and consistent waste enforcement across the region in accordance with Objective F. In 2016 the waste management plan targets were aligned with the next cycle of the RMCEI from 2017 - 2020. The activities undertaken by the WERLA, including the agreed national waste enforcement priorities will form part of the Annual Report from 2016 onwards.



<sup>1</sup> This figure excludes routine litter patrols/investigations



# POLICY ACTION G - PROTECTION ACTIONS

Apply the relevant environmental and planning legislation to waste activities in order to protect the environment, in particular European sites, and human health against adverse impacts of wastes generated



The overarching objective for waste management legislation and practice is the protection of health and environment. The RWMO prioritised a number of key actions in 2016 to ensure the highest environmental and human health benefits were achieved across the region.

### Historic Landfills

All historic landfill sites (1977 – 1997) classified as high risk sites were ranked using a risk screening process agreed with the Southern and Connacht-Ulster Regional Waste Management Offices. Following this ranking exercise, the EMRWMO prioritised 3 high risk sites in the EMR for further investigation and remediation works. A roadmap has been developed and agreed for prioritising site investigation and remediation nationally. Funding for these works will be provided by the Department for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCA) with a commencement date in 2017. A Historic Landfill working group will be established in 2017 comprising of representatives from each local authority in the region. The group will support the advancement of Certificates of Authorisation for sites in EMR.

### Siting Guidelines

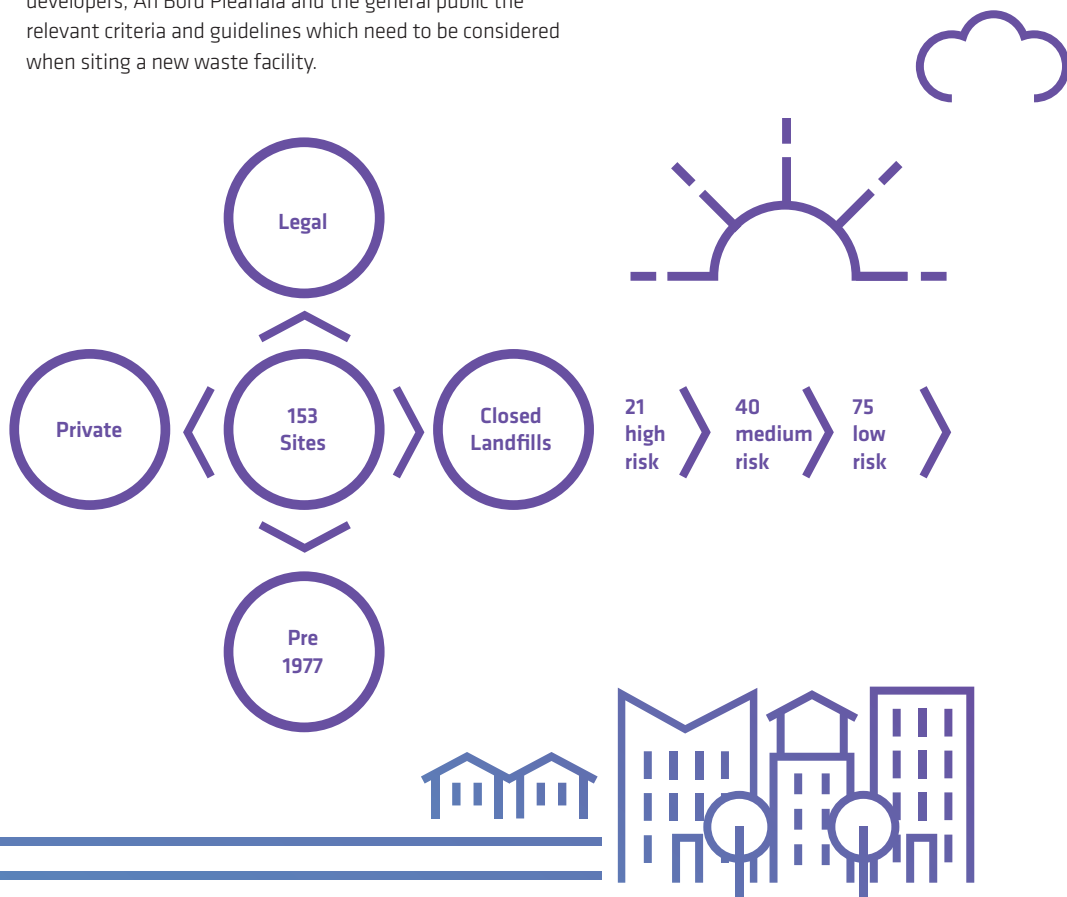
A set of draft siting guidelines have been produced by the 3 RWOs, a consultation process with stakeholders will be undertaken prior to finalisation. The guidelines will ensure there is a consistent approach to the protection of the environment and communities through the authorisation of locations for the treatment of wastes. These guidelines provide LA staff, waste management organisations, project developers, An Bord Pleanála and the general public the relevant criteria and guidelines which need to be considered when siting a new waste facility.

### Unmanaged waste

Recognising the importance of having a strong evidence base for policy and the implementation of policy, the RWO actively seeks involvement in research projects in the area of waste prevention and resource efficiency. For example, the regional office has teamed up with Dublin City University (DCU) to design and carry out a research project that aims to tackle the issue of low waste collection in particular areas. Areas where waste collection rates are low suffer, unsurprisingly from high levels of illegal dumping and an unhealthy environment is created for all residents. The project is currently in its planning stage with field work due to take place in 2017. The involvement of the RWO in this research means that the research findings can be applied in the real-life situation with immediate effect benefiting both the environment and the health of the communities affected by this issue.

### AA Screening

All LA authorisations require AA screening in accordance with the European Communities (Birds & Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. To assist LAs the 3 Regions prepared an AA screening template to determine if AA screening is required. The Regions also prepared training content which was delivered on behalf the RWO by Aster Environmental. The Aster Environmental Training course is also accredited with Engineers Ireland.



## Other Waste Streams Actions

The region will establish policy measures for other waste streams not subject to EU and national waste management performance targets.

While EU and national waste targets are useful in guiding the work of the RWOs, such targets do not cover every eventuality, waste type and stakeholder. As a consequence, the RWP includes the Other Waste Stream Actions as a safety net section designed to ensure that the practice of waste management in Ireland is as comprehensive as possible. It includes policy actions requiring the region to work with relevant stakeholders to ensure systems and facilities are in place for the sustainable management of a range of sludge's and other materials and waste streams.

### **Waste water and water treatment sludges**

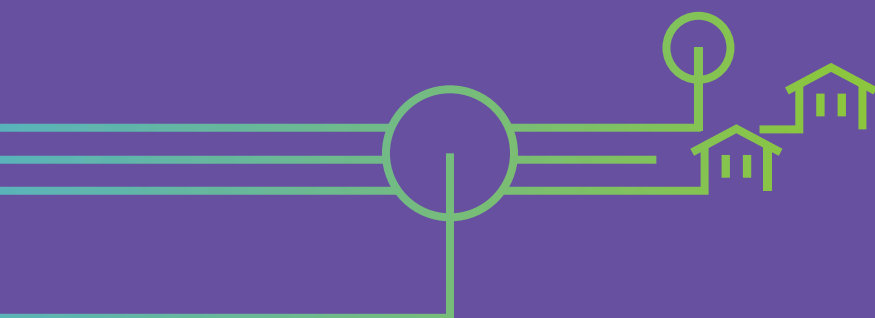
The EMRWO prepared a submission to Irish Water's National Wastewater Sludge Management Plan and will continue to engage with Irish Water as this plan evolves.

### **Pilots for waste oils and medicines**

Waste oils (petroleum based or synthetic) and out-of-date or unused medicines are 2 waste streams that present particular challenges. Currently, facilities and systems for dealing with these waste streams are under-developed. It is the responsibility of the EMRWO to develop and pilot potential schemes for the management of these waste streams. The RWO is currently investigating potential schemes for both these waste streams with a view to piloting them in 2017.

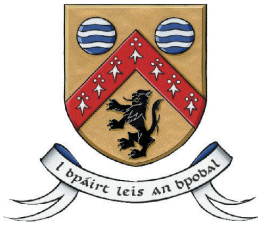
### **Waste Prevention and Circular Economy working Groups**

The EMRWO is tasked with participating in working groups of relevant stakeholders set up to examine waste management options for particular waste streams, such as producer responsibility initiatives. Currently, the RWO is involved in a working groups looking at waste streams such as tyres and mattresses. The RWO is also represented on national stakeholder groups such as the National Waste Forum, the National Waste Prevention Plan Committee and the Industrial Symbioses working group.





## Eastern Midlands Waste Region Local Authorities



Laois County Council



Louth County Council



Offaly County Council



Meath County Council



Wicklow County Council



Kildare County Council



Westmeath County Council



Longford County Council



Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council



Fingal County Council



South Dublin County Council



Dublin City Council

## Staff at the Eastern Midlands Regional Waste Office



Hugh Coughlan  
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