

Transport Infrastructure Ireland

Circular Economy Policy

2023 - 2025

September 2023

Circular Economy in Ireland

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) says in relation to Ireland:

“By making resource use more efficient, the circular economy alleviates environmental pressures linked to resource extraction and product manufacturing, namely greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and air, water and soil pollution...Data for circular economy policy in Ireland are limited and fragmented, obstructing the global vision needed for policymaking.”

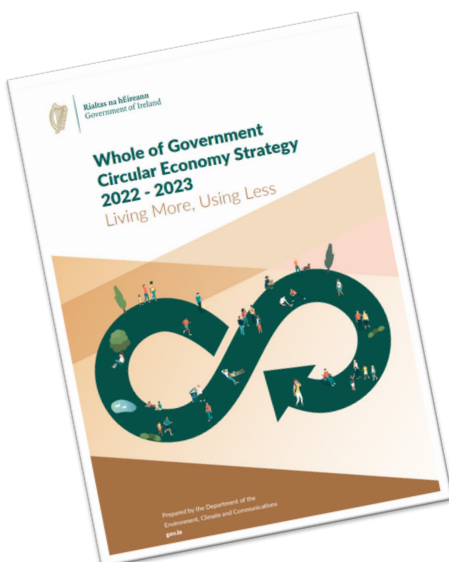
Weblink: <https://www.oecd.org/publications/the-circular-economy-in-ireland-7d25e0bb-en.htm>



The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications says in relation to circular economy:

“Ireland is fully committed to transitioning to a circular economy and embracing the opportunities that this transition can bring. Those opportunities will include contributing to the restoration of our national habitats, supporting our achievement of climate neutrality, and delivering sustainable, regionally balanced economic growth and employment.”

Weblink: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b542d-whole-of-government-circular-economy-strategy-2022-2023-living-more-using-less/>





Achill Greenway © TII

Purpose

TII is working to adopt a circular economy approach in the activities, programmes and projects it delivers and funds.

Today's society mainly operates as a linear economy whereby raw materials are extracted and manufactured into products or assets using vast quantities of energy, fuel and natural resources. Often when these products or assets are no longer deemed functional, they are disposed of and deemed a waste material. The value of the natural resources used to make these products is then lost. However, by moving to a circular economy, we can design out this value loss and minimise resource inputs.

The development of a Circular Economy Policy and Strategy by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) aligns with the Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy 2022 - 2023 and the objectives are aligned with those of the Department of Transport such as the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI).

National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland Intervention Hierarchy

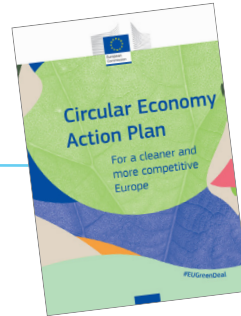


Policy and Strategy underpinning the TII approach to Circular Economy



Green Deal - The EU Sustainability Strategy

Dec 2019



EU Circular Economy Action Plan

March 2020



Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy

Sept 2020



Programme for Government

October 2020



National Development Plan 2021-2030

Oct 2021



Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy 2022-2023

Dec 2021



National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI)

April 2022



TII Circular Economy Policy & Strategy

September 2023



OECD Report The Circular Economy In Ireland

TII has been undertaking research into materials optimisation and sustainable materials management for many years prior to the development of the Circular Economy Policy and Strategy. TII is working to take a systemic approach to capturing and retaining value at every stage along the lifecycle of assets, components and materials on TII's transport networks.

This involves moving from a “waste” to a “value” mindset where assets, components and materials are kept at their highest value at all times and in use within its transport infrastructure system.

The TII Circular Economy Policy and Strategy set out TII's ambitions to continue to embed circular economy principles throughout its standards, operations, and TII delivered and funded projects and programmes. Therefore, it is clear that establishing and maintaining a circular economy approach to all of TII's work enables TII to capture and retain the value of its infrastructure assets.

However, TII cannot transition to a circular economy approach alone. Creation of the TII Circular Economy Policy and Strategy has involved stakeholder collaboration including government departments, local authorities, transport users, the supply chain and the construction industry and this will continue during its implementation. TII sets standards and technical requirements which have broader application than the design, maintenance and operation of transport infrastructure. As such these requirements will enable transition to a circular economy.





Objectives

TII's approach to circular economy aims to:

Reduce resource consumption¹

Keep assets, components and materials at their highest value²

Maintain safety and technical function of services, assets and components

Promote restorative and regenerative design

Reduce emissions

Note 1: Leading to a reduction in waste generation

Note 2: Keeping components and materials at their highest value typically involves reusing components and materials to serve the function for which they were originally designed or manufactured when appropriate. Reuse of asphalt in the same road design layer from which it is removed (where feasible and permitted by standards) is an example of this.

Focus Areas

The following focus areas will be key in the realisation of TII's Circular Economy purpose and objectives:



Note: Please refer to the TII Circular Economy Strategy for further information on the focus areas set out here.



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