

Press Release

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Barriers to Waste Infrastructure Delivery Need to be Removed

Forfás today (Tuesday, 20 March 2007) launched its report *Waste Management in Ireland: Benchmarking Analysis and Policy Requirements*. This report, which includes an update of Ireland's comparative performance across key indicators such as costs, treatment options, and capacity, focuses on the policy issues that need to be addressed to enable Ireland meet the waste management needs of the enterprise sector.

Speaking on the launch of the report, Martin Cronin, Forfás Chief Executive commented, "Maintaining economic progress in Ireland is contingent on good environmental practices and the availability of modern waste management facilities. The availability of a choice of competitively-priced and secure waste management options such as landfill, thermal treatment, recycling and reuse is crucial to business".

"Municipal waste recycling has progressed significantly in Ireland in recent years, with the target for waste recycling of 35 percent by 2013 being achieved eight years ahead of schedule in 2005. There have also been a number of important developments during the last year that will play a key role in improving Ireland's waste management performance. These include the funding for waste infrastructure under the new NDP, the enactment of the Strategic Infrastructure Act, and the consultation on the regulation of the waste sector. Nevertheless, from an enterprise perspective, Ireland continues to perform poorly relative to the benchmark countries in meeting their waste management needs. Of particular concern are the high costs and the heavy reliance on landfill", said Mr Cronin.

The benchmarking analysis highlighted three policy actions needed to improve Ireland's comparative performance in meeting the waste management needs of the enterprise base:

1. **Addressing Infrastructure Deficits.** Ireland's relatively high dependence on landfill is mainly due to the limited progress that has been made in delivering hard waste infrastructure. Specific infrastructures required include thermal treatment for hazardous and non-hazardous waste, biological treatment and reprocessing facilities.

2. **Removing Barriers to Infrastructure Delivery.** There are a number of impediments to accelerating the delivery of waste infrastructure nationally. These include:
 - Market reform to promote competition;
 - Co-ordination of regional waste plans; and
 - Improving the planning process to reduce lengthy delays in rolling-out infrastructure.

3. **Waste Minimisation and Prevention.** Investing resources in waste prevention and minimisation offers potential long-term benefits for the competitiveness of enterprises. A range of waste/pollution prevention initiatives is being undertaken by different organisations such as the development agencies, IBEC and the EPA. These organisations need to continue their efforts to ensure that businesses are fully aware of the benefits of waste prevention.