



GOVERNMENT SECTOR

Waste Minimisation Clubs are part of the national Race against Waste campaign. They are where businesses in a particular geographic area, group together to negotiate better terms and services from waste contractors.

www.raceagainstwaste.ie/take_action/waste_minimisation_clubs

REACH is a new EU law on chemicals and their safe use. It deals with the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals.

www.hsa.ie/eng/Sectors/Chemicals/REACH/

NGO SECTOR



An Taisce - Green Schools is an international environmental education programme and award scheme that promotes and acknowledges long-term, whole-school action for the environment.

www.greenschoolsireland.org



An Taisce - GreenHome is an environmental education and management system that facilitates and supports positive and practical action for the environment amongst householders.

<http://greenhome.ie>

OTHER SECTORS



European Union Eco-Label award - when you find this mark on a product, the consumer is being made aware that the product has been identified as having a reduced environmental impact.

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/ecolabel>

Some things to think about

Eating meat and dairy requires much more of the earth's resources than a vegetarian diet.

Only 24 per cent of Irish shoppers know what "food miles" are.

Only 1 in 10 households with gardens engage in composting of some kind.

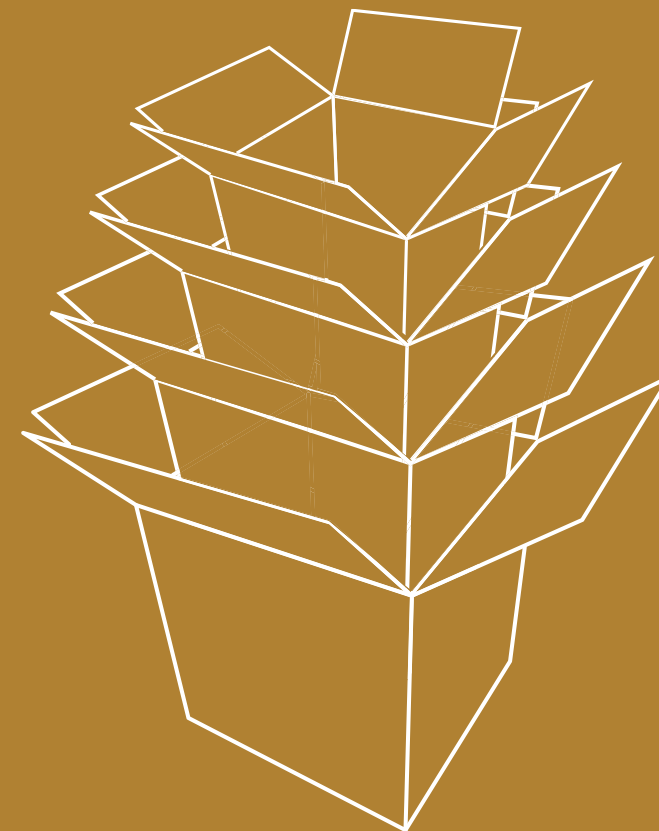
Shopping local and buying in season will reduce your ecological footprint.

ENFO 17 St. Andrew Street / Dublin 2 / Ireland

Phone 01 888 3931/3933 **Lo Call** 1890 200 191 **E-mail** info@enfo.ie **Web** www.enfo.ie

Reduce

Reduction is the second step of the waste hierarchy. It is about reducing waste at source and not creating it in the first place.



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The Less Waste We Make - The Less Harm We Do

“What gets measured gets managed; and what gets managed gets done” This is a common phrase used to explain how an Environmental Management Systems (EMS) works.

An EMS is a tool for managing the impacts of your activities on the environment. Like a financial management system that monitors expenditure and income and enables you to check your financial performance, an EMS integrates environmental management into the daily operations, long term planning and other management structures.

Two of the best known Environmental Management Systems are the ISO14001 system and the EU EMAS – Eco-Management and Audit Scheme.

But there are other Environmental Management Systems that you can use at home and at school. The Green-Schools and Green Home programmes run by An Taisce are excellent examples of an EMS that will fit in with your day to day life.

In 2006 the World Wildlife Fund published its Living Planet Report. The report confirms that we are using the planet’s resources faster than they can be renewed. The challenge for us all is to reduce our footprint and re-balance our consumption with the world’s natural capacity to regenerate and absorb our waste. It is time for all of us make some important choices and reduce the amounts of waste we produce is the first place.



Changing Our Concept Of Waste

The limits to prosperity in the 21st century will be the health of natural systems - not boats, but fish stocks; not sawmills, but forests.

There is waste all around us. There is the waste we can see: traffic jams, dumped computer screens, drink cans, landfills, illegal burning. Then there’s the waste we can’t see - greenhouse gases, radioactive waste and chemicals. Lastly we have what is often termed

social waste - such as poverty, homelessness, crime and the problems of the developing world. Our challenge for the future is to change the way we think about waste and minimise waste everywhere we find it.



Waste Minimisation By Design

Think of a product whose materials are perpetually circulated in closed non polluting loops just like natural systems.

Inventory management and improved operations. Implement an Environmental Management Systems

at home and work, use and produce less toxic materials, improve waste training.

Equipment modification. Redesign production systems so they produce less waste, improve operating efficiency, re-design systems that assist waste

Instead of designing products “cradle-to-grave” so that it is dumped in a landfill at the end of its ‘life’, we need to design products for a “cradle-to-cradle” cycle.

recovery, recycling and re-use on site.

Change production processes. Replace hazardous raw materials, explore alternative low-waste routes, eliminate losses, consider product substitution.

Re-use, recycle and recover.

Introduce closed loop systems, reduce and recycle on site for reuse, understand that waste is a resource.

