



Zero Waste Community Toolkit

Zero Waste Community Toolkit - Before you start...

▶ Know your community

- ▶ Do you have an environmental group/active Tidy Towns?
- ▶ It is better to start in a community that has an active environmental group with environmentally aware and motivated citizenry
- ▶ Map other interested groups, businesses and schools
- ▶ Identify local champions to push this programme forward
- ▶ Are there any existing environmental initiatives you could expand or build synergies?
- ▶ Plastic-straw campaigns
- ▶ Conscious cup initiative
- ▶ Plastic-bottle free areas/schools
- ▶ Refill campaign?
- ▶ Understand that this is not a short-term project. Most zero waste communities take at least 2-3 years to start reducing their waste.

Zero Waste Community Toolkit - Before you start...

▶ Know your Waste

- ▶ How many kerbside waste bins are collected?
Do you have a three-bin kerbside system?
- ▶ What are the constituents of the bins
(characterisation)
- ▶ Contamination levels/waste characterisation
- ▶ Get commitment at the beginning from the
local waste collector to provide baseline and
follow-on data for all kerbside waste bins

Zero Waste Community Toolkit - Before you start...

- ▶ **Work with local officials and waste contractors**
 - ▶ Do you have commitment from local government and local politicians to actively support this initiative?
 - ▶ Do you have a waste amenity centre and have you gotten buy-in from them to provide baseline and follow-on data
 - ▶ What type of street bins does your community have and what is the collection schedule?
 - ▶ If you install recycling and/or organic/compost bins, has the local authority committed to collect separately and provide baseline and follow-on data?
 - ▶ Will your local authority commit to passing ordinances to support zero waste?

Market Research

- ▶ Commission and run several focus groups with community leaders and interested individuals
- ▶ Understand concerns raised and possible solutions
- ▶ It is important to incorporate suggestions from locals as you want their ongoing support and buy-in to zero waste programmes and targets
- ▶ Possible themes may include:
 - ▶ *Theme #1 - CAUSES OF WASTE - What are the main causes of waste in your Home, Business, Community? How well is the community sorting its waste? Do households/businesses know what waste goes in each bin?*
 - ▶ *Theme #2 - CURRENT INITIATIVES - What initiatives do you know of in community which are reusing, recycling, or reusing waste?*
 - ▶ *Theme #3 - BARRIERS TO CHANGE - BARRIERS TO REDUCING and RECYCLING - What are the barriers to reducing and recycling waste? How do we spread the information on how to properly sort and manage our waste?*
 - ▶ *Theme #4 - HOW TO PROMOTE THE INITIATIVE? Changing minds to consider waste a valuable commodity, and develop a local circular economy.*
 - ▶ *Theme #5 - HOW DO WE GET THERE? - Ideas and Suggestions on how to reduce waste. This includes Management and Prevention Actions, and Opportunities for new businesses and social enterprises.*

Create an
active Steering
Group - meet
once a month

- ▶ **Members should come from:**
 - ▶ Local authority waste department
 - ▶ Local council politicians
 - ▶ Business or someone from the local chamber of commerce
 - ▶ Primary and/or Secondary Schools
 - ▶ Local sports club (GAA, Rugby, Football, Hockey, etc)
 - ▶ Active community group (Tidy Towns, Lions Club, Scouts, GIY, etc)
 - ▶ Local environmental group
 - ▶ Waste Management company
 - ▶ Local champion/active member of community

Develop Zero Waste Master Plan

- ▶ **Develop short- and long-term milestones/goals (2 years, 5 years, 10 years) for:**
 - ▶ **First Step:** Develop better waste separation for kerbside collection for household and commercial waste (2 years)
 - ▶ Target biggest fraction of the residual waste stream...biowaste, including food and garden waste. Provide kitchen caddies and offer composting workshops to all residents. Let them know WHY it is important to keep organic waste out of the residual bin
 - ▶ Decrease the contamination of the mixed dry recycling bin - hold workshops about what goes in and how (see voiceireland.org/rap and www.mywaste.ie)
 - ▶ Get the correct material in the correct bin. This is the first step before waste prevention
 - ▶ **Second Step:** Identify large waste streams to see where the community can work to prevent this waste (2-5 years) and set waste reduction targets
 - ▶ Single Use plastics
 - ▶ Excessive packaging
 - ▶ Food Waste
 - ▶ Infrastructure planning, including on-street recycling and compost bins and collection costs/schedule
 - ▶ **Third Step:** Waste prevention initiatives continue (5-10 years)
 - ▶ Reuse, sharing, repair economy - refuse excess consumption. Such activities include:
 - ▶ Reusable Coffee Cups and Water Bottles. See consciouscup.ie and refill.ie
 - ▶ Sharing economy such as weshare.ie
 - ▶ Repair initiatives such as hosting repair cafes and promoting repair businesses. repairmystuff.ie

Develop Communications Strategy and Plan

- ▶ **What are the main messages?**
 - ▶ Get your bin sorted...put waste in the correct bin
 - ▶ Why this is important
 - ▶ Combat Climate Change: less waste = less damage to the planet
 - ▶ Less waste saves money and time
 - ▶ Create a social fabric
 - ▶ Sharing networks
 - ▶ Repair activities
 - ▶ Community Composting
 - ▶ New local jobs/social enterprises
 - ▶ Pride of place
 - ▶ Teach environmental stewardship to our children

Develop Communications Strategy and Plan - part 2

- ▶ Reach all age groups and social strata
- ▶ Create strong messages both off-line and on-line through a wide range of tools and platforms
 - ▶ Eg: different social media channels (FaceBook, Twitter, Instagram)
 - ▶ Traditional media (radio, TV, print)
 - ▶ Community meetings/events
 - ▶ Peer to peer learning (workshops and face to face interactions)
- ▶ Reach out to other zero waste communities and be a part of the Zero Waste Europe network

Mobilise Your Community part 1

▶ **Develop local actions**

- ▶ i.e., Zero Waste Festival
- ▶ Repair Café
- ▶ Recycling and Composting workshops
- ▶ Reuse Month actions
- ▶ Ask local shops to offer zero waste items/map them
- ▶ Install new street recycling bins

▶ **Participate in local activities**

- ▶ Green your St. Patrick's Day festival
- ▶ Tend a stand at the local arts festival
- ▶ Work with schools

Mobilise Your Community part 2

▶ Create campaigns

- ▶ Plastic-free July
- ▶ Shop and drop unwanted packaging at local shop
- ▶ Plastic-free schools or straw free communities
- ▶ Conscious Cup Campaign
- ▶ Use your brown bin or 'compost for our community'
- ▶ Start a zero waste challenge (competition between communities, sports clubs, schools) See challenge pack at the end of this document
- ▶ Buy nothing new challenge
- ▶ Take and encourage new ideas from all community sectors
- ▶ Join a study tour to see what other zero waste communities are doing

Keep up the momentum and passion

- ▶ This is difficult as participants may get discouraged or burned out.
- ▶ Keep bringing in new volunteers to push this initiative forward
- ▶ Ensure that the waste company stays involved and helps to achieve lower rates of residual waste
- ▶ Continue to try new ideas, no matter how crazy
- ▶ Involve schools and children...get them involved in organising events
- ▶ Constantly try to improve and tackle hard to reduce waste...work with producers to make more sustainable products
- ▶ Share your story with all your successes and barriers or failures. Let others learn from your experience.
- ▶ Help other communities on their zero waste journey

Track your Success

- ▶ Get baseline waste data, including weights of all bins from the waste company and local authority
- ▶ Conduct a waste characterisation study at the beginning to understand contamination levels of each bin and what type of waste is most problematic
- ▶ Target biggest waste fraction first (ie, food waste in the residual bin)
- ▶ Periodically, conduct new measurements of bin weights and contamination levels throughout your zero waste journey
- ▶ Constantly liaise and coordinate with waste management company and get them involved

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