

Additional Funding Needed to Meet Future EU Packaging recycling Targets

- Investment in packaging recycling to rise to €45 million per year by 2011
- €117 million invested in packaging recycling by Repak since 1997
- Repak has funded the recycling of nearly 3 million tonnes of used packaging since 1997
- Repak agree 5 year Strategic Partnership with Government and stakeholders
- Changes to the packaging regulations to obligate more companies

(25 April 2007) €180 million needs to be invested by Irish industry in packaging recycling over the next 5 years in order for Ireland to meet its next EU packaging recovery targets. By 2011 the annual funding of packaging recycling by Repak is forecast to rise to €45 million, attendees at the annual Repak Service Operators Conference in Mullingar were told today.

The new figures reflect a 50% increase in the funding for the next 5 years versus the amount invested over the last 10 years, as more recycled packaging is sourced from household bins throughout the country. The figures were revealed against the backdrop of €117 million that the organisation has invested in funding packaging recycling in Ireland to date, in meeting its member's producer responsibility obligations to fund the recycling of their used packaging. Through this investment, packaging recycling has grown from under 15% in 1998 to over 60% in 2006. In total Repak has recorded the funding of nearly 3 million tonnes of used packaging since its establishment in 1997, which would otherwise have gone to landfill.

As Repak celebrates its 10 year anniversary it outlined that central to ensuring that future funds were available to meet growing recycling targets meant not only large increases to existing members but more importantly bringing more companies into the producer responsibility net. Large companies who were currently ignoring the legislative obligation under producer responsibility also need to be identified and forced to comply.

Commenting on the challenges ahead Andrew Hetherington, CEO Repak said "Higher costs and increases in EU Targets for packaging recycling will shape the recycling debate in Ireland. In order to ensure we are equipped to meet these challenges we need to control costs, where possible, by ensuring progress on indigenous market development to reduce the cost and reliance on exporting used packaging for recycling. To ensure certainty for all stakeholders Repak has agreed a 5 year strategic partnership with government and local authorities that will secure the future of recycling through increased Repak membership funding, increased subsidies and funding for local authorities and waste contractors. Central to Ireland meeting these future challenges is ensuring that all companies with producer responsibility are paying their way."

Also presenting at the conference for local authorities and waste contractors was Fred McDarby, senior Environment Consultant from Enterprise Ireland who presented on the plans for the €13 million government funded Market Development Programme. The delegates also heard details of the joint Repak/EPA Packaging Prevention programme that aims to reduce the volume of packaging being generated in the first place.

Future changes to the packaging regulations that will see thousands of extra companies becoming obligated under the Waste Management Regulations (Packaging) were also outlined by the minister for State Batt O'Keefe. Enforcement of this legislation is seen as key to ensuring that Ireland can continue to meet the steep costs of future packaging recycling targets.

About Repak

Repak is a not-for-profit voluntary member's based packaging recycling scheme established under a voluntary agreement between industry and the Department of the Environment and Local Government. It was established as industry's response to the obligations placed on Ireland by the EU directive on Packaging Waste (94/62/EC) and is the only government approved packaging compliance scheme under the Waste Management (Packaging) Regulations 1997. Repak succeeded in reaching and exceeding Ireland's EU National Packaging Recovery and Recycling Targets of 25% of packaging waste in 2001 and 50% in 2005 and is well on their way to achieving their 2011 target of 60%.

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