



CRNI 2020 Annual Report



The year 2020 was the CRNI's **10th anniversary**. While it was not possible to celebrate this in a meaningful way due to Covid-19, the crisis saw **the network become more valued than ever**. Members sought to connect with each other and help each other to navigate the restrictions. They valued even more the information that CRNI shared on funding, Covid-19 business supports, business opportunities and training.

CRNI saw the largest **new member intake** of any year. We contributed to **significant policy developments** in the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy, as well as reuse policy at EU level and policy developments affecting social enterprises nationally. We expanded our communications with new **circular economy online tools** and social media reach. The EPA's core funding also enabled CRNI to participate in four externally funded research projects and one funded promotional campaign to help advance our aim to mainstream community resources.

1.0 Innovating and Demonstrating

One of CRNI's strategic goals is to mainstream the community resources sector, which includes identifying innovative projects and sourcing funding or collaborating to develop pilot projects.

1.1 Green Enterprise

New Projects

In 2020, CRNI identified a need to explore separate collection methods for textiles that will support Irish reuse operators, in advance of any policy measures being introduced in 2025. We were pleased to be successful in applying for **Green Enterprise funding for "Circular Textiles"** to explore this and look forward to commencing the two year project in 2021.

CRNI made a submission to the **Climate Action Fund consultation** to flag the importance of funding smaller projects contributing to the circular economy and supported a Horizon 2020 application.

Dissemination of Past Projects

We continue to identify ways to **disseminate** our concluded Green Enterprise research projects.

CRNI made a strong recommendation in our submission to the consultation on the *Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy* to give ReMark *"formal recognition in policy and funding to develop it to the next stage on an all-island basis and in collaboration with Northern Ireland's DAERA"*. It was noted that, in Scotland, the quality mark Revolve has been funded by the Exchequer through Zero Waste Scotland for over 8 years and has accredited over 150 stores.



On the 27th October, CRNI presented findings from the ReMark project at an EPA dissemination event. CRNI will continue to explore opportunities to roll out ReMark at national level in 2021.



CRNI also used the findings from the **Bulky Item Reuse** project to make recommendations to the consultation on the *Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy*, including:

- The negative perceptions about the opportunity for reuse (either purchasing or handling unwanted items)
- The small scale of the reuse sector, and
- Storage being an important perceived barrier

To better communicate the findings from this research, CRNI commissioned an infographic and designed a “How to Guide” which were published, along with other updates, on our website <https://crni.ie/bulky-items-reuse/> and in social media.

We presented the project at a WARP_IT meeting in Belfast, at the [Procurement Summit](#) in Dublin and at an online EPA Green Enterprise dissemination event in September which reached 52 stakeholders. We followed up with five of these including the Irish Green Labs network, the HSE and the OGP to explore how the findings could benefit their organisations.

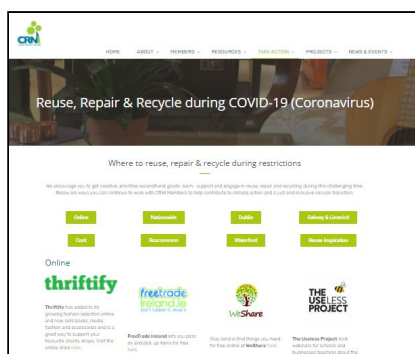
1.2 Campus Project

One of CRNI’s objectives is to influence behavioural change by supporting member engagement with the public and all sectors of the community. We see the EPA’s campus programme as an exciting opportunity to support behavioural change and apply our knowledge of bulky item reuse.

Although Covid-19 postponed activity in this campaign, we look forward to engaging with the programme in 2021.

1.3 Circular Economy Tools Online

As part of our work to promote our members, CRNI develops online tools and resources including webpages, toolkits, presentations and videos.

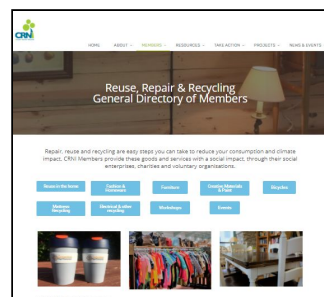


In response to Covid-19, CRNI focused on sharing actions individuals can take to keep reusing and repairing with our members via:

- [Reuse and Recycling during Covid](#), which was our **most visited webpage** in 2020
- a [press release](#) in collaboration with VOICE
- [webinars](#) e.g. Lightning Talk on Reuse and the Circular Economy post-Covid and Living Better, Using Less with The Wheel
- our stakeholder newsletter

In response to the growing focus on Green Public Procurement, we developed a **Green and Social Procurement** webpage [here](#), covering definitions, policy, Irish and EU case studies, links to a webinar on green procurement and a carbon calculator.

We added two directories including a **general members directory** [here](#) and a **procurement directory** [here](#). The general members directory was the second most visited page on our website in 2020.



Following numerous enquiries, we added a webpage with **guidance for new community reuse, repair and recycling enterprises** setting up ([here](#)). Finally, to provide further information on the **Right to Repair** campaign we developed a page about repair [here](#).

Other online resources that are continuously updated on our website include key [publications](#), [presentations](#) and [videos](#).

In 2020, our website obtained 41,261 page views from 14,900 users.

2.0 Partnerships

As a network, CRNI values partnerships. Our strategic objectives include supporting collaborations, stakeholder engagement, representing members locally, regionally, nationally and at EU level and developing strong relationships with key national and local partners.

2.1 Collaboration with the Rediscovery Centre

CRNI worked in close collaboration with the Rediscovery Centre, which is also represented on the CRNI board. We were partners on **two research projects** ([Q2reuse](#) and Nature and Extent of Post-Consumer Textiles) with the Rediscovery Centre and concluded the NWCPO [Green and Social Procurement](#) project in which the Rediscovery Centre was a major partner.



We invited the Rediscovery Centre to participate in **two EU-wide campaigns** including the Right to Repair “[Repair Heroes](#)” campaign in October and RREUSE’s “On the Road to Mannheim” campaign about social enterprise resilience in December.

We collaborated on **events**, inviting the Rediscovery Centre to participate in a [webinar](#) on Reuse and the Circular Economy post-Covid in April and contributing to the [webinar on Green Procurement](#) in November coordinated by the Rediscovery Centre for Green Leaf Limerick.

2.2 Collaboration with Circuleire

CRNI actively contributed to the IMR’s **Circuleire Green Procurement working group**, involving six workshops and in-depth feedback on the final report. The outcomes of this working group will be made available in 2021.

2.3 Supporting the Green Government Agenda

CRNI built on the findings from the BIR project and the NWCPO [Green and Social Procurement](#) project to support Greener Public Procurement.

To help build member capacity to engage in procurement, CRNI provided **tailored training** on procurement and tendering at a members meeting in March. This training was recorded and is available to members via the members-access area of our website.

We made **policy recommendations** on how to facilitate and grow circular procurement activity to the *Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy* consultation and the consultation on the EPA *Guidance on Green Public Procurement*.



We developed **communications tools** including an [infographic](#) and detailed [case study](#) on the NWCPO project, which went on to win Green Procurement of the Year Award at the National Procurement Awards. As highlighted above, we also developed a page dedicated to Green and Social Procurement [here](#) and a procurement directory [here](#).

2.4 Support and grow the network and influence in reuse and repair sector

CRNI's three strategic goals are to support our members, mainstream the community resources sector and build our capacity.



While our efforts to support and grow the network and influence the sector are described throughout this report, we have also summarized our overall achievements of 2020 in line with these three strategic goals in a **short video** [here](#).

3.0 Advocacy and Communications

3.1 National Policy Input

Number in 2020	Description
31	Meetings with the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) and Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) including the Waste Advisory Group, National Social Enterprise Awareness Subgroup and CSP Review Consultative Forum.
13	National working group meetings including the National Waste Prevention Committee, EPA mattress Working Group and IMR'S Circulaire Circular Procurement working group.
18	Policy submissions to DECC, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in Northern Ireland, DRCD and contribution to submissions to European Commission
180	Policy recommendations made to DECC and DAERA

The network participated in 15 meetings with DECC officials either directly on key policy matters or through actively contributing to the DECC Waste Advisory Group. In consultation with our members and in communication with the EPA and other stakeholders including RREUSE and WEEE Ireland, CRNI compiled a comprehensive response to the DECC's **Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy consultation** and the Waste Framework Directive Transposition consultation. The former included 81 recommendations and CRNI disseminated this paper to key stakeholders, TDs from the main parties, and via our news and social media channels.

We also made submissions to consultations on the Deposit-Refund scheme, the EPA's End of Waste Guidance, the EPA's Green Public Procurement Guidance and a Pre-Budget submission. CRNI also submitted a response to the DAERA consultation on the *Waste Prevention Programme 2019: Stopping Waste in its Tracks*. Most of these are publicly available on our website <https://crni.ie/key-policy-areas/>.



We prepared, with other RREUSE network members, a response to the draft **EU proposals on Reporting of Data on Re-use of products**, the **EU Roadmap on the Sustainable Products Initiative**, the **EU Roadmap on Empowering the consumer for the green transition**, as well as RREUSE position papers on Textile EPR schemes and a joined position paper on **Quality Standards for WEEE Treatment**.

CRNI met with officials from DRCD and was selected to participate in the **Awareness Strategy Sub-Group** of the National Social Enterprise Policy and the **Community Services Programme Review Consultative Forum**.

Finally, to promote the **Sustainable Development Goals**, CRNI prepared and disseminated four [videos](#) reflecting CRNI member and expert views on how SDGs 8, 12, 13 and 17 relate to reuse, repair and recycling. These were disseminated by social media and uploaded to our website and youtube channel.

3.2 Knowledge Sharing and Communications

CRNI's main strategic goal is to support our members, through developing a dynamic network, providing supports to strengthen member capacity, representing members at local, national and EU level and promoting our membership base as outlined below:

a. Develop a dynamic CRNI Network

Number in 2020	Description
13	New members
25 reaching 158 attendees	Members Meetings / direct calls (plus >35 individual consultations)

In 2020 CRNI added **thirteen new members** to its network bringing the total membership to 37. A full list of membership is included in Annex A.



One physical and 24 online **national members meetings** were held in total. In March, as noted in Section 2.3 above, our members meeting in Kerry included tailored training on procurement and tendering. Other themes covered during online meetings include promoting your business online, measuring impact, reopening guidance, new business opportunities and business responses to Covid-19, zoom tips, Covid-19 supports and key policy matters.

In total, the meetings were attended by 158 member representatives, which is the highest level of engagement the network has seen in any one year.

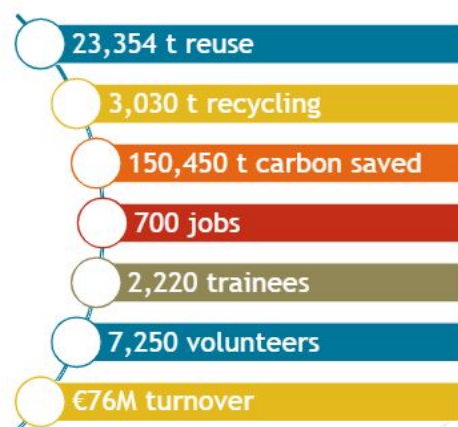
b. Provide supports to strengthen the capacity of CRNI Member Organisations

Over **80% of members were surveyed** (face to face or by phone) between January and March about their priorities and needs for 2020 and findings were reflected - and updated post-Covid - in training and promotional activities undertaken by CRNI.

CRNI provided **weekly members updates** including funding news, business opportunities, events and training available to members. These items were all updated in the members area of our website, which underwent a revamp. Our members funding roadmap was also updated regularly and is accessible any time by members looking for upcoming opportunities.

CRNI compiled **member impact data** for 2019, which is an excellent communications tool and strategically important in the context of reuse measurement and potential future policy targets. We disseminated this data through events, our website and social media.

An outline of the carbon calculation is provided in Annex B.



The COVID-19 crisis was, and continues to be, an extraordinary time for us all. CRNI focused on supporting our members in dealing with lockdown and preparing for reopening and recovery, by:

- running regular **Zoom calls** for members (see Section 3.2.a) to facilitate exchange of experiences, knowledge and identification of barriers
- creating a **new section in our members area** with all of the latest information on Government actions and funding arising to support social enterprises at this time and set up a new platform for members to share skills between themselves
- **lobbying** the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection about the need for greater supports
- promoting, as noted in Section 1.3 above, our members' **lockdown activities and reopening plans** and resources
- following up on behalf of members on **key challenges** including the definition of essential services and delays in TuS and CE scheme workers returning to work post-Covid.

c. Represent Network Members at local, regional, national and EU level

CRNI continued to work closely with its **European** representative body RREUSE - holding the Vice President position, as a board member, and as a member through the policy working groups. In March, before the first lockdown, we hosted the RREUSE network meeting in Ireland. This included a presentation by the EPA as well as site visits (Rediscovery Centre, Ecomattress, ReCreate). CRNI represented its members at regular RREUSE working groups - attending 46 in total plus two general assembly meetings.



At **national level**, CRNI represented its members on the DECC Waste Advisory Group, the EPA National Waste Prevention Committee, the DRCD's Awareness Strategy Sub-Group of the National Social Enterprise Policy and CSP Review Consultative Forum, the IMR's Circulaire Green Procurement working group and the EPA's mattress working group as outlined in Section 3.1 above.

CRNI reached out to the **TDs** from all of the main parties in April with summarised key policy positions as submitted to the DECC consultation and contacted **MEPs** in October and November about a Parliamentary vote on the INI report "Towards a sustainable single market for business and consumers", to support the right to repair.

We developed our **relationship with key stakeholders** including the Regional Waste Authorities, The Wheel, VOICE of the Irish Environment, the Irish Environmental Network, Community Foundation Ireland, Irish Green Building Council, Right to Repair Europe and the Irish Social Enterprise Network by collaborating on events, press coverage and exploring research opportunities. We also continued to develop **relationships with businesses** including AIB, Brown Thomas, Beauparc, Wisetek, Crown Workspace and Zipyard, exploring opportunities to collaborate or facilitate circular procurement.

Finally, CRNI responded to an increasing number of **general enquiries** including:

- queries about the sector from the Regional Waste Authorities (re textile bank management), and from the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) regarding barriers faced during Covid-19 lockdown.
- general public enquiries, due to CRNI being listed on mywaste.ie [here](#)
- business queries about setting up new social enterprises in reuse, repair or recycling across a range of product groups from hotel toiletries to second hand toys, EEE repair, foam recycling and reusable containers. This has involved more detailed support hence CRNI developed the guidance to new community reuse, repair and recycling enterprises setting up webpage ([here](#)).

d. Promote CRNI and its membership base

Number in 2020	Description
349,471	Social media and website reach
4 with 445 views	Stakeholder newsletter reach

21 reaching 800 attendees

Presentations given at virtual seminars / conferences

Due to COVID-19 the biennial conference was postponed to 2021. However, CRNI **presented at 21 online events** (including two at EU level) collaborating with 11 organisations and reaching over 800 attendees. Copies of a number of these presentations are on our website [here](#).

Through our 2020 Communications plan, we also:

- Changed our **logo** across to reflect our new branding as Community Resources Network and tagline “Reuse Repair Recycling”
- Compiled and disseminated our annual report for 2019 (see [here](#))
- Distributed **four newsletters** to our subscriber list of 225 contacts. The newsletter opening rate improved from 38% to 49%, with a total of 445 views.
- Published daily posts across our four **social media** channels with:
 - 19% increase in Twitter following making a total of 211,400 impressions
 - 19% increase in Facebook following making a total of 96,810 impressions
- Added six new pages to our **website** as outlined in Section 1.3 above.
- Ran four campaigns including **press releases** on CRNI's policy submission to the Waste Action Plan, Reuse while staying safe at home (at the start of the Covid-19 crisis), International repair Day and Green Friday as shown below.



4.0 Governance and Organisational

Building CRNI's capacity as a network and good governance are part of our third strategic goal. We achieved this through the four objectives outlined below:

4.1 Ensure that CRNI operates to the highest governance standards.

CRNI held six board meetings in 2020 and updated or developed key policies including the reserves policy and a volunteering and internship policy. We reviewed compliance with the Charities Governance Code as 2020 is the first year that registered charities are expected to comply with the Code.

4.2 Update HRM Policy and Staff Development Programme

A staff and board training plan was developed and identified training needs were addressed.

4.3 Develop funding capacity for CRNI to grow

We continue to diversify our funding base through projects including:

- Completion of DAERA funded project *Feasibility of Setting up a Reuse and Repair Network in Northern Ireland*
- Continued participation (as part of the consortium led by CTC and including Rediscovery Centre) in the EPA research project *Qualification and Quantification of Reuse* (Q2reuse)
- Participation in a consortium working for the EPA on the *Nature and Extent of Post-Consumer Textiles*
- Managing a DAERA funded project to establish a pilot network for reuse in Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Resources Network)
- Managing a Reuse month video project funded by the Regional Waste Management Plan Lead Authorities (RWMPPLAs)



4.4 Fulfil reporting requirements

CRNI completed and [published](#) audited accounts for 2019 and met all reporting requirements for the Companies Registration Office (CRO), Charities Regulator (CRA) and the Lobbying Act.

Annex A: List of CRNI Members

Full Members	Location	Materials/Services
An Mheitheal Rothar	Galway / CURWO	Repair bicycles
Back2New	Limerick / SRWO	Repair / upcycling / 2nd Hand furniture, textiles
Bounce Back	Galway / CURWO	Recycling mattresses
Bryson Recycling	Donegal / CURWO	Recycling household recyclables
Camara Ireland	Dublin / EMRWO	Refurbishment computers
Carrickmacross Toy Library	Carrickmacross / EMRWO	Toy lending
Cloth Nappy Library Ireland	Nationwide	Nappies
Deaf Enterprises	Cork / SRWO	Repair / upcycling / 2nd Hand furniture
Duhallow REVAMP	Cork / SRWO	Repair / upcycling / 2nd Hand furniture
East Belfast Mission	Belfast	Repair / upcycling / 2nd Hand furniture, bicycles, clothing, paint
Eco Mattress	Dublin / EMRWO	Recycling mattresses
FoodCloud	Dublin / Cork / Galway	Redistribution Food
Free Trade Ireland	Nationwide	2nd hand online exchange
Gateway to Education	Limerick / SRWO	2nd hand retail / school books and uniforms focus
Habitat for Humanity	Dublin / EMRWO	2nd hand "B&Q" charity shops
ICSA	Nationwide	2nd hand charity shops
Kingdom Furniture Revamp	Kerry / SRWO	Repair / upcycling / 2nd Hand furniture
Northside Community Enterprises	Cork / SRWO	Paint reuse
ReCreate	Dublin / EMRWO	Redistribution creative resources
Recycle IT	Dublin / EMRWO	Recycling WEEE
Rediscovery Centre	Dublin / EMRWO	Upcycling & repair furniture, bicycles, clothing, paint
Refill Ireland	Nationwide	Prevention single use bottles
Rehab Recycling	Dublin / EMRWO	Refurbishment computers
Renew Enterprises	Waterford / SURWO	Bicycle & lawnmower repair, upcycled furniture
Rethink Consumption	Galway / CURWO	Repair / awareness about impacts of EEE
Revamp 3R	Longford / EMRWO	Repair / upcycling / 2nd Hand furniture
Roscommon Women's Network	Roscommon / CURWO	2nd hand charity shop / textile upcycling
USEL	Belfast	Mattress recycling; furniture reuse
Affiliate Members		
Conscious Cup	Nationwide	Prevention single use cups

Cork Community Bikes	Cork / SRWO	Repair / 2nd hand bicycles
CycleSense	Cork / SRWO	Repair / 2nd hand bicycles and paint reuse
Native Events	Nationwide	Sustainable events management
Tech2Students	Nationwide	Laptop refurbishment
The Use-Less Project	Nationwide	Textiles, Food
Thriftify	Nationwide	Books, media, textiles
White Rabbit	Dublin / EMRWO	Furniture, Furnishings
Weshare	Dublin / EMRWO	Household items, skills

Annex B: Carbon Saving Estimate

Carbon savings are primarily based on metrics identified in an EPA Green Enterprise study *Key Performance Indicators for the Reuse sector* carried out by the Rediscovery Centre. An estimate of carbon savings per tonne food redistributed were provided by FoodCloud.

In this study the following carbon savings were identified per unit type:

Bicycle	81	kgCO2/bike
Clothing	9.5	kgCO2/kg
Furniture - tables	0.62	kg CO2/kg dining table
Furniture - sofas	1.45	kg CO2/kg sofa
Paint - water based	2.41	kgCO2/kg paint
Food	3	kgCO2/kg food

The tonnage reuse data reported by CRNI members is not granular, so conservative assumptions are made about the average unit saving. For example, the average saving from the reuse of a unit of furniture is estimated to be the same as for a table, as a true breakdown of furniture is not available. A blend of data applicable to cotton T-shirts and woollen jumpers is also used for general clothing in the study.

The tonnage reuse data reported by CRNI members is converted into tonnes CO2 saved as follows:

	Furniture	Textiles	Paint	Bicycle	Food
Total Reuse	6,285	14,559	18	10	2,175
Carbon est /t material	0.6	9.5	2.4	81	3
Carbon total tonnes saved	3,953	138,693	44	798	6,960

While this does not provide a high level of accuracy, it most likely represents an underestimate of the total savings as the lower end saving is used for a particular product group and several categories are not included due to a lack of data (e.g. IT reuse, creative materials, wood).