



Community Resources Network Ireland (CRNI) Repair, Reuse, Recycle

Annual Report 2021

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Throughout 2021 the CRNI network continued to be valued by members and stakeholders alike. Members connected with each other through ongoing Zoom sessions, and received valuable information on funding, business supports, opportunities, and training.

CRNI continued to contribute to significant policy developments as part of the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy, as well as reuse policy at EU level and policy developments affecting social enterprises nationally.

Additionally, we expanded our communications with new circular economy online tools and growing social media reach.

The EPA's core funding also enabled CRNI to participate in 4 externally funded research projects and 1 funded promotional campaign to help advance our aim to mainstream community resources.



1.0 Innovating and Demonstrating



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 February 2021, CRNI commenced working on the EPA Green Enterprise "Circular Textiles" project. [A web page](#) has been created to disseminate the work and CRNI has run numerous national and international workshops including a workshop at a major resource efficiency conference PLATE 2021.

With funding from DAERA, we continued to roll out the piloting phase of the Northern Ireland Resources Network, and began a new 'transition' phase towards NIRN becoming a standalone organisation.

In addition, CRNI supported 5 national and international research projects through knowledge sharing or structured interviews.

Dissemination of Past Projects

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

CRNI made a strong recommendation in submissions to the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy, All of Government Strategy for a Circular Economy and EPA Circular Economy Programme consultations to support the national roll out of ReMark to help motivate behaviour change through the improvement of consumers' perception of quality and decision to purchase second hand goods.

A successful funding application was also submitted to the Circular Economy Innovation Grant Scheme to improve and demonstrate the ReMark quality mark is ready for full-scale national roll out. This will align with the policy ambition in the All of Government Circular Economy Strategy pre consultation to explore the further expansion of national circular economy branding. The application was supported by DAERA in the context of a potential all-island roll out. CRNI also met with Zero Waste Scotland to discuss the Revolve secondhand branding project evolution and next steps.

CRNI presented the findings of the Bulky Item Reuse project to the Office of Government Procurement category council on the 2nd February, from which the feedback was highly positive.

1.2 Circular Economy Tools Online

As part of our work to promote our members, CRNI developed online tools and resources including webpages, toolkits, presentations and videos. In 2021 we made 5 online presentations available including the full recording from our two-day conference. We also shared all of our final policy submissions on our website. Our website obtained 53,012 page views from 18,332 users in 2021, which was a 20% increase on the previous year.

2.0 Partnerships



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 CIRCULÉIRE

CRNI is actively contributing to the IMR's *CIRCULÉIRE* Circular Design working **group**, which kicked off in June 2021. This will involve at least 6 workshops and contributions to reporting.

2.2 Collaboration with the Rediscovery Centre

CRNI works in close collaboration with the Rediscovery Centre, which is also represented on the CRNI Board. We are partners in the Q2reuse research project and agreed to work with the Rediscovery Centre in the Circular Textiles project following a competitive tendering process.

We also collaborated on events, with CRNI inviting the Rediscovery Centre to participate on a panel of experts at our Conference in June 2021 and the Rediscovery Centre inviting CRNI to facilitate a panel discussion during their Centre Fixit festival on 17th June.

2.3 Supporting the Green Government Agenda

CRNI participated in an expert working group on Beyond Buying: Towards a circular & fair trade public procurement in municipalities (1) in January, and shared opportunities for circular and social procurement to the Public Procurement Ireland Conference 2021 in June.

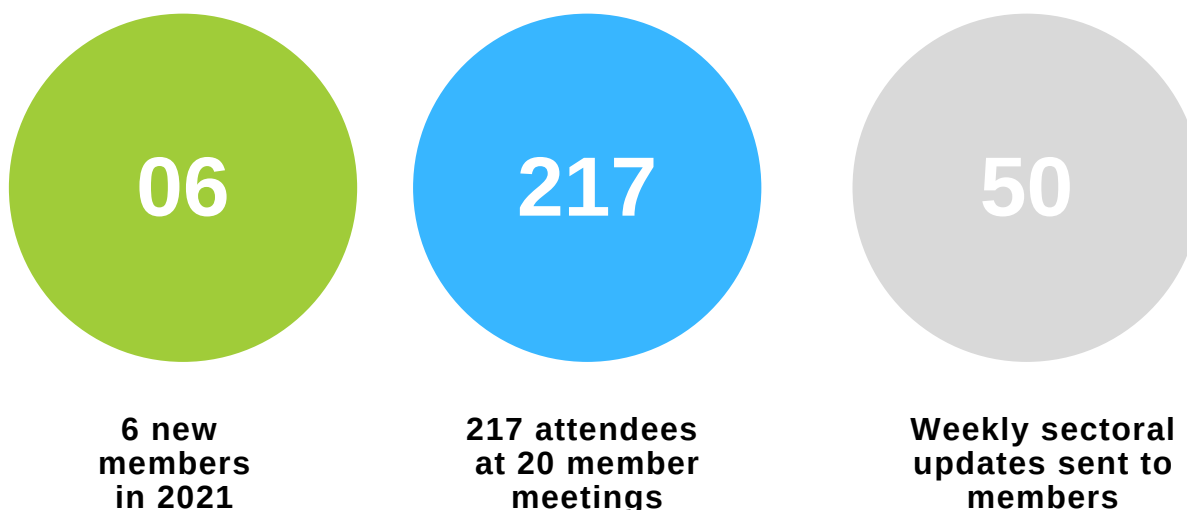
We made policy recommendations on how to facilitate and grow circular procurement activity to the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy (NWMPCE) and the All of Government Circular Economy Strategy (AGCES), including:

- supporting ReMark as a means of providing assurance regarding circular goods and services
- including the proposed minimum target for procurement of used goods as a goal, supported by actions, in the AGCES
- the monitoring of circular procurement in the <€25,000 threshold tenders to acknowledge the scale of the sector
- requiring circular and social goals are reflected in all local / regional Local Authority procurement contracts and grant or funding schemes through the NWMPCE
- reviewing and adopting the Irish Prison Service framework contract model, which is progressing measures to accommodate social enterprises
- Local Authorities supporting circular and social aims at Civic Amenity Sites, including supporting textile banks operated by charity retailers, through splitting Civic Amenity Site management contracts into lots or facilitating smaller contracts for specific streams like mattresses and/or by specifying that successful awardees of larger tenders provide social gain through subcontracts.

1. organised by the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen and the Fair Trade Advocacy Office

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

a. Develop a dynamic CRNI Network



In 2021 CRNI added 6 new members to its network but lost two members due to closures or inactivity, bringing the total membership to 41. A full list of current membership is included in Annex A.

There were 20 national members meetings and one all-island joint meeting between CRNI and Northern Ireland Resources Network (NIRN) members. This included training on funding, invited guests including the Department of Rural and Community Development, and tailored training on marketing and storytelling. A new feature was a monthly call on one dedicated product group, e.g. textiles or furniture, to connect members working in similar areas.

In total, the meetings were attended by 217 member representatives, which is the highest level of engagement the network has seen to date.

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

Over 85% of members were surveyed (via Zoom) between January and March about their priorities and needs for 2021 and findings were reflected in training and promotional activities planned by CRNI. CRNI continues to provide weekly members updates including funding news, business opportunities, events and training available to members, which are all also included in the members area of our website.

Through our members alerts we have shared 80+ funding or awards opportunities, 26 tender opportunities and 9 speaking or profile raising opportunities.

We also provided access for members to **8 large bulky goods donations**. This led to a successful and major partnership between Boyle Sports and Rehab Recycle, which is described further [here](#).

To support the increase in relevant funding opportunities, CRNI provided training and updated our member's funding roadmap. CRNI also **directly supported at least 16 members** with funding applications by providing letters of support, policy advice, funding application advice and/or feedback on draft applications. The Department of Rural and Community Development has also **adopted CRNI's funding roadmap** for their database of funding available to support social enterprises.

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

CRNI continues to work closely with its European representative body RREUSE - holding the Vice President position, as a board member, and contributing to policy working groups in 2021. CRNI has also participated in Right to Repair campaign policy meetings and joined ECOS, which advocates for environmentally friendly technical standards, policies and laws.

At national level, CRNI has represented its members at 26 meetings with the DECC Waste Advisory Group, the EPA National Waste Prevention Committee, the CSP Review Consultative Forum, Regional Operational Steering Groups and the IMR's CIRCULÉIRE Circular Design working group.

We further developed our relationship with key stakeholders including the Regional Waste Authorities, Probation Services, IWMA, Nevin Economic Research Institute, WERLAs, Strategic Investment Board NI, Department of Further Education, WEEE Ireland, Zero Waste Scotland, The Wheel, VOICE of the Irish Environment, An Taisce, CIWM, the Irish Social Enterprise Network, and the Alliance for Insurance Reform by collaborating on events, press coverage and exploring research opportunities. We also continued to develop relationships with businesses such as Irish Rail to explore opportunities to collaborate or facilitate circular procurement.

CRNI also responded to an increasing number of general enquiries including:

- 10 queries about setting up new social enterprises in reuse, repair or recycling, including tool libraries, online platforms and wood reuse
- Over 50 general public enquiries, due to CRNI being listed on mywaste.ie

3.0 Advocacy and Communications



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3.1 National European Policy Input

2021 in numbers



Policy submissions to DECC, DRCD and the European Commission



Policy recommendations



Meetings with key policy makers (Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), EPA, Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD), Regional Waste Management Authorities



Policy working group meetings with European networks RREUSE, Right to Repair, ECOS, and nationally with the National Waste Prevention Committee and DECC's Waste Advisory Group

2021 was a significant year for policy development. In consultation with our members and in communication with other stakeholders, CRNI made 6 policy submissions, including 1 in response to a European Commission consultation and three to national policy consultations, comprising 128 recommendations altogether. All submissions are available on our website [here](#).

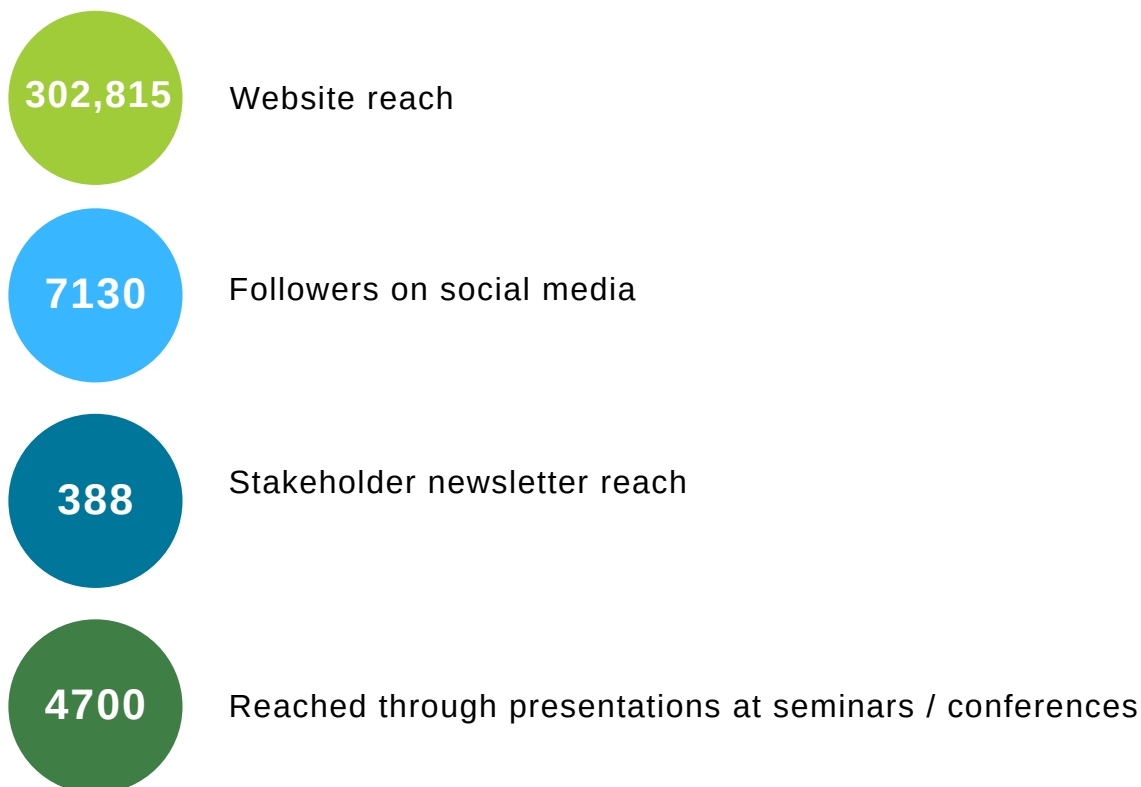
3 submissions were disseminated via our newsletter, news page and social media channels.

CRNI actively contributed to 23 meetings with the DECC, EPA or Regional Waste Authorities either directly on key policy matters or through actively contributing to working groups including the Waste Advisory Group, the National Waste Prevention Programme or the Operational Steering Committees. CRNI has also met 4 times with officials from DRCD either directly or through the Community Services Programme Review Consultative Forum.

1 of the 3 planned briefing sessions was on key EU themes with RREUSE and other stakeholders for the EPA / DCCAE, the other was with the Right to Repair campaign on Ecodesign Regulations. This was attended by 24 representatives from a broad cross section of policy makers and other stakeholders and led to 1 follow-up call with the monitoring body SEAI.

3.2 Knowledge Sharing and Communications

2021 in numbers



CRNI held its biennial conference in June on how Jobs and Skills in the Circular Economy, exploring how to make the most of the evolving policy and funding landscape to create real career opportunities in reuse and repair in Ireland. The event, run via the online platform Hopin, was joined by 198 people across the two sessions, involved 23 speakers of which 9 were CRNI members, supported 77 networking sessions and featured 25 expo booths. We are grateful to the EPA for their support for the event. All of the recordings are available on the website.

CRNI developed a new template for sharing our compiled member impact data for 2020 as shown across. The data compilation process was revised in light of member feedback and the Q2Reuse project findings. We have for the first time added statistics for repair as a service, the number of people reached through education and training services and the overall number of customers serviced. We also improved the quality of carbon estimates.

Member Metrics 2020



REUSED
18,170 TONNES



REPAIR SERVICES
49 TONNES



RECYCLED
2,327 TONNES



CARBON SAVINGS
118,386 TONNES



FULL TIME EMPLOYEES
728 PEOPLE



PART TIME EMPLOYEES
62 PEOPLE



EMPLOYMENT SCHEMES
818 PEOPLE



VOLUNTEERS
8,677 PEOPLE



TURNOVER
€39,774,837



CUSTOMERS SERVICED
5,354,319 PEOPLE



EDUCATION & TRAINING
64,105 PEOPLE



SOCIAL VALUE
€53,777,214

This data has been disseminated through our newsletter, news page, events and social media. This template is also being used to prepare individual member impact data, which was requested during the members surveys and which they can use to demonstrate their impact for funders and other key stakeholders.

CRNI presented at 11 online events (including one in the UK and one at EU level) reaching over 4,700 attendees. Copies of a number of these presentations are on our website.

Through our 2021 communications plan, we also:

- Compiled and disseminated our annual report for 2020
- Distributed 3 newsletters with 40+ news items to our subscriber list of some 390 contacts
- Published daily posts across our 4 social media channels
- Shared 17 news items which were disseminated in national circulars



4.0 Advocacy and Communications

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 4 board meetings in 2021 and developed a board induction pack.

4.2 Update HRM Policy and Staff Development Programme

A staff and board training plan has been updated and identified training needs addressed.

4.3 Develop funding capacity for CRNI to grow

In addition to the Circular Textiles Green Enterprise project, we continue to diversify our funding base through projects including:

- 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)
- Managing a DAERA funded project to transition the network for reuse in Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Resources Network) into a stand-alone entity

As highlighted previously, CRNI also successfully applied for funding through the CEIGS for the improvement and demonstration of ReMark in preparation for national roll out.

4.4 Fulfil reporting requirements

CRNI finalised audited accounts for 2020 in preparation for an AGM in August and CRO and CRA filing in October.

Annex A

CRNI Members



Annex A Continued CRNI Members



Annex A Continued CRNI Members



Annex A

CRNI Member Feedback

For all ranked questions 1 star = not at all beneficial, 5 stars = extremely beneficial

NETWORKING:

Since the start of 2021, please rate how beneficial CRNI has been to your organisation in providing opportunities to participate in knowledge sharing/networking with other reuse and/or repair organisations.

Average Rating 4.4

TRAINING:

Since the beginning of 2021 please rate how beneficial CRNI has been to your organisation in providing training to sustain/enhance your organisation's activities in reuse and/or repair.

Average Rating 3.3

PROMOTION:

Since the beginning of 2021, please rate how beneficial CRNI has been in promoting your organisation's products/services/activities in reuse and/or repair.

Average Rating 4.2

FUNDING:

Since the beginning of 2021 please rate how beneficial CRNI has been in providing information about funding opportunities in reuse and/or repair to your organisation.

Average Rating 4.1

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES:

Since the beginning of 2021, please rate how beneficial CRNI has been in providing information about business opportunities in reuse and/or repair.

Average Rating 3.4

POLICY:

Since the beginning of 2021, how beneficial has CRNI been in representing your organisation's policy priorities in reuse and/or repair to policymakers?

Average Rating 3.6