Reuse Repair Recycle

Community Resources Network Ireland



2025 Impact Report

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Community Resources Network Ireland

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1. Introduction

Social Enterprises and Community-based organisations are making a significant contribution to Ireland's transition to a circular economy, combining waste prevention, reuse, repair and recycling with employment, skills development, social inclusion and community participation.

Community Resources Network Ireland (CRNI) is the national member body representing organisations who are working to prevent waste, extend product lifespans and create value from resources that might otherwise be discarded.

CRNI's 2025 impact survey provides evidence of this contribution. **The responses from 27 of its 45 member organisations, representing 60% of the network, reported handling 32,850 tonnes of materials, including 18,501 tonnes reused, repaired or recycled. These activities are estimated to have avoided approximately 71,900 tonnes of CO_2e.**

Beyond their environmental contribution, respondents reported **507 staff, 10,816 volunteers, 6,438 hours of training and 65 people progressing into employmen**t.

The findings demonstrate the **distinctive value of community-based circular enterprises** while highlighting the barriers limiting their development, particularly funding, premises, insurance and organisational capacity.

This report provides an evidence base for strengthening CRNI's members and advocating for their meaningful participation in Ireland's emerging circular economy policies, infrastructure and investment programmes.

2. Environmental impact

Responding organisations and sectoral bodies reported **handling 32,850 tonnes of material across all streams**. Of this:

- 16,526 tonnes were reused,
- 128 tonnes were repaired,
- 1,847 tonnes were recycled,
- 2,617 tonnes were recovered.

Together, reuse, repair and recycling accounted for 18,501 tonnes, rising to 21,118 tonnes when recovery is included. **Textiles was the largest material stream**, and with 16,681 tonnes being handled this amounts to 51% of all materials reported by CRNI members. Furniture accounted for 4,909 tonnes, while other items accounted for 5,454 tonnes.

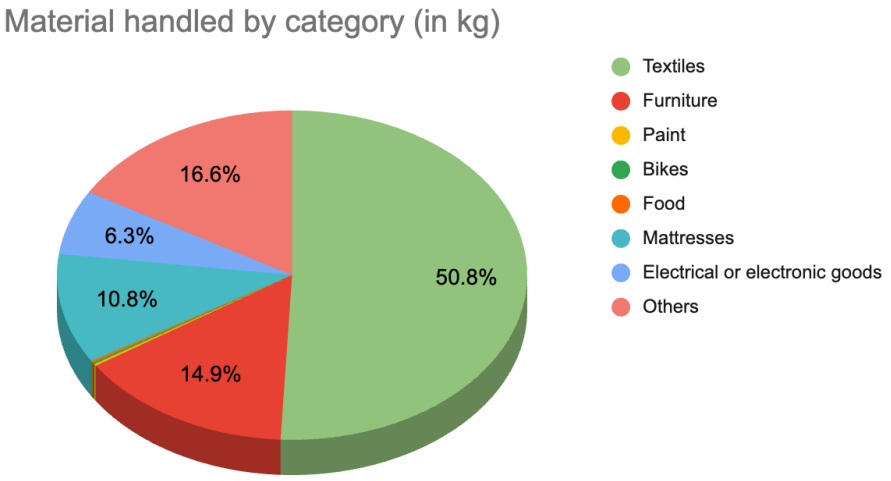
Based on the WRAP Benefits of Re-use Three model, the reuse, repair and recycling activity reported

by these organisations is estimated to have **avoided approximately 71,900 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e)**[1].

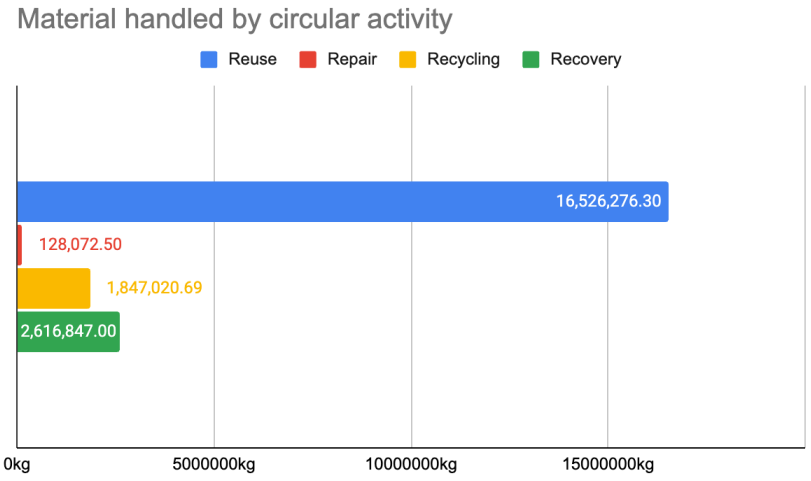
Some findings include national sector-wide data supplied by Charity Retail Ireland (CRI) on behalf of its members. Where relevant, these are distinguished from direct returns by individual CRNI member organisations. Consequently, reported totals should **not** be interpreted as activity delivered exclusively by individual CRNI members.

Of the 16,681 tonnes of textiles reported, 11,730 tonnes were recorded as disposed, with over 99% of this figure attributable to CRI's sector-wide return. Similarly, CRI accounted for 416 (90%) of the 460 shops and outlets reported, with the remaining 26 respondents accounting for 44 outlets.

Customer and sales data were less comprehensive. The reported 35,331 customers were drawn from 10 of 27 respondents, while 53,087 items sold were reported by nine organisations.



Graph 1: Material handled by CRNI members by category, 2025. Total reported material handled: 32,850 tonnes.



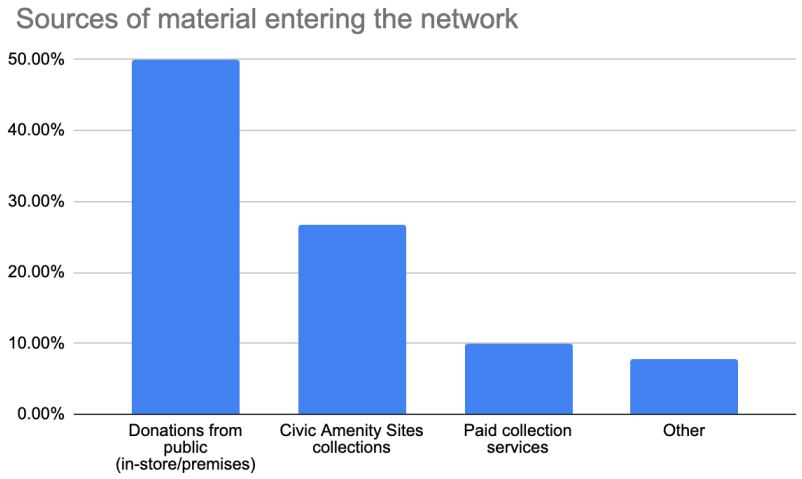
Graph 2: Material entering reuse, repair and recycling routes with CRNI members in 2025.

[1] This figure should be treated as a modelled estimate rather than a directly measured carbon saving. It is based on the organisations that responded to the survey and has not been extrapolated to the wider CRNI membership. The methodology and its limitations are set out in the appendix.

Public donations were the largest reported source of material entering the network, accounting for 49.9% of reported sourcing.

Other sources included:

- Civic Amenity Site collections: 26.8%,
- Paid collection services: 10.0%,
- Other sources: 7.7%,
- Corporate donations: 5.6%.



Graph 3: Sources of material handled by CRNI members in 2025.

These figures highlight the scale of activity represented while reinforcing the **need for more consistent, comparable impact reporting across the network**. This mix reflects the importance of both community participation and established collection infrastructure to the work of reuse and recycling organisations.

The environmental work of CRNI members contributes to wider sustainability goals including the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG12, SDG8 and SDG11, relating respectively to responsible consumption and production, decent work and sustainable communities.

3. Social and community impact

Most community-based circular enterprises **deliberately combine environmental services with opportunities for employment, training, inclusion and community participation**. These social outcomes are central to their purpose.

Our members informed us of their activities that create opportunities for skills development,

participation, employment and social inclusion, including for people facing barriers in the wider labour market.

In the survey, respondents reported:

- 507 staff,
- 10,816 volunteers,
- 6,438 hours of training,
- 294 certified trainee,
- 65 people progressing into employment.

Nineteen of the 27 respondents, or 70%, reported having or relying on volunteers to sustain their activities. Volunteers contribute to the operation of reuse and repair services, charity shops, community initiatives and other activities while also benefiting from opportunities for participation, learning and social connection.

Training and skills development were reported by 15 organisations. Together, these organisations delivered 6,438 hours of training, resulting in 294 certified trainees, of whom 65 moved into employment.

Six organisations reported running disability schemes involving 12 people, while five organisations reported dedicated social inclusion programmes.

These findings demonstrate the role circular enterprises can play in **developing practical skills and creating employment pathways**.

The social contribution of CRNI members also includes outcomes that are more difficult to quantify. Members highlighted benefits such as confidence, independence, social inclusion and community participation. These develop over time and are not always captured through conventional annual reporting. **While the survey quantifies employment, volunteering and training activity, the evidence on longer-term outcomes remains less consistent.**

Developing methods to capture these wider benefits, including health, wellbeing and community resilience, will be important to demonstrating the full value of community-based circular enterprises.

4. Economic impact

CRNI members contribute to economic activity through the **sale of reused goods, the provision of repair services and the operation of community-based circular enterprises**. These activities generate trading income while providing households with affordable alternatives to purchasing new products.

The 2025 CRNI impact survey recorded that combined revenue from reuse and repair was €75 million, reflecting the significant contribution of Ireland's charity retail sector. However, these figures

require careful interpretation because CRI reported national data on behalf of its member charity shops.

Total reported revenue from reuse sales was €70.3 million, of which €69.2 million (98%) came from CRI's sector-wide return. Excluding this figure, the remaining 26 respondents reported €1.1 million in reuse-sales revenue.

Repair services generated €4.65 million in reported revenue, including €4.44 million (96%) reported through CRI. The remaining organisations reported €209,052.

Excluding CRI's national figures, combined reuse and repair revenue reported by other respondents was €1.32 million.

These findings demonstrate economic activity across the network while highlighting the importance of distinguishing individual member returns from wider sectoral reporting.

The survey recorded 460 shops and outlets, including 416 reported through CRI's national network and 44 across the other 26 respondents.

Respondents also reported 35,331 customers served and 53,087 items sold. However, comparable customer figures were provided by only 10 organisations, while nine reported items sold.

These figures illustrate the extent of retail and customer-facing activity represented in the survey, although incomplete reporting limits their use as comprehensive network-wide indicators.

Applying WRAP's household-cost assumptions, reuse activity is estimated to have generated **€327.7 million in net household savings**. This is a modelled estimate and should be interpreted in light of the assumptions described in the methodology.

The estimated contributions were:

- Textiles: €260.5 million,
- Furniture: €18.7 million,
- Electrical reuse: €12.5 million,
- Other material streams: €36.0 million.

Repair activity may have generated a further €0.7 million in household savings.

These are modelled estimates, not directly measured household savings. They depend on assumptions about purchasing behaviour, the displacement of new products and the value of reused goods. The repair estimate is particularly uncertain because the model does not fully reflect the range of repair services delivered by members.

Like the circular and social impact metrics reported above, it must be noted that the the **values reported by CRI account for about 98% of reported reuse-sales revenue and 96% of reported repair revenue.** Only 10 organisations reported customer figures. These figures demonstrate both the scale of activity represented in the network and the importance of continuing to improve how CRNI members collect and report impact data. The distinction between individual organisational

responses and wider sectoral reporting is important when interpreting the results.

These results highlight the importance of charity retail within the circular economy and the role of smaller community-based enterprises in delivering reuse and repair services.

5. Barriers to greater impact

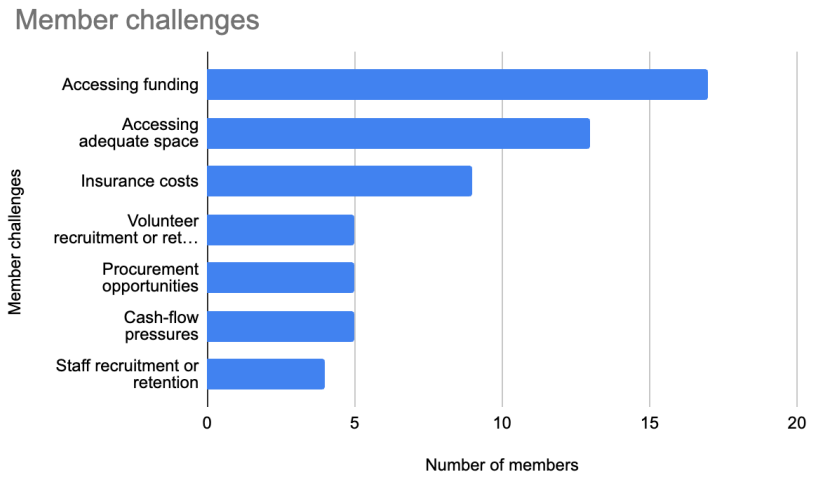
The survey demonstrates significant economic activity, but also identifies barriers that limit the capacity of community-based organisations to develop and expand their services.

Understanding these constraints is essential to identifying the investment, infrastructure and policy supports required to unlock greater impact. Figures demonstrate both the scale of activity represented in the network and the importance of continuing to improve how CRNI members collect and report impact data.

Funding was the most frequently identified challenge. Seventeen of the 27 respondents, or 63%, identified access to funding as an issue.

Other challenges included:

- Adequate space: 48%,
- Insurance costs: 33%,
- Volunteer recruitment or retention: 19%,
- Procurement opportunities: 19%,
- Cash-flow pressures: 19%,
- Staff recruitment or retention: 15%.



Graph 4: Challenges identified by CRNI members in the 2025 survey. Respondents could select more than one challenge.

One respondent highlighted the value of **multiannual funding** to **support staff and volunteer**

coordination, training, collection costs and the development of reuse activities.
Another emphasised the need for sustainable funding, affordable workspace and measures to address rising insurance costs.
A newer repair initiative reported that its founder had personally contributed more than €1,000 to secure locations for its 2026 programme while seeking longer-term local authority support.
Other respondents highlighted rising fuel costs, specialist recycling costs and increasing operational expenditure.
A number of respondents also highlighted the difficulty of **measuring longer-term social outcome**s. Examples included the challenge of demonstrating the longer-term impact of training, measuring confidence and independence, and quantifying softer benefits within communities.
One respondent suggested that CRNI could provide a standard impact-measurement framework or simple reporting template, with agreed categories and conversion factors. Another highlighted the value of support in measuring social return on investment, while a further respondent said that training in impact measurement and support to secure funding for staff would be useful.

Overall, the responses suggest that members see value in CRNI's networking, information-sharing, training and advocacy roles, while also identifying opportunities for further practical support. They also reinforce the need for a more consistent and manageable approach to impact measurement across the network.

6. The national and European policy context

Ireland's Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy 2026-2028 strengthens the national focus on reuse, repair and circular infrastructure. The National Policy Statement and Roadmap on Circular Textiles 2026-2028 explicitly recognises social enterprises and provides opportunities for their participation in the emerging textiles Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme. Of particular relevance are commitments relating to EPR delivery planning, social economy participation, innovation funding, demonstration projects and improved measurement of textile reuse.

CRNI's 2025 impact survey demonstrates the **contribution of established community-based operators while highlighting the resources and support required to strengthen their participation as partners in delivering government targets**. Developing an improved impact measurement tool for social enterprises and community-based organisations will be particularly important as national reporting requirements develop.

CRNI's members work within a policy landscape that is changing quickly, in Ireland and across Europe. The 2025 results are best read against that backdrop.The EU's 2020 Circular Economy Action Plan has been implemented through measures such as the Ecodesign for

Sustainable Products Regulation, the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation, a Directive on common rules promoting repair of goods, and mandatory Extended Producer Responsibility scheme for textiles at EU level, which is now moving into national implementation. The new European Circular Economy Act is intended to create a single market for secondary raw materials and to help double the EU's circular material use rate, which stands at just 12.2% against a target of 24% by 2030.

7. CRNI and RREUSE

CRNI is one of 34 member organisations of RREUSE, Europe's largest network of social enterprises active in the circular economy, with a focus on reuse, repair and recycling. RREUSE represents the sector in Brussels, feeding practical evidence from members into EU legislation. RREUSE provides an important platform for bringing the practical experience of CRNI members into European policy discussions and sharing learning across national networks.

RREUSE's own member impact 2025 report aggregates data from members across 22 countries. It shows:

- 1,200 social enterprises represented, with 120,000 employees, volunteers and trainees
- 1,340,000 tonnes of waste separately collected, with 800,000 tonnes of goods diverted from landfill locally and 320,000 tonnes reused locally
- 70 jobs created per 1,000 tonnes of waste collected with a view to reuse
- 95,000 EU citizens' annual CO_2 emissions avoided through reuse
- €1.334 billion in turnover and 40 million customers across 2,800 shops

Within RREUSE, the strongest local reuse volumes were reported in furniture, with 100,000 tonnes reused of 180,000 collected; textiles, with 60,000 tonnes reused of 450,000 collected; and electricals, with 43,000 tonnes reused of 330,000 collected.

These results demonstrate the scale of the wider European social enterprise movement.

While CRNI members operate at a smaller national scale, they share the same combination of circular services, social purpose and a need for robust evidence of impact.

Differences in data collection and reporting methodologies mean these figures should not be treated as directly comparable with CRNI's survey results.

8. Looking back at previous year's results

CRNI has surveyed its members on their impact since 2018, building an increasingly valuable record of community-based circular economy activity.

The 2025 results provide evidence of substantial environmental, social and economic contribution and demonstrate a growing opportunity to strengthen how that contribution is understood and supported. A comparison of these results against the headline figures for 2024 and 2023 shows where activity appears to be growing, and where an apparent change is better explained by who responded and how data was reported.

The 2025 response was the highest since 2021. The survey received 10 responses in 2023, 19 in 2024, approximately 50% of members, and 27 in 2025, representing 60% of 45 members. The group of respondents differed between years, however, with 17 organisations participating in both the 2024 and 2025 surveys. In 2024, several larger members did not respond, leaving limited or no information for some material streams, including food redistribution and mattresses.

Reuse, repair and recycling together accounted for 18,501 tonnes in 2025, approximately 15% more than the 16,134 tonnes reported in 2024. Reuse increased from 15,346 tonnes in 2024 to 16,526 tonnes in 2025, an increase of around 8%. Recycling increased from 763 tonnes to 1,847 tonnes, while repair increased from 25 tonnes to 128 tonnes.

Volunteering showed a particularly notable increase. The 10,816 volunteers reported in 2025 represented approximately 21% more than the 8,912 reported in 2024. It was also the highest reported total in any CRNI survey since 2018, exceeding the previous high of 8,912 in 2024 and 8,675 in 2020.

These changes represent increases in reported activity. They cannot automatically be attributed to underlying growth within the same organisations because survey participation and reporting coverage changed between years.

To make future comparisons more robust, **CRNI would like to further develop its methodology to agree on consistent definitions and indicators**. The organisation must consider whether the impact of its largest member CRI should be reported separately and perhaps report headline totals both with and without the CRII figures (CRI also publishes an independent impact report).

9. Looking ahead

The 2025 survey gives CRNI a starting point for understanding and communicating the contribution and impact of the reuse, repair and recycling sector. To strengthen future reporting, CRNI intends to:

1. Establish consistent definitions and reporting categories across material streams and activities,
2. Distinguish individual member returns from wider sectoral figures, including reporting totals with and without CRI's national data,

3. Track a core group of repeat respondents to support more reliable year-on-year comparisons,
4. Restate earlier years using the 2025 methodology where source information allows,
5. Improve the measurement of employment, training, social inclusion and other longer-term outcomes,
6. Develop practical reporting tools that reduce administrative burdens while improving the quality of available evidence.

The findings show significant activity across the network. **Members handled more than 32,000 tonnes of material, reused, repaired or recycled 18,501 tonnes, engaged more than 10,000 volunteers and delivered thousands of hours of training**. The modelling suggests that the reported reuse, repair and recycling activities avoided approximately 71,900 tonnes of CO_2e, while reuse activity is estimated to have generated €327.7 million in household savings.

The survey also shows that there is more work to do. The response rate was 60%, some indicators are dominated by sector-wide figures from individual respondents, and different organisations collect impact data in different ways.

For CRNI and its members, better impact measurement is not simply about producing stronger numbers. **It can help organisations understand what is working, demonstrate value to funders and partners, identify where support is needed and make a stronger case for the role of reuse, repair and the circular economy**.

Our survey results clearly show that CRNI members are already delivering measurable environmental, social and economic benefits. Issues such as funding, insurance, access to premises and organisational capacity are limiting the ability of members to develop their services. There is a huge opportunity that increased investment, appropriate infrastructure, supportive policies and greater recognition of social value will enable community-based enterprises to make a substantially greater contribution.

Appendix I: Methodology and Data Limitations

Calculating avoided CO_2e

Avoided greenhouse-gas emissions were calculated using WRAP's Benefits of Re-use Three model (BOR3)[2].

Reported tonnage was grouped into textiles, furniture, electrical and electronic goods, and other material streams. Reuse was mapped to BOR3's default direct-reuse pathway, repair to its default preparation-for-reuse pathway, and recycling to its 100% recycling pathway.

For each material and activity, the impact of the circular route was compared with WRAP's default disposal scenario. Avoided CO_2e was calculated by multiplying the reported tonnes entering each route by the difference between the default disposal impact and the relevant circular-route impact.

Recovery and disposal tonnage were not included in the headline diverted-tonnage calculation.

BOR3 provides specific factors for clothing, furniture and household electricals. These categories covered 11,594 tonnes of the reported material and produced an estimated 57,390 tonnes of avoided CO_2e, equivalent to 4.95 tonnes per tonne assessed.

BOR3 does not provide specific factors for paint, bicycles, food, mattresses or CRNI's "other" category. The model's all-products factor was therefore applied to these streams as a provisional proxy.

The resulting network-wide figure of approximately 71,900 tonnes of avoided CO_2e should consequently be treated as a modelled estimate. To note that the factors are UK-derived and sensitive to assumptions around displacement, collection, reuse pathways and end-of-life treatment.

Household savings

Household savings were estimated using BOR3's household financial-cost indicator[1]. This captures the net effect of household spending on second-hand goods and expenditure avoided when a reused product displaces the purchase of a new product.

Reported reused tonnes represent material entering a reuse route, which is consistent with BOR3's functional boundary. The model already accounts for the proportion of incoming material successfully reused, items subsequently sent for disposal and the likelihood that a second-hand purchase replaces a new purchase. No additional adjustment for sell-through rates was therefore applied.

BOR3 household-saving factors were applied separately to textiles, furniture, electrical goods and other material streams. Values produced by BOR3 in pounds sterling were converted to euro using the provisional 2025 average exchange rate in the analysis workbook of £1 to €1.17.

Recycling was assigned no direct household saving because it does not normally result in an identifiable saving for the household purchasing or repairing a product.

[2] https://www.wrap.ngo/resources/tool/benefits-of-reuse-tool

Repair was estimated using BOR3's preparation-for-reuse pathway. This should be presented separately as indicative because the pathway includes checking, cleaning and refurbishment before resale and does not fully represent every type of repair service reported by CRNI members.

Data limitations

WRAP's factors are UK-derived and product-specific. They can be treated as the best available proxy for Ireland and Northern Ireland until a specific factor set is available.

All indicators in this report are reported against survey respondents only. There has been no extrapolation to non-responding members.

The overall survey denominator is 27 respondent organisations. The number reporting each individual indicator varies, from as few as two organisations to as many as 25, because not every organisation answered every question.

All weights were standardised to kilograms and tonnes, and all currency figures were standardised to euro.

Further research is needed to establish a robust and consistent methodology for measuring the impact of CRNI members over time. This is particularly important given the challenges members themselves identified around staff capacity, data systems and measuring social outcomes.

Reporting and Comparability

Comparisons between years are affected by differences in survey participation, the composition of respondents and the availability of data for individual material streams.The survey does not currently track a fixed group of organisations. Changes in headline totals therefore cannot be interpreted as direct measures of growth among individual members.

Further research and methodological development will be required to establish a consistent approach to measuring CRNI members' impact over time.

This is particularly important for social outcomes, where member organisations reported challenges concerning staff capacity, data systems and the measurement of longer-term benefits.

Improving these systems will help CRNI develop more robust evidence of the contribution that community-based circular enterprises make to Ireland's transition to a circular economy.


CRM
Reuse Repair Recycle