

Waste Prevention Guide for Businesses

Embrace the reduction of Single-Use Plastic and the Circular Economy

By embracing the circular economy and implementing practical waste reduction strategies, businesses can create a positive impact on the environment, build a resilient future, and position themselves as leaders in sustainability.

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Welcome to the Waste Prevention Guide for Businesses, focusing on Single-Use Plastic Reduction and the Circular Economy. In this guide, we will explore practical strategies and actionable steps to help businesses transition towards a circular model, where waste is prevented where possible, then minimised, resources are conserved, and single-use plastic is eliminated.

By embracing these principles, your business can play a crucial role in creating a more sustainable future while simultaneously benefitting from cost savings and enhanced brand reputation.



Identifying Single-Use Plastic

Single-Use Plastic Awareness

- Educate employees and stakeholders about the environmental impact of single-use plastic, including its contribution to pollution and harm to wildlife.
- Raise awareness about the potential long-term effects of plastic waste on ecosystems and human health.

Assessing Plastic Usage

- Conduct a thorough audit to measure the amount of single-use plastic your business consumes and disposes of.
- Analyse specific areas where single-use plastic is most prevalent, such as packaging, customer service, employee facilities, and corporate events.



Strategies for Single-Use Plastic Reduction

Plastic-Free Alternatives

- Encourage customers and employees to use reusable cups, water bottles, and bags by offering incentives or discounts.

Redesigning Packaging

- Collaborate with suppliers to redesign product packaging, reducing unnecessary plastic and ensuring it is easily recyclable or reusable.
- Explore innovative packaging solutions that align with circular economy principles, such as refillable or returnable packaging.

Implementing Deposit-Return Schemes

- Introduce deposit-return schemes for certain items, like beverage containers, to incentivise customers to return used items for recycling or reuse.



Understanding the Circular Economy

What is the Circular Economy?

The circular economy is a regenerative economic model that aims to keep resources in use for as long as possible. Unlike the traditional linear economy (take, make, dispose), the circular economy promotes strategies such as reuse, repair and recycle to create a closed-loop system. It prioritises designing products and materials with longevity and circularity in mind, reducing waste generation and reliance on finite resources.

Benefits for Businesses

- ✓ **Reduced Waste Management Costs**
Adopting circular economy practices can minimise waste generation, leading to cost savings in waste disposal and management.
- ✓ **Enhanced Supply Chain Resilience**
The circular economy promotes collaboration and transparency throughout the supply chain, fostering resilience and mitigating risks.
- ✓ **Access to New Business Opportunities**
Embracing circularity can open up new markets and revenue streams, such as offering repair services or recycling used products.

Adopting the Circular Economy Model

Embrace Product Life Extension

- Explore strategies to extend the lifespan of products, such as offering repair and refurbishment services.

Northern Ireland Resources Network is a representative body whose aim is to promote reuse and repair as a practical way of reducing Northern Ireland's waste and developing the circular economy. Check out www.ni-rn.com

- Design products with modular components that can be easily replaced or upgraded to extend their usefulness.

Circular Supply Chain

- Collaborate with suppliers and partners to implement circular practices throughout the supply chain.

International Synergies Ltd NI are able to help businesses reduce waste destined for landfill, CO₂ emissions and help them save money by matching unwanted resources from one business with another that can use them. Check out www.international-synergiesni.com

- Prioritise sourcing materials from suppliers that embrace circular principles and follow responsible recycling practices.

Product-as-a-Service (PaaS) Model

- Consider shifting from traditional ownership models to a PaaS model, where customers pay for the use of products, and the responsibility for maintenance and end-of-life recycling remains with the business. For example, where a provider delivers hardware and software tools to users over the internet.



Employee Engagement and Training

Raising Awareness

- Organise workshops and training sessions to educate employees about single-use plastic reduction, the circular economy, and the importance of their role in waste prevention.
- Share success stories and case studies from within the company to inspire and motivate employees.

Encouraging Innovation

- Create a platform for employees to share ideas for waste reduction and circular economy initiatives.
- Recognise and reward employees who propose innovative solutions and actively participate in waste prevention efforts.



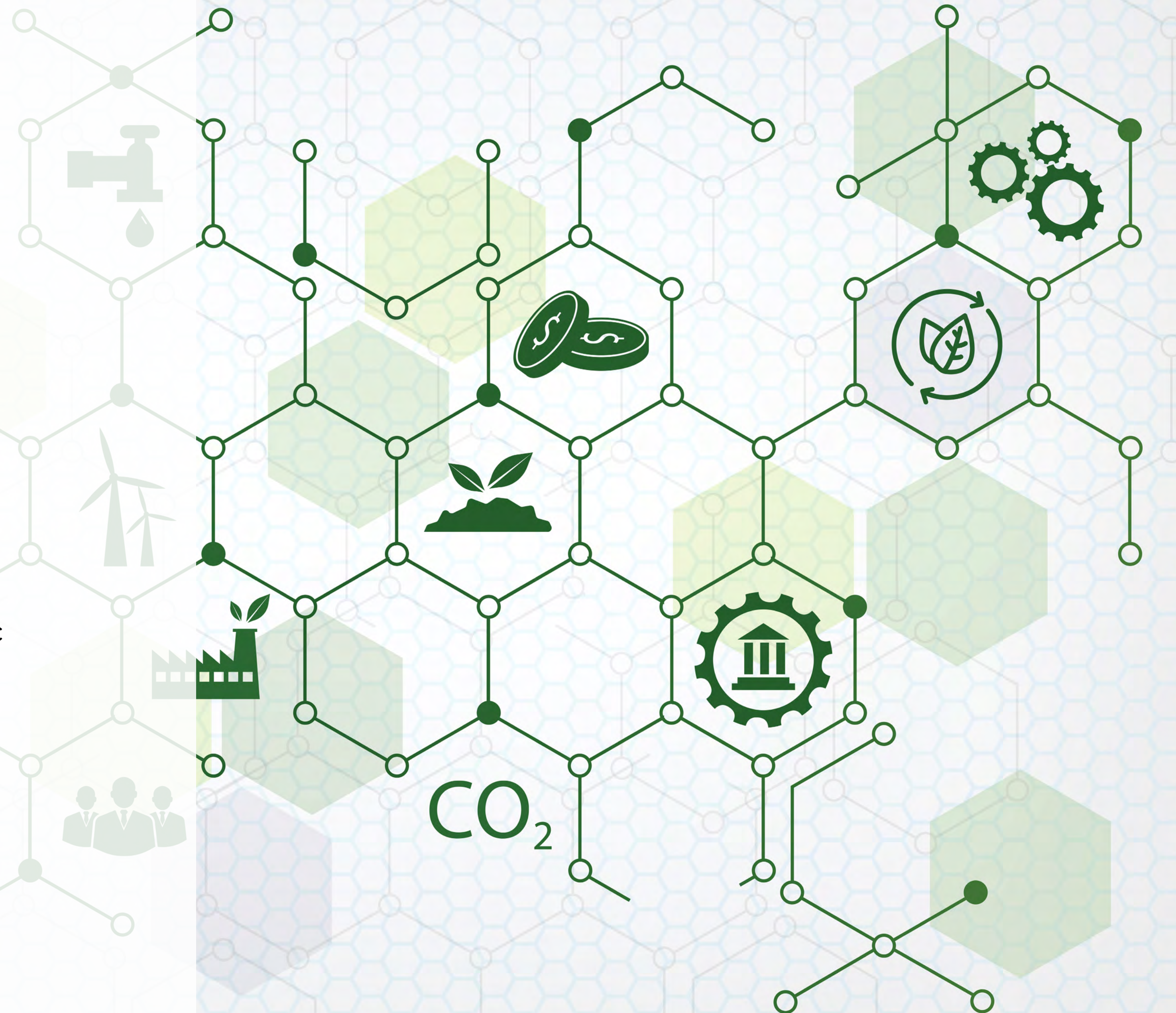
Tracking Progress and Continuous Improvement

Monitoring and Measuring

- Regularly measure and track the reduction in single-use plastic consumption and the implementation of circular practices.
- Use data to set new targets and drive continuous improvement.

Transparency and Reporting

- Share your business's progress on single-use plastic reduction and circular economy initiatives with stakeholders, customers, and investors.
- Highlight achievements and challenges, demonstrating a commitment to sustainability and accountability.



Partnering with the Community

Collaboration with Local Authorities and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

- Collaborate with local governments and NGOs to promote sustainable waste management and circular economy initiatives in your community.
- Participate in local clean-up and waste reduction events to raise awareness and foster positive change.

Engaging Customers

- Engage customers in your waste prevention journey by sharing your sustainability initiatives through marketing campaigns and on social media.
- Encourage customers to support your circular economy efforts by choosing products and services aligned with circular principles.



Resources and Help for Businesses

Useful links:



Litter Composition Report



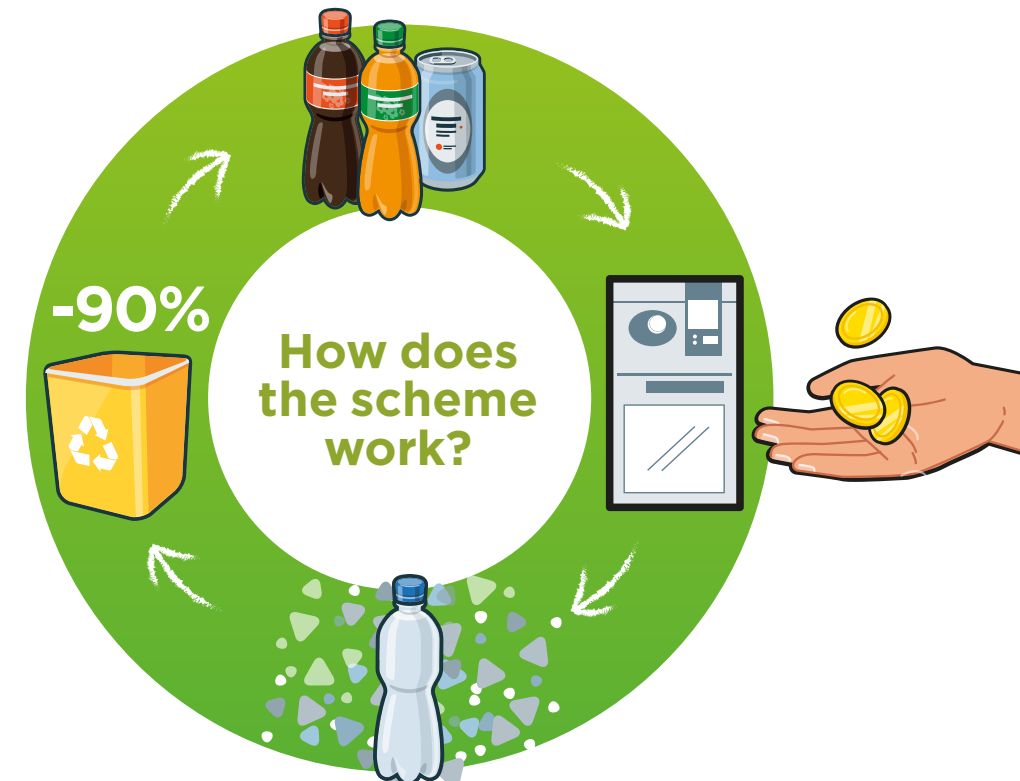
Plastic Free Events Guide



How to Remove Single-Use Plastics from Schools



Live Here Love Here Plastic Promise



Deposit Return Scheme

Next Step...

Would you like to share your efforts to tackle plastics and waste? Together, we can establish a platform for knowledge exchange, foster innovation, and collective problem-solving. Share your success stories, best practices, and waste reduction strategies, making a positive impact on the environment. Embrace circularity through waste exchange programs, reducing landfill waste and promote responsible resource management.

If so please get in touch.

Contact us now at:

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[#TacklingPlasticNI](#) [#PlasticPromise](#)



Department of
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and Rural Affairs**

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