

**BACK TO BASICS SERIES.**  
**YOUR 101 GUIDE TO ...**  
**RECYCLING**



Funded by Irish Aid's  
Worldwise Global Schools



**Post Primary**

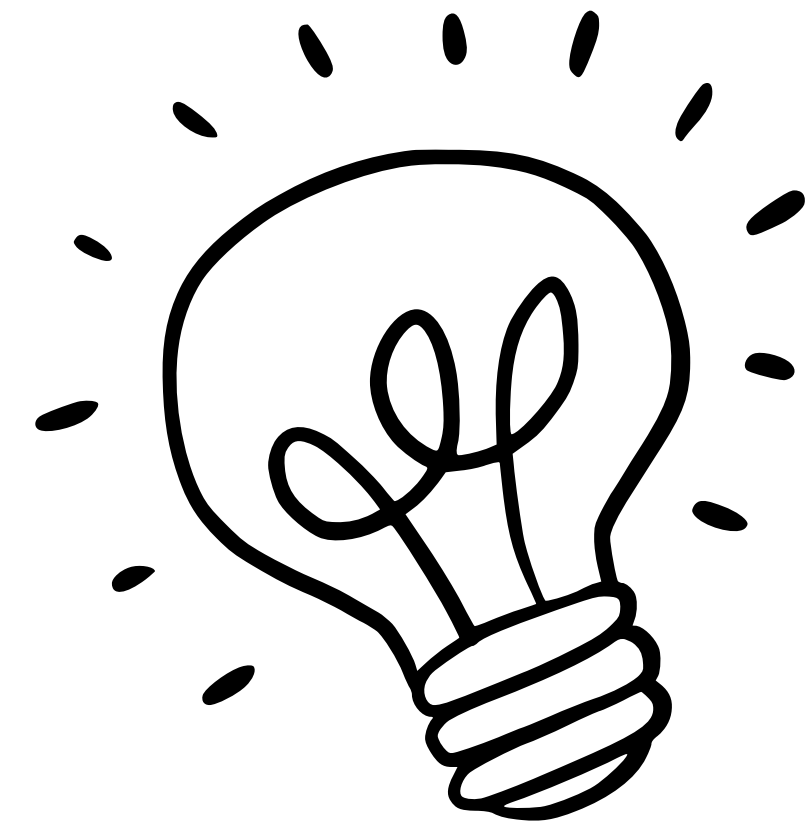


- We work with schools, communities and businesses
- Inform and inspire positive action - no matter how small!

# Recycling

- What really happens?
- Why does this happen?
- How is waste a justice issue?



A hand-drawn black outline of a lightbulb with a glowing effect of short lines radiating from the top and sides. The bulb has a simple filament design and a screw-in base.

# QUIZ

How many kilograms of  
waste does each  
household in Ireland  
generate in one year?



Which European  
country produces the  
most plastic waste per  
year?



Which activity has the greatest environmental impact?

- Effectively recycling
- Eating vegetarian
- Taking one less flight



Irish households  
generated an average of  
1000 kgs of waste in  
2021 - a total of 1.84  
million tonnes

EPA (2021)



Ireland is the #1  
producer of plastic  
waste each year at **65**  
**kgs per person**

Eurostat (2023).



- 
- 1. Taking one less flight**
  2. Eating vegetarian
  3. Effectively recycling

Lund University (2017).

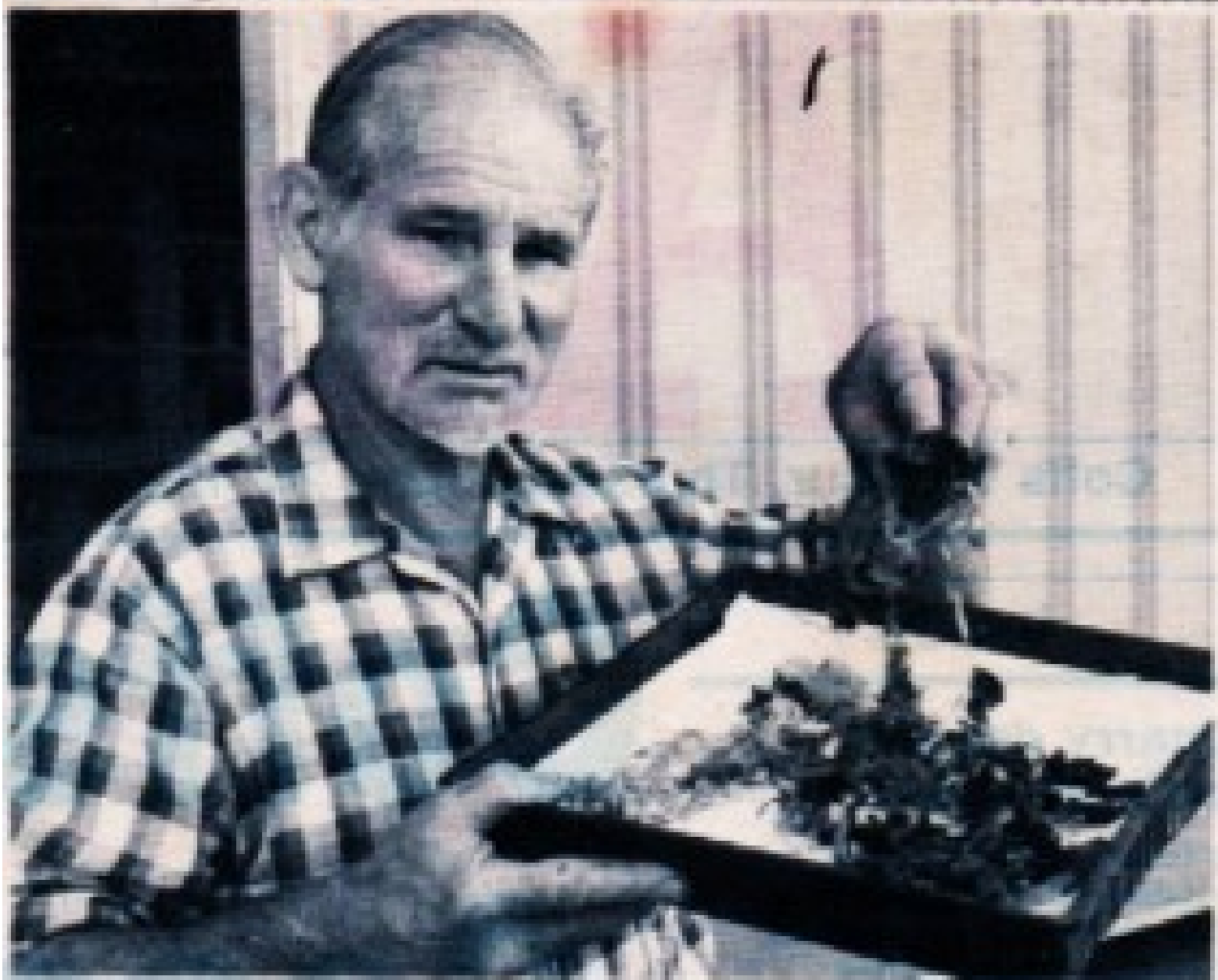


# Recycling

a range of processes  
that happen to post-  
consumer products  
when they are  
appropriately disposed  
of e.g. in recycling bins



Coffs Harbour Advocate Thursday June 24 1993



The manager of the Coffs Harbour Pet Porpoise Pool, Hec Goodall, with the plastics found inside a young green turtle.

# Turtle dies after plastics knot gut

[Plastic Collective](#)



## Members of The Plastic Bottle Institute

Allied-Signal Corporation  
American National Can Company  
Beatrice/Hunt-Wesson, Inc.  
The BF Goodrich Company  
B P Chemicals, Inc.  
Continental Can Company, Inc.  
Dow Chemical USA  
Exxon Chemical Americas  
Georgia Gulf Corporation  
Mobil Chemical Company  
Murphy-Phoenix Company  
Occidental Chemical Corporation  
Owens-Brockway, Inc.  
Phillips 66 Company  
PMS Consolidated  
Progressive Plastics, Inc.  
Quantum Chemical Corporation  
Rohm and Haas Company  
Setco, Inc.  
Solvay Polymers, Inc.  
Sunbeam Plastics Corporation  
Trans Container Corporation  
Union Carbide Corporation



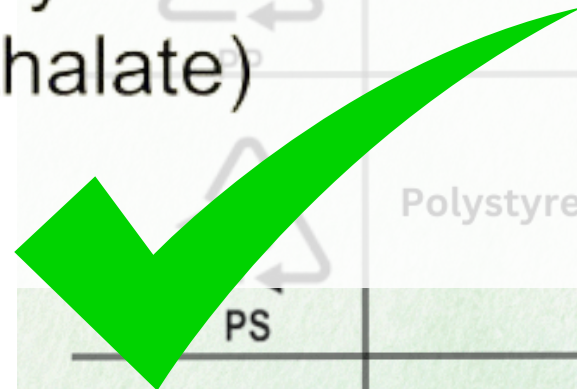
 01 PET	Polyethylene Terephthalate		
 02 HDPE	High-Density Polyethylene		
 03 PVC	Polyvinyl Chloride		
 04 LDPE	Low-Density Polyethylene		
 05 PP	Polypropylene		
 06 PS	Polystyrene		
 07 OTHER	Other		

[energytheory.com](http://energytheory.com)





**PET**  
(Polyethylene Terephthalate)



 01 PET	Polyethylene Terephthalate		
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 05 PP	Polypyrrolidone		
 06 PS	Polystyrene		
 07 OTHER	Other		



**PE-HD**  
(High Density Polyethylene)



	Polyethylene Terephthalate		
	High-Density Polyethylene		
	Polyvinyl Chloride		
	Low-Density Polyethylene		
	Polypropylene		
	Polystyrene		
	Other		



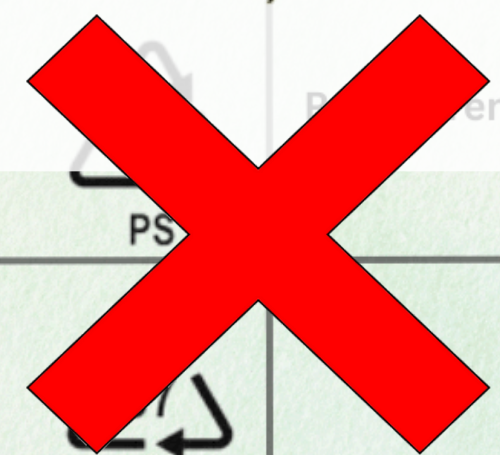
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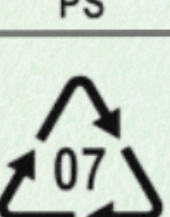




**PVC - U**  
(UnPlasticised Polyvinyl Chloride)



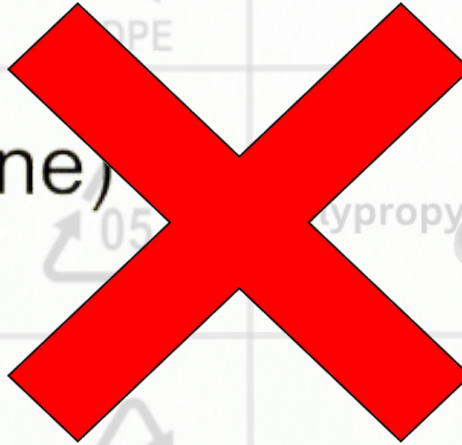
	Polyethylene Terephthalate		
	High-Density Polyethylene		
	Polyvinyl Chloride		
	Low-Density Polyethylene		
	Polypropylene		
	Polystyrene		
	OTHER		





















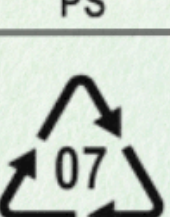


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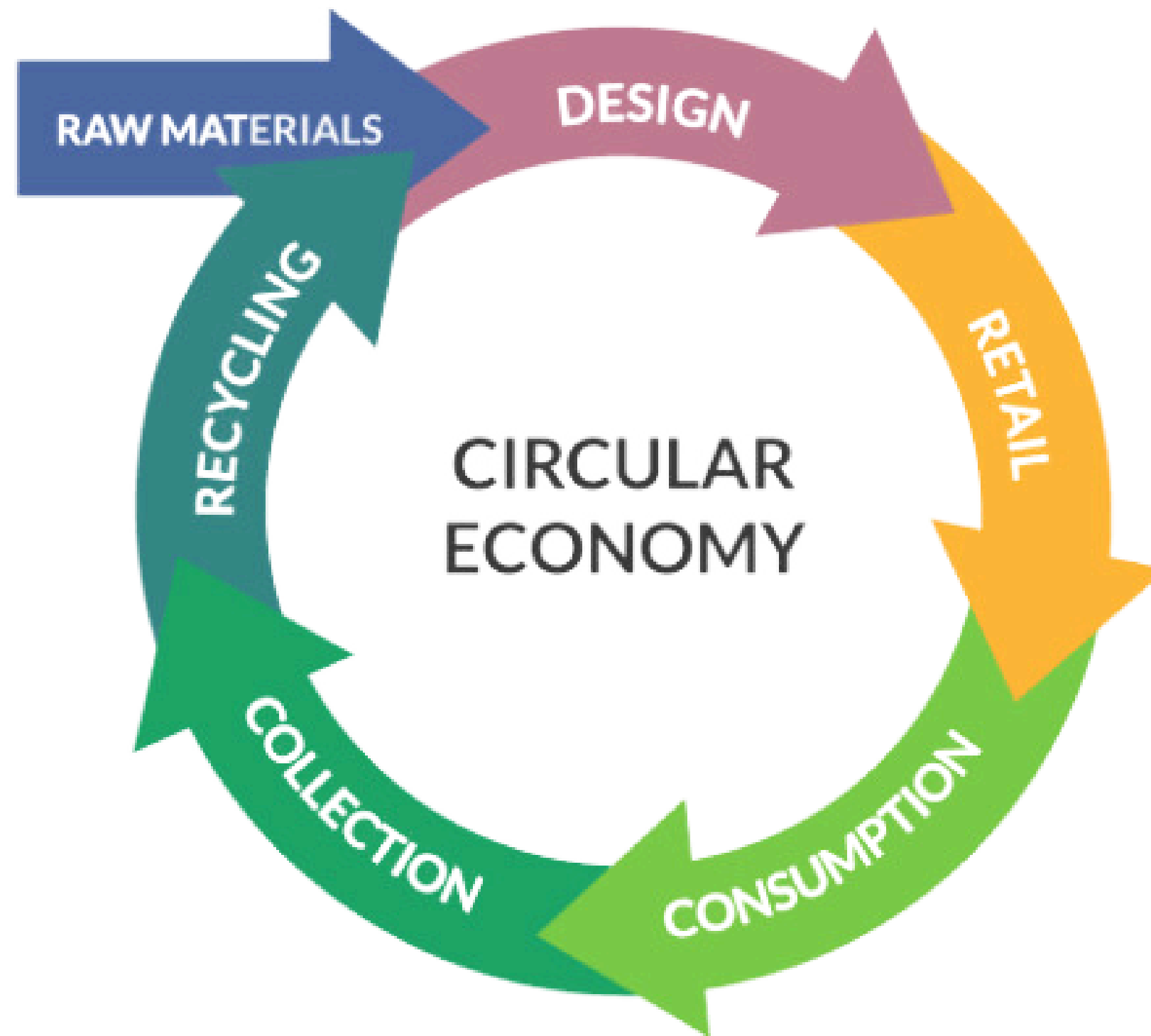
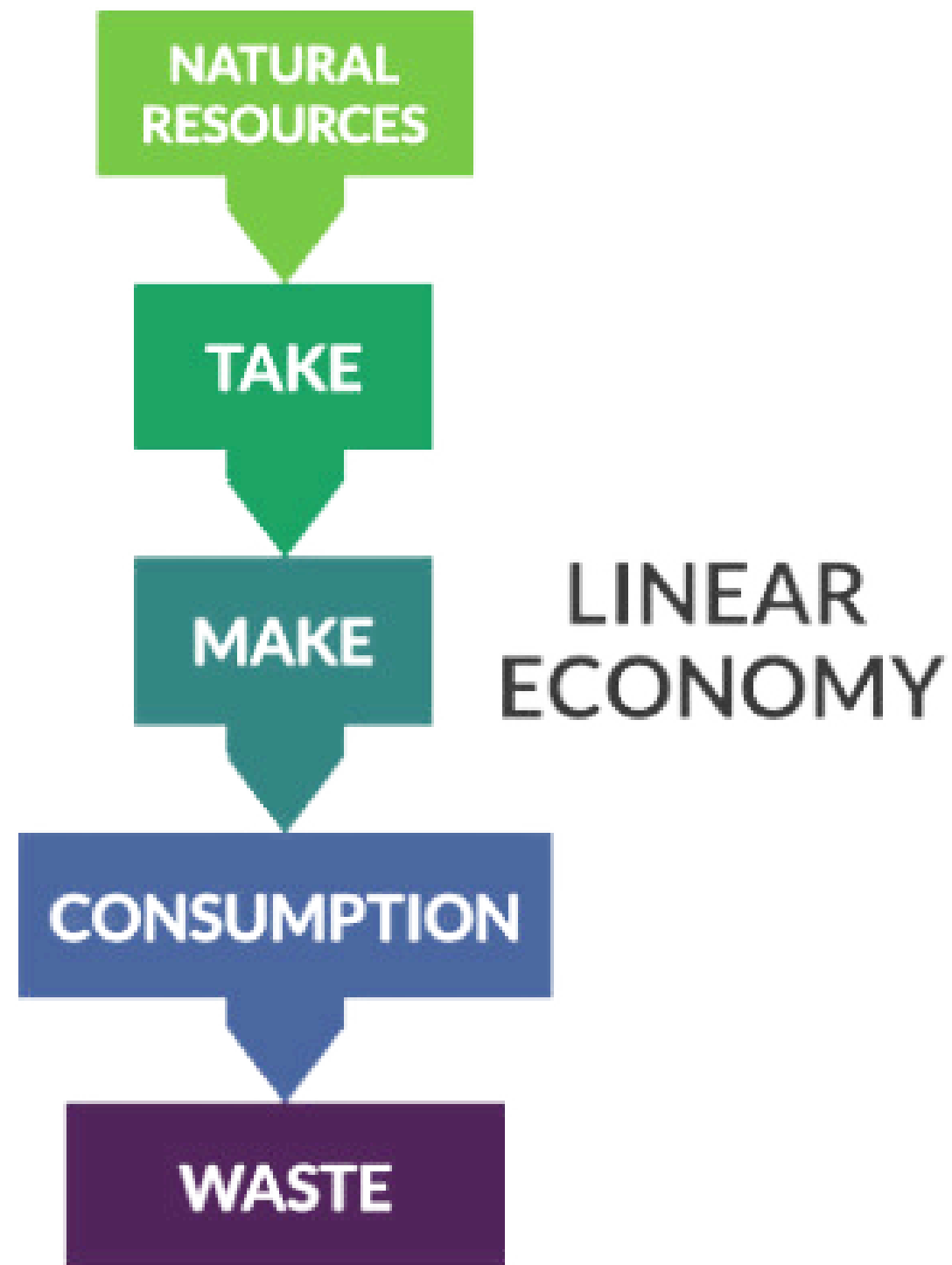
**PS**  
(Polystyrene)





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	Polystyrene		
	Other		



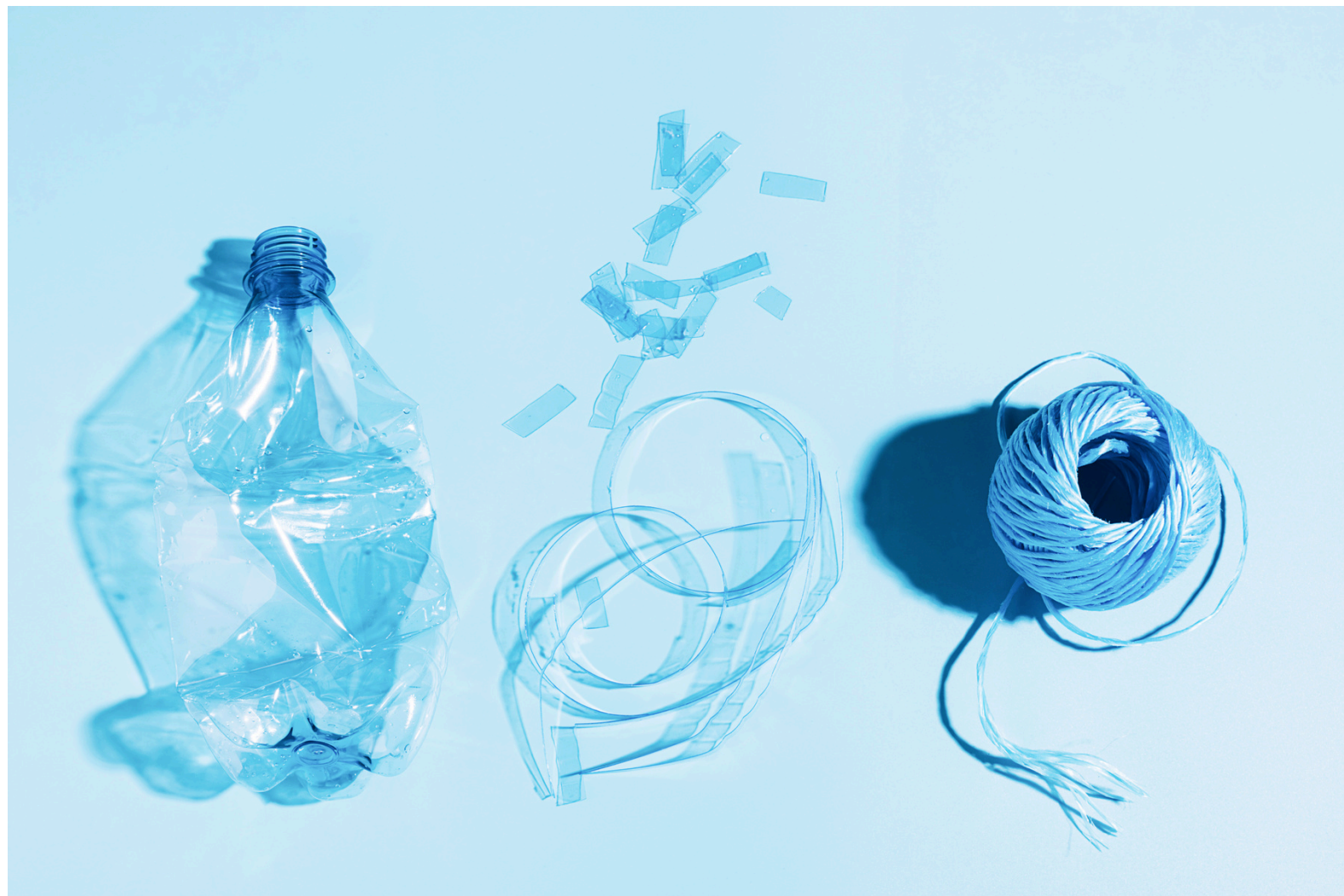


End of Waste Economy.





What happens  
to plastic after  
you put it in the  
recycling bin?



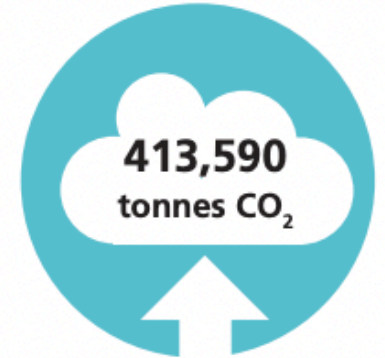


**Ireland's Plastic Waste**

The increase in plastic packaging going for incineration has implications for carbon emissions.



Much of the waste exported to the UK, Northern Ireland and the Netherlands will transit to other countries in the Far East and represents a missed opportunity to foster a circular economy.



153,182 tonnes of plastic packaging treated at municipal incinerators in 2021

Equivalent to the annual emissions 33,354 people or the population of Bray, Co. Wicklow



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**Disposal, 2%**

**413,590 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>**



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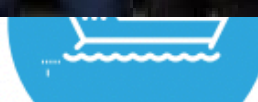
  
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**Energy Recovery, 70%**

Disposal, 2%

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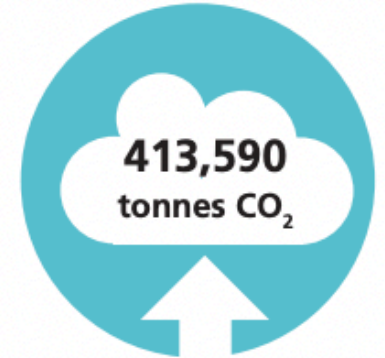
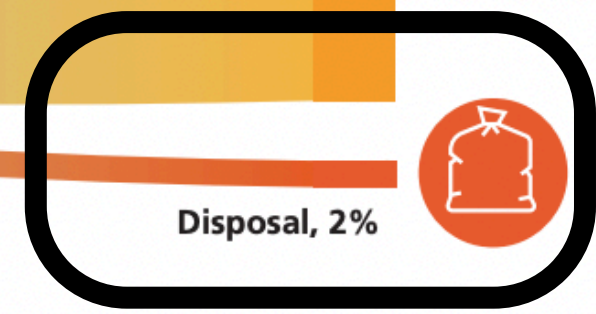
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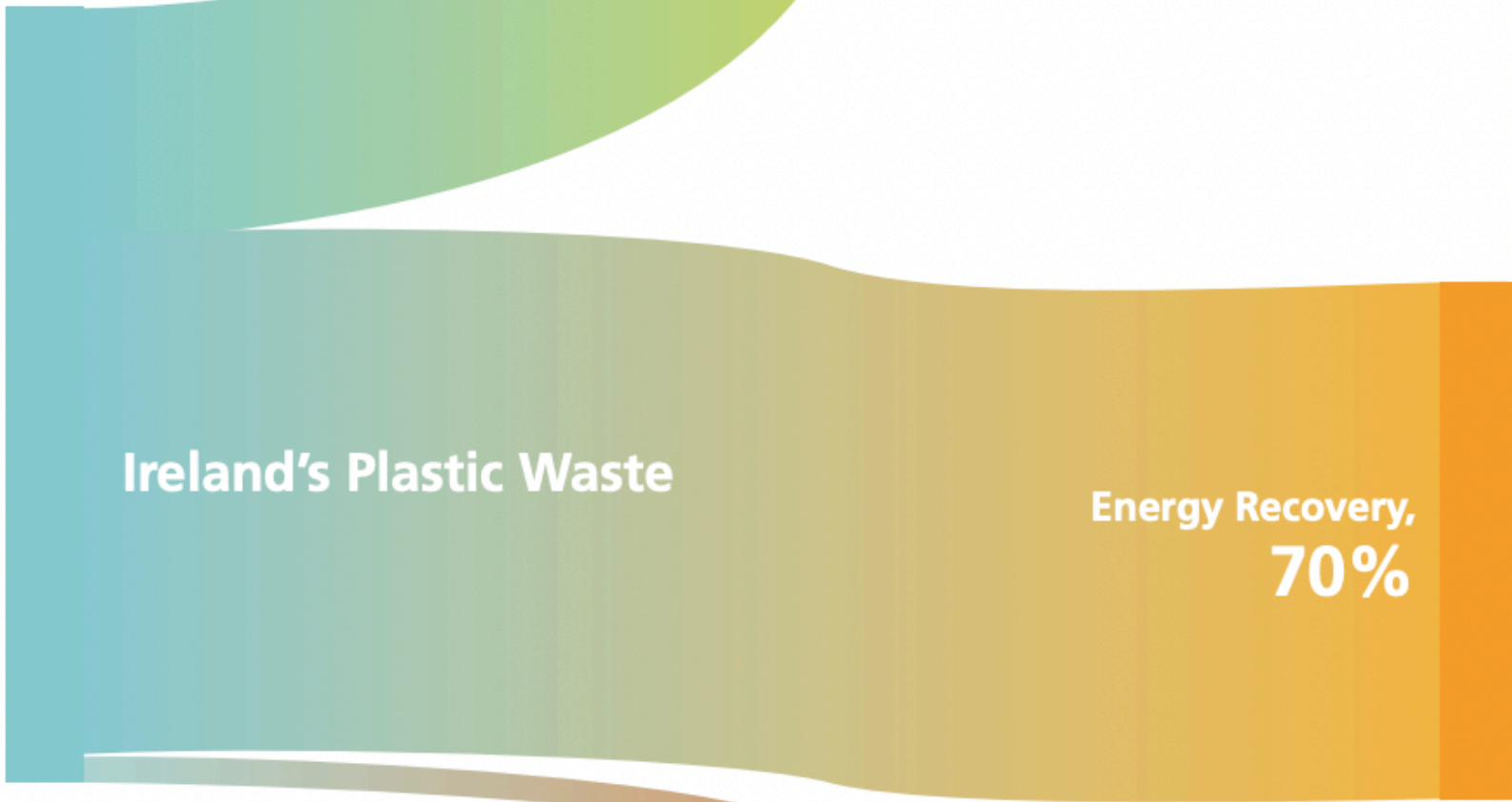


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**Recycle Plastic Packaging, 28%**

**Recycled in Other EU Member states, 13%**

**Recycled outside EU, 8%**

**Recycled in Ireland, 7%**

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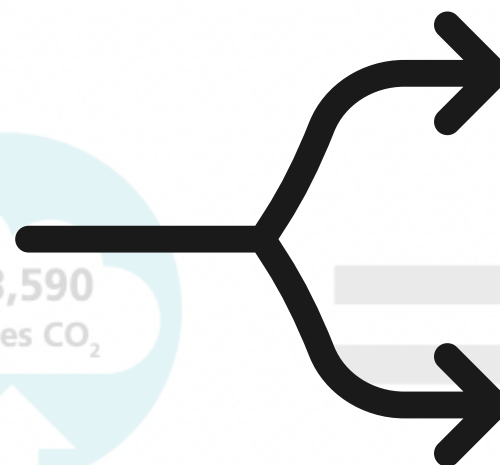


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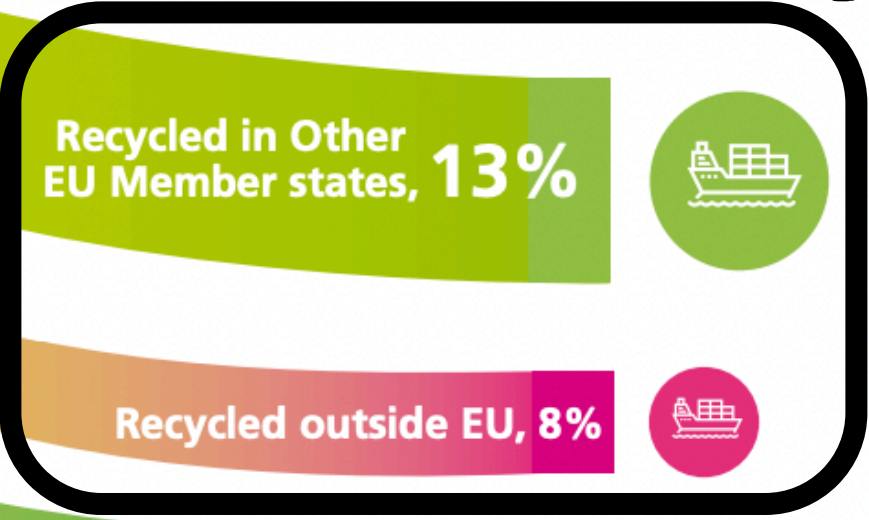




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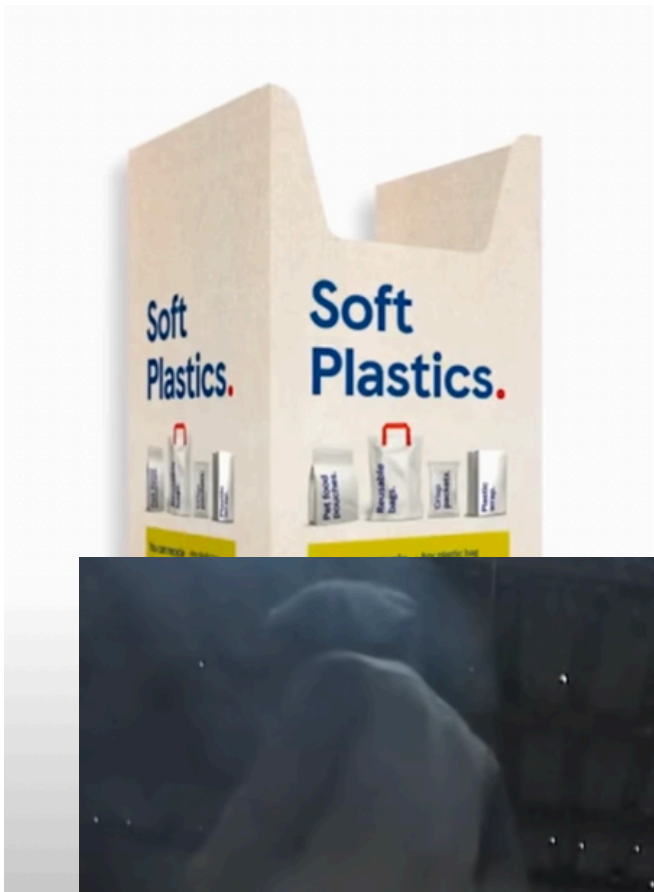
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Bloomberg (2022)





Plastic China (2019)







BBC

Register

Sign In

# Philippines sends tonnes of rubbish back to Canada

31 May 2019

Share Save



BBC

Register

Sign In

# Malaysia returns 42 containers of 'illegal' plastic waste to UK

20 January 2020

Share Save





BBC (2019)





# Sacrifice

# zones? BBC (2019)



Is it OK to export  
our waste to the  
Global South?  
Why? Why not?





The City Fix (2019)





The City Fix (2019)





**Irish consumers**



**Farmers near illegal plants**



**Recycling companies**



**People living near incinerators**



**Food producers**



**Recycling workers in illegal plants**



**People living near illegal dumps**



**Oil companies**



**Irish supermarkets**

**Who benefits from our system of recycling? How?**

**Who suffers as a result of our recycling? How?**

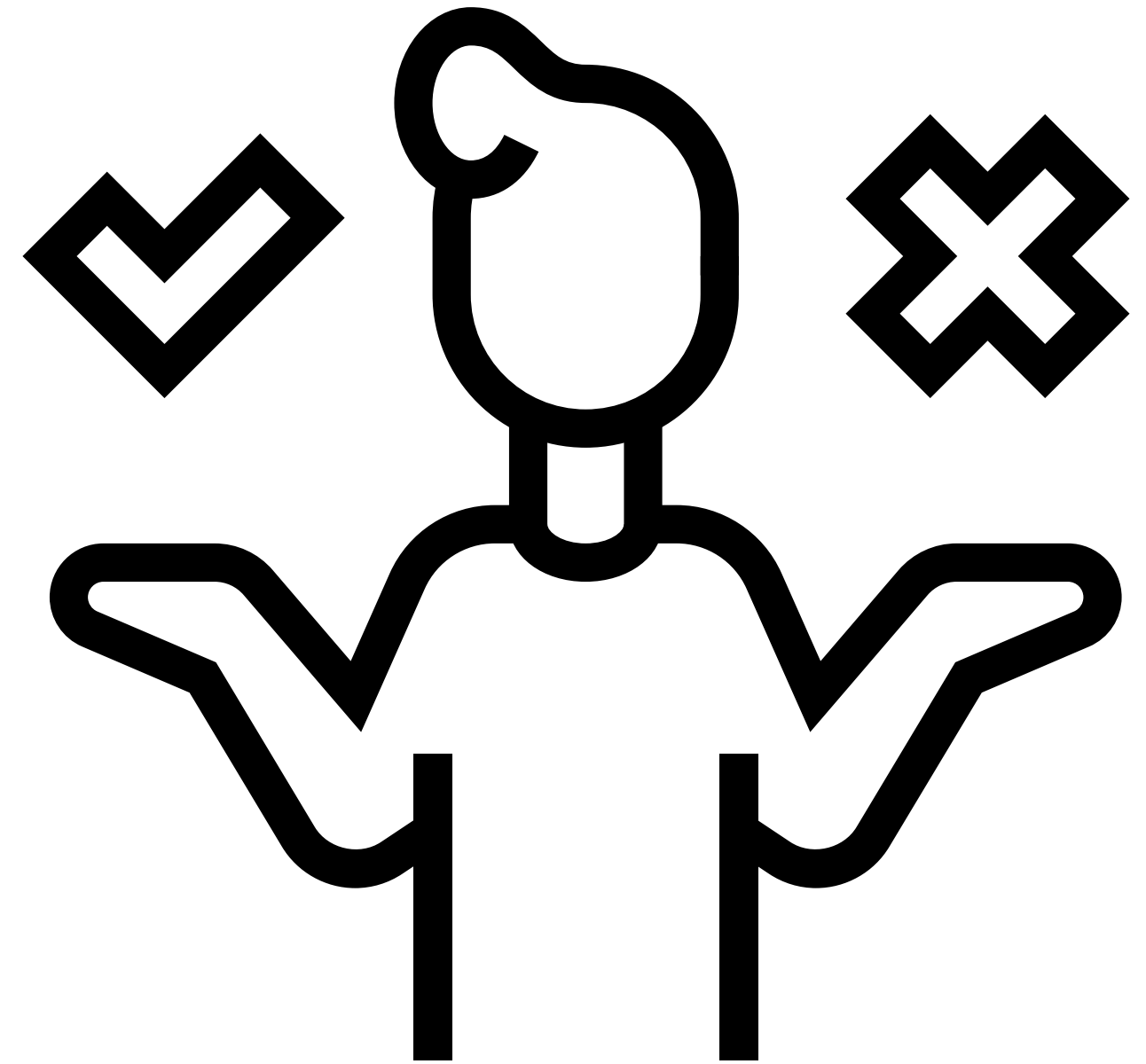
## **Who benefits from our system of recycling?**

- Us - access to goods and products
- Oil companies - creating and selling plastic
- Food companies (producers, supermarkets, etc)
- Recycling/waste disposal companies

## **Who suffers as a result of our recycling?**

- People living near incinerators
- People living near illegal recycling centres
- Workers whose health is endangered
- Those relying on clean water, air or land for a living

So what can  
we do about  
it?



# We need:



- Genuinely reusable packaging
- Places to refill bottles and jars
- Shorter food supply chains
- Stronger traceability
- Stop thinking in terms of ‘disposability’
- stand in solidarity with anti-waste activists



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# Final task

Design a completely new school that creates no waste. Think about:

- Where does its food come from?
- What do students use to study?  
(books, pens, copies, etc.)
- How does the school keep objects in good condition?
- What services support repair and re-use?



# Find out more!

[Global Action Plan](#)

[Irish Schools Sustainability Network](#)

[CRNI](#)

[CirculEire](#)

[Story of stuff](#)

[EPA](#)

[Rediscovery Centre](#)

[Worldwise Global Schools](#)



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