

€coCert

Membership Newsletter, Spring 2012

50th EcoCert Award

South East Radio

County Wexford's most listened to radio station became the fiftieth organisation in Ireland to achieve EcoCert environmental certification.

Station manager Liam Dwyer was delighted with the results "We have always been cost conscious and like to think of ourselves as environmentally responsible. When we decided to adopt EcoCert, to be honest, I was doubtful if any further real savings and improvements would be possible. Ours is a listed building, which also limits what we can do.

However, when we worked with our EcoCert advisor we were able to identify a further **€5,000 per year** of cost savings. This will be achieved through a combination of energy, water and administrative improvements, all of which will further reduce our environmental impact."



Government Launches Green Public Procurement Policy

A new government policy requires the public sector to adopt 'green' purchasing habits.

In addition to meeting 'green' product requirements, suppliers may be asked if they hold a recognised environmental certification. Happily, EcoCert is specifically mentioned as a means for companies to demonstrate their environmental credentials.

So in addition to saving you money, your EcoCert might now help you win business too!

Note: Public procurement accounts for 12% of GDP.

'Green Tenders – An Action Plan on Green Public Procurement' can be downloaded from the government website www.environ.ie

First EcoCert Companies Save 2,400 Carbon Tonnes

EcoCert monitors the environmental performance of each member, and this year the first compiled results are available.

The first 18 EcoCert companies have reduced their carbon emissions by a total of 2,400 tonnes per year. This is an 11% overall emissions reduction.

This clearly shows that being 'green' and saving money go hand-in-hand.

Congratulations to all involved.



€coCert is a service provided by €concertive supported by The Environmental Protection Agency, Laois County Council, Offaly County Council, Waterford County Council and Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council.

ECOCERT CASE STUDY – COUNTY LAOIS

Dunamaise Arts Centre, Portlaoise.



The Dunamaise Arts Centre and Theatre in Portlaoise provides theatre, cinema and arts for the town and county community. The auditorium can seat 240, and the centre also has a café/bar, exhibition space and an arts workshop area. The extensive programme of upcoming events can be accessed on the website www.dunamaise.ie

The centre was awarded its EcoCert in September 2010, and technical manager Nick Anton explains the environmental improvements which have been achieved to date.

Lighting

We reviewed the lighting arrangements throughout the centre, and first we identified a number of areas, notably back-of-house corridors and also the café area, which were excessively lit. With these areas it was a simple matter of removing excess lightbulbs to provide a more appropriate level of lighting and at the same time reduce our electricity bills.

We then looked at the types of lamp we had. Most areas already had energy-efficient lamps, but we also had a mix of less efficient units. In these cases we looked at the cost of running each lamp; the cost of installing a more efficient alternative; and the money the new lamp would save.

We then prioritised the lamps which would give us the best return for our money. We replaced our halogen spotlamps with LED units, which were almost 90% more efficient, although quite expensive to buy.

An important additional benefit of going through this process was that it made us all much more aware of the cost of running lights, and that in turn made us much better at switching them off when they weren't needed.

In all, we spent €500 on lighting improvements. We saved €3,400 on our annual electricity bill through reducing our usage by 15%. We estimate that about half of that saving was due to the lighting improvements. The other half was down to our increased energy awareness.

Water

This was a revelation to us. Because we don't pay for our water, in the past we hadn't given it much attention. That changed with our EcoCert.

We started by reviewing our water arrangements and our records of water usage.

The gents toilets had fill-and-flush urinals which were operating 24/7, even when we were closed. We installed a control unit to solve that problem.

We found that some of our toilet cisterns had faulty valves or had the overflows incorrectly set, such that they had a continual, albeit small, flow. These were repaired, and we now monitor them routinely.

Our wash basins have push-taps which automatically close after a time, making them good for water conservation. However, we found that some were set with excessive flow rates and flow times. Again, that was a simple matter of adjustment and repair. For the hot water taps, there was also, of course, an energy saving.

At our worst, we used almost 12 cubic metres of water in one day. We now average only 2 cubic metres per day. A colossal saving, achieved through simple common sense measures.

As a result, we now dose our water system with 80% less salt solution, saving us €600 per year.

Heating

The severe winter of 2010/11 highlighted the shortcomings of our building.

Our glass front doors had gaps all round. We measured the gaps and found they were equivalent to a hole the size of an A4 sheet of paper. We have installed new wooden framed doors giving a proper draught proof seal when closed. This allowed us to reduce the temperature in the cafe and foyer which was unduly high to compensate for the constant in-flow of cold air.

We also separated the Gallery and Studio areas upstairs with a dividing wall, so we can now control the heating in these areas independently. The insulation on our ventilation trunking had fallen into bad repair and has been replaced.

Our next task is to insulate the accessible hot water pipework throughout the building. We look forward to measuring our oil savings this winter.