

Summer 2017

€coMerit

Membership Newsletter

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Fast Fact

€coMerit has now won over €1 million in grant support for our certificate-holding members.

€coMerit is a service provided by
€concertive in partnership with



First EASI Grant Awards

Cobh Great Island Community Centre in County Cork is the first recipient of the new EASI grants available from €coMerit. The €2,000 grant was awarded towards the replacement of old fire doors and the upgrading of existing windows.

Centre manager Gwen O'Halloran said "These works improve the airtightness of the building and help to further reduce energy bills. We are delighted that our €coMerit membership helps us achieve improvements which we otherwise could not afford. This comes on top of our major SEAI grant last year which we also received with the help of €coMerit."

A second award has been made to **Wexford Arts Centre** for the upgrading of gallery spotlights to energy-efficient LED units.



Environmental Protection Agency



Eastern - Midlands Waste Region



Southern Waste Region



Dun Laoghaire - Rathdown County Council



Wexford County Council

The EcoMerit Award for Sustainability Improvement (the EASI fund) is exclusively available to **€coMerit** certificate holders and may be used for a sustainability project at the certified site or a closely associated site, such as a local community initiative.

For details of the EASI fund scheme, and an application form, click [here](#).

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SEAI Launch 'Smart Lighting' Grant



The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland recently launched a new pilot lighting grant scheme for companies with less than 50 employees.

The sectors selected below were chosen on the basis of their longer operating hours and higher electricity lighting costs.

- Fitness Centres
- Retailers
- Small Hotels / Large B&Bs
- Pharmacies
- Nursing Homes



Waterford City and County Council

For more **€coMerit** information, or to contribute to future newsletters, contact:

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For a full listing of **€coMerit** certificate holders and members click [here](#)

To view **€coMerit** case studies click [here](#)

To view previous **€coMerit** newsletters click [here](#)

To download an **€coMerit** application form click [here](#)



- Jewellers

More information can be found on the [SEAI website](#).

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New EcoMerit Awards



The SSE Airtricity headquarters facility at Leopardstown became the first Irish energy provider to achieve **€coMerit** certification. Marian Troy, Head of Corporate Affairs at SSE Airtricity commented "We are delighted to receive this EcoMerit Certification, and we're looking forward to using the programme to help us meet our environmental improvement goals."

Pictured at the presentation of the **€coMerit** Award by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council were, left to right, Kieron Phillips, Project Manager for Green Business at the Environmental Protection Agency; Councillor Tom Murphy, An Cathaoirleach of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council; Marian Troy, Head of Corporate Affairs, SSE Airtricity; and Kieran Flanagan, Facilities Manager, SSE Ireland, South County Business Park. Photo by Peter Cavanagh.

Other recent awardees are;

- Roche Logistics (Co. Wexford)

- Joyces Expert (Co. Wexford)
- Heatdoc (Co. Wexford)
- Barretstown Camp (Co. Kildare)
- Graphedia (Co. Wexford)
- Button & Spoon (Co. Wexford)

We are delighted to welcome them all into the **EcoMerit** 'family', which now totals more than 90 certified sites across the Republic of Ireland.



Sarah Reck of Graphedia receiving their EcoMerit certificate from Phil Walker, CEO of Econcertive.

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EcoMerit Update



Summer is proving to be a busy time for us. In addition to the usual certification and support work, six EcoMerit sites are being supported with SEAI grant-aided works. Work on the first of these is already complete.

The Waterford & South Tipperary Community Youth Service site at Abbeylands, Waterford has installed new windows and a door under the SEAI 'Better Energy Communities' scheme.

Other sites being supported under this scheme are;

- Waterford Institute of Technology
- Port of Waterford
- Crown Packaging Ireland (Athy)
- The Irish National Heritage Park
- Wexford Enterprise Centre

Work has also commenced on a new project supported by the Environmental Protection Agency. This new 'GreenSave' project provides mentoring and certification support to organisations in Counties Wexford and Kilkenny. For details of the programme, click [here](#).



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The Pakman Awards are national awards that recognise excellence in waste management and recycling among businesses, organisations, community groups and initiatives in Ireland.

We are contemplating putting in an application on behalf of the whole **EcoMerit** 'family'. If you would like this to feature your organisation and your waste management achievements, please [contact us](#) now. Also, indeed, if you would like help in putting in your own application!

The closing date for applications is 31st August 2017.

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'Go Green' Seminar In Leopardstown



In July, **Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council** in collaboration with **Business in the Community Ireland** and the **Environmental Protection Agency** hosted a free seminar in the Clayton Hotel Leopardstown.

Featuring case studies from a variety of contributors, the seminar aimed to highlight what it means to be an environmentally responsible business. The Council provides support for businesses wishing to improve their sustainability.

A follow-up seminar is planned for November. For more information, contact Margaret Coles, Green Business Officer. Tel 086 803 4921.

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Case Study - Carbon Footprinting



Photo: Econcertive Home Base at the start of project.

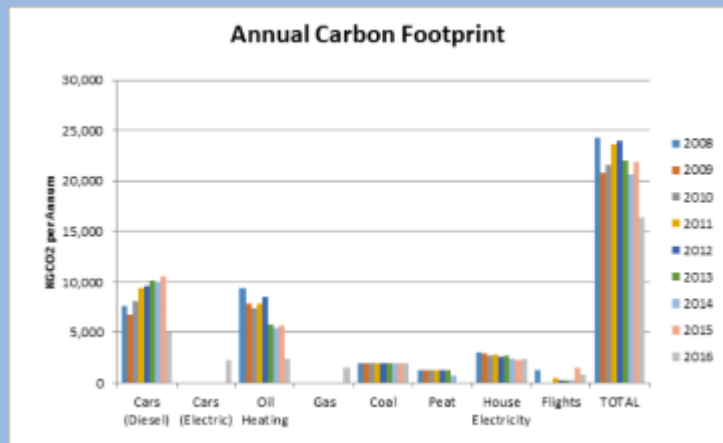
Background

At **Econcertive**, we have a great interest in becoming more sustainable in our day-to-day lives. To help us focus our efforts, we measure our carbon footprint. This gives us the ability to evaluate how well we are doing and where next we can best invest our limited time and money.

All **EcoMerit** organisations measure their carbon footprint as a matter of course. This case study aims to demonstrate how you can use this as a simple tool to improve the long term sustainability of your business or indeed your home.

Carbon Footprint Measurement

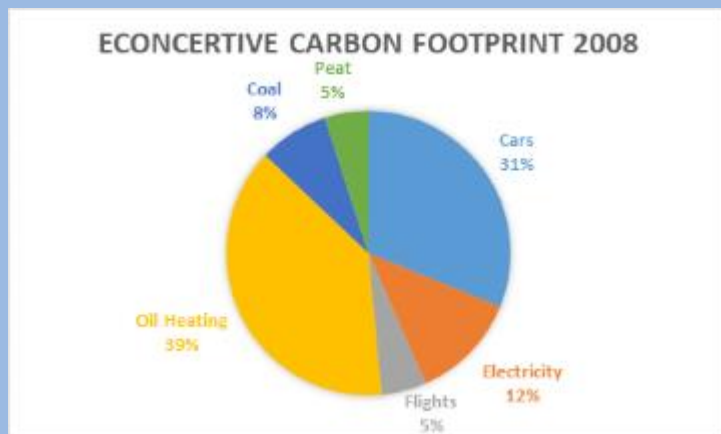
As **Econcertive** is a home-based business we find it best to measure the combined carbon footprint of the business and the home together. For us, it is easier and more meaningful to do it this way. The table below shows the **Econcertive** carbon footprint over recent years.



To put this into context, our premises are an old farmhouse cottage with stone walls three feet thick and a slate roof. When we moved in it had oil central heating, single glazing and three open fires. We are a two car family, with business mileage accounting for a significant proportion of our overall mileage.

Insulation

The starting point of our journey was when we first calculated our carbon footprint back in 2008. It totalled 24.3 tonnes.



The most striking feature was that home heating (oil, coal and peat combined) accounted for more than half of our total footprint. We were burning 3,600 litres of kerosene per year, which is a high usage for a house of relatively modest proportions.

A little investigation soon revealed why. Three quarters of the roof area was completely un-insulated. The remaining quarter had minimal insulation. The single glazed windows and un-insulated stone walls didn't help.

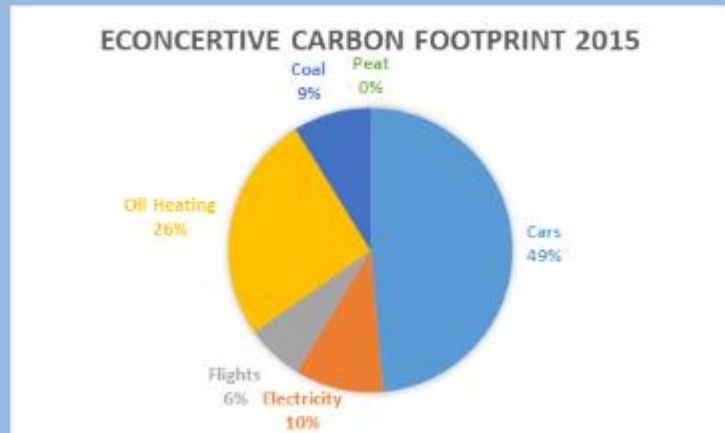
This pointed us to upgrading the insulation at every opportunity as we gradually renovated the house. Over a period of years we re-roofed each part of the building and incorporated a high insulation specification. We replaced the single glazed windows with triple glazed units. We are still in the process of dry-lining the walls, area by area.

The combined effect of these measures was to gradually reduce our annual kerosene usage from 3,600 litres in 2008 to a more respectable 2,100 litres in 2015.

Electricity

While our electricity usage was a modest part of our footprint, we nevertheless made improvements. Whenever an electrical appliance needed to be replaced, we made sure to buy an energy-efficient model, which is always cheaper in the long run. We progressively replaced the lighting with LED units.

The combined effect of these measures was to reduce our electricity usage from 15 kWh per day in 2008 to a little over 13 kWh per day in 2015.



The graph above shows the combined effect the changes since 2008 had made to our 2015 carbon footprint. In comparison with 2008 our overall footprint had reduced by 10%. Heating was no longer responsible for half of our footprint. It was now down to about one third.

However, on the negative side, the emissions from our diesel cars had increased significantly, due to the growth of the business and the consequent increase in business mileage. Our cars were now responsible for half our footprint, and this pointed us to the next challenge.

Road Vehicles

In 2008 we were driving 28,500 miles per year. By 2015 this had increased to 42,000 miles per year. Our increased mileage had severely compromised the positive effects of all our other improvements. Clearly, transport had to be our next priority.

Our next car replacement, in 2016, was a radical one. We bought an electric car. This car has 57% lower emissions than the diesel it replaced, and is 80% cheaper to run. This one change has had the biggest impact on our carbon footprint of all our measures to date.



For a full case study on the electric car, click [here](#).

Central Heating

Our plan was always to eventually replace the oil boiler with a woodchip or wood pellet boiler, which would be almost carbon neutral. However, when a gas transit line was laid outside our front door in 2016, we could not turn down the opportunity to tap into the national gas network.

We invested in a new gas central heating boiler for our heating and hot water needs. Although gas is a fossil fuel, and therefore not ideal environmentally, it results in significantly less emissions than burning oil. It is also much cheaper. Add to that the much improved burn efficiency of the new gas boiler, and we have another significant step change in our carbon footprint.

Summary to Date

In 2008 our energy carbon footprint was 24.3 tonnes. By 2016 we had managed to reduce this to 16.3 tonnes – an overall reduction of one third. This was achieved against a backdrop of ever-increasing business mileages.

Future Plans

We will continue to be informed by our carbon footprint when making lifestyle and investment decisions. In the short term, we plan to replace our electric cooker with a gas one and replace our ageing fridges with a more energy-efficient fridge and freezer.

When our remaining diesel car is due for replacement, we hope to be in a position to consider a second electric vehicle, or possibly a hybrid.

We aim to continue dry lining the remainder of the house and more than likely we will replace the remaining open fire with a solid fuel stove.

Solar PV panels, for electricity generation, are on our 'wish-list' although these are still hard to justify financially.

Conclusions

It is quite a simple matter for any business, or household, to measure its energy carbon footprint. This provides a valuable tool to;

- help promote positive change in day-to-day habits
- help evaluate capital investment options
- provide some balance to traditional finance-based evaluations
- measure progress on sustainability improvement

If you don't already do this for your home or business, try it!

To view the full unabridged case study, including guidance on how to calculate your carbon footprint, click [here](#)

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New Contributions Invited



Please let us know if you have any noteworthy news you would like to share with the **EcoMerit 'family' in future newsletter editions.**

Also if you would like to contribute a case study for the **EcoMerit** website, this would be very welcome. If you need help drafting it, just let us know. Case studies can also become newsletter features.

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