



# Consumer Survey on Visible Fees Preliminary Findings

**SENS eRecycling & WEEE Ireland**

# Consumer Survey Research Background and Objective

- Survey conducted in tandem by **WEEE Ireland** and **SENS eRecycling** on the Irish and Swiss markets with the same methodology and among the same target market
- 30 qualitative in-depth interviews; Nationwide (rural and urban) - Age spread 33-68 years; Even mix of male and females; All had bought a Large Household Appliance in last 18 months
- The findings from both markets can be used collaboratively to inform the WEEE Forum Eco Modulation Project

# Visible fees (vEMCs) - Irish Context

- Approved at national level
- Only applicable to certain sub-categories of WEEE
- Paid by Producers on EEE reported to the PRL Blackbox in addition to recycling charges
- Visible to customers – on shelves, online, on receipts, ads...
- vEMCs assist in the development of additional infrastructure and programmes to increase take back of WEEE and contributions to the EPA for R&D and enforcement

**32" High Definition Large Screen TV**

Only **€299.99**

*Included in this price is a contribution to recycling costs of €5.00*

Figure 3: vEMC at Retail Premises - where the retail price of the EEE is displayed

Category	Visible Environmental Management Cost (vEMC)	Placed On The Market	Cost, Excl VAT*	VAT	vEMC**
1.1.1	All side by side / American style refrigeration	Per Unit	€8.13	€1.71	€10.00
1.2.1	All Larder and two door (under / over configuration) appliances	Per Unit	€4.07	€0.85	€5.00
1.2.2	Chest Freezers above 150 litres	Per Unit	€4.07	€0.85	€5.00
1.3.1	All under counter / table top refrigeration	Per Unit	€4.07	€0.85	€5.00
1.3.2	Chest Freezers below 150 litres	Per Unit	€4.07	€0.85	€5.00
2.1.1	Large Televisions 73cm+	Per Unit	€4.07	€0.85	€5.00
3.1.1	All fluorescent lamps	Per Unit	€0.12	€0.03	€0.15
3.1.2	High and low pressure gas discharge lamps including pressure sodium lamps and metal halide lamps	Per Unit	€0.12	€0.03	€0.15
3.1.3	All compact fluorescent lamps (PLS and CFLs)	Per Unit	€0.12	€0.03	€0.15
3.2.1	LED Lamps	Per Unit	€0.04	€0.01	€0.05
4.1.1	Washing machines, washer dryer, clothes dryer, dish washing machine	Per Unit	€4.07	€0.85	€5.00
4.1.2	Combination oven etc (see PRL Listing for full description)	Per Unit	€4.07	€0.85	€5.00
4.1.3	Other large appliances e.g. sunbed	Per Unit	€4.07	€0.85	€5.00
4.5.1	Large LED Luminaire	Per Unit	€0.04	€0.01	€0.05
5.5.1	Small LED Luminaire	Per Unit	€0.04	€0.01	€0.05

\*Invoiced to Producer  
\*\*Visible to Consumer

# Irish Survey -Preliminary findings

**Visible fees are seen positively**, a reassurance to the consumer their old appliance will be disposed of

They need to stay **embedded in the overall** price, otherwise they could be perceived as a tax or levy

The fee is a **nominal part of the product purchase** and a lower/higher fee, depending on recyclability, is irrelevant to consumers

Introducing different fees among products is seen to be **confusing** although potentially could exist among large/small appliance categories

The fees become more significant when people consider the **wider world of the recycling journey**

**Clear and consistent communications** can inform and empower the decision-making process

As **consumer values evolve**, purchasing will be more discerning and expectations from manufacturers will rise

It is within this context that **the role of Visible Fees can be shaped for the future**

# Environmental Information is welcome but needs to be CLEAR and CONCISE

Upfront and on the appliance is where they would take most notice



Having information on the receipt is a nice bonus but not necessary



Showing the value of the visible fee demonstrates transparency



Graphics, colour coding, traffic light system are all effective in communicating essential information quickly



An authoritative stamp of approval from public body – trusted, standardised

# Swiss survey

## Initial results of the interviews

### Consumer behaviour

#### Consumer behaviour

- The key components are: practical factors (suitability, dimensions, functions), energy efficiency (label), brand, design and price.
- Everything depends on urgency (different decision reached in the case of time pressure).

### Sustainability

#### Sustainability

- Large need
- Relevant at all social levels, but different priorities
- Openness to sustainable products
- Sustainability may (must) cost

### Visible fee ARF

#### Visible fee, ARF

- Everyone is aware of the ARF, or the fact that disposal is paid for when making the purchase. However, it is viewed as a compulsory system. So it is not taken into account. It is not relevant for the purchase decision because of its low financial impact.
- It is not understood why a sustainable product should have a lower ARF. From the consumer perspective, it should be higher (labelled products cost more, sustainably produced electricity costs more, etc.).

# How do consumers wish to be informed?



Sustainability

## Presentation of sustainability

- At present, it is not possible for consumers to evaluate whether a product is sustainable (aside from energy efficiency).
- Desire for simple, practical evaluation of products by a neutral, independent organisation.
- A label would be desirable; directly on the appliance.
- Transparency must be ensured (additional information on website, on flyers, from sales staff).
- A lower ARF for, say, appliances that are easy to recycle would not be understood. More sustainable products must be more expensive (organic, fair trade, etc.).

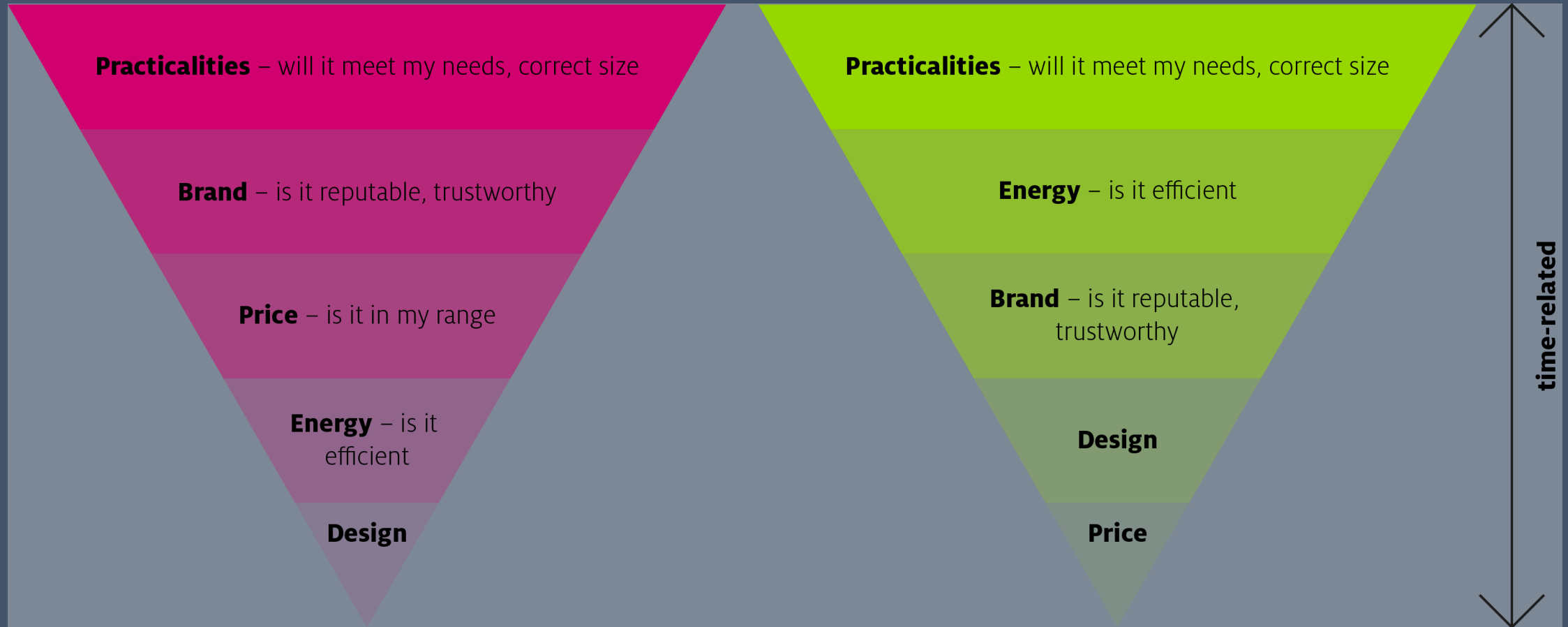
However, the most important point is communication. If consumers are not informed about a problem, they do not care about that problem.

Knowing more makes it matter more!

# Differences between the Irish and Swiss findings

Ireland

Switzerland





# Comparison with findings of WEEE Ireland

- **No understanding of why an appliance that is easy to recycle has a lower ARF.** In the minds of Swiss consumers, sustainability is expensive. For them, a lower ARF would mean less is extracted and it simply goes into the incinerator.
- For many people, **energy efficiency is not only a sustainability factor, but a financial consideration** as well (that is much more worthwhile than a lower ARF).
- **Strong desire for a label that provides an evaluation of sustainability.** Desire for presentation as in Ireland, for example, in the form of a traffic light system. The label should enable a good conscience (I only buy “green” products and am therefore doing something good for the environment).
- **Advice may be a point of contact for us (from sales staff in the shop as well as via reviews and evaluations online).** Swiss consumers use advice offerings, especially for appliances that are not purchased on a regular basis (such as large household appliances).

Thank you

weee  
ireland



Sons eRecycling