

**Title:** Mechanical and Biological Treatment (MBT)  
**Sub-Title:** The Role of MBT in Meeting Ireland's Waste Obligations  
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**Submission Date:** August 2010

**Purpose:** This dissertation arises at a time when Ireland's waste management strategies are being debated at length both in media and political circles. Ireland is obliged to comply with ever tighter waste disposal targets. New waste policies that depart significantly from previous waste policies are being proposed. The purpose of this paper is to understand the strengths and weaknesses of MBT technology and to demonstrate that MBT will be the preferred waste treatment technology over the coming years.

**Methodology:** A comprehensive Literature Review was carried out by the researcher. There is not a clear consensus running through the literature with regard to the potential of MBT. There appears to be a lot of mis-information in the public arena regarding MBT plants. Discussions were held with persons with a knowledge of the industry, and a list of experts covering the waste industry spectrum was drawn up. These were contacted and a series of one-on-one interviews took place. The findings are based on the substance of these interviews and other published papers and reports.

**Findings:** The research findings are that although MBT is favoured by the new Draft Waste Management Policy document, MBT does not compare favourably with incineration as a waste treatment method. There are difficulties with finding a market for MBT products and this is likely to mean that MBT will not be widely used in Ireland. Incineration and anaerobic digestion are likely to be the waste treatment technologies of choice in the future. MBT will play a minor role in Ireland's waste infrastructure.

**Keywords:** MBT, mechanical biological treatment, Irish waste strategy,