

The EU's Circular Economy Action Plan and forests

How and why NGOs should engage



Contents

The EU's Circular Economy Action Plan and forests	1
Executive summary	3
List of main acronyms and abbreviations	4
I The policy context	5
II Circular Economy Action Plan measures impacting forests	7
A Production and consumption	7
B Waste management and the market for secondary raw materials	12
C Sectoral action	13
D Monitoring	14
III Recommendations	17
Conclusions	20
Key dates for NGOs to consider	22

The EU's Circular Economy Action Plan and forests: How and why NGOs should engage

Author: Nicole Polsterer

Design: Daan van Beek

Editor: Roger East

Acknowledgement

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union and the Ford Foundation. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Fern and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union or the Ford Foundation.



With thanks for contributions and comments from Carsten Wachholz, Lindsay Duffield and Richard Wainwright.

January 2017

Executive summary

This report looks at the European Union (EU) Circular Economy Action Plan, presented in December 2015 by the European Commission (EC) as the Communication “Closing the loop - An EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy”.¹ It assesses the relevance of the Action Plan for forests and forest-risk commodities, and considers how non-governmental organisations (NGOs) could engage with EU policy in these areas.

The Action Plan aims to help the EU develop a more resource efficient economy, with lower carbon dioxide emissions and concrete targets on recycling. Although it sets out a number of legislative and non-legislative initiatives, the Action Plan is actually a continuation of policies already pursued under other instruments, such as the Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan² and the Raw Materials Initiative.³ It also explicitly contains mandatory evaluations or reviews of policies initiated under previous legislation.

When considering the drivers of deforestation, some of the most relevant EU policy areas are found outside the Circular Economy Action Plan, such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and EU trade policies. Nonetheless, a number of potentially fruitful areas for NGO engagement on forest-risk commodities and forest products can be identified within the scope of the Action Plan. These include securing raw materials, green procurement guidelines, food waste, and a review of the EU bio-economy strategy.

1 COM/2015/0614 final. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1453384154337&uri=CELEX:52015DC0614>

2 http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/escp_en.htm

3 http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/raw-materials/policy-strategy_en

List of main acronyms and abbreviations

BAT	Best Available Techniques
BEUC	Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs
BREFs	Best Available Techniques Reference documents
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
DG	Directorate-General
EMAS	Eco-Management and Audit Scheme
EAP	Environmental Action Plan
EIA	Environmental Investigation Agency
EC	European Commission
EEB	European Environmental Bureau
EU	European Union
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
FoE	Friends of the Earth
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
GPP	Green Public Procurement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICLEI	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives
IED	Industrial Emissions Directive
IPPC	Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control
IFOAM	International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements
LULUCF	Land Use, Land Use change, and Forestry
LCA	life cycle assessment
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OEF	Organisation Environmental Footprint
OEF SR	Organisation Environmental Footprint Sector Rules
PEF	Product Environmental Footprint
PEF CR	Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
TTIP	Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
UEAPME	Union Européenne de l'Artisanat et des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises

I The policy context

The package of policies put forward by the European Commission (EC) in its 2015 Communication “Closing the loop – An EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy”⁴ needs to be understood in the context of existing EU policies, and in relation to a range of previous initiatives in the EU's ongoing work on resource efficiency, raw materials and consumption and production.

In 2010 the EU adopted its ten-year jobs and growth strategy Europe 2020.⁵ This gave rise to flagship initiatives such as the 2011 Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe,⁶ which sets out milestones for the “EU economy to grow in a way that respects resource constraints and planetary boundaries”. The 7th Environmental Action Plan (EAP)⁷ adopted in 2013, sets out the political mandate for the Commission's environmental action, and aims “to stimulate the transition to a green economy and to strive towards an absolute decoupling of economic growth and environmental degradation.” It identifies three thematic priorities including “turning the Union into a resource-efficient, green and competitive low-carbon economy.”⁸

The EU has also signed up to implement by 2030 the 17 globally agreed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The EC delivered a number of Communications on these in November 2016.⁹

The overarching goal set out in the Circular Economy Action Plan is to “turn waste into a resource and move towards a lifecycle-driven circular economy with a cascading use of resources and residual waste close to zero.” Its many initiatives, addressing various stages of the product lifecycle, include revised targets on waste and the need for a monitoring framework. Many of the proposed actions represent ongoing work rather than entirely new Commission work streams, and have previously been covered under such instruments as the 2008 Raw Materials Initiative¹⁰ and the 2008 Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan¹¹ (which included for example developing EU criteria on Green Public Procurement, testing environmental footprint methodologies, making better use of the Ecodesign Directive, refining eco-labelling schemes, extending producer responsibility, updating the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme, and exploiting industrial symbiosis).

Coordination of EU work on the Circular Economy Action Plan is led jointly by the Directorates-General Environment (DG Environment) and Growth (DG Growth), with several other DGs also responsible for elaborating and implementing parts of its content. The Council of Environment Ministers deliberated on the Plan on 20 June 2016. The Parliament did not present an opinion on it,

4 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Closing the loop – An EU action plan for the Circular Economy COM (2015) 614 final

5 Communication from the Commission. Europe 2020. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, COM(2010) 2020 final, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>

6 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe COM(2011)571 final, <http://www.cbss.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/energy-efficient-europe.pdf>

7 Decision Number 1386/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of November 2013 on a General Union Environment Action Plan to 2020 “Living well, within the limits of our planet”

8 The other two priorities being to protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital and to safeguard the Union's citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and wellbeing

9 <http://www.fern.org/SDGblog>

10 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. The raw materials initiative — meeting our critical needs for growth and jobs in Europe {SEC(2008) 2741}, COM(2008) 699 final, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52008DC0699&from=EN>

11 The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Sustainable Consumption and Production and Sustainable Industrial Policy Action Plan {SEC(2008) 2110} {SEC(2008) 2111} COM(2008) 397 final, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52008DC0397&from=EN>

however, since it had already adopted a resolution (2015) on "Resource efficiency: moving towards a circular economy."¹²

The aim of most of the actions under the Circular Economy Action Plan is to boost the EU's competitiveness by protecting businesses against scarcity of resources and volatile prices, by creating new business opportunities and jobs, and by lowering carbon dioxide emission levels. Its legislative and non-legislative actions encompass the main stages of the lifecycle of products, apart from the sourcing of raw materials, for which it refers to strategies outside of the Action Plan (mostly the EU Trade for All¹³ strategy).

The Action Plan's lack of attention to sustainable sourcing is something that NGOs could look at in more detail, particularly considering that the Commission does have a priority goal of securing undistorted access to raw materials (particularly Critical Raw Materials)¹⁴ and, to that end, will stimulate investment in innovation and new technologiesEuropean industriE.¹⁵ The European Innovation Partnership on Raw Materials¹⁶ targets industries in non-energy, non-agricultural raw materials sectors such as mining, aiming to help raise their contributions to EU Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to around 20 per cent of GDP by 2020.

At a June 2016 meeting, the Council of Environmental Ministers called on the Commission to take concrete initiatives to promote sustainable sourcing and supply of raw materials.¹⁷ Ahead of this meeting, DG Environment promised to strengthen its dialogue with DG Trade on sustainable sourcing of raw materials, but so far it seems no action has been taken and few NGOs seem to be engaged on trade issues (apart from around the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), and Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT)).

12 European Parliament resolution of 9 July 2015 on resource efficiency: moving towards a circular economy2014/2208(INI)

13 http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2015/october/tradoc_153846.pdf

14 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Council and the Committee of the Regions. On the review of the list of critical raw materials for the EU and the implementation of the EU Raw Materials Initiative, COM(2014) 297 final, {SWD (2014) 171 final}, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52014DC0297>

15 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Council and the Committee of the Regions. For a European Industrial Renaissance. COM(2014) 14 final {SWD(2014) 14 final}, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014DC0014&from=EN>

16 <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/eip-raw-materials/en/content/european-innovation-partnership-eip-raw-materials>

17 Council of the European Union (2016) Outcome of Proceedings. Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade-Council conclusions 10721/16 (28 June 2016), <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10721-2016-INIT/en/pdf>

II Circular Economy Action Plan measures impacting forests

The Circular Economy Action Plan proposes 54 measures, with timelines running from 2015 to 2019, under the headings of (1) Production, (2) Consumption, (3) Waste Management, (4) Market for Secondary Raw Materials, (5) Sectoral Action (including action on plastics, food waste, critical raw materials, construction and demolition, and biomass and bio-based materials), and (6) Innovation and Investment. Monitoring implementation of the Plan is also a proposed measure.

Although the Plan contains actions under all these headings, none of those listed under Markets for Secondary Raw Materials or Innovation and Investment¹⁸ appear to impact forests either directly, through consumption or production of timber/wood products and pulp and paper, or indirectly through the consumption or production of forest-risk commodities. The discussion that follows therefore focuses on (a) Production and Consumption (merged to make the explanation of interdependencies of the actions and policies easier), (b) Waste, (c) Sectoral Action, and (d) Monitoring implementation.

A Production and consumption

Under the broad umbrellas of 'production and consumption', the EC proposes 22 measures

- to increase resource efficiency through better design of products,
- to regulate energy efficiency in particular product categories under a revised Ecodesign Directive,
- to extend the scope of best practice guides on production processes for circular economy indicators and improve related information sharing among Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs),
- to 'refit' the EU Ecolabel and revise Green Public Procurement (GPP) criteria and guidelines, and
- to update EC Guidance on the Unfair Environmental Practices Directive.

Within these 22 measures, the following actions relate to some extent to the supply and demand of timber or forest-risk commodities:

Product and Organisation Environmental Footprints, Communication Vehicles and a more coherent EU product policy framework

The EC encourages Member States and the private sector to start using Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) and Organisation Environmental Footprint (OEF) methods as a way of measuring lifecycle environmental performance (known as life cycle assessments (LCA)). Under its Single Green

¹⁸ Annex to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Closing the loop – An EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy. COM(2015)614final

Market for Products Initiative (2013)¹⁹ it started developing PEF rules for 26 products²⁰ and OEF rules for two sectors.²¹ The development of these harmonised LCA methods should help make the environmental impacts of products and organisations comparable and communicable to consumers and businesses across Europe. Table 1 shows the 14 default environmental impact categories which can be covered by the PEF and OEF, and their unit measures.²²

Table 1: Recommended Impact Categories for the Produce Environmental Footprint and their unit measures

Impact category	Unit	Domestic	Normalisation Factor per Person (domestic)	Overall Robustness
Climate change	kg CO ₂ eq.	4.60E+12	9.22E+03	Very High
Ozone depletion	kg CFC-11 eq.	1.08E+07	2.16E-02	Medium
Human toxicity – cancer effect	CTUh	1.84E+04	3.69E-05	Low
Human toxicity – non-cancer effect	CTUh	2.66E+05	5.33E-04	Low
Acidification	mol H ⁺ eq.	2.36E+10	4.73E+01	High
Particulate matter/Respiratory Inorganics	kg PM _{2.5} eq.	1.90E+09	3.80E+00	Very High
Ecotoxicity for aquatic fresh water	CTUe	4.36E+12	8.74E+03	Low
Ionising radiations – human health effects	kBq U ²³⁵ eq. (to air)	5.64E+11	1.13E+03	Medium
Photochemical ozone formation	kg NMVOC eq.	1.58E+10	3.17E+01	Medium
Eutrophication – terrestrial	mol N eq.	8.76E+10	1.76E+02	Medium
Eutrophication – freshwater	kg P eq.	7.41E+08	1.48E+00	Medium to Low
Eutrophication – marine	kg N eq.	8.44E+09	1.69E+01	Medium to Low
Land use	kg C deficit	3.74E+13	7.48E+04	Medium
Resource depletion – water	m ³ water eq.	4.06E+10	8.14E+01	Medium to Low
Resource depletion – mineral, fossil & renewable	kg Sb eq.	5.03E+07	1.01E-01	Medium

In the pilot phase of the PEF (2013 – 2016), each pilot product has its own technical secretariat, consisting of at least one representative from a company, an industrial organisation, an NGO, a Member State, a national or international institution, and a university or a research institute. The secretariats are tasked with consulting with stakeholders, harmonising existing guidance and drafting the Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCR) and Organisation Environmental Footprint Sector Rules (OEFSR). They are now in the final stages of consulting on these rules for pilot products.²³

A PEFCR or OEFSR is considered representative of a sector when competitors covering at least 75 per cent of the EU market (and all companies with over a 10 per cent EU market share) have been invited to the process and 51 per cent of EU industry stakeholders have participated.²⁴

19 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. Building the Single Market for Green Products. Facilitating better information on the environmental performance of products and organisations {SWD(2013) 111 final} {SWD(2013) 112 final} COM(2013) 196 final <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013DC0196&from=EN>

20 Batteries and accumulators, decorative paints, hot and cold water supply pipes, household detergents, intermediate paper product, IT equipment, leather, metal sheets, footwear, photovoltaic electricity generation, stationery (discontinued), thermal insulation, T-shirts, uninterruptible power supply, beer, coffee, dairy, feed for food-producing animals, marine fish (discontinued), meat (bovine, pigs, sheep), olive oil, packed water, pasta, pet food (cats & dogs), wine, http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/ef_pilots.htm

21 Retail and copper production http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/ef_pilots.htm#oef

22 The impact categories are explained here <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/communication/impact.htm>

23 Non legislative acts, 2013/179/EU Commission Recommendation of 9 April 2013 on the use of common methods to measure and communicate the lifecycle environmental performance of products and organisations, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L:2013:124:FULL&from=EN>

24 Guidance for the implementation of the EU Organisation Environmental Footprint (OEF) during the Environmental Footprint (EF) Pilot Phase Version 4.0 – February 2016, http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/pdf/Guidance_organisations.pdf

Participating pilot companies are currently conducting tests²⁵ in their shops or with consumer groups on communication tools for PEFs for 11 products. The tools, for instance labels, use a limited number of impact categories (three to four) so that consumers can easily digest the information.²⁶

Graph 1: Example of a PEF communication vehicle: Shopping basket comparison²⁷

<p>XYZ Supermarket Well done! Your cart is greener than that of our average buyer 😊</p> <p>PEF A Milk 1€ PEF A shoes 50€ PEF B detergent 5€</p>		<p>XYZ Supermarket Your cart is less environmentally friendly than the average buyer's cart 😞</p> <p>Milk 1€ Aggressive dishw3.5€ PEF C T-shirt 10€ Plastic carrier bag 0.5€</p>		<p>XYZ Supermarket Fantastic! Your cart is greener than that of our average green buyer! 😊😊😊</p> <p>PEF A Milk 1€ PEF A detergent refill 4€ PEF A T-shirt 10€ Glass return -5€</p>	
---	--	--	--	--	--

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) have put out statements that LCAs such as the PEF have limitations when social issues are not addressed in supply chains such as forestry, mining, or agriculture²⁸ and that the current selection of impact categories used in the PEF does not reveal impacts on biodiversity.²⁹ Both organisations concur that the lifecycle-based approach as currently proposed under the PEF is not sufficient to define a common baseline for comprehensively measuring the impacts that products might have.

The EC has announced that it will gradually incorporate the PEF and OEF methods as appropriate in its Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), in GPP, and in the EU Ecolabel.³⁰ It might use the PEF studies as a means to identify relevant environmental impacts to help develop Ecolabel or GPP criteria. As part of this, it will assess whether the methods, product and sector performance benchmarks and incentives were successful so that they can be applied in policy tools. This might lead to a review of the Eco-design and Energy Label Directives and the Ecolabel Regulation for LCA indicators. It is hoped that progressive application of PEF and OEF methods across the EU will also generate benefits for businesses outside the EU by providing two single references for companies desiring to enter the EU market, rather than the current multitude of schemes applied at national level. It seems unlikely however that national certification and product declaration schemes will be dropped in favour of an EU wide reference.

25 European Commission, Environment. Sustainable Development. Single Market for Green Products. How do tests work? http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/communication/how_to_test.htm

26 Questions and answers, http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/pdf/q_a.pdf

27 European Commission, Environment. Sustainable Development. Single Market for Green Products. Product Environmental Footprint information, http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/communication/product_information.htm

28 Forest Stewardship Council (2016) Product sustainability assessment: FSC calls for addressing the limitations of lifecycle assessment with certification, <http://www.isealliance.org/online-community/blogs/fsc-position-paper-asks-companies-to-recognise-limitations-of-life-cycle-analysis>

29 Goedkoop (2015), Issue Paper. Addressing biodiversity in the Environmental Footprint pilots. Version 2.3 final. Technical Helpdesk, <http://www.eeb.org/index.cfm?LinkServID=81461848-5056-B741-DB5EFE4063DDA34B> <http://www.eeb.org/index.cfm?LinkServID=8186255C-5056-B741-DBA339B617E09EA9>

30 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council (2013), Building the Single Market for Green Products. Facilitating better information on the environmental performance of products and organisations COM(2013) 196 final [SWD(2013) 111 final] [SWD(2013) 112 final], <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013DC0196&from=en>

In 2018 the EC will examine options and actions for a more coherent policy framework for an EU product policy, which would then integrate revised EU instruments on Eco-design, labelling, and public procurement. A 2014 study³¹ reviewed five possible options. Rather than mandatory environmental performance requirements or reporting frameworks, the study favoured a recommendation that Member States apply PEF and OEF methods whenever they intend to introduce a voluntary scheme or requirements related to the measurement, verification, reporting, benchmarking, and communication of the environmental performance of products and/or organisations. This option is currently being implemented. It remains to be seen whether the future product policy framework will go beyond voluntary schemes.

The Eco-design and Energy labelling Directives

The current Eco-Design Directive sets out minimum mandatory requirements for the energy efficiency of energy related products such as household appliances, information and communication technologies and engineering. The complementary Energy Labelling Directive requires labelling and the consideration of energy efficiency criteria in procurement actions.³² The EC also promised to elaborate product requirements in its Eco-Design work plan 2015 - 2017 related to circularity, such as durability, reparability, upgradability, and recyclability, but the publication of this work plan has been delayed.

Some NGOs have called for inclusion of non-energy related products in the EC's work plan with a view to developing circularity product requirements. The inclusion of wood products, such as furniture, could present an opportunity to reduce the demand for virgin timber. Opening the scope of the Directive to other, non-energy related products, rather than devising a new Directive would also bring the benefit that a legal basis and verification system is already in place. The EC does not currently foresee doing this.

Extending Green Public Procurement

Assessing the possibility of extending mandatory GPP rules to more products is one of the EC's stated intentions under the 7th EAP, as is a comprehensive review of the Ecodesign Directive with the possibility of broadening its scope to product groups such as construction materials, bio-based chemicals, textiles and furnishings. A revised Ecodesign Directive could take up criteria on other environmental aspects than energy efficiency, which have already been developed and applied for GPP and ecolabelling.

The Circular Economy Action Plan says that it will use the Public Procurement and Ecolabel directives to push for meaningful criteria on durability, reparability and recyclability.

GPP criteria for 'Office Building Design, Construction and Management', and 'Computers and Monitors' have recently been published. The EU GPP Guidance on Food and Catering³³ is currently being revised. So far it includes guidance for one forest-risk commodity, namely palm oil.³⁴ For other imported products, including forest-risk commodities such as cocoa, the criteria refer to Fair Trade standards. Sustainability and Fair Trade are only non-mandatory criteria, for which the organisation responding to a tender receives bonus points. Imported beef is not covered and feedstocks are not

31 Bio by Deloitte, Ecologic, IEEP, Investigating options for different compliance systems for PEF and OEF declarations, http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/pdf/Compliance_finalreport.pdf

32 Directive 2010/30/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the indication by labelling and standard product information of the consumption of energy and other resources by energy-related products, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32010L0030&from=EN>

33 European Commission GPP Training Toolkit - Module 3: Purchasing recommendations, http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/toolkit/food_GPP_product_sheet.pdf

34 Joint Research Centre, GPP Helpdesk Webinar on Sustainable Procurement of Food & Catering Services (23 June 2016), http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/23_06_2016/webinar_revision_GPPcriteria_%20food_catering.pdf

explicitly covered. They are implicitly covered when a product is defined as organic. Organic as a production standard can be set as a mandatory criterion. Bigger Member States usually have their own Green or Sustainable Procurement Guidelines; smaller Member States refer to the EU GPP guidelines but usually do not take up all the criteria.

A GPP Advisory Group, consisting mainly of national Member State representatives working on GPP plus representatives from Business Europe, the SME association UEAPME, EEB, the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) and the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), meets twice a year and advises the European Commission on the development and implementation of GPP policies. EEB and ICLEI offer to build the capacity of NGOs to work better with Member States and their procurement agencies on green procurement.

Best Available Technique reference documents

The Circular Economy Action Plan provides for sector-specific guidance on waste management and resource efficiency practices to be set out in Best Available Techniques (BAT) reference documents.

Known as BREFs,³⁵ these documents exist for instance for the production of pulp, paper, board and wood-based panel. They cover the techniques and processes used in this sector, the emission and consumption levels, and how to determine the best available and emerging techniques. BREFs are industry-led and result from the exchange of information on production processes between the industries concerned, EU Member States, NGOs promoting environmental protection, and the EC. Once published, BREFs are applied under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED) and the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) Directive. When permits are being granted for new installations the IED mandatorily requires conformity with the key elements of the relevant BREFs, i.e. the BAT conclusions, before commencement of operations. For existing installations, the IED requires that permit and license conditions be reconsidered within four years of the publication of new BAT conclusions.

Updated guidance on unfair commercial practices

In 2009 the EC issued guidance on the use of clear, accurate and relevant environmental claims in marketing and advertising. This guidance was updated in May 2016.³⁶

The guidance relates to the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive, which by itself does not provide for specific rules in relation to environmental marketing.³⁷ A Fern-commissioned study of EU regulation and of case law in the United Kingdom, Netherlands, France, Germany and Italy finds that it will be difficult to use the Directive to hold companies to account over commitments such as zero deforestation in marketing to consumers. Fern is aware of numerous infractions of such commitments, but these commitments are primarily directed towards the industry, NGOs and public administrations, rather than directly towards consumers via labelling on packaging. An average consumer is thus not expected to be aware of these commitments. In addition, since these commitments are often aspirational and not bound by a code of conduct, it is difficult to hold them to account, although the guidance for the Directive indicates it is better practice to communicate actual achievements rather than aspirations.

³⁵ <http://eippcb.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reference/>

³⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/consumer-marketing/files/ucp_guidance_en.pdf

³⁷ EU Ecolabel Work Plan for 2016 – 2018. Version 1. 4 of March 2016 <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/documents/Work%20plan%202016-2018.pdf>

If NGOs do nevertheless wish to pursue the avenue of more widespread use of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive, they should be aware that case law indicates more willingness among regulators to issue warnings than to take legal action even when unfair commercial practice is found.

B Waste management and the market for secondary raw materials

Based on the legal obligation to review the waste management targets, the following directives are being amended: Directive 2008/98/EC on waste, Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste, Directive 1999/31/EC on the landfill of waste, Directive 2006/66/EC on batteries and accumulators and waste batteries and accumulators, and Directive 2012/19/EU on waste electrical equipment. The Directives are concerned with amending the definition and scope of existing waste legislation, extending producer responsibility such as covering the cost of waste management for its products, encouraging reuse activities, methodologies for measuring waste, and measuring food waste.

From a forest perspective, it is positive that all Directives are being amended, better measurement methodologies adopted and in some cases higher targets set, encouraging the prevention of waste and making more material available for recycling and reuse as secondary raw materials. Clauses of “where technically, environmentally or economically practicable” in the current and revised draft legislation, however, might give Member States a way out of collecting or recycling more.

The Waste Framework Directive on waste has proposed amendments on food waste. The informal ‘waste coalition’ of Brussels based NGOs calls for a binding food waste reduction target of at least 30 per cent by 2018, but several caveats apply to the introduction of such a target: there are various definitions for ‘food waste’, and no common methodology at EU or United Nations levels to measure it. Even at the EU level precise data is lacking, since food waste and several other kinds of organic waste are listed under one code in the Waste Framework Directive.³⁸

Few Member States carry out a waste census³⁹ (characterisation and quantification of waste) because they are expensive. A study carried out for the EC found that 53 per cent of food waste comes from households and 19 per cent from food processing (although there is considerable uncertainty around the estimate for the processing sector, with only four Member States providing information of sufficient quality) while 12 per cent comes from food services such as catering and restaurants, ten per cent from primary production and five per cent from wholesale and retail.⁴⁰

A Dutch study found that Dutch citizens waste on average 47 kilos (14 per cent) of solid food each year. Dairy products are by far the most wasted, followed by bread and then vegetables.⁴¹ The study found that food waste is caused by less-than-ideal buying, cooking and storage habits. A reason is that food is relatively cheap, so there is little incentive to be economical.

While the waste legislation package provides a concrete opportunity to influence EU policy, working on detailed amendments and lobbying for these is time intensive. It requires a good understanding of technical feasibility, Member States’ different collection processes, repair and recycling systems and calculation methods. The informal NGO waste coalition working on resource efficiency, repair, reuse and plastics and environmental protection in Brussels are very active on proposing

38 Estimates of European food waste levels, <http://www.eu-fusions.org/phocadownload/Publications/Estimates%20of%20European%20food%20waste%20levels.pdf>

39 Discussion with Odile le Bolloch on 15 February 2016

40 <http://www.eu-fusions.org/phocadownload/Publications/Estimates%20of%20European%20food%20waste%20levels.pdf>

41 Government of The Netherlands, Ministry of Economic Affairs (2013), Facts and figures on consumer food waste in 2013. How much food is wasted by consumers?, <https://www.government.nl/documents/publications/2014/01/30/facts-and-figures-on-consumer-food-waste-in-2013>

amendments and influencing Member States on the revised waste directives. On food waste, however, NGOs working on forests and non-timber forest resources may do better to concentrate on the need for total material consumption reduction targets, which are neglected in the Circular Economy Action Plan and in EU policy more generally, and on overarching work for better integrated food and farm policies. In this way NGOs could address underlying factors concerning food waste such as overproduction, low food prices, and the lack of measurement in the agricultural production sector.

C Sectoral action

Construction and demolition

Construction and demolition waste is one of the biggest waste streams in the EU. It accounts for approximately 30 per cent of all waste generated in the EU. Much of the wood of this waste stream can be recycled.⁴²

In the Circular Economy Action Plan three initiatives are foreseen to address this by drafting pre-demolition assessment guidelines for the construction sector, setting a voluntary industry-wide recycling protocol for construction and demolition waste, and establishing a set of core indicators for the assessment of the lifecycle environmental performance of a building.

Making wood that has been previously used more readily available would mean less pressure on virgin wood. The promotion of LCA indicators for the environmental performance of a building would be likely to favour wood over steel construction.

Biomass and bio-based materials

The Circular Economy Action Plan prioritises securing access to sustainable raw materials at world market prices for the production of bio-based products, including bio-ethanol or starch for bio-based industrial activities.

The Action Plan calls for the 2012 Bio-economy Strategy to be reviewed by 2017.⁴³ The Bio-economy strategy addresses the production of renewable biological resources and their conversion into products and energy, thereby seeking to help ensure that fossil fuels are replaced with sustainable natural alternatives as part of the shift to a post-petroleum society.⁴⁴ The Strategy also seeks to enhance the markets for and competitiveness of the Bio-economy by actions such as supporting integrated and diversified bio-refineries,⁴⁵ including the necessary logistics and supply chains for cascading use of biomass and waste streams, establishing a research and innovation public private partnership for bio-based industries, developing standards and standardised sustainability assessments, and facilitating green procurement for bio-based products by developing labels.⁴⁶

In its June 2016 Council Conclusions, the Council of Environmental Ministers⁴⁷ requested that the EC review the contribution of the Bio-economy to the Circular Economy, and to update the Circular Economy strategy accordingly. It has invited the EC to promote nature- and bio-based solutions. The

42 38. European Commission Environment Waste http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/construction_demolition.htm

43 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the regions (2012) Innovating for Sustainable Growth: A Bioeconomy for Europe (SWD(2012) 11 final) COM(2012) 60 final

44 European Commission <http://ec.europa.eu/research/bioeconomy/index.cfm?pg=policy&lib=strategy>

45 Biorefineries are expected to produce a wide range of products, fuels and energy from renewable resources including from different waste streams.

46 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the regions (2012) Innovating for Sustainable Growth: A Bioeconomy for Europe (SWD(2012) 11 final) COM(2012) 60 final

47 <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/06/20-envi-conclusions-circular-economy/>



Inova biomass plant in Brignoles, France

photo: Collectif SOS Forêt du Sud

The Circular Economy Action Plan includes dissemination of best practices on cascading use of biomass

See also Recommendations on page 17: 2. Develop a position on the Bio-economy

EC is also seeking to get wider acceptance for the concept of a Bio-economy. A Stakeholder Panel has been established by DG Research with a mandate to develop a Manifesto on the Bio-economy highlighting challenges, devising principles and proposing actions. The EC will evaluate the EU Bio-economy strategy in 2017 and will likely communicate a revised strategy in 2018.

This review process of the Bio-economy Strategy is an opportunity to emphasise the environmental and human risks of seeking to replace all fossil-fuel-based products with bio-based materials while consumption continues to grow overall. Campaigns could focus on land use and on calling for the reduction of material consumption, fair prices, access to resources, visions for wellbeing, a new system and principles for food production, and criteria for biomass for all uses.

Few NGOs are presently involved in the discussions on a Bio-economy.

D Monitoring

The EC plans to use the Resource Efficiency Scoreboard and the Raw Materials Scoreboards as building blocks for a monitoring framework of the EU Circular Economy.⁴⁸

There are three tiers of indicators in the Resource Efficiency Scoreboard. Resource productivity is the lead indicator,⁴⁹ followed by a dashboard of other indicators such as domestic material consumption,⁵⁰ artificial land⁵¹ productivity, the water exploitation index, the share of renewable energy in gross energy consumption, and carbon dioxide equivalents of greenhouse gas emissions. Thirdly there are thematic indicators which include, for example, recycling rates of different waste streams,⁵² nutrient balance on agricultural land, and environmental tax revenue.⁵³ Resource efficiency is not measured by specific sectors.

The wood sector is explicitly measured in the Raw Materials Scoreboard. This comprises 24 indicators,⁵⁴ relating for example to geographical concentration of raw materials, the use and trading of metals, or mineral exploration. On wood supply it notes that it is not yet possible to map EU forest areas covered by Sustainable Forest Management or to measure how much wood comes from them. Hence, the Scoreboard concentrates on felling rates, considering felling rates below 85 percent as avoiding negative environmental impacts on forests. The EC also notes, however, that the growth of the bioenergy and bio-based products sectors makes more qualitative and quantitative monitoring of forests necessary.

In relation to the circular economy, the Raw Materials Scoreboard also helps to measure recycling's contribution to meeting demand for materials. In the area of environment and sustainability it tracks companies in the construction materials, forest and paper, metals and mining sectors adhering to and reporting under the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

As the Commission plans to publish monitoring indicators for the Circular Economy Action Plan together with reporting on the SDGs, its indicators work could offer an opportunity to stimulate debate on Sustainable Forest Management, bioenergy and the bio-economy.

48 Communication 'For a European Industrial Renaissance' (COM (2014) 14 Final) of 22 January 2014

49 Resource productivity is defined as the ratio between GDP and domestic material consumption.

50 Domestic Material Consumption is defined as the total amount of materials directly used in the economy (used domestic extraction plus imports), minus the materials that are exported. A limitation of this indicator is that it does not include unused domestic extraction and indirect flows of imports and exports, thus it is only a proxy for the actual total material consumption.

51 Artificial land consists of built-up areas (areas covered with buildings and greenhouses) and non built-up areas (streets and sealed surfaces, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/web/table/description.jsp>)

52 Food waste is not included in this list, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/environmental-data-centre-on-natural-resources/resource-efficiency-indicators/resource-efficiency-scoreboard/thematic-indicators/transforming-the-economy/turning-waste-into-resource>

53 <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/environmental-data-centre-on-natural-resources/resource-efficiency-indicators/resource-efficiency-scoreboard/thematic-indicators>

54 European Commission Raw materials scoreboard. (2016) European innovation partnership on raw materials, <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/raw-materials-scoreboard-pbET0215541/>

Summary of NGO engagement on elements of the Circular Economy Action Plan

Policy areas	NGOs (not necessarily exhaustive)
Product Policy	
With different focuses such as Product Environmental Footprints, planned obsolescence, Repair and Reuse, Sustainable Consumption and Production in general, Organisation Environmental Footprint, Ecodesign, Energy labelling.	EEB and some of its members. NABU, BUND ÖKO-INSTITUT e.V, LEGAMBIENTE, FNE – France Nature Environment WWF International, Green Alliance, Svenska Naturskyddsföreningen, BBLV, Zero Waste Europe, Global2000
Legislative Proposals on Waste	
With different focuses: zero waste, reuse, resource efficiency, plastics, oceans.	The informal “waste coalition” in Brussels, including: Zero Waste Europe, Quaker Council for European Affairs, Rreuse, Healthcare without Harm, Ecos, EIA, FoE Europe, Surfrider, Seas at risk, Let's do it, Green Alliance, EEB.
Bio-economy	
	EEB/Birdlife in the Stakeholder Panel, Friends of the Earth (FoE) Europe within its work on the Circular Economy.
Sourcing and Trade	
	Legal and sustainable sourcing: Greenpeace, WWF, Client Earth, EIA, Global Witness, Conservation International, Trade: 11.11.11

III Recommendations

Most NGOs have been reluctant to work on measures that are non-binding and on non-legislative policy streams under the Circular Economy Action Plan, such as the Bio-economy. They either do not have funding for it, or consider that exerting influence over legislative proposals is more effective.

Options for future NGO engagement on the circular economy and tackling the drivers of deforestation:

1. When campaigning on trade, include work to monitor raw materials diplomacy and partnerships
2. Develop a position on the Bio-economy
3. Develop a position on Food and Agricultural Policy
4. Selectively engage on Eco-design, Product Environmental Footprints, Labelling and Green Public Procurement
5. Monitor the development of the Product Policy Framework and the Monitoring Framework of the Circular Economy Action Plan starting in 2017

1. When campaigning on trade, include work to monitor raw materials diplomacy and partnerships

Sustainable trade and sourcing are underrepresented in the Circular Economy Action Plan. There is scope to draw attention to this omission through advocating for the closing of loopholes in the EU's trade and sustainability approaches and calling for legally and sustainably sourced supply chains.

2. Develop a position on the Bio-economy

Under the Dutch EU Presidency, DG Research and DG Growth have started to consolidate stakeholder views to gather support for a shift towards a bio-based economy. The EU Stakeholder Panel drafted a Manifesto and will continue to elaborate this Manifesto and present it to the European Council and Parliament in 2017. While the current version of the Manifesto recognises that the land footprint of the EU should not increase due to growth in the bio-economy, it also puts a strong emphasis on facilitating large bio-refinery and bio-plastics plants.⁵⁵

A shift towards a more bio-based strategy carries risks of environmental degradation due to over-exploitation of natural resources, so it would be helpful to develop a position that includes guidance on sustainability indicators. The same danger will emerge in the future EU Plastics Strategy (anticipated 2017), which will seek to address the shift from fossil to bio-based feedstocks. The Bioeconomy is a vast policy field and a good umbrella for campaigns/campaign contributions on land use, reducing material consumption, fair prices, access to resources, a new system and principles for food production, and biomass criteria for all uses.

⁵⁵ Draft European Bioeconomy Stakeholders Manifesto, 12 – 13 April 2016, <http://bioeconomyutrecht2016.eu/Static/bioeconomyutrecht2016.eu/Site/Manifest.pdf>. A new version of the Manifesto dated 13 June 2016 is available to Stakeholder Panel members but is not referenced publicly yet.



Soy field

Photo: barbaragailLewis / Flickr.com / CC

In Brazil, the vast majority of deforestation is for either cattle rearing or planting soy. The EU imports 98% of the soy it consumes.

3. Develop a position on Food and Agricultural Policy

Initiatives in the Circular Economy Action Plan to enhance resource efficiency in the agricultural sector include a proposal for a revised fertilizer regulation, a revised legislative proposal on waste including food waste, the development of a common methodology and indicators to measure food waste, a stakeholders' platform to examine how to achieve the SDG goal on food waste, clarifying relevant EU legislation related to waste, food and feed, and exploring options for more effective use of date marking on food.

A coalition of NGOs working on waste legislation is also looking at food waste, but few NGOs seem to be dedicated to advocacy on reducing food waste as a single issue. Rather than focusing just on end of life issues, the challenge for food can be approached more holistically, and indeed a core group of NGOs is calling for a new food and farming policy that takes into account such issues as dietary requirements, animal welfare, better production methods and gearing CAP subsidies towards a better agricultural policy. They use the call for a Refit⁵⁶ of the CAP as the moment to do so. More work on controlling or limiting non-sustainable product choices available to consumers by retailers, rethinking food retailing distribution systems and shortening supply chains are all areas that are important to the food and farming debate. These seem to lie for the moment outside of the scope of Circular Economy and NGO work on farming and the CAP.

56 http://www.fern.org/sites/fern.org/files/NGOs%20letter%20-%20CAP%20Fitness%20Check%20_final_version%20for%20publication%20Tuesday%20morning2.pdf

4. Selectively engage on Eco-design, Product Environmental Footprints, Labelling and Green Public Procurement

The Circular Economy Action Plan has so far made unambitious proposals of actions related to Ecodesign and GPP. The Ecodesign work plan was published on 30 November 2016.

On these issues there are short windows of opportunity for NGOs to inform the debate on a technical level. Possible avenues include: registering for the GPP Food and Catering stakeholder group and attending the meeting in February 2017; engaging if or when EEB opens a working group on a specific timber-containing product to develop circularity guidelines to make the repair, reuse, and recycling of these products feasible; encouraging EEB to ensure acceptance of FLEGT licensed timber in Green Procurement standards.

However, there may not be much scope for wider campaigns, as EU GPP guidelines are voluntary, and the scope of the Ecodesign Directive very likely remains restricted to energy related products.

5. Monitor the development of the Product Policy Framework and the Monitoring Framework of the Circular Economy Action Plan starting in 2017

In 2017 information from the pilot PEF studies should be available and a stakeholder consultation might follow for the formulation of an integrated Product Policy Framework. NGOs should monitor when the Integrated Product Framework is presented, although it looks unlikely that there will be much room to address deforestation through this framework. It currently looks unlikely that the PEF will find wider acceptance or become a mandatory requirement. When the Monitoring Framework of the Circular Economy Action Plan is opened up for consultation (anticipated 2017), it could present an opportunity for interested NGOs to input in to the most appropriate methodologies for measuring impacts of Sustainable Forest Management practices.

Conclusions

The Circular Economy Action Plan focuses heavily on waste legislation; piloting LCA tools for take up in future measures under EU product policy such as Ecolabels and procurement guidelines; improving standards for the recycling of energy related products; and promoting a bio-economy. From a 'drivers of deforestation' perspective, the Circular Economy Action Plan does not tackle major drivers of deforestation directly. In relation to agricultural commodities, it only deals with the end of life of agro-commodities: food waste. On the beginning of life of products, sourcing, the Circular Economy Action Plan relays responsibility to DG Trade and policy initiatives outside of the Action Plan, and is more focused on minerals and metals than on agro-commodities or timber.

On biomass, the Circular Economy Action Plan includes dissemination of best practices on cascading use. The Plan also aims to assess the contribution of the bio-economy to the Circular Economy. So far this contribution can be seen in the promotion of bioplastics in the revision of the waste legislation. It can also be seen in DG Research engaging a Stakeholders' Panel to draft a Manifesto, to bring the discussion on a bio-economy from the policy making level to the implementing and regional levels. DG Research is now informing the European institutions of stakeholders' views ahead of the review of the EU Bio-economy Strategy, and is expected to publish an EU Plastics Strategy towards the end of 2017.

A larger opportunity to drive forward the message of protecting forests and respecting rights lies however, outside the Circular Economy Action Plan, namely with the Common Agricultural Policy, which governs payments to farmers and also sets market conditions. A key issue here concerns soy, which is the second largest driver of tropical deforestation. There seems to be relatively little pressure from civil society on farmers and policy makers, however, to reduce its negative impacts (on ecosystems, on communities where soy is sourced, and also from an animal welfare point of view). This may be because the public seems largely unaware of soya's deforestation footprint, and of European dependency on imported protein feed such as soy for beef, dairy, pork and poultry production. While a recent hearing in the Parliament on Improving European plant protein supplies⁵⁷ shows that there is growing attention to the issue, there is little pressure for remedial action on the sourcing and importing of soy from forest-risk areas overseas. Fern's forthcoming study on the CAP and deforestation will help identify possible entry points for NGO campaigning on soy (including trade policy, such as duty free tariffs for soy). It might be acted upon within the timeframe of the new CAP reform, with its mid-term review in 2017 and consultation foreseen in 2018.

The Integrated Product Framework and Monitoring of the Circular Economy are areas which NGOs should monitor and possibly act upon when the Commission presents its proposals. For the Raw Materials scoreboard this would mean including measuring the risk that the EU's planned supply of raw materials leads to deforestation. Advocating for legal and deforestation-free sourcing of raw materials is an area NGOs could engage with.

Food waste seems to be less of a burning issue for NGOs working on forests and non-timber forest resources to focus on; the EC has started to tackle it by clarifying best-by date marking, and

57 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/agri/events.html?id=20160621CHE00151>

setting up a multi-stakeholder food waste prevention platform to help Member States meet SDG food waste targets.

Messages on how preventing food waste can reduce the need for land and hence deforestation can, however, resonate with the EC in this context. Systemic issues which require attention include overproduction, the lack of internalisation of environmental costs, and the continued support for a demand- and export-oriented food system. Tackling these issues requires that NGOs look more closely at the CAP and its interplay with trade policy.

Key dates for NGOs to consider

Some relevant dates for NGOs to consider are outlined in an annexe to the Circular Economy Action Plan.

ANNEX to the Commission Communication COM (2015) 614 final, Closing the loop – An EU action plan for the Circular Economy

Actions	Timetable
Production	
Emphasis on circular economy aspects in future product requirements under the Ecodesign directive .	2016 onwards
Ecodesign work plan 2015-2017 and request to European standardisation organisations to develop standards on material efficiency for setting future Ecodesign requirements on durability, reparability and recyclability of products.	December 2015
Proposal for an implementing regulation on televisions and displays	End 2015 or beginning 2016
Examine options and actions for a more coherent policy framework of the different strands of work of EU product policy in their contribution to the circular economy	2018
Include guidance on circular economy into Best Available Techniques reference documents (BREFs) for several industrial sectors	2016 onwards
Guidance and promotion of best practices in the mining waste management plans	2018
Establishing an open pan-European network of technological infrastructures for SMEs to integrate advanced manufacturing technologies into their production processes	2016
Examine how to improve the efficiency and uptake of the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) and the pilot programme on environmental technology verification (ETV)	2017
Develop an improved knowledge base and support to SMEs for the substitution of hazardous substances of very high concern	2018
Consumption	
Better enforcement of existing guarantees on tangible products, accompanied by a reflection on improvements (upcoming Commission proposal for online sales of goods, and Fitness Check of consumer legislation)	2015-2017
Action on false green claims, including updated guidance on unfair commercial practices	2016
Analysis of the possibility to propose horizontal requirements on repair information provision in the context of Ecodesign	2018
REFIT of Ecolabel, to be followed by actions to enhance its effectiveness	2016
Assessment of the possibility of an independent testing programme on planned obsolescence	2018
Subject to evaluation of the current ongoing pilots, explore the possible uses of the Product Environmental Footprint to measure and communicate environmental information	2016 onwards
Action on Green Public Procurement: enhanced integration of circular economy requirements, support to higher uptake including through training schemes, reinforcing its use in Commission procurement and EU funds	2016 onwards
Waste management	
Revised legislative proposal on waste	Dec 2015
Improved cooperation with Member States for better implementation of EU waste legislation, and combat illicit shipment of end of life vehicles	2015 onwards
Stepping up enforcement of revised Waste Shipment regulation	2016 onwards
Promotion of industry-led voluntary certification of treatment facilities for key waste/recyclate streams	2018 onwards
Initiative on waste to energy in the framework of the Energy Union	2016
Identification and dissemination of good practices in waste collection systems	2016 onwards
Market for secondary raw materials	
Development of quality standards for secondary raw materials (in particular for plastics)	2016 onwards
Proposal for a revised fertilisers regulation	Early 2016
Proposed legislation setting minimum requirements for reused water for irrigation and groundwater recharge	2017

Promotion of safe and cost-effective water reuse, including guidance on the integration of water reuse in water planning and management, inclusion of best practices in relevant BREFs , and support to innovation (through the European Innovation Partnership and Horizon 2020) and investments	2016-2017
Analysis and policy options to address the interface between chemicals, products and waste legislation, including how to reduce the presence and improve the tracking of chemicals of concern in products	2017
Measures to facilitate waste shipment across the EU, including electronic data exchange (and possibly other measures)	2016 onwards
Further development of the EU raw materials information system	2016 onwards
Sectorial action	
Plastics	
Strategy on plastics in the circular economy	2017
Specific action to reduce marine litter implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals	2015 onwards
Food waste	
Development of a common methodology and indicators to measure food waste	2016
Stakeholders platform to examine how to achieve SDGs goals on food waste, share best practice and evaluate progress	2016
Clarify relevant EU legislation related to waste, food and feed in order to facilitate food donation and utilisation of former foodstuffs for animal feed	2016
Explore options for more effective use and understanding of date marking on food	2017
Critical raw materials	
Report on critical raw materials and the circular economy	2017
Improve exchange of information between manufacturers and recyclers on electronic products	2016 onwards
European standards for material-efficient recycling of electronic waste, waste batteries and other relevant complex end-of-life products	2016 onwards
Sharing of best practice for the recovery of critical raw materials from mining waste and landfills	2017
Construction and demolition	
Pre-demolition assessment guidelines for the construction sector	2017
Voluntary industry-wide recycling protocol for construction and demolition waste	2016
Core indicators for the assessment of the lifecycle environmental performance of a building, and incentives for their use	2017 onwards
Biomass and bio-based materials	
Guidance and dissemination of best practice on the cascading use of biomass and support to innovation in this domain through Horizon 2020	2018- 2019
Ensuring coherence and synergies with the circular economy when examining the sustainability of bioenergy under the Energy Union	2016
Assessment of the contribution of the 2012 Bioeconomy Strategy to the circular economy and possible review	2016
Innovation and investments	
Initiative "Industry 2020 and the circular economy" under Horizon 2020	October 2015
Pilot project for "innovation deals" to address possible regulatory obstacles for innovators	2016
Targeted outreach to encourage applications for funding under EFSI, and support the development of projects and investment platforms relevant to the circular economy	2016 onwards
Targeted outreach and communication activities to assist Member States and regions for the uptake of Cohesion Policy funds for the circular economy	2016 onwards
Support to Member States and regions to strengthen innovation for the circular economy through smart specialisation	2016 onwards
Assessment of the possibility of launching a platform together with the EIB and national banks to support the financing of the circular economy	2016
Engagement with stakeholders in the implementation of this action plan through existing fora in key sectors	2016 onwards
Support to a range of stakeholders through actions on public-private partnerships, cooperation platforms, support to voluntary business approaches, and exchanges of best practices	2015 onwards
Monitoring	
Development of a monitoring framework for the circular economy	2017



Fern office UK, 1C Fosseway Business Centre, Stratford Road, Moreton in Marsh, GL56 9NQ, UK

Fern office Brussels, Rue d'Édimbourg 26, 1050 Brussels, Belgium

www.fern.org