

UNITED KINGDOM

CIRCULAR ECONOMY 2-PAGER, APRIL 28 2021



POLICY LANDSCAPE

NATIONAL LEVEL

With the UK having left the European Union in February 2020, the UK has consequently withdrawn itself from the European Green deal. In the past, EU legislations have significantly contributed to the improvement of the UK's recycling systems. Leaving the EU means therefore needing to restructure, which might offer opportunities for localising CE in the UK. In the end of 2020, the **Ten Point Plan** has been introduced, identifying 10 areas to achieve more resource efficiency and minimise the contribution to climate change by setting a target of a **zero net carbon** budget by 2050 and pave the way for a new Green Industrial Revolution.

For this, the **Circular Economy Package** (CEP) is an overarching legislative framework which substantially focuses on resource efficiency linked to waste management. To further enhance circular economy in the UK, the government funds five **interdisciplinary circular economy centres** which explore circular solutions, innovations, and business model around the topics waste, textiles, and construction.

REGIONAL LEVEL

Additionally, each country has determined its own pathway towards a circular future. England has formed a **Green Future Plan**, including a **Waste Prevention Programme for England** which builds on the

R-principles: to reuse, repair and remanufacture to enlarge material life-cycles. Wales has set actions to realize its goal to go zero waste by 2050. Scotland has determined a circular economy strategy '**making things last**' which puts focus on the manufacturing industry as a driver for circularity. Northern Ireland is, under the umbrella of the CEP, focusing on reduction of household waste by increasing municipal recycling capacities under current development of a 'Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland'.

FACTS & FIGURES

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

- Population 2020: 67.26 mln.
- Nominal GDP + ranking: \$1.938 trillion, 5th
- Purchasing power 2019: 35.2929
- Export from the NL: 39,8 mrd. Euro
- Economic growth 2019: 1,46%
- Ease of doing business 2020: 8/190
- Corruption perception Index: score 77/100, rank 11/180
- Unemployment rate 2018: 4%
- Currency: Pound
- Time difference with NL: -1 hour

CE INDICATORS

- Innovation Index rank 2020: 4th
- Recycling rate (2018): 45%
- Renewable energy: 6% of total consumption



GRAPH: UK waste plastic flow 2020 and 2030

Source: Letsrecycle.com (2021)

EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY (EPR)

Since 2019, the current EPR scheme is under revision. Considered is the implementation of EPR on plastic packaging used on household level (such as wrapping foils) and EPRs on compostable plastic substitutes, to separate waste streams. Subject of discussion is also the role of packaging design in regard to standards for materials and additives.

NATIONAL RECYCLING AWARD

The Material Recycling World annually issues its National Recycling Award to a project, product or initiative in the UK or Ireland. The award is accompanied by a National Recycling Conference which discusses the waste management landscape and supply chain of the UK.

SELECTED PRIORITY AREAS

PLASTICS

Annually around 5 million tonnes of plastic is consumed in the UK, of which almost 50% accounts for packaging waste. The UK targets the elimination of all avoidable plastic waste by 2042, amongst others by a **plastic packaging tax** which will become effective in 2022. Crucial elements for a circular plastics sector are the **UK Plastic Pact** and the **Plastic Industry Recycling Action Plan** working on a value chain approach to increase recycling volumes by means of design and improved collection, and both sorting systems. However, to meet UK targets recycling services need to extend. This offers attractive business opportunities for Dutch chemical- and mechanical recycling companies. As the development of end markets to line up the plastic chain remains critical, Dutch business models which transform plastic waste flows into new products can inspire.

FASHION & TEXTILES

Textiles and its environmental pollution exacerbated by fast-fashion culture is a hot topic in the UK and focus topic of the Waste Prevention Programme for England. To enforce collection and enhance sustainable business models, the **Resources and waste strategy for England** offers textiles chain stakeholders consultation on better design and labelling of clothing for recycling purposes and extended producer responsibility schemes. With **Textiles 2030** the industry takes initiative on reducing its water use and carbon footprint. As textiles is a focus sector of the Netherlands towards full circularity by 2050, the Dutch can share their insights into circular textiles opportunities and research, and inspire with business models. The UK is an attractive business case for Dutch high-quality technology that allows to recycle textiles into feedstock garment quality and innovative dyeing techniques for circular textiles made in the UK.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The built environment accounts for 40% of the UK's carbon footprint. Almost half is linked to energy used during the lifetime, excluding construction efforts. To achieve zero net carbon, a **National Infrastructure Strategy** has been set out. **The Green Construction Board** focuses on the reduction of carbon emissions of 50% by 2050 and resource efficiency. To be able to achieve these goals, the UK is seeking for expertise input on knowledge and skills. This offers business opportunities for The Netherlands, working on a circular built environment on city- and regional level. Dutch businesses can offer smart solutions for innovative building technologies- and materials, how to integrate nature into construction and share experience from value chain collaborations that optimize resource flows and give inspiration for the role of the public sector in supporting the transition into a circular built environment.

REPORTS & LINKS

Reports

- [Closing the circle. Circular economy: Opportunity for the welsh built environment](#)
- [Plastic Waste](#)
- [UK Government: A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment](#)
- [Circular Cities](#)
- [Municipal recycling potential in Northern Ireland - Brexit and Circular Economy Law: Challenges and Opportunities](#)
- [10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution](#)
- [Brexit and Circular Economy Law](#)

Events

- [Collaboration: The key to a cost-effective circular economy for the construction industry](#), 4 May
- [UK Construction Week](#) 5 - 6 May
- [Future Fabrics Expo](#) 22 June - 2 July
- [Interplas](#) 28 - 30 September
- [RECOUP Plastics Resources and Recycling Conference](#) 30 September
- [COP26](#) 1 - 12 November

RELEVANT NETWORKS

CE THINK TANKS & RESEARCH INSTITUTES

- [UK Circular Plastic Network](#)
- [Circular Economy Wales](#)
- [Ellen Macarthur Foundation](#)
- [Zero Waste Scotland](#)
- [Circular Edinburgh](#)
- [Circular Glasgow](#)
- [ReLondon](#)
- [Wrap](#)
- [Green Alliance](#)

BUSINESS NETWORKS

- [Aldersgate Group](#)
- [ASBP](#)
- [KTN](#)
- [UKMSN](#)
- [Doing Business in the United Kingdom](#)

EMBASSIES & RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

- [British Embassy in The Hague](#)
- [Netherlands Embassy in London](#)