



Department for the  
**Economy**  
[www.economy-ni.gov.uk](http://www.economy-ni.gov.uk)

**Draft**

# **Circular Economy**

**Strategy for Northern Ireland**

**Response Template**

## Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland

### Response Template

#### Overview

We are consulting on the draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland which aims to transition our Linear Economy to a Circular Economy, where business, people and planet flourish. Adopting a circular mindset throughout society and business will be essential to a successful transition. This draft Circular Economy Strategy is a key enabler of the Department for the Economy's 10X economic vision for a decade of innovation, facilitating a sustainable, innovative and inclusive approach to economic growth, making the most of new opportunities and possibilities presented by the 4th Industrial Revolution.

We especially want to hear from those across industry, education and the public sector who will be vital in making the change happen, as well as private individuals who we want to embrace this change.

#### Why your views matter

We want you to tell us if we have accurately assessed the situation and if our proposals are right to kick start the transition to a truly Circular Economy, using a whole system approach. Feedback from this consultation will inform the final Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland and help to shape the design, remit and function of future delivery.

#### Responding to our Consultation

We would ask that you respond to the consultation using the online survey which can be accessed at the [Circular Economy Consultation page on the nidirect website consultations.nidirect.gov.uk](https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk)

If you are unable to respond using the online consultation survey, please complete this response template and send it to: [ces@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:ces@economy-ni.gov.uk)

Before you submit your response, please read the **Privacy Notice** published along with the Consultation Documents, which explains how we will use personal information as part of the processing of responses.

## Draft Circular Economy Strategy Consultation Questions

### Personal Details

1. **Name**

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2. **I am responding as**

**An individual**

**On behalf of an organisation**

3. **Name of your organisation**

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4. **What sector are you from?**

Agriculture

Bioeconomy

Central Government

Construction and Built Environment

Education

Local Government

Manufacturing

Representative Body

Research & Development

Services

Social Enterprise / Third & Voluntary Sector

**Other**

## Vision

By 2050 Northern Ireland will have an innovative, inclusive and competitive economy where business, people and planet flourish, with responsible production and consumption at its core.

### 5. Is this vision the right vision?

Yes

No

**Any other comments?**

## Target

According to the Circularity Gap Report, each person in Northern Ireland is consuming c.16.6 tonnes of resources per year. This is our individual material footprint. With the earth's finite supply of resources and our current production and consumption patterns, we must start to rethink our relationship with resources and reduce our demand for them. To live sustainably, the United Nations (UN) recommends that we should only be using an average of 6-8 tonnes of resources per year.

Within this strategy we have included a target to reduce our annual material footprint to 8 tonnes per person by 2050.

### 6. Do you agree with this target to halve our material footprint by 2050?

Yes

No

**Any other comments?**

## Proposals for Change

### Develop and implement a programme to support and promote behaviour change

Our behaviours and individual choices about what, where and how we purchase stuff, how long we use it for, whether we can reuse or repair it, and when and how we dispose of it, will ultimately determine if Northern Ireland can successfully transform to a Circular Economy.

A recent report issued by the House of Lords 'In our Hands' urged Ministers to lead a public campaign using all government levers to guide public behaviour change in order to stop biodiversity loss and achieve net zero.

Changing mindsets, business models and developing new products and services is going to be a complicated task, especially for Northern Ireland, which has many SMEs with limited time and resource.

This level of intervention is required to transform our relationship with resources.

### 7. What efforts do you think government should make to promote behavioural change?

**Please put the following in order of priority.**

**(Ranking scale 1 = most preferred / 4 = least preferred)**

Provide greater transparency and clarity on what government is doing to show commitment and create momentum.

Provide information and tools to increase awareness and help change attitudes.

Use regulatory and financial incentives to increase affordability and availability of sustainable options.

Provide or adapt physical infrastructure to help make it easier for people to change behaviours e.g. recycling centres, refill stations in supermarkets and bottle banks.

**Create clusters and networks to raise awareness and facilitate collaboration**

Many of the barriers to circularity will not be addressed without the utilisation of existing and new clusters and networks which will support industry to research, design, test and deliver transformative solutions.

Clusters are a geographic collection of interconnected companies producing similar or related goods/services that are innovation-orientated, seeking to benefit from integration across businesses.

Networks are an alliance of organisations (public/private or other) seeking to work together to achieve an economic goal, this could be within or outside a cluster. Networks may involve organisations within the same sector or across sectors which belong to the same value chain.

**8. What existing clusters and networks could be utilised to deliver transformative solutions for increased circularity?****9. What clusters and networks do you think will need to be established to maximise resource use?**

### **Embed Circular Economy principles in public procurement**

In Northern Ireland, public sector procurement has buying power in excess of £3 billion per annum. This provides strong potential to shape markets and behaviours through the development of specifications and contract management clauses to retain the value of materials for example purchasing refurbished computers or supporting leasing business models. This creates opportunity to influence the maintenance of the public estate, supply contracts including food and waste as well as delivery of infrastructure and capital projects.

#### **10. How do you think public sector procurement can best influence the behaviours of industry to increase circularity of resources?**

### **Create and support platforms and hubs to share goods and materials**

To improve the use of resources and retain their value, people and businesses need to know what is available, where it is and what condition it is in. Information is required for people and business to make choices about what they want to access. This can be provided through online platforms for typical fast moving consumer products e.g. the Olio platform which is dedicated to helping stop food waste within the UK. It can also be provided for industrial materials through established platforms such as International Synergies. We want to create more platforms and hubs to share products and materials.

#### **11. What sorts of platforms do you think would be most useful in the future to enable people and business to share and reuse products and materials?**

### **Maximise the value of materials locally**

When products and materials are kept in use, it retains the maximum value of those materials and components, reducing the overall demand for material extraction to make new products. We can do this by increasing the repair and reuse sector, doing more with natural bio-based materials locally available as well as growing our reprocessing sector.

The European Commission established the 'right to repair' for consumers and similar regulations have been introduced for GB.

The 'right to repair' regulation requires manufacturers of household appliances such as dishwashers, washing and drying machines, refrigerators and televisions to ensure their products are repairable for at least ten years through providing repair manuals and making parts available.

### **12. What are the most effective tools that government could use to encourage and facilitate business and society to extend the life of products and services to keep materials and resources in use for longer?**



## Establish a Circular Economy funding programme

To unlock benefits at scale, we need to create economic incentives that enable Circular Economy solutions to succeed.

### 13. Which of the following interventions should be a priority focus for government funding?

**Please put the following in order of priority.**

**(1= highest priority and 9 = lowest priority)**

Research and development

Secondary material markets

Circular supply chains

Digitisation and technology

Job creation

Waste reduction

Carbon emissions reduction

Reuse and repair

Environmentally focused solutions

**Further comments? Please enter response in box below**

- 14. What funding instruments do you consider would be most appropriate in years 1-3? Please put the following in order of priority. (Ranking scale 1 = most preferred / 3 = least preferred)**

Loans

Grants and subsidies

Blended finance (i.e. a mix of repayable and non-repayable finance)

- 15. Do you have any further comments to make on funding instruments that could be used to enable Circular Economy solutions to succeed?**

**Create a regulatory framework that enables circular solutions to become the norm**

Regulations, taxation and enforcement can further reduce waste and improve resource efficiency.

For example, the European Commission rules to establish the 'right to repair' for consumers. These regulations will affect the design, manufacturing and distribution of all applicable goods in Northern Ireland and will facilitate greater reuse and repair of such products.

- 16. Considering the EU right to repair regulation, what other regulatory tools do you consider government can use to stimulate greater circulation of materials?**

**Deliver a Skills programme to support a Just Transition**

Unless we plan, anticipate and resource for the transition to a Circular Economy, skills shortages could derail long-term goals for circularity and jobs growth.

As we progress into the 4th Industrial Revolution, some jobs will be lost in traditional sectors and the demand for new skills will increase, for example the demand for diesel engineers will decrease while the demand for those skilled in electric vehicles will increase.

**17. What three skills do you consider will be most critical to supporting the Circular Economy?****Skill 1****Skill 2****Skill 3**

## Future delivery

### Delivery of Circular Economy Strategy

**18. Do you consider that government should play a role in assisting the transition to greater circularity through a dedicated Circular Economy delivery body?**

Yes

No

Don't Know

**19. What do you think a Circular Economy delivery body should look like? e.g. government led or a public-private partnership.**

**Please provide a rationale for your answer.**