

# ENERGY STRATEGY E-BULLETIN

**ISSUE 12: JUNE 2021**

**IN THIS EDITION:**

- Energy, the Economy and Skills
- Circular Economy Strategic Framework for NI



## WELCOME TO THE ENERGY STRATEGY E-BULLETIN

As the summer holidays near, we are coming close to the end of the consultation period for the new Energy Strategy. We've been busy engaging with consumers, the energy industry, businesses and more. There is still time to submit responses to the consultation, and we encourage you to respond before 5pm next Friday 2nd July.

This month we also provide an update on other relevant strategies being developed across the Department, some of which will complement the Energy Strategy; others which will support its delivery.



**Thomas Byrne**  
Director, Energy Strategy

## ENERGY, THE ECONOMY AND SKILLS

### A 10X Economic Vision

Clean growth has already been highlighted as a growth opportunity post-Covid. The Department's Medium Term Recovery Plan, published last June, prioritised rebuilding a stronger economy towards a more competitive, inclusive and greener economy. Last month the Department also issued a longer-term Economic Vision for a '10x Economy' which identifies "a greener, more sustainable economy" as a key outcome.

This proposes a decade of innovation that will encourage greater collaboration to deliver a ten times better economy with benefits for all our people.

The paper includes a proposed focus on key new and emerging technologies, including zero carbon technology, transport, energy and agrifood. It also outlines five key steps to success, which include:

- Technologies and Clusters;
- Talent;
- Diffusion;
- Funding; and
- Place.

The Strategy and accompanying summary can be found in the following links:

[A 10x Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk)

[A 10x Economy - Summary \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk)



## SKILLS FOR A 10X ECONOMY CONSULTATION

A new Skills Strategy consultation has been issued to support the 10x Vision. This aims to address skills imbalances identified in the Skills Barometer's high growth scenario as a driver for economic development and improved employment opportunities. The consultation document proposes three major policy objectives:

- Addressing Skills Imbalances, Driving Economic Growth;
- Creating a Culture of Lifelong Learning; and
- Enhancing Digital Skills, Developing Our Digital Spine

The strategy outlines plans to focus on innovation by increasing further education qualifications in technical and professional skills and rebalancing higher education towards Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM). These objectives are underpinned by the need to develop a more cohesive approach to education, skills and employability policy across government; the need to build stronger relationships between government, business leaders, the education sector and trade unions and the need to invest in the skills system. Consultation responses are due by 19th August 2021.

[Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland - Skills for a 10x Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/skills-strategy-for-northern-ireland-skills-for-a-10x-economy)

[Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland - Summary \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/skills-strategy-for-northern-ireland-summary)



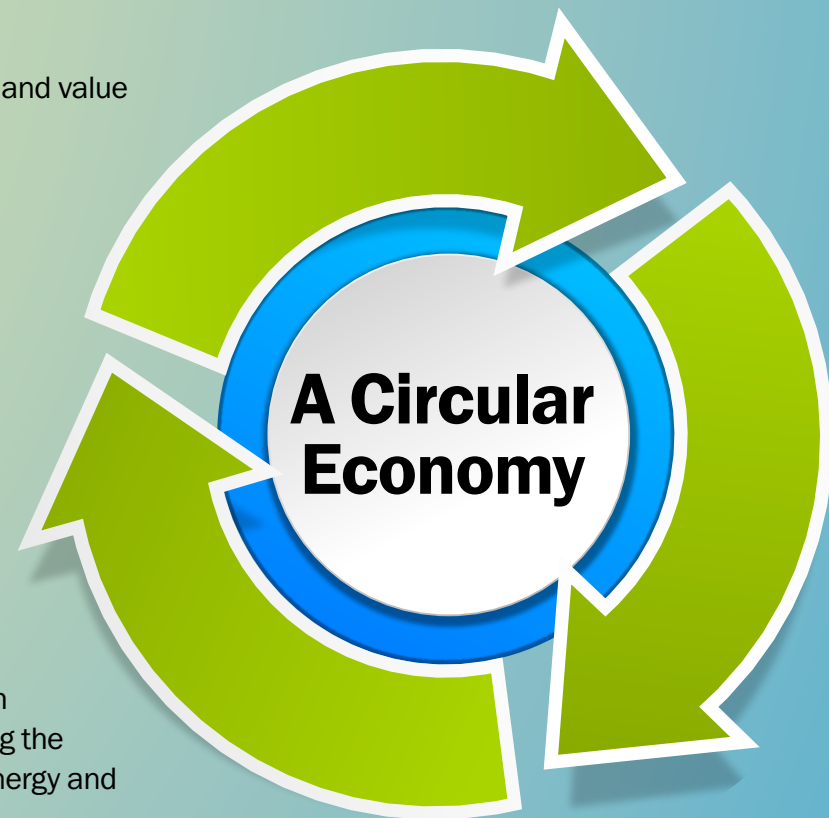
## CIRCULAR ECONOMY STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR NI

Circular Economy is based on three principles:

1. Design out waste;
2. Keep materials, components and products in circulation at their highest use and value for as long as possible; and
3. Regenerate natural systems.

It is an alternative to our current linear economy, where we take, make, use and then dispose of products, components and materials. A Circular Economy disrupts this current system to foster innovation and decouple economic growth from resource consumption and environmental degradation. A Circular Sharing Economy is a key element of a green economy which NI's Executive is striving for and it is essential to tackling global issues such as climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.

While increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy plays an essential and vital role in tackling climate change, it must be accompanied by the transition to a Circular Economy which will change the way we make and use products. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF) is a global organisation which promotes the concept of a Circular Economy. According to its paper 'Completing the picture' the Circular Economy can reduce 45% of emissions while renewable energy and greater energy efficiency can reduce the remaining 55% of emissions.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Ellen MacArthur Foundation, Completing the Picture: How the Circular Economy Tackles Climate Change (2019) [www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/publications](http://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/publications) p.13.

## CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Department for the Economy are leading in developing a Circular Economy Strategic Framework to support sustainable economic growth in Northern Ireland. Working with the Strategic Investment Board, the Department has commissioned a baseline Circularity Gap Report specific to NI.

The Circularity Gap Report will assess the national level of Circularity in the NI economy using qualitative and quantitative research and will feed into the Circular Economy Strategic Framework, helping to identify the levers for transitioning to circularity and delivering key priorities, detailed in the Programme for Government framework, where we live and work sustainably.

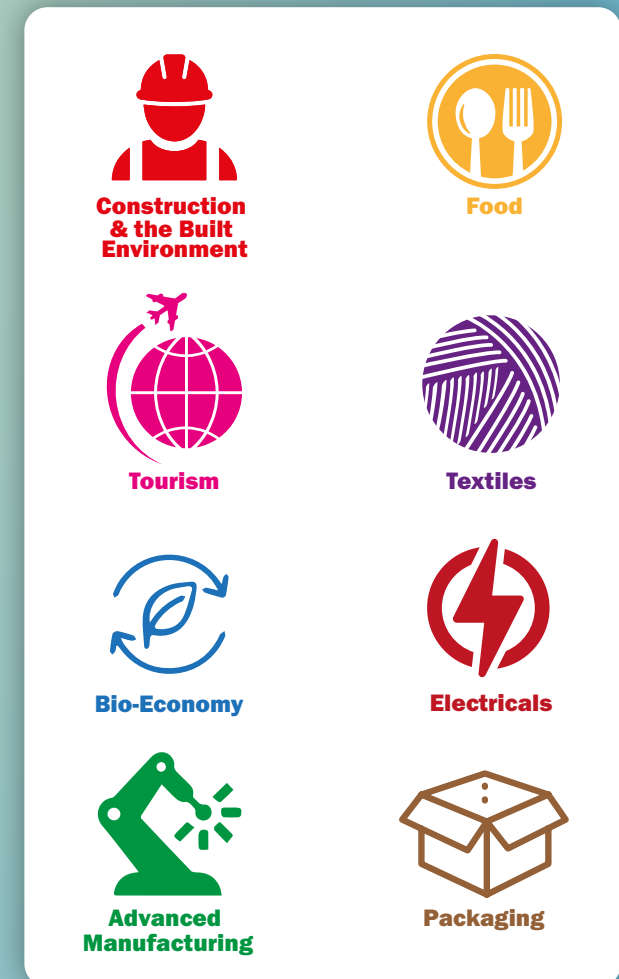
The Department has identified 8 focus areas which present the greatest opportunity to increase re-circulation of key products and materials within NI. Categorized in either Business Sectors:

- Construction & the Built Environment;
- Tourism;
- Bio-Economy;
- Advanced Manufacturing

Or as a Material Flow:

- Food;
- Textiles;
- Electricals; and
- Packaging (Plastic, Glass, Paper, Cardboard).

These focus areas closely align with the European Circular Economy Action Plan.



## CALL FOR EVIDENCE

The Department has issued a Call for Evidence centred on the above 8 focus areas to the Circular Economy Coalition (a stakeholder engagement vehicle) and over the next number of months will be meeting the Coalition to review and discuss the findings of the Circularity Gap Report through roundtable meetings.

The project team are actively engaged with key NICS colleagues across Departments, conducting a review of current and developing policies and also feeding into emerging strategies including DAREA's Green Growth and Environmental Strategies.

The Circular Economy Strategic Framework, which will be published in Spring 2022, will set a vision and ambition for circularity in Northern Ireland. It will inform NICS economic, environmental, and social policy development. The framework will not only

raise awareness within the private, public and third sector of what a Circular Economy is, it will also identify where opportunities exist to create a Circular Economy in NI, showcasing case studies and examples of best practices.

