

Department for the  
**Economy**  
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**Draft**

# **Circular Economy**

**Strategy for Northern Ireland:  
Public Consultation Response  
Report - Annex**

**July 2023**



## CONTENTS

<b>1. Case Studies &amp; Examples:</b>	<b>3</b>
Clusters & Networks	4
Circularity and Public Procurement Practice	6
Platforms and Hubs	7
Role of Government in Maximising the Value of Materials Locally	8
Funding Instruments	9
<b>2. Supplementary Responses</b>	<b>10</b>



**1.**

**Case Studies  
& Examples**



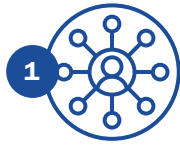
## Case Studies & Examples

### Clusters & Networks

Respondents to the consultation provided a great deal of information on existing clusters and networks which they considered could be used to facilitate and support industry to research, design, test and deliver transformative Circular Economy solutions.

The responses did not always make it clear whether the examples provided were to be considered a network or a cluster. Some were obvious but others less so. Respondents also named many organisations that they considered to be very relevant to support the transition because of their expertise, reach or ability to coordinate activity. While they are not strictly a 'network' or 'cluster', they have been included for completeness. Given the variety in styles of responses, all examples were amalgamated and considered together.

The examples identified by respondents are illustrated in figure 1. They are presented under the eight categories described in the main report, however many of these examples can be considered under a number of the categories. A hyperlink has been included for any networks and clusters with a website.



### 1 Circular Economy Collaboration Networks (International and Local)

Circular Economy Innovation Network
EMF CE100 network
Circular Hotspots in Europe (e.g. Holland Circular Hotspot)
Circular Cities and Regions Initiative
All-Island Circular Economy Think Tank
Rediscovery Centre
Community Resources Network Ireland
Circular Economy Social Enterprise Programme



### 2 Community & Grass Roots Initiatives

Artitude
Code Monitoring NI
Refill Quarter
Belfast Tool Library
Lifeshare
Live Here Love Here
Social Farms & Gardens



### 3 Place-Based Clusters

Smart Cities
City and Growth Deals
Cleantech Collaborative Growth Network
The Innovation District/Smart District/Smart Port
Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor
Belfast Sustainable Food Network
Belfast City Centre Management
Belfast Resilience and Sustainability Board
Belfast Community Planning Partnership
Zero Waste North West
Zero Waste Scotland
Scottish Circular Economy Business Network
Northern Ireland Resources Network
CR Plus Consultancy
Tees Valley Combined Authority
Peel Environmental
Humber Local Enterprise Partnership
NECCUS
CirculEire
Belfast Healthy Cities



### 4 Education, Skills Development & Workplace Environmental Policies

Modos
SkillNet
Solas (Skills to Advance)
Fashion and Textile Design Centre



### 5 Industry Transformation, Knowledge Transfer, Research & Development

UK Chemicals stakeholder Forum (UKCSF)
Retail NI
Green Growth Platform
Clean Growth UK
Renewable NI
Hydrogen Ireland
CEOs Connect
The Software Alliance
Federation of Small Businesses
Chamber of Commerce
Invest NI Collaborative Growth Programme
Hospitality Ulster
Manufacturing NI
Northern Ireland Retail Consortium
Food and Drink Federation
INCPEN
The Recycling Association
Business in the Community (BITC)
Hydrogen NI
Irish Green Building Council
WEEE Ireland
Green Enterprises
ADS (Advancing Leadership in Aerospace, Security, Defence and Space)
MATRIX
Recycle NI
The Construction Employers Federation (CEF)
The Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA)
Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE)
Mineral Products Association Northern Ireland (MPANI)
Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
Construction Industry Forum Northern Ireland (CIFNI)
Institute of Directors
Digital Connectivity Forum
Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA)
Arc-21
International Synergies
National Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Research Programme



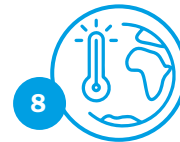
### 6 Agriculture and Livestock

Anaerobic Digestion and Bioresources Association (ADBA)
Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)



### 7 Multi-Stakeholder Cooperation

All Party Group on Climate Action
Charity Retail Association
Association for Public Service Excellence
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
The Baby Feeding Law Group UK
Baby Feeding Law Group Ireland
UNICEF
The Lancet
Local Authority Prevention Network (LAPN)
The Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC)
IBEC
The Confederation of British Industry (CBI)
Shopping with M&S
WRAP



### 8 Sustainable Development, Environmental and Climate-Related Networks

Sustainable Development Forum
The Environmental Gathering
Northern Ireland Environment Link
Greenpeace
Friends of the Earth
All Ireland Sustainability Summit
All Ireland Sustainability Professionals Network
Bankers for Net Zero

Figure 1: Cluster & Network examples identified by respondents



## Circularity in Public Procurement

Respondents agreed that public procurement presents an opportunity to influence the behaviours of industry to increase circularity of resources. The following examples were provided of circularity already in place in public procurement across the UK.

- WRAP Cymru, which provides procurement support to help Welsh public sector organisations embed sustainability into procurement strategies and activities.
- Belfast City Council’s ‘Inclusive Growth Strategy’, which contains commitments to social value in procurement and measures to support local supply chains.
- Since 2022, NHS procurement in England has included a 10% net-zero and social-value weighting, and from 2023, contracts above £5 million per annum will require a carbon-reduction plan from suppliers.
- Manchester City Council includes stipulations on circularity for private sector bids, and asks tenderers for evidence of commitment to reducing carbon emissions.
- In Nottinghamshire, local procurement of food for schools is calculated to generate over £5 million in value each year – returning £3.11 in social, economic and environmental value for every £1 spent.
- Community Resources Network Ireland (CRNI) has created a website promoting opportunities for green and social procurement.



## Platforms and Hubs

As part of the consultation process, respondents provided a number of examples of platforms and hubs which they considered would be most useful to enable people and business to share and reuse products and resources. Examples included:

- TerraCycle and Loop enable individuals and businesses to recycle products that are traditionally difficult to recycle.
- Repair My Stuff is an online platform providing a directory of repair services.
- DigiPrime, FiberEUse and the rEUse platforms and BIOWAYS were promoted for connecting different sectors to build value creation networks.
- Kudoti, a South African initiative, has developed a digital platform to address global waste challenges by working across the value chain.
- Work by the Green Building Council advocates for buildings to be regarded as material banks.
- NI-wide Buy and Supply platform, managed by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council promoting local suppliers.
- Further information is available in [Citizens.IS Organise Online Through Ideas And Civil Deliberation](#) (external link opens in a new window/tab) – this open-source Icelandic software platform was put forward as an example for sharing resources and facilitating discussion.
- Further information is available in [Reuse Consortium Circular Communities](#) (external link opens in a new window/tab) - a Scottish initiative that offers used furniture and household appliances to local authorities and housing associations.
- MyWaste in Ireland, which one respondent thought could be replicated to increase visibility of local platforms like Freecycle.



## Role of Government in Maximising the Value of Materials Locally

Keeping products and materials in use helps retain their maximum value, while simultaneously lowering demand for material extraction to make new products. Respondents provided a number of examples of where government has worked to maximise the value of materials locally.

- A scheme run by Belfast City Council that freely distributed reusable period products to participants to try out. The products are normally more expensive than single-use sanitary products but are better for the environment, and the user will save on cost over a lifetime. The scheme was an example of tackling single-use items while making it a Just Transition by ensuring everyone can access the items.
- Another example was a scheme that allows parents to try using reusable nappies for two weeks free, as well as offering a £30 refund on the cost of buying cloth nappies if the parents stayed with the cloth option.
- Climate Fresk<sup>1</sup> was mentioned by one respondent as it was considered a useful tool for awareness-raising amongst all groups and ages.

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1 Further information is available in [Climate Fresk](#) (external link opens in a new window/tab)





## Funding Instruments

Respondents to the consultation provided examples of research undertaken and case studies developed to highlight the different types of funding instruments that government could use to support the Circular Economy in years 1–3.

- 3CI (Cities Climate Investment Commissions).
- The Just Transition Bond<sup>2</sup>.
- The Environmental Fund supported by levy raised on single-use plastic bags, which respondents thought could be used to encourage reuse and repair.
- Green bonds and transition bonds and the role of financial institutions<sup>3</sup>.
- The Sitra report on circular business models for the chemical industry – a good guide for business models to follow when implementing Circular Economy solutions<sup>4</sup>.
- Carbon and Energy Fund (CEF) in Britain and in the Republic of Ireland. The CEF partners with NHS trusts and major public hospitals and experts to fund Energy Performance Contracts (EPC). An EPC involves a planned programme of investment in upgrading energy utilities and building fabric, which delivers reductions in energy usage leading to cost savings and CO<sub>2</sub> reductions. The savings are guaranteed by the expert partner, funded by the CEF with the benefits going to the hospital. Typically, EPCs run for 15 to 20 years to allow for a return on investment.
- The UK government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. This supports the aim of reducing emissions from public sector buildings by 75% by 2037, compared to a 2017 baseline, as set out in the 2021 net zero and Heat and Buildings strategies. Private companies partner with public sector organisations to deliver energy and carbon savings.

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2 Further information is available in [London School of Economics, Why governments need to issue just transition sovereign bonds and how they could do it](#) (external link opens in a new window/tab)

3 Further information is available in [Research Paper: Financing an inclusive circular economy - De-risking investments for circular business models and the SDGs](#) (external link opens in a new window/tab)

4 Further information is available in [Sustainable and circular business models for the chemical industry](#) (external link opens in a new window/tab)



# 2.

**Supplementary  
Responses**



## 2. Supplementary Responses

Seven responses were received by email, with a further four addenda also received by email in support of responses received via Citizen Space. The format of these additional responses and addenda varied, therefore they were analysed separately and are referenced in the main report as supplementary responses.

These supplementary responses were segmented and where the comments related to topics covered in the consultation, they have been amalgamated within the main body of the report.

### **Additional Supplementary Comments**

For completeness, the additional comments made in the supplementary responses which did not sit under any of the specific questions asked in the consultation have been summarised into four broad areas as follows.

#### 1. Community involvement and equality issues

- The need to focus on community wellbeing above economic performance, including the following key recommendations:
  - investment in social infrastructure
  - incentives for green jobs
  - sharing care and investing in care jobs/sector
  - democracy and ownership in promoting a cultural shift towards valuing care
  - national (and international) responsibilities via tax and ethical procurement
  - the need for gender equality, calling for gender-proofing of measures to increase circularity in alignment with the Climate Change Act.
- The importance of involving consumers in proposals to increase circularity and call for education on sustainability issues to promote circular habits and lifestyles.
- Highlighting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly the right of children to a healthy environment and to environmental education. The Circular Economy Strategy should consider and be informed by these rights to ensure genuine engagement of young people.
- Provide a focus on the role of community transport, emphasising the importance of this sector's role in achieving net zero in Northern Ireland.
- Emphasise Northern Ireland's commitment to UN's Sustainable Development Goals and suggest utilising gender budgeting in the final Circular Economy Strategy to ensure that plans for a Just Transition are embedded in gender-responsive budgeting mechanisms. Also, recommend an alternative to GDP as a measure for growth.



## 2. Waste

- The need for greater concentration on non-household municipal waste and commercial/industrial sectors.
- The importance of focusing on the lower tiers of the waste hierarchy and the development of an Integrated Waste Management System to improve recycling rates; to contribute to Circular Economy targets; and to benefit the economy and the environment. It was further suggested that Northern Ireland's Energy from Waste infrastructure is under-developed and exporting waste abroad is unsustainable.
- Share the potential of anaerobic digestion (AD) in cutting greenhouse gas emissions, noting the need to use AD more widely on farms to meet the UK's fifth carbon budget. The benefits of AD for UK's energy security were also noted.
- The need for recognition at a policy level that existing and new waste management facilities will continue to be necessary during the transition to a Circular Economy and that they must operate legally, responsibly and with minimal risk.
- The final Circular Economy Strategy should clearly state the role of Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) and Energy from Waste (EfW) facilities in target delivery and highlight the need for new facilities to meet the 8-tonne per year target.

## 3. Coordination and collaboration

- A need to strengthen the proposals for change and a monitoring framework to ensure coherence with Executive-wide strategies and policy, recommending:
  - a stock-take of environmental pressures and impacts
  - defined interim and longer-term targets, with corresponding indicators
  - clear mapping of interlinkages with other strategies
  - a comprehensive action plan specifying delivery and assessment arrangements
  - a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework.
- The need for stakeholder involvement and coordination with other departments, councils and agencies to ensure adherence to relevant regulations, setting waste/recycling collection targets and actively participating in networks and clusters focused on driving circularity.
- The Circular Economy Strategy needs to prioritise the opportunities for transitioning towards a Circular Economy, including an all-Ireland approach, alignment with EU standards and addressing gaps in other related strategies. The responses highlight the need for an all-Ireland approach to engagement and ambition for the proposals for change that are specifically relevant to sharing goods and materials and maximising the value of materials locally – as well as the need for a framework for a Just Transition that facilitates the transition towards green and circular jobs and skills.
- Highlight the key areas in which the use of standards can support the development and implementation of Circular Economy policy objectives in Northern Ireland.



#### 4. Funding

Funding instruments which encourage retrofitting such as incentives that do not require repayment. For example, grants and tax initiatives are more effective in encouraging uptake of retrofitting. However, loan programmes can achieve a higher leverage ratio. It was suggested that grants and tax initiatives are appropriate for households to kick-start retrofitting, but as policies extend, less popular mechanisms may be needed.