

Batumi Initiative on Green Economy (BIG-E)
Actions by Netherlands

Country: Netherlands, Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment

Title:

International Green Deal North Sea Resources (NSRR) Roundabout

Focus area 2, 5 and 6: Promote the internalization of negative externalities and the sustainable use of natural capital; Develop clean physical capital for sustainable production patterns; Promote green and fair trade.

Description of the action: Europe's economy is hugely dependent on the import of raw materials. Every year in the European Union (EU), nearly 15 tonnes of materials are used per person, while each EU citizen generates, on average, more than 4.5 tonnes of waste annually, almost half of which is disposed of in landfill sites.

The circular economy is a response to the aspiration for sustainable growth in the context of the growing pressure of production and consumption on the world's resources and environment. It can boost economy and competitiveness of the EU by bringing new business opportunities as well as innovative and more efficient ways of producing and consuming. The transition towards a circular economy gives us an opportunity to reinvent our economy and create new competitive advantages for the EU on a sustainable base.

The use of waste material as a secondary resource is one of the first actions that businesses could consider to improve both their economic and environmental performance. Value chains are often cross border in nature and so require trans-border shipment of secondary resources.

The International Green Deal NSRR aims to increase industry uptake of secondary resources by facilitating cross border use of secondary resources within the North Sea region in Europe. In this approach the central governments facilitates innovative and voluntary initiatives from society – businesses, non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and local authorities – by supporting entry into networks or by addressing legal barriers if needed. This support is in principle not financial. This Green Deal approach empowers frontrunners by enabling new and ambitious developments that contribute to economic and environmental benefits (Circular Economy/Green Growth). The NSRR is based on voluntary, bottom up cases/initiatives – with a maximum of ten cases in total. Actions in Green Deals are specific (SMART), but are not legally enforceable.

Companies and government participants will cooperate to identify barriers and consider solutions for a limited number of specific secondary resource cases between countries. These barriers are amongst others related to the “waste or resource” status and hamper cross border secondary resources optimization. The companies intend to increase investments related to secondary resource use in the case of solid solutions. The intention is to share the lessons learnt in the cases with stakeholders and other interested parties, with the objective of facilitating the movement of secondary resources within and eventually beyond the North Sea Region in Europe.

Action's timeframe/milestones, as appropriate: This International Green Deal was signed at March 3th 2016 and terminates on March 2nd 2021. In principal, the individual cases/initiatives that are part of the NSRR have duration of two years.

Type of action: Information/ Education-based/Capacity building/ Voluntary

Economic sectors: economy-wide

Reference instruments and sources, as appropriate: This International Green Deal is based upon the experience with the Dutch Green Deal approach (www.greendeals.nl/english) and includes similar elements: integral cooperation (multiple value chain partners, public-private, cross silo, policy makers, inspection and enforcement) and a practical case-by-case approach. The actions involved are voluntary and not legally binding. Support from governments is in principal not financial and there are no other policy instruments a priori available. The main strength of the approach lies in the forging of new types of cooperation.

Expected co-benefits and impact of the outcome: This International Green Deal is expected to have co-benefits for profit (facilitate frontrunners and innovation in the field of circular economy), people (green growth related employment creation) and planet (reduction of reliance on finite primary resources). Overall the aim is to increase investments in starting or scaling up of business activities in the field of secondary resources and circular economy and thus to accelerate the transition towards sustainable, green growth.

SDGs target(s) that the action may contribute to implement: 7, 8, 9, 12, 13 and 17

Implementation of Environmental Performance Review (EPR) Recommendations, as appropriate: 2015, Environmental performance Review of the Netherlands. Policy recommendations for Waste to Resource:

Maintain absolute decoupling of waste generation from GDP to avoid a potential rebound as the economy recovers by reinforcing efforts to reduce waste generation in the next iteration of the National Waste Management Plan.

Objectively verifiable indicators, as appropriate: A reduction of barriers to trans-border shipment of the secondary resources that are part of the NSRR. Smoother and faster procedures to get clarity on waste or resource status of these secondary resources – incl., possibly, harmonisation of the status of these resources between the participating countries in the NSRR. Uptake in the use, trade and transport of secondary resources

Partners: Joint project between the governments of Flanders, France, the United Kingdom and The Netherlands, as well as companies, industry associations, port authorities and NGO's.

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