
Circular economy policies should target cuts in resource use

Environmental organisations in Scotland have welcomed growing interest in creating a more circular economy, but warn that government should set resource use targets if it is to secure environmental benefits.

In advance of the Scottish Government releasing its forthcoming strategy on the circular economy late in February, Scottish Environment LINK commissioned a [report](#) to look at the strengths and weaknesses of the concept from the point of view of environmental NGOs. LINK thinks that the aspiration to create a more circular economy has enormous potential but only if its adoption drives genuine changes in the ways in which enterprises and government work.

Richard Dixon, Director of Friends of the Earth Scotland, speaking on behalf of LINK's Economics Group says: "The Circular Economy concept has great potential to reduce waste, save citizens and businesses cash, create jobs and reduce climate change emissions. It's a great idea but it needs to be done right. We'll be looking for the Scottish Government to produce a strategy which measures the fundamentals of our current over-use of materials, and demonstrates how its policies will make a real difference. Scotland has a chance to be a leader in tackling resource use in Europe if the Government produces a strong strategy next week."

LINK's report challenges the government on several points:

- The circular economy needs to be presented as an approach to achieve absolute (as opposed to relative) reduction in the rate of consumption of finite resources;
- If the Scottish Government is serious about the circular economy, metrics to measure natural resource use, waste generated and the degree of circularity need to be in place;
- There may be temptations to focus circular economy approaches in sectors in which competitive advantage could be achieved. LINK would like to see the principles of the circular economy adopted widely, especially where environmental gains might be largest.

LINK keenly awaits to see how these issues are addressed in the forthcoming Scottish Government Strategy and looks forward to engaging with government and other stakeholders to support Scotland's transition to a more circular economy.

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For more information please contact:

Phoebe Cochrane, LINK Sustainable Economics Policy Officer at phoebe@scotlink.org or 0131 243 2723/07419 373320

Richard Dixon, Director of Friends of the Earth Scotland at rdixon@foe-scotlandorg.uk or 0131 243 2700

Notes/links for editors:

1. The circular economy alters material flows within the economy so that resources are retained in productive use for as long as possible, at the highest possible utility and value, through multiple cycles. Instead of being designed for disposal after use as in a linear economy, products are designed and made to be used again. Aspirations towards a more circular economy have become

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popular recently and the Scottish Government is seen as a leader in terms of embracing the concept and reviewing opportunities to adopt it.

2. Scottish Environment LINK report '[The Circular Economy: Implications for the Environment Movement](#)' was commissioned by LINK's Economics Group and written by Andrew Llanwarne, IDEAction.
3. The Scottish Government's strategy paper on the circular economy, 'Making Things Last', is due to be published towards the end of February.

This statement is supported by [LINK's Economics Group](#).