Circular Electronics Initiative: what it brings in relation to WEEE

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DG Environment

European Commission

ReWEEE – Final webinar,
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A new vision for Europe

Circular Economy Action Plan — For a cleaner and more competitive Europe

35 actions along the entire life cycle of products, to:

- Make **sustainable products** the norm in the EU

- **Empower** consumers and public buyers

- **Focus also on key product value chains**: electronics and ICT; batteries and vehicles; packaging; plastics; textiles; construction and buildings; food; water and nutrients

- Ensure **less waste**

- Make circularity work for **people**, **regions** and **cities**

- **Lead global efforts** on circular economy

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Key product value chains

Food, water & nutrients

Electronics and ICT
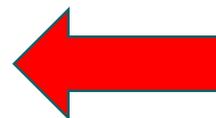
Batteries & vehicles
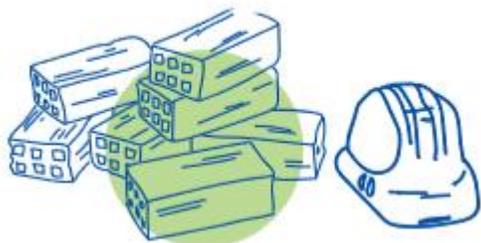
Construction & buildings

Circular Economy Action Plan

For a cleaner and more competitive Europe

Packaging

Textiles

Plastics

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WHY electronics and ICT?

- **Increasing production and sale** of smartphones:
  - Expected to grow by **28%** from 2020 to 2025
  - Accounts for up to **80%** of the devices lifecycle GHG emissions, not their actual use
  - Increasing the lifespan of all smartphones in the EU by 1 year would reduce emissions equivalent to taking 1 million cars of the roads

- **Growing electronic waste** (e-waste):
  - One of the **fastest growing** waste streams (Europe is 1st worldwide per capita)
  - Less than **42%** of electronics are currently being **recycled** in the EU
  - Around **€55 billion** in materials are **lost** globally every year (€12Bn in the EU)

- **Europeans want it** (Eurobarometer March 2020):
  - **64%** of Europeans would like to use their phone for at least **5 years**
  - **79%** thinks that manufacturers should be **required** to make it **easier to repair** digital devices or replace their individual parts

- **Limited legislation** is currently in place to address these challenges and improve the circularity of ICT products.

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The Circular Electronics Initiative

- **The Circular Electronics Initiative aims to (by 2021):**
  - **Extend the lifespan** of electronic devices
  - Prevent **premature obsolescence**
  - Promote **repair, recycling** and efficient use of **resources**
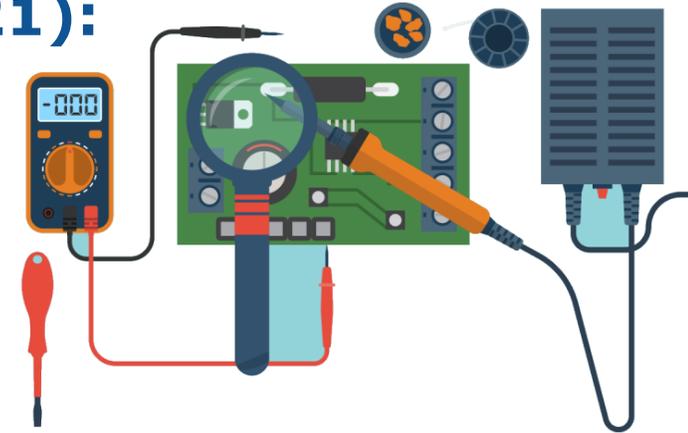
- **This could be achieved through:**
  - **Design requirements** (e.g. durability, modularity, repairability, recyclability)
  - **Information requirements** (e.g. repair manuals, source code, components/materials, availability of spare parts, tools, environmental footprint)
  - Requirements on **spare parts** (e.g. production/supply, licensing)
  - **A Right to Repair** (for consumers/users and 3rd party repairers)
  - **Take-back schemes** and **common charger** standards
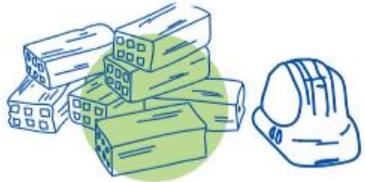
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Key product value chains: Electronics and ICT

Circular Electronics Initiative

➢ Regulatory measures including mobile phones, tablets and laptops under the Ecodesign Directive

➢ Implementing the new "right to repair" and update obsolete software

➢ Introducing a common charger

➢ Explore EU-wide take back schemes to return or sell old mobile phones, tablets, laptops & chargers

➢ Restrictions of hazardous substances in electrical & electronic equipment

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Circular Electronics Initiative

- **Regulatory measures including mobile phones, tablets and laptops under the Ecodesign Directive**

  - designed for energy efficiency and durability, reparability, upgradability, maintenance, reuse and recycling

  - Preparatory studies (End of 2020 / Beginning of 2021)

  - Legislative proposals (public consultation : spring 2021)

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- **Implementing the new "right to repair" and update obsolete software**

  - Consumers should have a strong "right to repair"

  - It requires both supply-side requirements on producers and a demand-side consumer right, which is enforceable and enforced

  - The Commission is working on developing a comprehensive range of options from **three angles**:

    - ✓ Consumers should be in the position to choose reparable (and durable) products and access affordable and consumer friendly repair services;

    - ✓ Products need to be designed and made to be reparable;

    - ✓ Further development of producer responsibility schemes should promote repair operations.

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- **Implementing the new "right to repair" and update obsolete software**

  - The Commission is working on these three angles in several initiatives under development, most notably:

    - ✓ The initiative 'Empowering Consumers in the Green Transition'

    - ✓ The 'Sustainable Products Initiative'

    - ✓ The 'Circular Devices Initiative'

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Circular Electronics Initiative

- **Introducing a common charger**

  - Regulatory measures on chargers for mobile phones and similar devices, including

    - the introduction of a common charger,

    - improving the durability of charging cables, and

    - incentives to decouple the purchase of chargers from the purchase of new devices.

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- **Explore EU-wide take back scheme to return or resell old phones, tablets, laptops & chargers**

  - Study on options for EU-wide return schemes of mobile phones, tablets and other small electrical and electronic equipment (June 2020-March 2021)

  - Objectives of the study:

    - ✓ to provide the Commission with assessments of the challenges and opportunities of collecting small EEE and WEEE for subsequent reuse, repair, recovery and recycling,

    - ✓ to present an overview of the different types of return schemes across the EU,

    - ✓ to provide recommendations on possible EU action.

Identification and typology of existing return and reward systems and other measures

First selection through desk research and questionnaire for EU-27 and additional countries

In-depth analysis of identified systems through desk research and (targeted) stakeholder consultation

Clustering of assessed systems into categories and assessment of their **replicability and scalability**

Category 1

Category 2

Category 3

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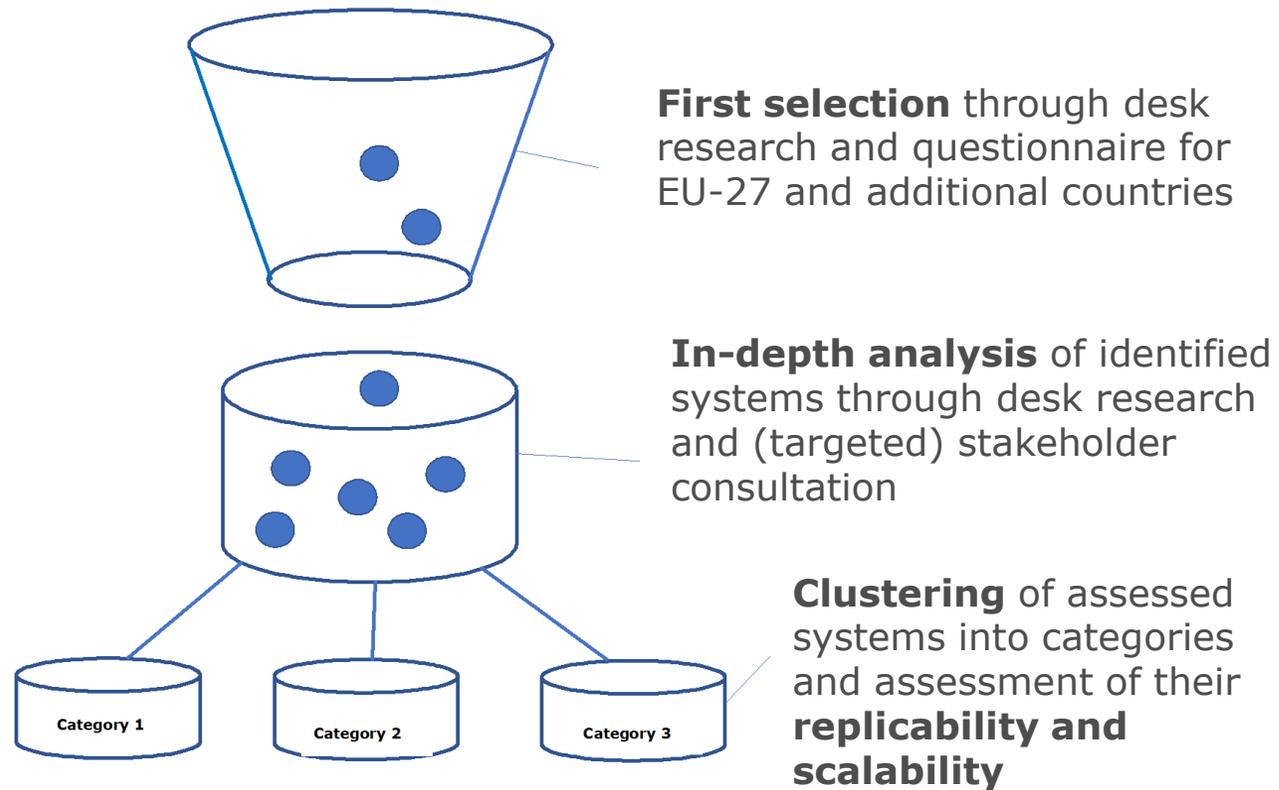
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- **Restrictions of hazardous substances in electrical & electronic equipment**

  - review of EU rules on restrictions of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment

  - guidance to improve coherence with relevant legislation, including REACH and Ecodesign

HOW

- **Preparatory studies**
  - Several studies pending to assess **new eco-design measures** for phones, tablets, laptops + IoT/edge and other electronic devices (incl. software)
  - Ongoing studies on extending **consumer protection** legislation on horizontal rights to information/transparency and repair
- **Legislative actions (through existing or new instruments)**
  - New minimum **design requirements** for ICT devices (e.g. phones, tablets and laptops): Implementing measures (current Ecodesign Directive)
  - Enable measures beyond design requirements (e.g. **right to repair**): TBD – possibly via consumer protection legislation
  - **Common Charger** (decoupling, collection): delegated act
- **Non-legislative actions**
  - **Take-back scheme** (TBD)
  - Capacity building (e.g. after-markets, repair/recycling)
  - Improved consumer information (e.g. product passports, ecolabels)

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Sustainable Products Initiative

Sustainable Products Initiative aimed at:

- **Extending product lifetime** *(durability, reparability, upgradability, counter premature obsolescence)*

- **Improving overall 'circularity'** *(remanufacturing, recyclability, recycled content, restrict single use)*

- **Reducing emissions, pollution and waste** *(chemicals, carbon/env footprint, efficiency, etc)*

- **More circular 'handling'** *(destruction unsold goods, product-as-a-service, reward sust. performance)*

Digitalisation as a key enabler: *digital product passport, supported by European Dataspace*

« *Sustainable products should be the norm, not the exception*

Up to **80%** of products' environmental impacts are determined at the design phase

The roadmap for the Sustainable Product Initiative is published::
https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12567-Sustainable-Products-Initiative
The feedback period for the inception impact assessment is until **16 November 2020**

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Thank you!

Learn more here:
https://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/index_en.htm

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