

Mainstreaming sustainable consumption and production policies and circular models: Best practices and recommendations

Online consultation with Canada, 13 October 2020

[UNEA-4 Resolution 1](#) Innovative pathways to achieve sustainable consumption and production

1. Agenda

The agenda of the online consultation with Canada was structured as follows. First, UNEP provided an introduction of the mandate of the UNEA-4 Resolution on sustainable consumption and production, followed by a presentation of the objectives of the consultation and the key questions to be answered.

Examples of product policies and good examples of design practices of products and services in the North American and pan-European regions were then given by CEPS (Centre for European Policy Studies). Two case studies from the textile and electronics sector were presented in more detail.

The final part of the online consultation was participatory discussion. The following questions were put forward to all participants:

I. Product policies

How have product policies in your country been instrumental in preserving the environment?

What are the enabling conditions for higher impact of product policies?

How to create further coherence among product policies?

II. Innovative design practices

How is your country performing in identifying and taking up innovative design practices of products/services, which minimize harmful environmental impacts?

What are the requirements to implement, replicate and scale up such design practices?

III. Role of the international community

What role should UNEP, the UN system and the wider international community play in addressing gaps and challenges highlighted during the above discussions?

Detailed agenda is found in Annex 1.

2. Participants

Representatives from Environment & Climate Change Canada (ECCC).

The list of participants is found in Annex 1.

3. Proceedings

The online consultation was held using the Microsoft Teams platform.

3.1 Welcome

Welcome remarks were given by Jason Jabbour, Regional Coordinator and Senior Science Advisor, UNEP Regional Office for North America, followed by a presentation of the objectives and methodology of the consultation by Claire Thiebault, Associate Programme Officer, UNEP Economy Division.

3.2 Inventory of product policies in the pan-European region

Vasileios Rizos, Head of Sustainable Resources and Circular Economy at CEPS presented examples of coherent product policies, the summary of which is shown in the graph below, covering both the North American and pan-European regions.

Country	Policy framework	Product policies
Flanders (Belgium)	Circular Flanders	Circular purchasing, financing instruments for circular projects, development of circular toolkit for entrepreneurs, circular city applications
Netherlands	Circular Economy Programme for the Netherlands, 2050 (priority sector plastics)	Use of recycled content in design, reducing production and consumption, and recycling of waste
Netherlands	Circular Economy Programme for the Netherlands, 2050 (priority sector construction)	Circular procurement, strengthening of transparency and information exchange
Finland	More from less – wisely	Eco-labels, pilot-projects on sustainable housing and eating, green public procurement, economic incentives for material efficiency audits
France	Circular Economy Roadmap	Legislation on extended producer responsibility, single use of plastics
Sweden	Strategy for sustainable consumption	Lowering VAT for certain repair, consumer campaigns, phasing out harmful chemical
Scotland	Making Things Last - A Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland	Focus on avoiding waste, design, reuse, repair, remanufacturing, and recycling
Germany	National Programme on Sustainable Consumption (NPNK)	Sustainable public procurement, strengthening of environmental and social labelling, promotion of sustainable ICT products, ambitious eco-design
Georgia	Waste Management Code	Extended producer responsibility scheme gradually introduces in packaging, tires, vehicles, batteries and accumulators, WEEE, used oils
Albania	National Strategy and National Plan on Waste Management 2010-2025	Objectives to develop markets for recycled materials and provide waste minimization advice to businesses
Canada	Federal Sustainable Development Strategy (2016-2019)	Voluntary and partnership agreements, economic instruments in the form of taxes and levies and eco-labelling programs and toolkits.
Canada	Canada-Wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility (2009)	Extends industrial producers' responsibility of a product to the post-consumer stage.
Canada	Canada-Wide Strategy for Sustainable Packaging	Builds on the Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility and includes voluntary certifications, eco-labelling and reduction agreements.
United States	EPA Sustainable Materials Management Program Strategic Plan (2017-2022)	Voluntary standards, information sharing and guidance and technical assistance. Focus on waste reduction through source reduction, reuse, recycling and prevention.

Regarding the good design practices, Vasileios Rizos presented two examples: the case of *Teemill* and *Fairphone*.

3.3 Results

The main messages and comments raised by the participants are summarized below.

a) Coherent product policies

How have product policies in your country been instrumental in preserving the environment? What are the enabling conditions for higher impact of product policies? How to create further coherence among product policies?

- **Common product standards and methods for measuring circularity** could be key in enabling coherent product policies.
- **Regulatory cooperation between different jurisdictions could enable significant uptake of sustainable product policies at scale** also including smaller economies and allow a bigger impact on global value chains.
- In the case of Canada, policies have to a large extent focused on improving energy efficiency through labelling programmes (Energuide) on key consumer items. Another focus of sustainable policy has been the banning of certain chemicals found to be harmful for the environment, which ultimately has had an effect on product design.
- In high volume product sectors with significant parts of the supply chain located in Canada, namely the auto- and aerospace industries, **market dynamics and consumer demand has created incentives for the design of more sustainable products** in terms of durability and life-extension activities.
- It is highlighted that the **geographical location of supply chains and production is a challenge, as they have a limited possibility to influence the sustainability of design and production when it takes place outside of the country.**
- The Canadian flagship initiative on plastic waste is a **multi-level strategy with commitment at federal, territorial and provincial level** that is aiming to reduce plastic waste and reintroduce post-consumer plastics into the economy through greater use of recycled plastics, amongst others. Through this initiative, key roles were identified among the different levels of jurisdiction for a more comprehensive approach.
- As part of the Plastics Strategy, the Government has taken various steps, such as: **integrating performance standards on recycled content in a range of products with a high plastic content, setting a target of 50% recycled content in plastic products by 2030 (of which they aim to introduce to legislation)**, banning of certain single-use plastics, provide guidelines and other tools supporting companies to meet the requirements, and have made efforts are made to harmonize sub-national Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes.
- EPR-schemes on plastics have been in place in Canada since 2009 at a provincial level, covering the packaging and electronics sectors. Responding to a need of more guidelines and rules at the federal level, the Government is working to **harmonize and streamline the different EPR-schemes and overcome fragmentation.**

- As policies related to waste management are being adopted at provincial level, there is no common monitoring framework for measuring impacts. In relation to the EPR schemes, annual reports are produced to share lessons learned.
- Lessons learned from Canada's experience with implementing EPR-schemes include the **need for holistic life-cycle approaches, and avoiding siloed thinking, when introducing new environmental policies to avoid unintended negative consequences.**

b) Innovative design practices

How is your country performing in identifying and taking up innovative design practices of products/services, which minimize harmful environmental impacts? What are the requirements to implement, replicate and scale up such design practices?

- Green Public Procurement (GPP) at federal level has advanced in Canada in recent years, particularly related to reducing packaging waste and improve product durability, recognizing the role of public entities in encouraging sustainable design practices. **The central government plays a facilitating role in sharing knowledge with procurement departments at provincial and territorial level** to multiply the impacts of best practices.
- **Funding for research and development is provided by the federal government to trigger innovative circular practices** in areas such as bioeconomy.

c) Role of the international community

What role should UNEP, the UN system and the wider international community play in addressing gaps and challenges highlighted during the above discussions?

- International organizations can play a role in encouraging voluntary industry initiatives specifically aimed at product design and to facilitate efforts to overcome technical barriers and demonstrate results.
- UNEP and other international organizations can play an important role in creating better coherence between existing standards on circularity, and to ensure that such common standards do not infringe on trade rules under the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- UNEP and other international organizations can play a key role in better connecting the standards to the environmental impact of products, in order to better identify the products and processes with the highest impact.

Next steps

Claire Thiebault thanked the participants for their contribution to the consultation and indicated that it would still be possible to send contributions and information. To do this, she asked the participants to:



Share details on **national and/or state/city product policies**. Share details and/or relevant reports by email with Vasileios Rizos, CEPS, vasileios.rizos@ceps.eu

Share **good examples of design practices**, and send supporting material/link/contact details to Vasileios Rizos, CEPS, vasileios.rizos@ceps.eu

Submit **written inputs to the key consultation questions**: Claire Thiebault, UNEP Economy Division, Claire.Thiebault@un.org; Jason Jabbour, UNEP North America Office, jason.jabbour@un.org ; Hilary French, UNEP North America Office, Hilary.French@un.org

Annex 1

List of participants

- **Sophie Bernier Gestionnaire**, Manager, Strategies and Coordination, Waste reduction & management, Environment and Climate Change Canada
- **Somayyeh Montazer-Hojat**, Program Analyst, Environmental Protection Branch, Environment and Climate change Canada
- **Julie Bryhn**, Researcher, CEPS (Centre for European Policy Studies)
- **Vasileios Rizos**, Head of Sustainable Resources and Circular Economy, CEPS (Centre for European Policy Studies)
- **Jason Jabbour**, Regional Coordinator and Senior Science Advisor, UNEP Regional Office for North America
- **Claire Thiebault**, Associate Programme Officer, UNEP Economy Division