



STANDARDS IN THE TIME OF THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

HOW CAN STANDARDS WORK FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?

The European Green Deal and its Circular Economy Action Plan lay out a bold and ambitious strategy to transition from a “throwaway” economy to a clean and circular one. From theory to practice, its realisation depends on an equally ambitious and timely execution of the underpinning initiatives and policies, as well as a recognition that the EU Green Deal should be a key pillar of any economic stimulus following the COVID-19 pandemic.

In order to support the implementation of the expected legislative and policy initiatives, robust and reliable methods will need to be used. The standardisation system has the potential to offer those services in a wide range of sectors, as long as the methods delivered are appropriate and come in a timely manner.

WHAT IS NEEDED FOR DIFFERENT SECTORS?



1 Optimising product design

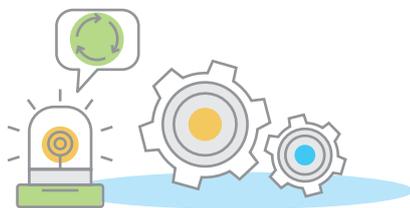
Definitions, metrics, tests and assessment methods will need to be developed in support of regulatory initiatives related to product design. These methods need to address a wide range of specific products, from ICT and electronics to household appliances and batteries. They also need to assess individual aspects ranging from durability, repairability and recyclability to energy efficiency and chemical content, as well as bring these characteristics together in an integrated sustainability approach.

The greening of sectors such as steel, cement and chemicals needs to be supported by standards related to and methods enabling comparability of carbon and environmental footprints.



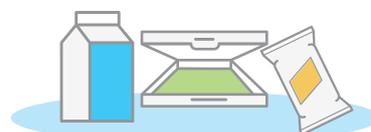
2 Greening of high impact sectors

Standards can support the transition of production processes to less emitting, resource-intensive and more circular ones, starting with a robust definition of what “circular” means and expanding to the harmonisation of circularity metrics and principles in support of circular business models.



3 Re-thinking production processes

Amidst the ever-increasing amount of packaging waste, standards can offer methods to improve packaging design, harmonise reusable packaging formats and introduce common typing for food packaging containers.



4 Packaging



Plastics 5

Driving down plastic consumption and waste would require measurement methods for the determination of recycled plastic content in products, the presence of microplastics in the environment and well as methods for measuring the unintentional release of microplastics and microfibrils.

Regulatory initiatives aimed at introducing textile circularity should be supported by standards containing robust common definitions of sustainable and circular textiles, methods to assess durability, repairability and recyclability, as well as processes facilitating textile reuse, recycling and labelling.



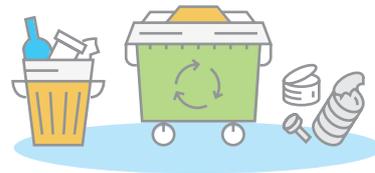
Textiles 6



Construction 7

In support of policies to make buildings more sustainable, standards can offer common methods, tests and criteria to assess sustainability and circularity for the Construction Products Regulation, and generally facilitate energy and material efficiency in building design.

Standards should contribute to waste prevention, circularity enhancement and the creation of favourable conditions for secondary raw material use by establishing harmonised formats for declaring waste reduction, common test methods for substances of concern, as well as assessment methods for the quality of various material streams.



Waste 8



Carbon neutrality and sustainable finance 9

Standards should support the EU's work towards climate neutrality by providing common definitions of "carbon neutrality", focusing on the absolute reduction of emissions rather than their offset, as well as developing methods to underpin sustainable finance, such as for the identification of economic activities contributing to a circular economy.

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The green line to standards



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