

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

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Funded by



CIRCULAR ECONOMY & TRADE: GLOBAL DIMENSIONS OF THE EU CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The objective of the study is to identify and assess links between trade, circular economy and the SDGs. In particular, it will explore the effects of the transition of the circular economy in Europe on third countries – especially developing countries – and the EU's role in the development of a sustainable circular economy worldwide.

Introduction

With the support of the [Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), and the Steering Committee formed by experts from the [OECD](#), the [Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#), the [United Nations Conference on Trade and Development](#) (UNCTAD), [Tearfund](#) and [The Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra](#), IEEP is undertaking a study to explore the links between trade, circular economy and the SDGs. The objective is to explore these interlinked policy issues and provide an evidence-based analysis of the global dimensions of the EU circular economy and the implications on trade. In particular, the study addresses questions related to just transition and empowering developing countries.

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Scope

The study focused on addressing the following questions:

- What are the **risks and the benefits of trade liberalisation** for the implementation of the circular economy worldwide?
- How the **implementation of the circular economy changes trade flows** (e.g. less raw materials, more secondary raw materials)?
- What are the potential **consequences of the transition of the circular economy in Europe** and circular economy related EU legislation on **international trade**?
- What are the **links between trade, circular economy and the SDGs**?
- What should the EU do to ensure that its circular economy framework delivers **sustainability both internally and externally**?
- What opportunities and risks does the transition and its trade policy implications present to **developing countries**? How can they be part of and benefit from a just circular economy transition in a globalised economy?

Main elements

1. Report

The **study report** will provide an analysis of the links between trade and circular economy, providing policy recommendations for better policy coherence. The global dimensions of circular economy will be analysed, exploring both the role of the EU and the impacts of the EU's transition to a circular economy worldwide. The role of trade will also be analysed as a vehicle for circular economy.

2. Case studies

Three **case studies** will support the analysis by exploring the implications of trade barriers to circulate economy, interlinkages between circular economy, trade and development cooperation, and the role of trade in shifting to circular bio-economy.

3. Expert workshop and high level event

An **expert workshop** will be organised back-to-back the World Circular Economy Forum in Helsinki, on June 5th 2019. The workshop will gather key trade, circular economy and sustainable development experts. The study report will serve as a basis for the discussions during the workshop, with the workshop insights feeding into the finalisation of the study.

A **high-level event** will be held in Brussels during the Finnish EU Presidency (July – December 2019) to launch the final study.

THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE STUDY

For a successful study that makes a valuable contribution to the policy debate, we would welcome hearing from experts on:

- Key literature
- Interesting case studies
- Insights on circular economy and trade
- Policy needs for progress
- Engagement in the expert workshop

We thank you in advance for any inputs!

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