

Executive Briefing: BS 8001 – a Guide

The world's first standard for implementing the principles of the circular economy in organizations



Why should executives, decision-makers and senior managers be interested in BS 8001?

The circular economy is one of the biggest economic growth opportunities to have been identified for many years. In September 2015, McKinsey & Company identified in their report '[Europe's Circular-economy opportunity](#)' that its net economic benefit in Europe alone will be worth €1.8 trillion by 2030. Opportunities of that scale make a compelling business case for organizations to embrace circularity into their everyday activities. But how an organization starts the transition towards a more circular mode of operation has been largely theoretical - with first movers feeling their way through trial and error. BS 8001 has been developed for organizations seeking practical guidance that want to start capitalizing on the circular opportunity. This practical guide and framework helps secure understanding and enables the implementation of the circular economy at an organizational level.

How might your organization benefit from the circular economy?

It's not guaranteed that your organization will benefit from the circular economy – but forward-thinking organizations are looking to understand if they might be able to secure a share of that €1.8 trillion opportunity. BS 8001 provides a framework to help organizations determine this.

The world is facing a series of unprecedented sustainability threats and uncertainties and these are the common themes running through the World Economic Forum's 2017 register of 'global risks of highest concern for doing business'. The circular economy offers organizations a route to decouple their economic growth from resource use and environmental impacts. That in turn, helps improve an organization's security of supply and resilience to increasing market volatilities. Also, and just as importantly, the circular economy helps explain why more established organizations increasingly find their reputations and market shares unsettled by disruptive innovation and how they can respond to these risks.

The circular economy takes a whole systems perspective. BS 8001 enables organizations to map out their unique system and understand how their operations impact it. It explores how, by applying circular economy principles, organizations can capitalize on cost savings; unlock new revenue streams; and make themselves more resilient to external shocks and disruption.

Ultimately the circular economy is about organizations turning things on their head and re-thinking how their resources are managed to create financial, environmental and social benefits both in the long- and short-term.



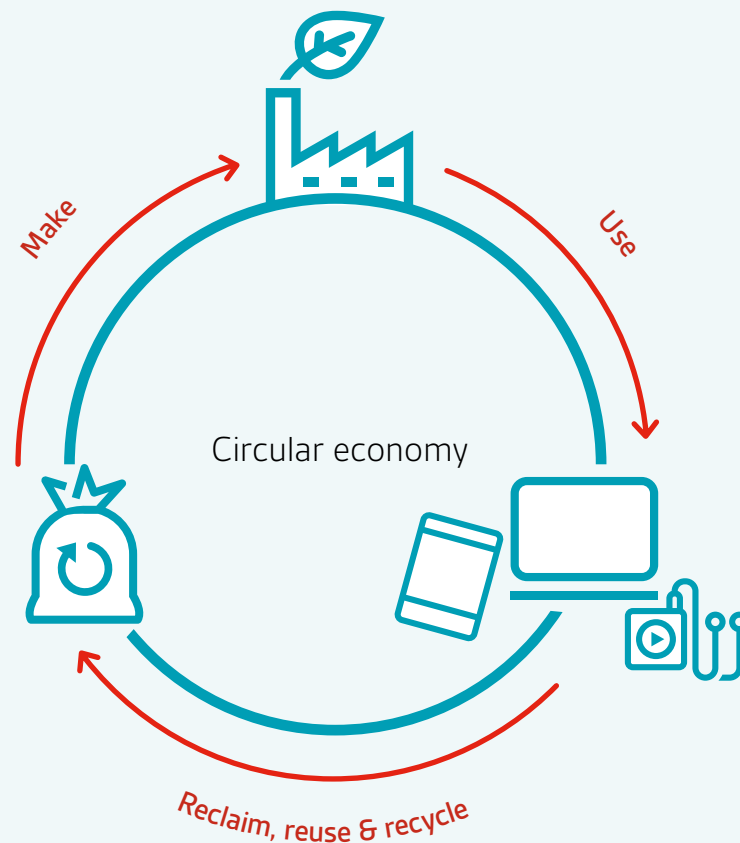
€1.8 trillion estimated worth of circular economy in Europe by 2030.*

Why all the interest in the circular economy?

Global demand for products and services is set to increase as the world's population grows and development increases income levels. The bad news for organizations looking to meet that demand is that trend also increases the pressure on already constrained natural resources.

A circular economy aims for a global economic system that can thrive in the long-term by decoupling economic growth from resource use and environmental impacts. It has the potential to give rise to much more resilient economies with more abundant resources and a healthier environment.

By applying the principles of a circular economy to how they approach their processes, products, services and business models, organizations can more effectively manage their resources. This enables them to capitalize on cost savings; unlock new revenue streams; and make themselves more resilient to external shocks and disruption.



How might your organization benefit from BS 8001?

This is the first practical framework and guidance of its kind for organizations to implement the principles of the circular economy. Whilst this is a British Standard, it is intended to be used by organizations irrespective of where they are located and regardless of size, sector or type. It is useful to those with varying levels of knowledge and understanding of the circular economy so readers don't need to be sustainability or circularity specialists to benefit. It provides practical ways to secure smaller 'quick-wins', right through to helping organizations re-think holistically how their resources are managed to create financial, environmental and social benefits.

BS 8001 is a voluntary guidance standard like ISO 26000, not a requirements standard like ISO 9001 or ISO 14001. This means that it is not intended nor suitable for certification purposes, i.e. you cannot be certified for compliance.

It has been developed by capturing the latest thinking and practice amongst experts in the circular economy and draws on the experiences and lessons learned from a range of organizations, both large and small, who are already attempting to become more circular.

It sets out two things:

- 1 What the circular economy is and why moving towards a more circular mode of operation might be beneficial and relevant to an organization - both now and in the future.
- 2 How to implement the principles of the circular economy within an organization to create value through process, product, service or business model innovation.

Whether your organisation is taking its first steps or is looking to advance its circularity, this practical guidance includes handy watch-outs to avoid the pitfalls that hinder organizations on their journey to becoming more circular.



1/3 the amount of food produced worldwide each year for human consumption which gets lost or wasted.*

How is BS 8001 a practical guide?

Here are the top 10 ways this guide offers practical assistance.

If your organization:

- 1 Is curious as to whether the circular economy presents you with an opportunity - either now or as a result of emerging and future issues – this guide can determine organizational relevance and role. It also offers thinking around integrating circularity into core business strategy.
- 2 Needs to identify their key materials of concern – this guide can define resource management risks and opportunities.
- 3 Is confused by the terminology employed around the circular economy - then this guide identifies key terms and provides definitions
- 4 Is unsure what it should be asking itself to encourage circular economy thinking - then this guide provides those thought-provoking questions.
- 5 Is confused by what to prioritise to become more circular – this guide sets out six circular economy principles to focus on.
- 6 Is unsure of how circular it currently is, wants to benchmark itself and understand what 'good' might look like – this guide provides a suggested maturity model.
- 7 Wants to progress its circular journey but doesn't know where to start – this guide provides an eight-stage flexible framework and navigational tool.
- 8 Is open to exploring more circular ways of creating value but finds its current linear business model prohibiting progress – this guide identifies six business model groupings compatible with circular economic systems, accompanied by a number of enabling mechanisms.
- 9 Wants to embed product design improvements from the outset - this guide provides a handy design improvement check list.
- 10 Has misgivings or concerns about the pitfalls involved in transitioning its business towards a more circular economy – this guide identifies key factors, issues and considerations.

*UN FAO 'Key facts on food loss and waste you should know!'. www.fao.org/save-food/resources/keyfindings/en/

What are the six principles of the circular economy?



Why is BS 8001 credible?

The circular economy is complex and there is a lot of technical and theoretical information about it already in existence. What has been missing is the practical framework to help guide organizations to simplify and identify what is relevant to them. BS 8001 attempts to address that need.

The drafting panel comprised of circular economy experts including representatives from the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF), Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), The Centre for Sustainable Design at the University of Creative Arts, Resource Association and the Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM) to name just a few. The standard was overseen by a wider committee of around 60 members including (but again not limited to) representatives from the environment (Defra) and business, energy and industrial strategy (BEIS) UK Government departments as well as the Scottish and Welsh governments, WRAP, several companies belonging to EMF's CE100 network and other industry bodies and experts.

Independent non-profit Forum for the Future, was appointed during BS 8001's development to pilot its content prior to publication. A variety of businesses and organizations from differing sectors and sizes were consulted during this piloting phase, both within the UK and overseas, to ensure BS 8001 met their needs for practical guidance and recommendations.

This is a comprehensive and practical guide but is designed to be used flexibly depending on whether an organization is new to the circular economy or is more advanced in their thinking. The document is easily navigable and is structured to enable organizations to identify the most relevant sections for them.



>200,000 potential jobs (gross) created in UK from the circular economy by 2030.*

Obtaining BS 8001 and where to go from here:

BS 8001 is designed to cater to organizations with differing levels of understanding of the circular economy – from those starting out to those more advanced in their thinking and wanting to review or sense check their approach.

In addition to purchasing your copy of BS 8001 which can be accessed from: shop.bsigroup.com/BS8001, consideration should be given to identifying key individuals/teams or establishing an internal project team within your organization to work through the key elements of the BS 8001 framework.



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