

From Setting Recycling Targets to Achieving Them

A brainstorming workshop hosted by FEAD took place on Tuesday 9 April:

From Setting Recycling Targets to Achieving Them?

The event was divided into two parts:

- Brainstorming workshop where participants were divided into groups and assigned an issue to discuss, with the help of a moderator.
- A designated rapporteur for each group took notes of main points and suggestions, and report on them after the brainstorming session, during the “Plenary Session”.

Below is the resume of the points discussed by each table:

Table 1: What do we expect from regulation, and policy makers at European and national level in order to achieve recycling targets?

- The Commission needs to ensure it has the right tools to support and enforce implementation
- Better implementation of the law at a domestic level is needed, too many loopholes and lack of enforcement at national/local level. Need for capacity building in many MS
- Emphasis on green public procurement - How do we define what “green” really means?
- Increased consumer conscience

Table 2: How to increase demand for secondary raw material?

- Real costs for virgin materials, accounting for externalities
- Lowering the price of creating secondary raw materials, e.g. with reduced VAT on secondary raw materials
- Focus on positive measures /incentives as opposed to punitive ones
- There is a need to for more green public procurement, in order to increase demand
- Using targets or objectives for secondary raw material consumption could both increase GPP, or simply making GPP mandatory in certain areas

Table 2b: How to increase demand for secondary raw material?

- Measures used to boost demand for secondary raw materials should be clearly implemented. There is a need for clarity in the law, and for that clarity to last long enough for the market to trust and rely on it.
- Increasing the quality of secondary raw materials, removing toxic substances as soon as possible in the recycling chain, preventing from using them in the manufacturing chain as far as possible

- There is a requirement for clear standards
- Sustainable investment mechanisms should be implemented in order to drive the market
- Must improve the cost-effectiveness of recycling

Table 3: What kind of financial incentives do we need?

- Prioritisation of waste prevention
- Incentives on the consumers: there must be incentives to reward good actions
- Simplifications and harmonisation of all incentives
- Deposit return schemes
- Internalisation of externalities
- Taxing use of natural resources
- Public authorities must reserve some funds for Circular Economy projects
- Other than financial incentives: Public Procurement

Table 3b: What kind of financial incentives do we need?

- There is a need for more GPP, but also a requirement for municipalities to have guidelines on how these contracts should be put in place
- Also discussed possibility of mandatory recycled content measures, which were viewed as not being a solution for all areas – but nonetheless participants agreed that for some materials and some applications they should be implemented
- Reduced VAT could also be used but should be based on eco-design
- A landfill tax was presented as a possibility

Table 4: Achieving recycling targets through EPR schemes?

- EPR schemes currently focus on collection, not enough on recycling
- EPR schemes not the only factor for success
- Requirement of strong governance
- Eco-modulation: an effective incentive for eco-design and recyclability
- Potential conflict with existing B2B schemes, deposit return schemes

Table 5: Specific issues for very low performing countries

- Strong implementation and governance measures required, help for capacity building
- Cooperation across Member States
- Need for more convenient and efficient collection systems, particularly in urban areas
- Also suggested to make better use of technology in under-performing states
- A better forum for sharing practices, and the EC should provide better assistance to low-performing countries
- Education and raising awareness, among both citizens and companies
- Introduce more economic instruments, and other such banning landfill / incineration of recyclable materials.