



2nd EU Civil Society - Industry Dialogue

“Urban Mines, Consumer Behaviour and Producer Responsibility in a Circular Economy”

Summary

This document outlines the key findings of the second EU Civil-Society-Industry Dialogue on “Urban Mines, Consumer Behaviour and Producer Responsibility in a Circular Economy”, which took place in Brussels on 6 June 2014. The Dialogue comprised **three sessions**: keynote introductions from industry, civil society and policymaking, relevant practical examples, and exchange on future pathways for stakeholder collaboration.

Introduction to the project and workshop objectives

Andreas Endl from the Institute for Managing Sustainability, Vienna University of Economics and Business in Austria provided a short overview of the Cobalt project and its objectives. Polina Dekhtyar from BIO by Deloitte in France summarised the aims of the COBALT Dialogues and introduced concepts at the core of the discussion, such as circular economy, urban mining and WEEE recycling.

Session 1: Framing the dialogue – key insights and takeaways

KEYNOTE: MARIA BANTI, DG ENVIRONMENT

- **WEEE is a rapidly growing waste stream** and there is a need to develop **technically feasible and economical** ways to boost material recovery from this stream, particularly in cities
- The recast of the WEEE Directive will potentially **increase compliance** through **MS-appropriate collection targets** and **reduction of administrative burdens**.
- **Circular economy for EEE** includes: design for recyclability, producer responsibility, markets for secondary raw materials and improved recycling technologies
- **Producers play an active role in WEEE** recycling through various responsibilities, including: eco-design, end-of-life management and provision of information on product content and properties. To further involve producers, the Commission is currently studying EPR systems and identifying best practices to promote.

KEYNOTE: STEPHANE ARDITI, EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

- **Consumers play a key role in EEE and WEEE**: expected to **consume EEE**, **use** it and participate in **discarding** it properly. They should thus be **involved in the WEEE management dialogue** and encouraged to participate in recycling via **convenient or rewarding take-back** / collection.
- Nonetheless, a dialogue involving both industry and consumers will not be fully productive unless we are also able to **rethink production and consumption models** (e.g. better design, smarter consumption, etc.)

KEYNOTE: PASCAL LEROY, WEEE FORUM

- Multi-stakeholder collaboration around WEEE management is a relatively recent development
- WEEE market is **not delivering to its full potential** and needs a **holistic transformation**
- WEEE Forum is involved in several projects to help transform the market:
 - WEEELABEX: **market harmonisation and standards**
 - WEEE 2020 Raw Materials Partnership: value chain approach for **new methods and technologies**
 - **Countering WEEE Illegal Trade**



INTRA-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE: ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS

Participants were asked to exchange with others in their stakeholder group and to identify their group's key competencies and role in driving urban mining and WEEE recycling. Key takeaways are summarised below:

Stakeholder group	Roles	Competencies
Industry	Collaboration with other stakeholders Challenges: establishing a better feedback loop between design and recycling; creating positive market incentives	Knowledge of products and product use; ability to act; bird's-eye view of the market (amongst compliance schemes)
CSOs	Promoting sustainable resource use and conservation	Capacity building, education and awareness raising Transfer of technical knowledge and skills
Researchers	Integration role and link between stakeholders Knowledge creation and education Catalysers	Technological expertise and process know-how Neutrality / credibility Dynamism Identification and development of opportunities: social, process technologies and policy fields Facilitation of cross value chain collaboration/ innovation

Session 2: Learning from practical experiences – key insights and takeaways

CASE STUDY: CHRISTINA MESKERS, UMICORE

- EEE is an industry that changes quickly, and uses complex technology materials – an **adaptive and smart recycling industry** is therefore necessary.
- **Matching product properties and process capabilities** (costs and performance, robustness and flexibility) is key to viable and effective recycling/ material recovery of WEEE.
- Boosting material recovery from complex products calls for **technical and organisational improvements along the entire product supply chain**, from design to collection and beyond.
- **Overall recycling chain efficiency** is essential for later-stage recyclers.

CASE STUDY: DANIEL SEAGER, HEWLETT-PACKARD

- WEEE is increasingly becoming recognised as a **resource with value**. As such, it is being collected by a variety of **formal and informal actors** –some 70% is collected, with only about **half of this collection managed through producer systems and reported**.
- Producers cannot control parallel collection flows, so policy makers need to establish **rules and standards** for these actors and focus on traceability.
- Some 20% of WEEE is exported; a **“best of two worlds”** approach should be leveraged.

CASE STUDY: BARBARA TOORENS, WORLD LOOP

- WEEE is gaining value in Africa, with an **informal sector** developing around collection. However, a lack of proper waste treatment poses **environmental and health risks**.
- A **“best of both worlds”** approach handles WEEE effectively by combining local collection and dismantling with proper recycling of complex or hazardous fractions in European facilities.



INTER-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE: PATHWAYS FOR COLLABORATION

Participants presented 2-3 recommendations for improving the collaboration between different stakeholders on boosting urban mining and improving management and recycling of WEEE.

RECCOMENDATIONS

1. Promote **open communication** (trust and transparency) and develop **incentives** for multi-stakeholder collaboration
2. Maintain a clear **understanding of different actors' goals and visions**, and focus on the **core business and strengths** of each stakeholder in collaboration
3. Make use of **relevant legislation** (stick or carrot as appropriate) to incentivise collaboration
4. Establish a **national multi-stakeholder coordination / advisory body** representing the entire recycling system rather than a single stakeholder: lean body, non-profit and supported by the government
5. Promote **high-level commitments** and a shared understanding of the goal, with commitments focused on win-win solutions rather than on adversarial goals
6. Improve relevant **data collection and availability** (e.g. on recycling), and better understand the **economics of urban mining**
7. Improve the link to and feedback loop with **design / eco-design**