



Dr Liz Goodwin, the Chief Executive of the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP, the Government's waste and resources agency) has outlined the benefits that the EU could claim in 2020 through the adoption of a resource efficient circular economy. In short, these benefits include an improved trade balance and an increase in jobs.

A circular economy is the term used for an industrial economy that acts in an environmentally restorative way. WRAP describe the circular economy as a place 'in which we keep resources in use for as long as possible, extract the maximum value from them whilst in use, then recover and regenerate products and material at the end of each service life'.

Goodwin is not naïve of the concept. She says 'understanding the potential for the circular economy is one thing, achieving it is something far more complex and challenging. Our challenge and opportunity today is to go one step further, and understand how we can turn ideas behind the circular economy into positive action.' She goes on to say 'building a more resource efficient circular economy will help us deliver a more sustainable future and I intend WRAP to be at the heart of delivering the vision in the UK and beyond. This will help deliver benefits to our funders, to business, and to consumers'.

From our point of view as a business, we can certainly understand her vision. It will be tough to achieve, though, because collaboration on an unprecedented scale will be needed between citizens, councils, private [waste removal companies](#), politicians and big business. However, just because it will be hard to achieve does not mean that it can't happen.

Within this new circular economy, Goodwin claims that there will be 160,000 new jobs created by 2020 in the European recycling industry. Goodwin also went on to suggest that trade would be improved with business competitiveness improvements valued at £330bn. It has been

WRAP's Circular Economy

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predicted that, if the circular economy came into effect, businesses in 2020 can be expected to cut waste by 20% and a cut the use of more than 10% of material used. Analysis has shown that there would be 30m tonnes less material waste. Dr Liz Goodwin has claimed that food is the most wasted resource and she has called for 'concerted action'. She wants to half the amount of food wasted in the UK by 2025.

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