



# New concepts towards zero waste: From a Circular Plastics Index to a Precycling Premium

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**James Greyson, BlindSpot Think Tank**  
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Session 4.4 Making plastics fit for the circular economy



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**THINK TANK**



**IMSA AMSTERDAM**  
SUSTAINABILITY & INNOVATION

1. Introduction IMSA and BlindSpot Think Tank
2. Vision on Circular Economy
3. Dutch Plastic Cycle Value Chain Agreement
4. Circular Plastics Index (IMSA)
5. Precycling Premium (BlindSpot)



- A tale of two think tanks
- Science based systems thinking

## *IMSA Amsterdam*

- Sustainability Think Tank for stakeholder dialogues and strategic advice (Netherlands, 1985), 17 professionals, with main clients and sponsors from industry and governments



## *BlindSpot Think Tank*

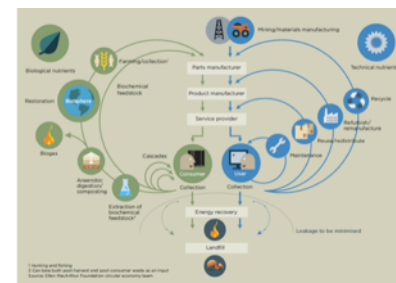
- Multi-issue problem solving by system change (England, 2006), Founder and Director James Greyson, 20+ years professional experience with sustainability and security, working at the MIT Climate CoLab and Fellow at Earth System Governance Project



## 2. OUR VISION ON CIRCULAR ECONOMY



- Circular thinking has evolved for over 40 years
- Current best practices are limited
- Enormous opportunities ahead
- Resilience against increasing risks paramount
- The barriers are roughly known: many linear lock-ins (IMSA, 2013), material complexities and geographic dispersion (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2014)
- Needed: a circular level playing field
- We propose an *action agenda* for companies and governments



### 3. PLASTIC CYCLE VALUE CHAIN AGREEMENT



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- Initiative from the Dutch Ministry for the Environment (2013): A broad coalition of over 60 organisations including industry, waste management companies, NGOs, the financial sector, port companies, research institutions, consultancies, IMSA and the government has signed the Plastic Cycle Value Chain Agreement to substantially reduce plastic waste, including objectives for reducing plastic litter and increase plastic recycling
- Several working groups have been formed to define concrete results to be obtained in 2015
- An example to follow



## 4. CIRCULAR PLASTICS INDEX: AN ACTION AGENDA FOR COMPANIES



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- To be a simple, voluntary, industry-driven, market-based *tool* providing *incentives* to chain partners to keep materials and products in the loop by rewarding ‘circular’ behavior
- Use inspiring examples such as the CO<sub>2</sub> Performance Ladder (including lessons learnt) and the Environmental Ship Index
- Focus on verifiable plastic waste reduction such as increased recycling, reuse, also by refurbishment and redesign





# WHAT COULD A CIRCULAR PLASTICS INDEX LOOK LIKE?



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N.B. A theoretical example - to be worked out by companies - also for other materials / resources

## *Level 3*

The company only sells recycled plastics

10% contracting advantage

## *Level 2*

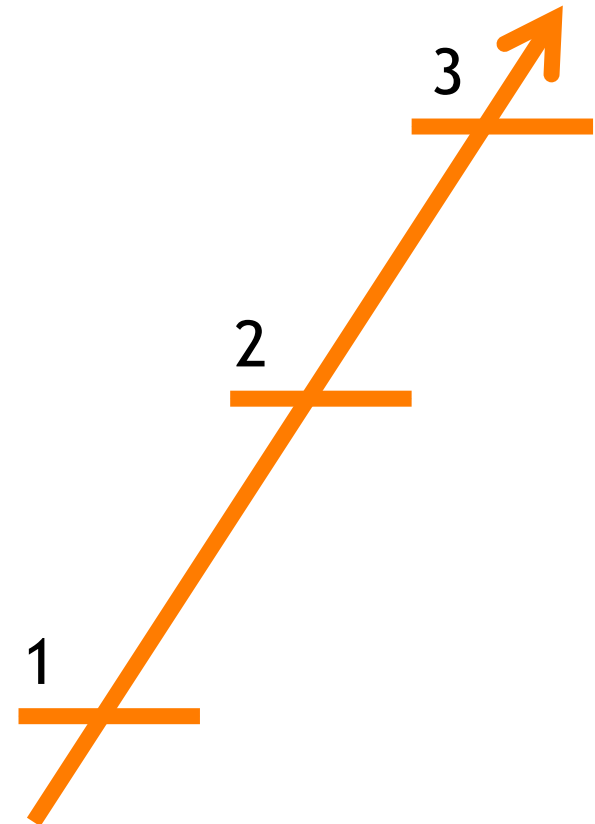
At least 25% of the plastics sold by the company are (made from) recycled material

7% contracting advantage

## *Level 1*

The company has quantitative insight in the plastic flows through the company.

3% contracting advantage





# CIRCULAR PLASTICS INDEX: HOW TO MOVE ON



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- Make it simple
- Next step: feasibility study (in cooperation with the Dutch Federation of Rubber and Plastics Industry NRK)
- Looking for: organisations to join us in the development, especially retailers and brand owners
- Objective: plan for concrete follow-up



- Precycling = planning for non-waste
- Market-based instrument
- Producers pay an obligatory premium depending on the quantifiable risk of products becoming waste in ecosystems
- Premiums *invested* in reducing the waste-risk
- Premiums can be reduced by cutting the waste-risk
- All products can be precycled
- Based on ‘recycling insurance’ in WEEE, as was offered by a Swedish insurer
- Slashes through many barriers identified by IMSA and others



- Precycling Premiums provide producer responsibility without prescription
- GDP growth friendly: incentivises and supports new thinking, investment and activity
- Designed to work with the whole economy not just target issues/actions/sectors/streams

*Compared to tax:*

- Separation from political budget negotiations
- The funds are invested in accelerating circularity



- Each plastic producer must pay a premium depending on the risk of their products becoming waste
- They pay this premium to the insurance company of their choice
- The premium is reduced if the waste-risk of the company products is reduced
- Plastics recycling, reuse, waste prevention and product durability can be substantially increased
- Relatively small premiums can create large shifts
- Producers with the fastest plastic waste risk reduction improve their competitiveness



- To gather comments and ideas from stakeholders: businesses, insurers, policy-makers, NGOs and scientists/experts
- Obstacles, objections and ways to overcome them
- Advance the idea: name/framing/communication, implementation options, integration with other measures
- Governance of the precycling premium funds
- Precycling, waste-risk and premium calculation case studies
- Objective: plan for concrete follow-up



- Circular economy holds great promise
- New tools needed to create a circular level playing field and cut waste
- The Dutch Plastic Cycle Value Chain Agreement forms an example to follow for governments
- The Circular Plastics Index is a proposed tool enabling an action agenda for companies to provide incentives for circular business
- A Precycling Premium could create a system change forming an EU market providing economy-wide incentives for waste reduction
- Next step: feasibility studies
- Let's do it!





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Available online at [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)  
ScienceDirect  
Journal of Cleaner Production 15 (2007) 1382–1390



## An economic instrument for zero waste, economic growth and sustainability

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BlindSpot, PO Box 140, Lewes BN7 9DS, UK  
Accepted 12 July 2006  
Available online 28 November 2006



## SYSTEMIC ECONOMIC INSTRUMENTS FOR ENERGY, CLIMATE AND GLOBAL SECURITY

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**Abstract:** Energy security, climate stability, sustainable development, economic growth and national security are codependent goals; either all will be achieved or none. This global security goal-set will remain elusive with prevailing 'patchwork' policy-making. Irreversible failure with one or more of the goals may be avoidable with a non-



The circular economy has been promoted as an attractive economic destination for around four decades, but are we there yet? Clearly not. Inspired by Walter Stahel at the recent CMM Scottish Resources Conference, James Greyson considers how to move on from journey to destination.

Circle reuse instability: viable commodity prices, even dead stock, recycling biodiversity and forests. Making economic growth, expanding food security and resource efficiency, all of these are part of the resource-to-energy pattern of linear economics. Any of these is capital and the manufactured technosphere? Or by the negative value of accumulating wastes, ecological debts and instability? Is the endlessly patient step-by-step approach to circular economy actually a dead end? Planning a step-by-step journey is the default approach.

### Abstract



## SEVEN POLICY SWITCHES FOR GLOBAL SECURITY

PRESENTED AT NATO ADVANCED RESEARCH WORKSHOP, SPLIT, CROATIA 17<sup>TH</sup>-19<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2009

James Greyson, BlindSpot, PO Box 140, Lewes BN7 9DS, UK  
[www.blindspot.org.uk](http://www.blindspot.org.uk) security AT blindspot.org.uk

Citation: Seven Policy Switches for Global Security. NATO Science for Peace and Security Series C: Environmental Security, 2010, Volume 00, 69-92, DOI: 10.1007/978-90-481-9565-7\_3



## Plastic Marine Litter

### One big market failure Systemic look at plastic waste in the light of plastic marine litter

Report of the Plastic Marine Waste Project,  
discussed at the Stakeholder Meeting Eenhoorn Amersfoort, March 28 2013

Janneke Pors  
Arthur ten Wolde



## Plastic Marine Litter

### Plastics Do Not Belong In The Ocean

Towards a roadmap for a clean North Sea



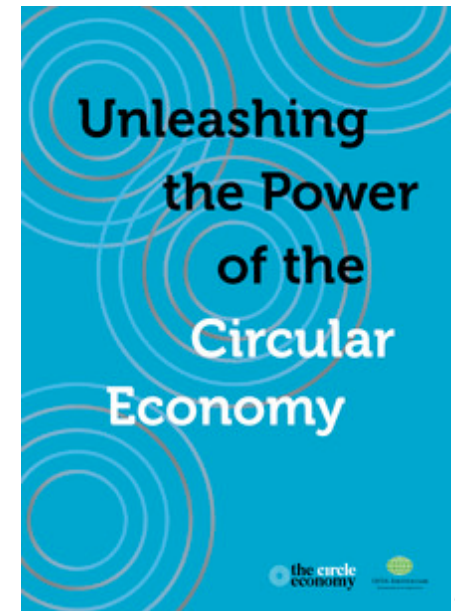
November 2011  
PNE.300



## Updating the future

The next steps in becoming  
the sustainable global part, using  
scenario from Livable to Growth

An update for the State of Knowledge Indicators  
for the North and North-Channel Region



## Unleashing the Power of the Circular Economy

