



BS 8001 - a new standard for the Circular Economy

The move to a 'circular economy' has been identified as a significant opportunity for business. It will contribute towards a resource efficient and low-carbon economy, reducing costs and supply chain risks, while generating economic and social value. BS 8001 will enable organisations to take practical action to realise these benefits.

To support growth in the face of resource scarcity, it is widely accepted that standards will be pivotally important. There are already a large number of standards that support waste prevention, resource efficiency, eco-design and remanufacturing, but there is no single standard focussed on taking practical action on the circular economy.

To address this challenge, the British Standards Institution established a committee of expert stakeholders to develop what is believed to be the first standard to help improve understanding and implementation of the circular economy at an organisational level. The first output of this programme, BS 8001 *Framework for implementing the principles of the circular economy in organisations – Guide* will help organisations continually improve their transition from a linear to a more sustainable and circular mode of operation. The work of the committee focused on the following questions:

- How can organisations determine resource management risks and opportunities and identify key materials of concern?
- How can organisations determine the relevance of the circular economy to them? What is their role?

What are the implications for manufacturers, retailers, and service-based organisations however small or large?

- What is the meaning behind the use of certain terms within the context of the circular economy, for example 'closed loop' and 'open loop'?
- Which business models might be relevant for organisations to consider if transitioning to a more sustainable and circular mode of operation?
- What key factors will organisations need to consider (e.g. provenance and use of secondary materials, chemicals transparency, competition law, liability and insurance, etc.)?

Have your say on the new standard

The draft of BS 8001 will be made available for public consultation between 7 November 2016 and 15 January 2017 at <https://drafts.bsigroup.com/>, with final publication due in summer 2017. Full details on the new programme can be found at www.bsigroup.com/CircularEconomy

About BS 8001 *Framework for implementing the principles of the circular economy in organisations – Guide*

BS 8001 is believed to be a world first and is different to many other standards developed by BSI. It is a 'guide' framework standard not a specification standard such as a management system standard, or a product specification, which provide requirements for meeting the standard.

As a 'guide', BS 8001 gives guidance to organisations of all types and sizes, wherever they may be in the world, on the steps they can take to transition to a more sustainable and circular mode of operation. Specifically, it aims to provide organisations with an understanding of:

- What the circular economy is and how it may be relevant both now and in the future; and
- How to implement the principles of the circular economy in order to create direct and indirect value as a result of process, product/service or business model innovation.

BS 8001 is not intended to be prescriptive or certifiable.

Whilst BS 8001 provides a suggested framework, organisations are completely free to decide how they use or follow it. Other supporting or 'daughter' standards may be developed in the future which cover particular topics in more detail.

BS 8001 is intended to be used flexibly with the guiding principles and framework for action forming the heart of the document (Clauses 4 & 5 respectively).

Guiding principles of BS 8001:

- **Systems thinking**
Principle: organisations take a holistic approach to understand how individual decisions and activities interact within the wider system
- **Innovation**
Principle: organisations continually innovate to create business value through the sustainable management of resources in products and services
- **Stewardship**
Principle: organisations manage the direct and indirect impacts of their decisions and activities across their system

- **Collaboration**
Principle: organisations collaborate internally and externally through formal and/or informal arrangements to create mutual business value
- **Value optimisation**
Principle: organisations keep all products, components and materials at their highest value and utility at all times
- **Transparency**
Principle: organisations are open about decisions and activities that affect their ability to transition to a more sustainable and circular mode of operation and are willing to communicate these in a clear, accurate, timely, honest and complete manner

The **Framework** enables an organisation to put the principles of the circular economy into practice. BS 8001 provides an 8-stage process (**Framing, Scoping, Idea Generation, Feasibility, Business Case, Piloting, Implementation, and Reviewing**) that can be freely adapted to an organisation's needs depending on their maturity and extent of implementation. It is up to the organisation to choose which stages they intend to implement and in what order this will be done.

This is supported by:

- Clause 2, which describes the language of the circular economy;
BS 8001 definition of the circular economy: a systemic approach to the design of business models, enabling the sustainable management of resources in products and services]
- Clause 3, which provides a narrative on what the circular economy is and its relevance to business (to provide an introduction for those not aware of the term, highlighting opportunities and risks);
- Clause 6, which gives guidance on specific business models (remanufacturing, leasing, sharing economy, etc.); and
- Clause 7, which gives guidance on specific issues or considerations (e.g. how to consider a range of relevant aspects - logistics, measurement, liability & insurance, materials)