Circular Economy and the Global Biodiversity Framework: EMF review, assessment and recommendations | July 2026 (v2)

Possible citation please contact: Marianne Kettunen | marianne.kettunen@ellenmacarthurfoundation.org

Analysis of the Global Review / 7NR Synthesis Report (June '26 draft)

Method: initial review of Synthesis Report by AI, "analogue" check and conclusions / recommendations

- **Based on the 7NR Synthesis Report / the Global Review, circular economy (CE) / circular approaches and business models are recognised as delivery mechanisms for Target 16 (sustainable consumption) and Target 7 (pollution).**
- For **Target 16,** this is the only target in the draft review where CE receives significant attention.
- Summary of Actions for T16 states: "*The most widespread approach to implementing Target 16 is enactment or enforcement of legal instruments targeting waste, plastics and the circular economy. Bans or restrictions on single-use plastics are the most commonly reported concrete measures. Another very common category of action in national reports is the introduction of extended producer responsibility (EPR) systems, requiring producers to take financial or direct responsibility for products at the end of their life. Around one-quarter of reporting Parties, equally across high-income and developing countries, mention EPR as a contribution towards implementation of Target 16.*" (p.191)
- The challenges section also identifies CE-relevant barriers (e.g. weak implementation of extended producer responsibility, absence of appropriate infrastructure for sorting, recycling and composting, and end-of-life product management costs)
- For **Target 7**, the use of circular economy to deliver Target 7 is oriented downstream (i.e. recycling / end-of-life), with special focus on addressing plastics pollution. No reference to upstream approaches are reported, such as product redesign, ecodesign, elimination of hazardous substances at source, or circular material flows to prevent nutrients.
- Summary of Actions for T7 states that "*A growing number of Parties report investment in recycling infrastructure and circular economy frameworks as a structural response to plastic and waste pollution.*" (p.113)
- The above is in line with the EMF analysis of the 7NRs (below).
- **However, the 7NR Synthesis Report / Global Review fails to pick up several other important – and promising – CE related elements that the EMF own analysis (see below) has identified, especially the several countries linking CE to the delivery of T14 (mainstreaming) and also to T15 (business), T19 (resource mobilization) and T18 (incentive reform).**

EMF conclusions and recommendations:

- Based on the EMF own analysis, key recommendations are outlined below to improve the 7NR Synthesis Report draft and related future recommendations for accelerating GBF implementation.
- These recommendations are also in line with the message from the IPBES Business and Biodiversity Assessment (2026), which positions CE / CE approaches and business models as central to unlocking synergies and further progress.
- The 7NR Synthesis Report does not capture more comprehensive approaches that several countries (inc. the EU and several Lat Am countries) have adopted to use CE as delivery

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mechanism, especially regards T14 / national targets linked to T14 (see EMF own analysis below). The interesting connection to using CE as means to mobilize finance towards biodiversity target delivery (inc. reform subsidies) (i.e. T19 and T18) that some countries have highlighted has also not been picked up.

- Furthermore, the 7NR Synthesis Report overarching summary (pp.14–28) and Part III conclusions do not reference circular economy at all. The summary identifies that Target 16 is among the targets with the greatest gap between national ambition and global targets (SR p.23 / Figure 1 and p.25 / Table 1) but does not reference CE as a mechanism for closing that gap — despite CE being the dominant T16 delivery tool across national reports. Part III (Means of Implementation, pp.269–291) similarly does not reference CE as an instrument for mainstreaming and/or financing biodiversity, building capacity, or reforming harmful subsidies.
- Based on the EMF own analysis (below), a number of national reports also recognise the role circular approaches and business models play in delivering T15, connecting CE to corporate accountability and supply chain sustainability for biodiversity. This is also not recognised in the 7 NR Synthesis Report.
- ⟶ It is recommended that the 7NR Synthesis Report takes a more nuanced analytical look into how countries are using / positioning CE in their national report, recognising especially the positioning of CE as a mainstreaming and resource mobilization tool (T14, T18 and T19). This is where significant co-benefits to accelerate GBF implementation can emerge, with wider group of countries exploring already existing practice(s).
- ⟶ Based on the above, it is recommended the 7NR Synthesis Report would integrate a dedicated section on underutilised and/or innovative approaches that countries can adopt via learning from one another, with a view to support GBF acceleration across several targets.
- **Building on the already existing assessment in the 7NR Synthesis Report / Global Review (T16) and more nuanced review of the national reports (vis a vis T14, T19 and T18, and T15), it is recommended that circular economy / circular approaches and business models are integrated into the Key Messages A2 and A3 of the 7NR Synthesis Report / Global Review , as a key policy synergy and/or concrete means that can help accelerate implementation across targets.**
- Key external references to substantiate the above: EMF (2025) on how the circular economy can help deliver the Global Biodiversity Framework and EMF (2026) on a policy agenda for bio-based materials in a circular economy.

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EMF Analysis of Uptake in 7th National Reports to the CBD

Method: “analogue” policy analysis, with AI used only in summarising the results.

Overview / as of 31 May 2026

Status (June 2026)	Countries
Available — with CE mentions	84
Available — no CE mentions	34
Needs translation	7

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Of the 118 reports currently available and assessed, **84 (71%)** contain at least one reference to circular economy (CE). However, the quality of integration varies substantially — from passing mentions to deep, policy-grounded integration. **67 countries (57%)** demonstrate substantive CE integration, with the circular economy explicitly identified as a means to deliver one or more GBF targets.

Primary Targets Driving CE Integration

Target 16 — Sustainable Consumption – most common driver Target
(47 countries with substantive integration, 60 countries with mention)

Target 16 is by far the most common anchor for circular economy integration across national reports. It is used by countries at all income levels and regions to frame CE as the principal mechanism for reducing the environmental footprint of consumption, eliminating waste, and shifting toward production and consumption patterns compatible with biodiversity.

Common applications include:

- Waste reduction and EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility): Explicit CE frameworks built around waste minimisation and producer responsibility (e.g., Malaysia, Dominican Republic, Qatar, Norway).
- Food waste: CE approaches to reduce post-harvest losses and food system waste (Belgium, Jordan, Philippines, Moldova).
- Plastics and packaging: Circular plastics strategies linked to T16 delivery (UK, Panama, Ecuador, Canada).
- National CE strategies as T16 delivery vehicles: Countries such as Paraguay, Moldova, Philippines, Netherlands, Norway, and South Africa frame their national CE action plans directly as tools to achieve T16.
- Consumer behaviour and information: Some countries (Finland, Czech Republic) link CE to consumer information, eco-labelling, and sustainable lifestyle promotion under T16.

Illustrative examples

- Paraguay: The national CE strategy explicitly names biodiversity conservation as a primary objective, framing the transition from a linear to circular economy as reducing waste that degrades natural habitat.
- Moldova: The "Programme for Promoting the Green and Circular Economy 2024–2028" is placed at the centre of NBSAP implementation, giving CE a cross-cutting role beyond T16 alone.
- Armenia: 'Compost academy: school-based circular economy education at scale' — linking CE to education and behavioural change [Inc. also in Global Review draft]
- Dominican Republic: 'Green procurement and deposit-return system combination' — linking green public procurement and deposit-return to T16 [Inc. also in Global Review draft]

Target 7 — Pollution Reduction – 2nd most common driver Target
(22 countries with substantive integration, 48 countries with mention)

Target 7 is the second most prominent target for CE integration, almost exclusively in the context of plastic pollution and hazardous waste. Countries use CE principles — particularly the elimination of

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single-use plastics, EPR schemes for packaging, and circular design — as their primary tools to meet T7 commitments. This target is especially prevalent in reports from developing countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), where plastic pollution of marine and coastal ecosystems is a central biodiversity threat. The strong alignment between T7 and recycling underscores that CE at the T7 level is often recycling-led, representing an earlier stage of CE policy maturity compared to T16 integration.

Illustrative examples

- India frames CE and EPR explicitly as the main tool to prevent pollution across all sectors under T7.
- Ghana uses CE to address both plastics and e-waste under T7.
- St Vincent highlights CE as a key mechanism in Caribbean plastic pollution reduction.
- France, Morocco, Sri Lanka, and several others link CE narrowly to plastics under T7.

Target 14 — Mainstreaming Biodiversity – 3rd most common driver Target
(16 countries with substantive integration, 17 countries with mention)

Target 14 is used by a smaller but significant group of countries to embed CE as part of broader biodiversity mainstreaming across productive sectors. This reflects a more sophisticated integration of CE, going beyond waste to encompass supply chains, procurement, financial flows, and industrial strategy.

The T14–T16 linkage is notable: several countries (Austria, Spain, Ireland, Sweden) treat T14 and T16 as complementary, with CE serving as a bridge between sustainable production systems and consumption-side change.

Illustrative examples

- Austria, Spain, and Switzerland use T14 to link CE to industrial and private sector transformation, with CE positioned as a means to reduce biodiversity pressures from economic activity.
- Belgium references green public procurement under T14 as a CE delivery mechanism.
- Malta links T14 to Green Public Procurement with integrated biodiversity objectives.
- Iceland explicitly calls for biodiversity to be integrated into CE lifecycle assessments and ecological footprint calculations.
- Colombia uses T14/T18/T19 together to develop green employment in sectors with circularity potential (construction, manufacturing, tourism, energy).

Target 15 — Business Accountability and Reporting
(4 countries with substantive integration, 13 countries with mention)

Target 15 is used by a smaller group of countries, particularly EU members, to connect CE to corporate accountability and supply chain sustainability.

Illustrative examples

- The EU reporting is the most detailed, citing multiple legislative instruments (Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation, Circular Economy Action Plan, Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles, New Consumer Agenda) under T15.

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- Ecuador's Ley Orgánica de Economía Circular Inclusiva is cited under both T15 and T16 as a legislative framework creating business obligations for circularity.

Targets 18 and 19 — Economic Incentives and Resource mobilization
(6 + 4 countries with substantive integration, 8 + 11 countries with mention, respectively)

Some countries link CE to economic instruments and biodiversity finance:

T18 examples (Positive incentives / harmful subsidies):
- Algeria uses CE-linked VAT reform as a fiscal instrument.
- Tunisia references circular fiscal instruments alongside green taxation.
- Cambodia and Malta embed CE within incentive frameworks aligned with biodiversity objectives.
- Colombia integrates CE into the design of green employment and sector transformation programmes.

T19 examples (Mobilising financial resources):
- Countries such as Cambodia, Mexico, and the EU reference CE as attracting finance for biodiversity — through LIFE funding, national green economy plans, and development finance.
- Austria mentions the Green Finance Alliance and bioeconomy strategies as linked to CE investment.

Target 10 — Sustainable Management of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Aquaculture
(5 countries with substantive integration, 9 countries with mention)

CE is linked to T10 primarily through nutrient cycling, circular bioeconomy approaches, and waste valorisation in agricultural systems.

Illustrative examples
- Germany highlights nature-friendly biomass extraction under T10, linking CE to circular use of biological materials.
- Austria references nutrient cycling in agricultural landscapes.
- Honduras identifies CE as a means for sustainable management across agriculture, forestry and tourism.
- Kenya identifies CE scaling as a pathway for sustainable aquaculture and fisheries management.
- Yemen references a circular biofuel model based on waste biomass.

Targets 11–12, 20–23 — Emerging and Cross-cutting CE Applications
(1-6 countries each)

Several countries identify CE in less conventional but promising contexts:
- **T12 (Urban green spaces):** Japan, Honduras, and Yemen reference CE within urban planning and green infrastructure strategies.
- **T20 (Capacity building):** Austria, Cambodia, Dominican Republic, and the UK link CE to technical cooperation and ODA-funded programmes.
- **T21 (Data, information, monitoring):** The EU and Austria reference CE within monitoring frameworks for biodiversity and ecosystem services.

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- **T23 (Gender):** Venezuela and the Philippines both reference CE initiatives explicitly linked to women's empowerment and gender-responsive environmental governance.

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