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# **The EU Sustainable Products Initiative**

A key opportunity to establish a level playing field  
on design solutions for a circular economy in Europe

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# Circular Economy Principles

The circular economy is built on three principles, **all driven by design**:



**Eliminate**  
waste and  
pollution



**Circulate**  
products and  
materials



**Regenerate**  
nature

**“Circular design means not only redesigning the products themselves, but also the processes, services, supply chains, and business models that surround them.”**



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# The SPI could steer business action towards making the circular economy the ‘new normal’ via a range of regulatory interventions at three critical levels:

## At product level

Minimum design and information requirements can push the market to eliminate the worst performing products from a circular economy perspective and enable new opportunities for circular value creation.

## At business level

The definition of benchmarks for developing circular economy capabilities can incentivise companies to work towards achieving better environmental outcomes, at the same time as setting the baseline for mandatory producer responsibilities in the future.

## At procurement level

Harmonised approaches can help pull the market towards more ambitious and innovative product and service offers that allow for pooling and scaling up circular solutions in response to public demand.



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# Assess the circularity improvement potential

1

Enhance the use  
of the product

Can we assume that the product will most likely be used only by one customer over a longer period of time?

Can we reasonably expect that the same product could be circulating intensively amongst different users?

2

Consider  
cascading uses

Can we utilise the product, its components, or materials to replace inputs into manufacturing processes in the same or another value chain?

3

Ensure safe  
chemical and  
material choices

Can we maintain the integrity and value of the materials embedded in the product across various life cycles?

**“Getting product design right is key but the ultimate goal is to replace the concept of selling more products - how sustainable they might be - with opportunities for value creation and retention that fit within a circular economy, thereby reducing the environmental footprint through a multitude of product, component, and material cycles.”**