

Towards a gender responsive Circular Economy

The challenges and opportunities for standardization



REGULATORY COOPERATION
AND STANDARDIZATION POLICIES



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From 'take, make and dispose'



To 'renew, remake and share'



Source: European Commission, Eurostat

Source: Wright et al. 2019

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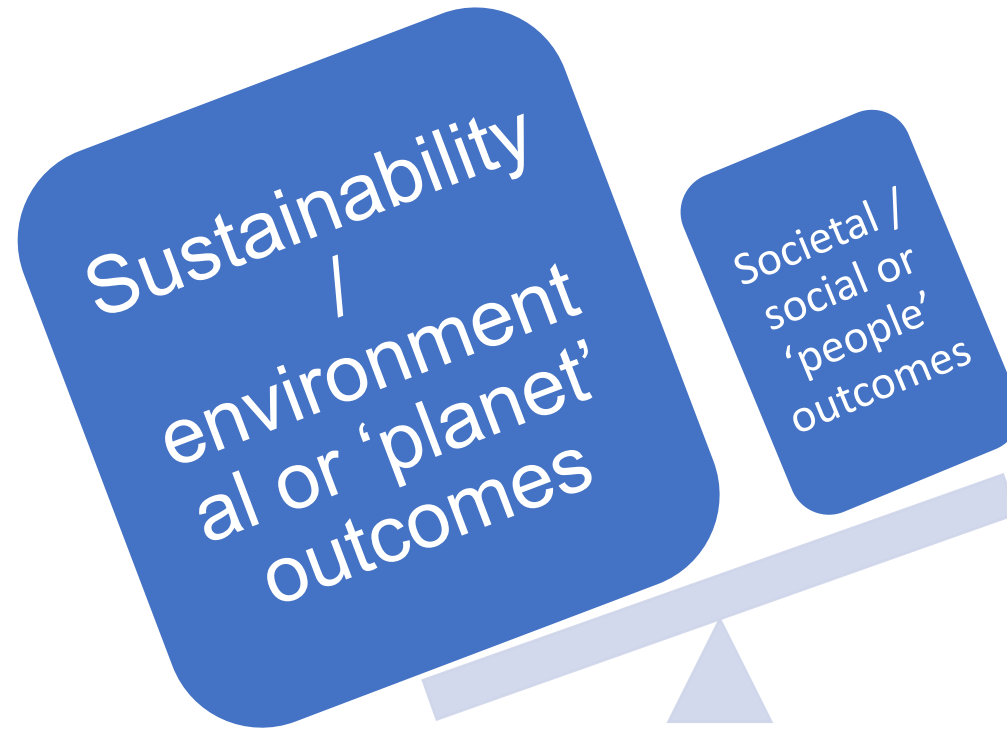


Three core principles of the CE:

- Eliminating waste and pollution
- Keeping products and materials in use / circulating products and materials
- Regenerating nature / natural systems

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The imbalance of focus is relevant because it means implementation of the CE can, for example, lead to...

- Creation of fewer jobs¹
- Imposing more environmental health risks including exposure to hazardous and toxic working environments and infectious diseases²

... and women can be differentially affected by some of the issues...

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According to the OECD women are differentially affected by both sustainable and unsustainable production and consumption patterns...

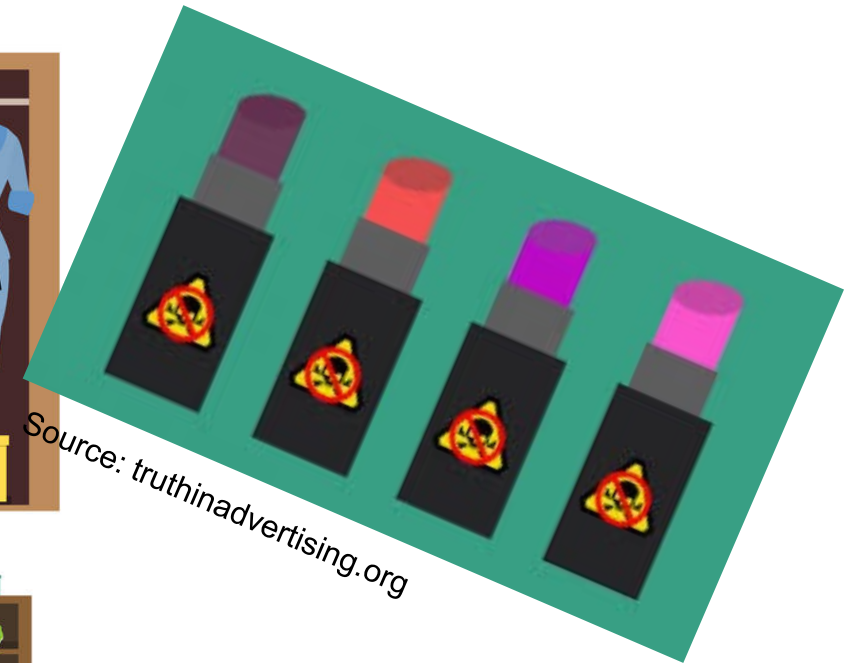
- Women are dependent for subsistence on strained natural resources
- women are affected by poor labour conditions in a “feminised” workforce
- women provide a large amount of informal and sometimes unpaid work related to waste management
- women are involuntarily and without their knowledge exposed to harmful products and chemicals

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Source: dreamstime.com



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Source: UN Women

- *But...* Its not just the differential impacts on women of implementing the circular economy nor just women’s production and consumption habits we need to understand. We also need to recognize that:
“women can be key drivers of change, as consumers and as decision-makers, in both the public and private sectors. Integrating gender equality is essential for the successful implementation of a circular economy strategy”

Source: OECD 2021

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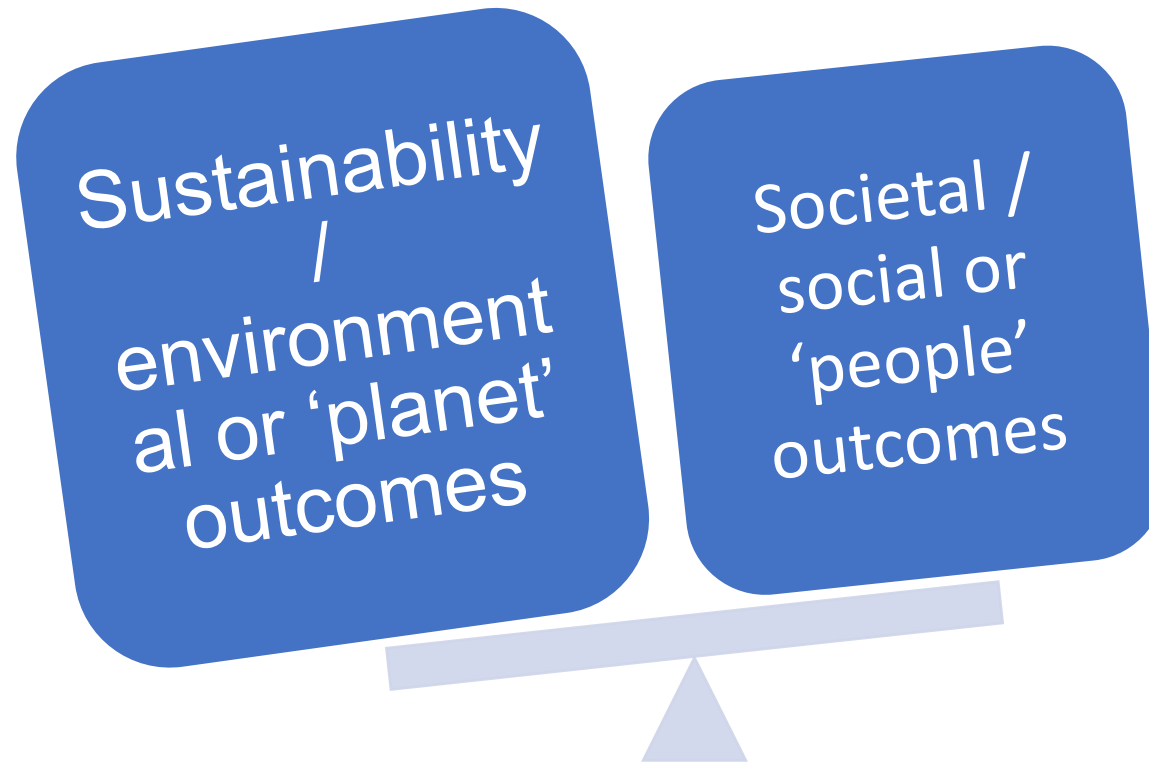
Surveys from around the world show that **women...**

- tend to be **more sustainable consumers** and are more sensitive to ecological, environmental and health concerns
- are **more likely to** recycle, minimise wastage, buy organic food and eco-labelled products, and engage in water and energy savings initiatives at the household level
- **place a higher value on** energy-efficient transport and in general have a higher preference for public transport than men.

“Engaging women in the circular economy – raising awareness on sustainable consumption and encouraging participation in leadership and managerial roles – is indispensable to create good circular systems”

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→ New CE standards can help enable a more sustainable and socially responsible circular economy



→ New gender responsive CE standards will maximize the positive outcomes of the circular economy for both people – all people - and the planet

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“Systematic incorporation of a gender lens in the circular economy design – understanding consumer behaviours, integrating lessons learnt from traditional sustainable practices, of which women are often knowledge holders, and leveraging local value chains for sustainability – would not only ensure a “just transition” for all, but would also inform how to make the new economic paradigm operational and sustainable. Targeting gender roles and behavioural preferences in consumption as well as waste generation and prevention could be a key pillar in transition to circular economy not only by reducing waste but also by addressing some gender inequalities through recognising the value of jobs supporting circular economies.”

Thank you!

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