



CASE STUDY

# Reconomy

Identifying the levers for change  
in the UK waste sector

**Sancroft.**

# Unlocking the potential to drive the UK's transition to a circular economy

## The brief

- What is the current state of waste sector regulation in the UK – and where should it be moving?
- What lessons can be learned from regulation in the EU?
- How can Reconomy help shape future UK policy and promote waste as an economically efficient resource?
- What additional opportunities exist for Reconomy to demonstrate leadership in circularity?

## The situation

Reconomy is an international circular economy specialist that brings together experts in recycling, waste management and compliance under one group.

To strengthen its position as a leader in the sector, Reconomy sought to understand where current and planned UK legislation was ineffective at driving circularity – and to identify where policy reform could increase the recovery of resources at all stages of the waste system.

While the company already manages a wide range of materials through tech-enabled solutions, it wanted to go further and understand where it can advocate for change.

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“Sancroft was selected for this assignment based on its deep understanding of the UK's waste and resource management industries. The team was very effective in distilling a complex policy backdrop into relevant, actionable insight that we have taken forward into our own business planning and PR activities. It is the ability to work seamlessly between the policy landscape and the needs of business that makes this work so valuable.”

GUY WAKELEY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, RECONOMY

The Sancroft logo is located in the bottom left corner of the page. It features a stylized blue and white circular graphic that resembles a globe or a lens. The word "Sancroft." is written in a white, serif font across the center of the graphic.

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## Project deliverables



Review of existing and future regulation in the UK and EU



Long-form report outlining 10 guiding principles for regulation to support the advancement of the circular economy



Short-form, shareable summary of key findings suitable for external engagement



Engagement with key external stakeholders, peers and policy makers to validate the principles



Comprehensive contact list and recommended next steps to support ongoing advocacy

## How we helped

To support Reconomy, we began with a deep dive into current and upcoming UK regulation, including the Net Zero Strategy and the Environment Act 2021.

In particular, we identified where the regulation supports circularity and where unintended consequences emerge (i.e. where the system is failing at retaining the value of materials). We also compared progress in the EU, where circular economy regulation is more advanced to help understand lessons already learned.

Working closely with Reconomy stakeholders across the organisation, we explored their operations and specialisms as well as how challenges differ for distinct resource streams. The approach evolved over the course of the project, informed by team feedback and engagement sessions designed to break down silos between different business units.

Our review concluded that while resource types vary, common regulatory challenges and opportunities exist across material streams. This insight enabled us to develop 10 overarching principles that can be applied to drive effective, economically efficient circular resource management.

To ensure our findings could support Reconomy's advocacy, we distilled our technical

research into clear insights, supported by compelling messaging to quantify the opportunity. We created a long-form report, but also a shorter, shareable summary that highlighted the key message, supported by persuasive statistics to strengthen the narrative.

We identified where these principles are already gaining traction and where additional work is needed to embed them.

We then mapped and engaged with key stakeholders across the UK policy and waste industry landscape, including peer organisations to ensure the project was not just inward looking. In addition, we stress-tested the principles through nine strategic engagement sessions and captured feedback to ensure the framework was robust, relevant and practical.

Finally, we concluded the project with a handover of stakeholder insights and engagement contacts – equipping Reconomy to lead the next phase of dialogue and advocacy with industry and UK government.

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## What Reconomy achieved

Reconomy now has a clear, evidence-based rationale for advocating regulatory change to accelerate circular economy practices in the UK. The ten guiding principles offer a strategic and actionable approach to moving materials up the waste hierarchy – from disposal to prevention, reduction, reuse and recycling – across all resource streams and management methods.

Through the engagement process, Reconomy deepened relationships across the sector and positioned itself as a proactive and collaborative voice in policy conversations. It secured alignment with key partners within the sector on the 10 principles and laid the groundwork for future, collaborative advocacy on the circular economy space where interests overlap.

The long-form report and principles framework provide a foundation for internal strategy and external engagement, while the concise summary and stakeholder mapping support clear and targeted outreach.

Crucially, the project has helped Reconomy to drive forward its ambition to transform the system it operates in – not just for the benefit of its own business, but for its customers, the sector and society as a whole.

## Key takeaways

- **Regulation drives markets** – understanding and influencing it is key to advancing circularity
- To drive systems change, it's important to **build industry alliances** and think beyond competing with peers
- **Clear, actionable principles** provide a roadmap for improving circularity outcomes
- **Simple, persuasive messaging** supported by deep research strengthens the policy and business case for reform
- **Extensive internal engagement** helps to break down operational silos
- **Proactive engagement** enables businesses to demonstrate leadership, think beyond compliance and drive systemic change

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If you want to know how we can help your organisation inform future sustainability policy and strategy, get in touch with [Felix.Gummer@sancroft.com](mailto:Felix.Gummer@sancroft.com)