

Foreword


The past decades have witnessed unprecedented growth in the global consumption of raw materials. In light of a growing world population, improving living standards, changing consumer behaviour and changing production modes due to new technologies, this trend is expected to further increase and almost double by 2060, if decisive policy action is not taken. The continued increase in materials demand is expected to exert significant pressure on the environment, including intensification of land use, human toxicity and increases in greenhouse gas emissions, putting countries at risk of missing important environmental goals.

Over the years, the OECD has accumulated extensive experience in developing policy recommendations in support of the transition to a resource-efficient circular economy, with analytical work focusing on topics as diverse as plastics, metal and other minerals, macroeconomic and labour market consequences, the role of digitalisation and trade.

I am delighted that the OECD was able to support the Hungarian government, jointly with the Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (REFORM) of the European Commission, in its endeavour to develop a national circular economy strategy and an action plan. To make the consumption of materials more sustainable and generate additional economic value for the country, Hungary is aiming to extend its current plans and create new policies and programmes by 2040.

Our analysis shows that, although Hungary has achieved some decoupling of economic growth from resource and energy uses as well as from waste generation, several challenges remain. Despite structural and technological changes, materials consumption in Hungary is projected to increase by one-third by 2050 compared to 2017 levels, generating significant additional pressures on the environment. This report therefore identifies a set of priority areas and puts forward concrete policy recommendations that are deemed critical to the Hungarian circular economy transition. These include better managing biomass, food, and plastics, as well as decreasing the very large materials footprint of the construction sector.

When implemented, the recommended policy measures will contribute to lower materials consumption and related environmental externalities, help enhance Hungary's competitive advantages, accelerate eco-innovation and investment in green products and services, generate green jobs, and make the economy less dependent on imported raw materials.



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