

esap - Generating value for business through sustainability

The Electrical and Electronic Equipment Sustainability Action Plan (esap) is the collaborative framework for sharing evidence and implementing sector-wide actions to improve business efficiency and the sustainability of electrical and electronic products.

WRAP is now inviting stakeholders to join this ground breaking initiative to influence and deliver action throughout the product lifecycle. This includes designers, manufacturers, retailers, service providers, consumer interest groups, re-use organisations, national and local government representatives, collectors, recyclers, compliance schemes and trade bodies.

esap action themes

WRAP has identified that televisions, laptop computers, vacuum cleaners, refrigeration products and washing machines have the greatest resource impacts on the UK market and therefore esap will prioritise action for better efficiency and business savings here. We will consider a wider range of products and issues to keep momentum and deliver effective actions.

Following feedback from stakeholders, esap will start with focussed action, by product category, in the following five areas:

Theme	Activity	Benefit
1. Extending product durability through design and customer information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide product design specifications and buying guidelines to address common failures and extend durability. ■ Develop consumer information on product durability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reduce in-warranty returns. ■ Meet customer expectations (80% of customers want longer guarantees).
2. Minimising product returns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Collate data on the costs and causes of product returns to enable better buyer and user guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reduce 'no fault found' returns (estimated cost to UK businesses £400m p.a. in product value alone).

Theme	Activity	Benefit
3. Understanding and influencing consumer behaviour on product durability and reparability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand user behaviour and impact on product returns to develop information on product repair, re-sale, durability & recycling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce in-warranty returns. Grow brand recognition with partners and customers. Develop new income streams, e.g. through spares & repair services.
4. Implementing profitable, resilient and resource efficient business models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and test a toolkit for more resource efficient business models. Track and report residual value of used EEE products to demonstrate market opportunity for re-sale. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new income streams (product services, lease, rental, trade-in etc). Extend customer relationship beyond single transaction. Deliver added value with partnerships with complimentary organisations throughout product lifecycle.
5. Gaining greater value from re-use and recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse product age data from re-use and recycling collection points to increase understanding of user behaviour and actual product age. Support maximising value from WEEE collections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand actual product life. Increase WEEE collection rates and value recovery.

Visit www.wrap.org.uk/esap for further detail on these action themes. We are able to add further actions to esap to meet the needs of its members.

Why is esap needed?

Annual UK retail sales of electrical and electronic products are £21bn – equivalent to over £800 per household. WRAP has published an evidence base on the economic and environmental drivers for improving electrical and electronic product sustainability, called *Switched on to Value*.

This research shows that annual UK retail sales of electrical and electronic products constitutes around **1.4 million tonnes of materials in 180 million products**, including 65 tonnes of precious metals such as gold and silver. Each year, consumers discard a similar amount of products, **only 7% of which are re-used** and around a third go to landfill.

This is a missed opportunity for businesses and consumers; our analysis shows that changing how we design, make, buy and dispose of electrical and electronic equipment could **reduce our carbon footprint by up to 15% and add £800 million in GDP** to the UK economy. For example, used computers and tablet computers can hold a good second-hand value, yet 8% of householders threw a computer, laptop or tablet in the bin in the last 12 months.

Five common household products account for **40% of the materials-related impact**: TVs, laptops, washing machines, fridges/freezers and vacuum cleaners. Increasing the durability of lower-end products to match the current market average would cut materials use by around 10%.

The case for action

<p>Direct value benefits for businesses and consumers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reducing product returns - each year returns cost UK businesses approximately £400 million in product value alone. Many of these products are not faulty. ■ Trading models for re-using products that can generate profit and liberate value to customers. ■ Influence research and secure early access to findings. ■ Improving customer satisfaction with products and brand reputation. ■ Demonstrating progress against environmental/CSR targets and grow brand recognition with partners and customers. ■ Increasing resilience against product and material supply volatility.
<p>Market drivers for change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Customers have little information to estimate product durability. ■ In the UK, a third of washing machines and fridges and a quarter of vacuum cleaners fail to meet average customers' expectation for durability. ■ Two thirds of consumers welcome new models based on repair, re-use and trade-in if they are provided by the right organisations.
<p>Policy drivers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ EU Ecodesign implementing measures are beginning to consider factors outside energy use, such as for vacuum cleaners. ■ Waste Prevention policy across the UK calls for more durable products. ■ New WEEE regulations set demanding targets for collection and recycling. ■ Finding effective ways for businesses to achieve extended producer responsibility for products brought onto the market ■ esap provides a cross-industry opportunity to keep informed of policy developments and engage policy makers.
<p>Environmental drivers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ esap provides a framework to understand where business efficiency gains can maximise electrical product sustainability; to influence priorities for action and contribute to environmental/CSR goals.

WRAP will facilitate esap to deliver impact

WRAP's vision is a world where resources are used sustainably. WRAP is not-for-profit and works with industry, governments (in the UK and increasingly in Europe), civil society and consumers. Our approach brings together stakeholders to tackle sustainability and business challenges and deliver tangible economic and environmental benefits.

The challenges of the electrical and electronic equipment sector are unique. WRAP will draw upon our experience of collaborative frameworks and successful engagement within the Electrical Product Pathfinder Group and also WRAP's learning from successful industry-wide initiatives and consumer engagement campaigns in other sectors¹.

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¹ WRAP is responsible for facilitating sector action through the [Sustainable Clothing Action Plan](#) and also in the grocery sector through the [Courtauld Commitment](#). Examples of WRAP's consumer campaigns include [Love Food Hate Waste](#) and [Love Your Clothes](#).