

Report on the roadmap and the next steps regarding a circular economy for pleasure craft

1. Background:

In recent years, a large number of pleasure craft have reached the end of their useful life. At present, there are neither a specific industry nor actions for the processing, dismantling or recycling of end-of-life (EOL) pleasure craft and their components.

A study highlighted the elements that should be developed to stimulate and finance specific industries, following the example of what is being done elsewhere in Europe (cf. Aper project in France¹)

Several round tables were also held to define actions and areas for action over the coming months.

The purpose of this report is to describe the various areas for action under the roadmap. The implementation of this roadmap will involve a number of players and stakeholders, starting with the country's various public administrations involved in the shipping sector (at sea and on inland waters) and in the three regions.

2. Definition and scope:

2.1. Definition of circular economy:

The circular economy concept needs to be defined on several levels.

1. Measures to manage the existing stock of EOL pleasure craft, i.e. those no longer fit to sail or remain afloat
2. Measures to extend the useful life in good condition of pleasure craft (Use and Maintain)
3. Measures to stimulate the eco-design of pleasure craft to facilitate their dismantling and recycling (Design and Build)

¹ <https://www.recyclermonbateau.fr/>



Implication along a pleasure craft lifecycle



	Design and build	Use and maintain	Manage end of life (EOL)
Issues	Current techniques don't consider yet enough the impact of EOL treatment.	Existing fleet is composed of various state of maintenance, low obligation/incentive to maintain crafts	Some boats are abandoned in harbours (dry or water decks), parking or even in public areas. Sometime the craft owner is unknown
Question to address	How to stimulate sustainable supply and boost eco design so life duration and EOL treatment is made easier ?	How to stimulate the consumer responsibility, the good maintenance and the lifecycle extension of pleasure crafts	How to develop industrial processes and capacities to allow a sustainable and as circular possible EOL treatment . How to make accessible for all situations

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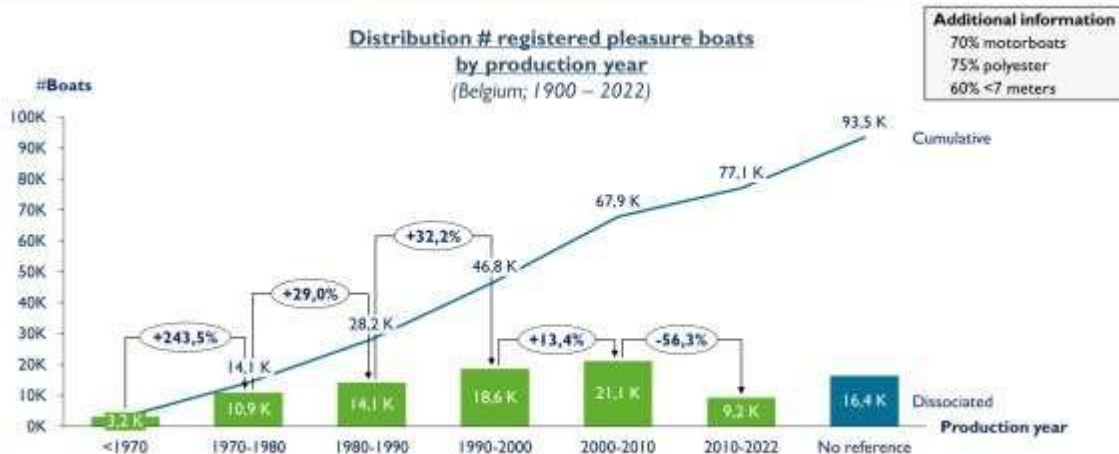
2.2. Estimated stock in circulation:

Almost 93,000 pleasure craft are registered in Belgium.

Nearly 50% of registered craft are over 30 years old.



There are 93K registered pleasure boats in Belgium (2022)



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We can therefore anticipate a future increase in the number of EOL craft in the years to come.

Action on the eco-design of new-built craft will only have an impact on EOL craft that will have to be processed in 30-40 years.

Moreover, it is important to note that some of the pleasure craft registered in Belgium operate outside Belgian waters. Conversely, pleasure craft registered under a foreign flag may operate or berth in seaports, along waterways or in inland ports.

Craft registered under the Belgian flag only make up part of the stock of craft present in the country.

2.3. Comparison between this sector and other sectors that are also subject to EPR regulations.

Compared to markets that have already been subject to EPR (extended producer responsibility), such as packaging, batteries or mattresses, the pleasure boating sector has a number of specificities:

1. A niche market with an annual purchase volume of no more than 2,000 new-built craft
2. A useful life ranging from 10 years to over 50 years
3. Transfers of ownership during the useful life of pleasure craft
4. Very little or no production in Belgium
5. New-built craft are sold through broker distributors
6. Used pleasure craft are sold through brokers/professionals and/or directly between owners
7. Administrative powers spread over the 3 regions and the federal level

3. Roadmap structure:

Following the first reflection exercise in 2022 and consultations with stakeholders in 2024, it was proposed to structure the roadmap into 4 areas for action with a logical grouping of activities/actions based on well-defined themes. This grouping enables the project to be managed logically (see work breakdown structure in project management²).

It should be noted that the aim is to define a regulatory framework that makes it possible to deploy circular models. It is proposed that the work be structured around 4 pillars:



3.1 Circular Economy Industry/Market:

This area of activity covers the technical and industrial aspects of an industry to be developed.

It covers upstream eco-design actions, i.e. standards to be imposed on pleasure craft manufacturers so that, from the design stage, they incorporate techniques and raw materials that increase reparability and useful life and/or make dismantling, reuse and recycling of EOL craft easier. It should be noted that these actions will involve collaboration at EU level, as manufacturers are located in Europe but also outside Europe.

This area of activity includes actions to be started with craft repair and maintenance professionals with a view to maintain pleasure craft in good condition, seaworthy and long-lasting. These actions can be taken in collaboration with shipyards in the three regions of Belgium, but also with neighbouring countries where owners can have maintenance work carried out.

Finally, it is also important to develop an industry and a process for managing EOL pleasure craft. This industry will have to include solutions for dismantling and processing the various components that make up pleasure craft (metal, fittings, sails, wood, composite plastic, oil and fuel residue, etc.). This industry will have to include an industrial component but also a logistics/transportation component to carry hulls to the processing unit or develop transportable units for decentralised dismantling, depending on the size and weight of pleasure craft.

² https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organigramme_des_t%C3%A2ches_du_projet

With regard to the industrial aspect and with a view to developing a sufficient flow of raw materials to create an industry, every effort will be made to get close to sectors that generate comparable flows from a technical point of view (e.g. dismantling of EOL wind turbines).

This area for action involves operational/industrial players who propose or could develop technical solutions and business models around eco-design, heavy maintenance/renovation and, of course, dismantling, recovering, reuse and recycling at the end of the useful life of pleasure craft. These players may be manufacturers, shipyards, but also waste sorting/recovering professionals and suppliers of shipbuilding materials (fibreglass, composite materials, etc.).

3.2 Inventory and follow-up of stock and maintenance:

This area of activity covers the inventory of pleasure craft, in particular EOL craft located in Belgium. As indicated in point 2.2 above, the statistics and inventory of pleasure craft berthed in Belgium are not limited to those registered in Belgium.

Although the obligations regarding the registration of ships have made it possible to significantly improve the quality of the register of Belgian-flagged ships, there is still a lack of clarity regarding:

- pleasure craft brought onto the market several decades ago
- foreign-flagged craft
- pleasure craft with little commercial value that are sold for small amounts between individuals and end up abandoned along waterways or on public/private land.

On the other hand, in order to implement and evaluate policies designed to encourage good maintenance of pleasure craft, extend their useful life and use and 'prevent' abandonment, it might be worthwhile collecting data on the general condition of craft (their level of maintenance, some sailing statistics, etc.).

This stage will have to integrate data from several sources (registration but also toll sticker, or other data).

This area for action will involve several stakeholders:

- Public stakeholders: FPS Mobility, authorities in charge of the management of waterways and the North Sea, marinas managed by public authorities (for example, local authorities)
- Private stakeholders: dealers, managers of marinas (wet or dry dock), shipyards, craft purchase/sale brokers

3.3 Governance and solution model:

This area of activity covers the design and deployment of a governance model for the management and monitoring of EPR activity in the pleasure boating sector.

On the basis of models developed in Europe (see APER in France), it is important to define :

- rules and support mechanisms for owners wishing to dispose of EOL craft
- rules and mechanisms for abandoned craft
- a pooled funding mechanism, taking into account various possible sources of funding (when purchasing craft, transferring ownership, or on a more recurring basis each year by all the owners)

The “solution model” must have two components:

- the legal framework (= EPR framework)
- the operational model (= implementation in practice; how to make sure to meet the EPR obligations to be defined by the EPR organisation on the basis, in particular, of the lessons learned from point 3.1 above)

This area of activity will involve private and public players responsible for managing waterways or port areas, as well as user representatives.

It will have to take into account the technical and economic aspects related to point 4.1. (transport and dismantling costs, but also the potential recovering of certain recycled or reused components).

3.4 Communication:

This area of activity covers communication towards the various stakeholders involved in developing a policy to promote a more circular management of the pleasure boating sector. In this respect, it is important to highlight the benefits of a vision for the various stakeholders.

For example:

- For users/owners: the possibility of using a scheme to dismantle EOL craft
- For marina managers: options to offer their members and the possibility of creating berths for new-built craft and their owners on a waiting list
- For professionals, importers, purchase/sale brokers: the possibility of offering take-over solutions for EOL craft.
- For public authorities: the possibility of expropriating and dismantling wrecked and/or abandoned craft, combating pollution and improving safety.

4. Roadmap implementation planning:

As mentioned above, there are many actions aimed at designing and deploying measures to promote a circular economy for the pleasure boating sector. They involve a wide range of players (public, private, pleasure boating professionals and owners/users).

It is important to define governance principles and a common framework with the various stakeholders, starting with the public administrations in the 3 regions.

4.1 Planning principles

This planning will also have to take into account the degree of priority and ambition given by the various governments to this area.

Although it is possible to present, in theory, the sequence of deliverables to be planned by area of activity, it is difficult, at this stage and taking into account the elections in June 2024 and the subsequent formation of governments, to define a precise work schedule.



At this stage, and in order not to waste any time, it is advisable in first instance to carry out an inventory, a technical and economic analysis and an identification of the different possible models, specifying the advantages and limitations of each option.

4.2 Role of the FPS and relationship with regional authorities:

The round tables held in 2023 and 2024, as well as the event organised on 18 March under the Belgian Presidency of the European Council, have shown the willingness and motivation of the various public players (waterway management authorities, port area authorities/police, etc.) to continue their reflection process and identify options to propose to their respective authorities.

The FPS Mobility has been able to take on the role of coordinator and facilitator in this area with respect and added value.

It is recommended for the FPS to keep playing this role, but, at this stage, pending the formation of new governments, to focus on 2 deliverables:

A. A preliminary technical and economic study:

As part of area of activity 1 (Circular Economy Industry/market), meetings with various industrial players (materials manufacturers, pleasure craft manufacturers, shipyards, composite waste management professionals, wind energy industry).

This study will make it possible to list the opportunities and points for attention in setting up a dismantling industry (including the transport aspect, which seems to pose major challenges).

This study will include a visit to APER in France to gather as much information as possible on the business model.

It will put into perspective:

- the volumes (tonnage and number of units) required to achieve sufficient critical mass
- industrial players interested in investing in such an industry (taking into account the critical mass to be achieved per player)
- financial orders of magnitude for the potential cost and revenue items associated with the recovering of certain components
- relevant sites and potential deployment options

This preliminary study is planned to be submitted to the federal and regional authorities involved.

- B. Support for putting the circular economy for pleasure craft on the political agenda of federal and regional authorities

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