

EU policies on biobased, biodegradable & compostable plastics



EUROPEAN COMMISSION



**A climate-neutral,
resource-efficient
and competitive
economy**



An economy where the value of products, materials and resources is maintained in the economy for as long as possible, and the generation of waste minimized



*Changing the way Europe
consumes and produces*

Existing legislation & policies on plastics



The plastics strategy (2018)



Directive on single use plastics (2019): Reducing marine litter – *unsustainable use of plastics*



Many of these items are packaging for food and drink and most were designed to be used only once ("single-use plastics"). That's a waste of valuable resources.

Upcoming work on plastics: the new Circular Economy Action Plan



Key product value chains: *Plastics*



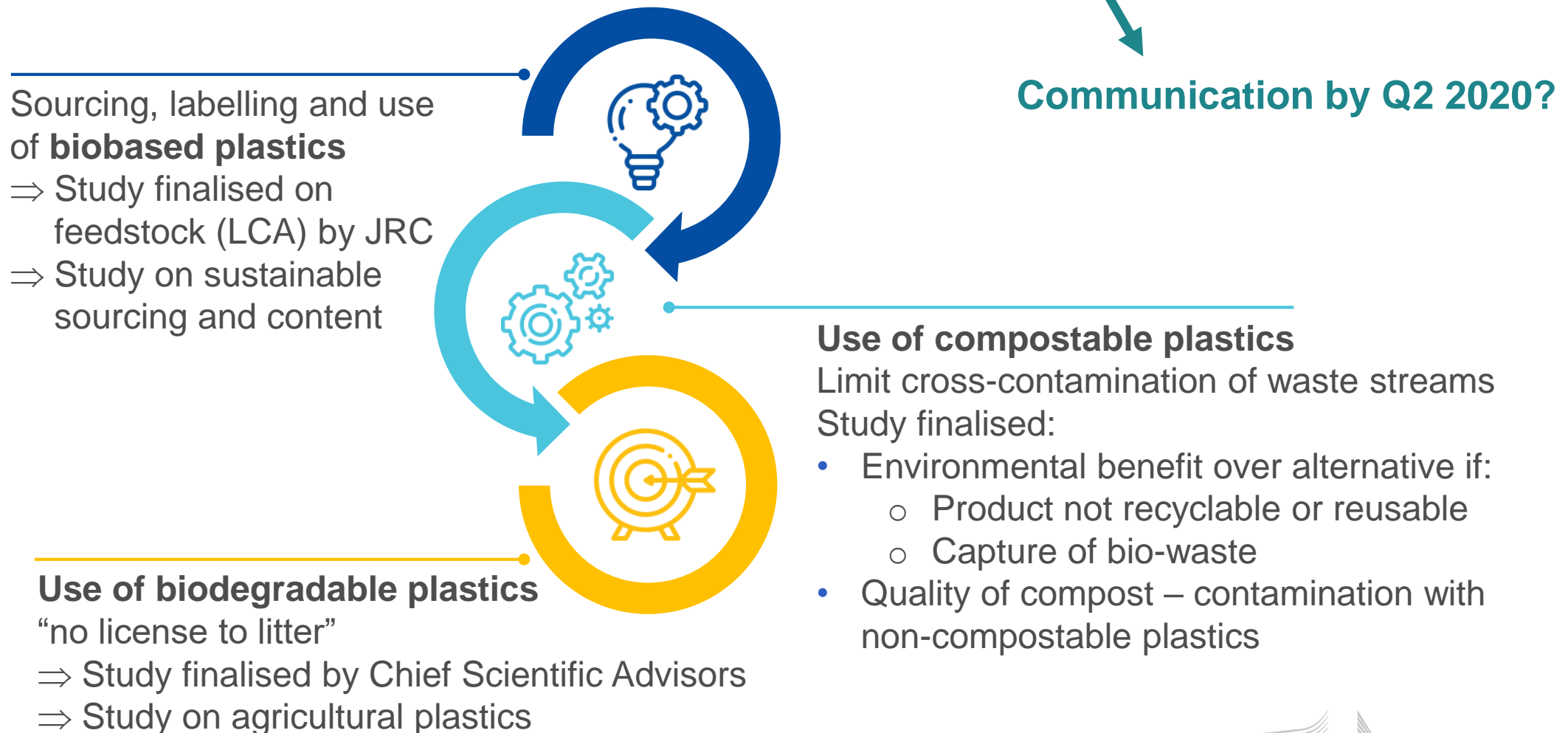
Keeping the
value of (plastic)
material in the
circular economy



Implementation of the EU Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy

- Mandatory requirements for recycled content and waste reduction measures
- Address the presence of microplastics in the environment
- **Policy framework on bio-based and biodegradable plastics**

Framework for biobased & biodegradable plastics



Biodegradable plastics in the open environment

COM Chief Scientific Advisors have recommended:

- ‘Biodegradability’ : a ‘**system property**’
- Limit their use in the open environment to **specific applications** for which reduction, reuse and recycling are not feasible
- **Not a solution** for inappropriate waste management or littering
- Test and certify on **actual biodegradation** (~ likely receiving environment) & of the **final product**
- Develop of a **catalogue of biodegradation** of different polymers across a range of environments
- Provide accurate **information** to consumers and relevant users

See: [Biodegradability of plastics in the open environment | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eip/biodegradability/)

Biodegradable plastics in the SUP Directive

- Recital 11 of the SUP Directive:
‘adapted definition of plastics should therefore cover [...] bio-based and biodegradable plastic regardless of whether they are derived from biomass or are intended to biodegrade over time’
- No agreed criteria or standards (yet) to ensure that single-use plastic products undergo full decomposition into CO₂, biomass and water within a timescale short enough not to be harmful to marine life and not lead to an accumulation of plastics in the environment
- The revision of the SUP Directive envisaged for 2027 will look at the scientific and technical progress on biodegradability of single-use plastic products in the marine environment

Content of the upcoming policy framework

- To clarify the role biobased, biodegradable and compostable plastics can play to deliver for a carbon neutral and circular economy.
 - establishing clear definitions and overarching principles applying to both **BBP** and **BDCP** in light of the circular economy and waste hierarchy principles; possible follow-up actions where appropriate
 - for **BBP**, addressing the measurement method and labelling of the part of a plastic product that is entirely or partly derived from biomass (the 'biobased' content) as well as the sustainability of the biological feedstock used to produce BBP by considering sustainability criteria
 - for **BDCP**, addressing definitions, applications and criteria for such applications, as well as the role of testing, labelling and certification to ensure effective biodegradation and avoid consumer confusion
- Web-based consultation on DG ENV website coming soon!

refuse



share



reuse



return
&
collect



sort



recycle



Learn more about the plastics strategy, the SUP Directive and the circular economy:



http://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/index_en.htm

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