Waste Prevention & Recycling

Source Metadata

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EU Taxonomy Definition

Waste prevention and recycling under the EU Taxonomy cover activities that substantially contribute to the transition to a circular economy by reducing waste generation, increasing material recovery, and enabling secondary raw material markets. Eligible activities include collection and transport of non-hazardous waste in source-segregated fractions, material recovery facility operation, recycling of specific waste streams (plastics, textiles, electronics, construction and demolition waste, batteries), repair and refurbishment services, and development of secondary raw material trading platforms. The 2026 revision strengthens criteria for plastic recycling quality and introduces textile recycling performance benchmarks.

Technical Screening Criteria Summary

Collection systems must achieve source-separation rates that maximize recyclability of collected materials. Material recovery facilities must achieve sorting efficiency above 85% and contamination rates below defined thresholds per material stream. Plastic recycling must produce secondary raw materials meeting quality standards equivalent to virgin material for the same application (food-contact recycling requires EFSA authorization). Textile recycling must achieve fibre-to-fibre recovery rates above defined benchmarks. Electronics recycling must comply with WEEE Directive targets and recover critical raw materials. Construction waste recycling must achieve at least 70% material recovery by weight. All activities must respect the waste hierarchy, prioritizing prevention and reuse above recycling.

Do No Significant Harm (DNSH)

Waste and recycling activities must not harm mitigation (energy-efficient processing, logistics optimization), adaptation (facility climate resilience), water (leachate and process water management), pollution (air emissions from recycling processes within limits, no cross-contamination of hazardous substances into secondary materials), and biodiversity (siting of facilities away from sensitive areas, prevention of waste leakage to natural environments).

LATAM Relevance

LATAM's recycling infrastructure is growing but remains underdeveloped compared to EU standards — recycling rates in Colombia average 17% versus the EU's 48%. EU Extended Producer Responsibility frameworks influence how European companies manage waste from products sold in LATAM markets. The EU's Plastic Waste Regulation and textile strategy create compliance incentives for LATAM manufacturers exporting to Europe to invest in taxonomy-aligned recycling infrastructure.

Colombia Green Finance Taxonomy Alignment

The TVC covers waste management and recycling under its circular economy and environmental objectives. Alignment is partial — Colombia's framework addresses recycling broadly but lacks the EU's specific sorting efficiency thresholds, material quality standards for secondary raw materials, and textile recycling benchmarks. Colombia's informal recycler integration (recicladores de oficio) represents a social dimension not captured in the EU framework.

Cleantech Taxonomy Crosswalk

Maps to Cleantech Taxonomy sector WA (Waste) — nodes WA-REC (recycling), WA-PRE (waste prevention), WA-COL (collection systems), WA-MRF (material recovery). Cross-references with IN (Industry) for industrial symbiosis and secondary material use, and BU (Buildings) for construction waste recovery.

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