

Assessing Taiwan's endeavors towards a circular economy: the electronics sector

[Armin Ibitz](#)

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Abstract

The concept of circular economy (CE) has drawn the attention of various actors around the world. In 2015, the EU laid out its Circular Economy Package, followed by a concrete Action Plan. In line with the global trend, Taiwan has stepped up its efforts to promote the concept of CE. In 2016, the president proclaimed that the country seeks to transform into a circular economy, and the government initiated several measures to implement the plan. Taiwan's electronics industry not only takes a vital role in the local economy but also represents a very resource-intensive sector. In the lack of own natural resources, the domestic industry heavily relies on imports. At the same time, the industry is responsible for tremendous environmental pollution. For Taiwan—a leading global supplier of electronic components and devices—CE provides a meaningful concept to combine economic development with environmental protection. As Taiwan is closely integrated into the global electronics supply chain, a transition into a circular economy may not only provide benefits for the domestic industry and the environment but also trigger changes to the global electronics industry. By applying a case study approach, the paper seeks to reveal the current status of Taiwan's electronics industry concerning advances towards a circular economy. Therefore, it not only discusses achievements but also discloses the difficulties of the transition. The study not only acknowledges the initial steps taken towards CE but also reveals that Taiwan will need to implement a more comprehensive policy approach to overcome the obstacles and harness the benefits from a circular economy. Moreover, since the EU and Taiwan share the same goals, closer cooperation and exchange could be meaningful for both.

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