



# CE MONITOR PORTS

## EXPLORATIVE RESEARCH

### Toward first actionable insight

## RESEARCH SHEET

**Period:** November 2021 – July 2022

**Commissioner:** Vlaanderen Circulair / Circular Flanders

**Research team:**

- European Centre for Strategic Analysis (ECSA)
- Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB, Solvay Business School)
- Ports and Logistics Advisory (PLA)

**Approach and expected deliverables:** see page 3.

**Ports are at the crossroads of transitions and changing realities**, was the headline of a recent report by [Deloitte and ESPO](#) (2021). Large-scale socio-economic 'change' comes from better cross-sector collaboration rather than from isolated interventions of individual actors. The **shift to 'collective impact' for a circular economy (CE)** is not merely a matter of encouraging more collaboration or partnerships. It requires also a fundamentally different, more disciplined, and higher performing approach to demonstrate real progress towards shared goals.

Ports, and more specifically **Port Authorities (PAs)**, are expected to be **co-responsible for making circular economy work**. Monitoring and evaluation should be used for both transparency and accountability. The bar can be raised by talking not only about learning but also about improvement, so that learning is also used to drive real change.

The current dynamic context of CE monitoring and evolving role of PAs in sustainability reporting presents an excellent opportunity: to clarify the direction in which CE monitoring in a port context can co-evolve and be integrated.

Commissioned by Circular Flanders, a **research team is exploring the first steps in gradually propelling circular ambitions and performances to a higher level**. It is primarily an exploratory study, based on scientific knowledge and tested against (international) practice. The exploration results in a first framework with a baseline development of a useful starter set of indicators for port authorities, and paths for further development towards a CE monitoring.

### Complexity requires flexibility

The assignment for this first step was broadly formulated to allow for flexibility: **giving more clarity, structure and direction in the complex and relatively open issue of 'CE monitoring and ports'**.

The approach builds on available CE insights and actual debate on monitoring, which are also enriched throughout the exploration. Right from the start, common ground and engagement are sought for a mutual ambition and agenda, and for actionable development and collaboration through selected pathways.

## Why this explorative research matters

Explorative research was **chosen as a method** because the complex topic of 'monitoring CE and ports' was not clearly defined and **needed a better understanding**. The concepts 'CE and ports' as well as 'CE and monitoring' are not fully documented or researched yet, and hence the combination thereof certainly is in an early stage.

From the start of the exploration, the research team tries to find the balance between building on and improving already **existing knowledge** (lean), and adaptively working on some **new insights** (agile).

## More potential benefits

Besides the factual research, this exploration also contributes in a way to:

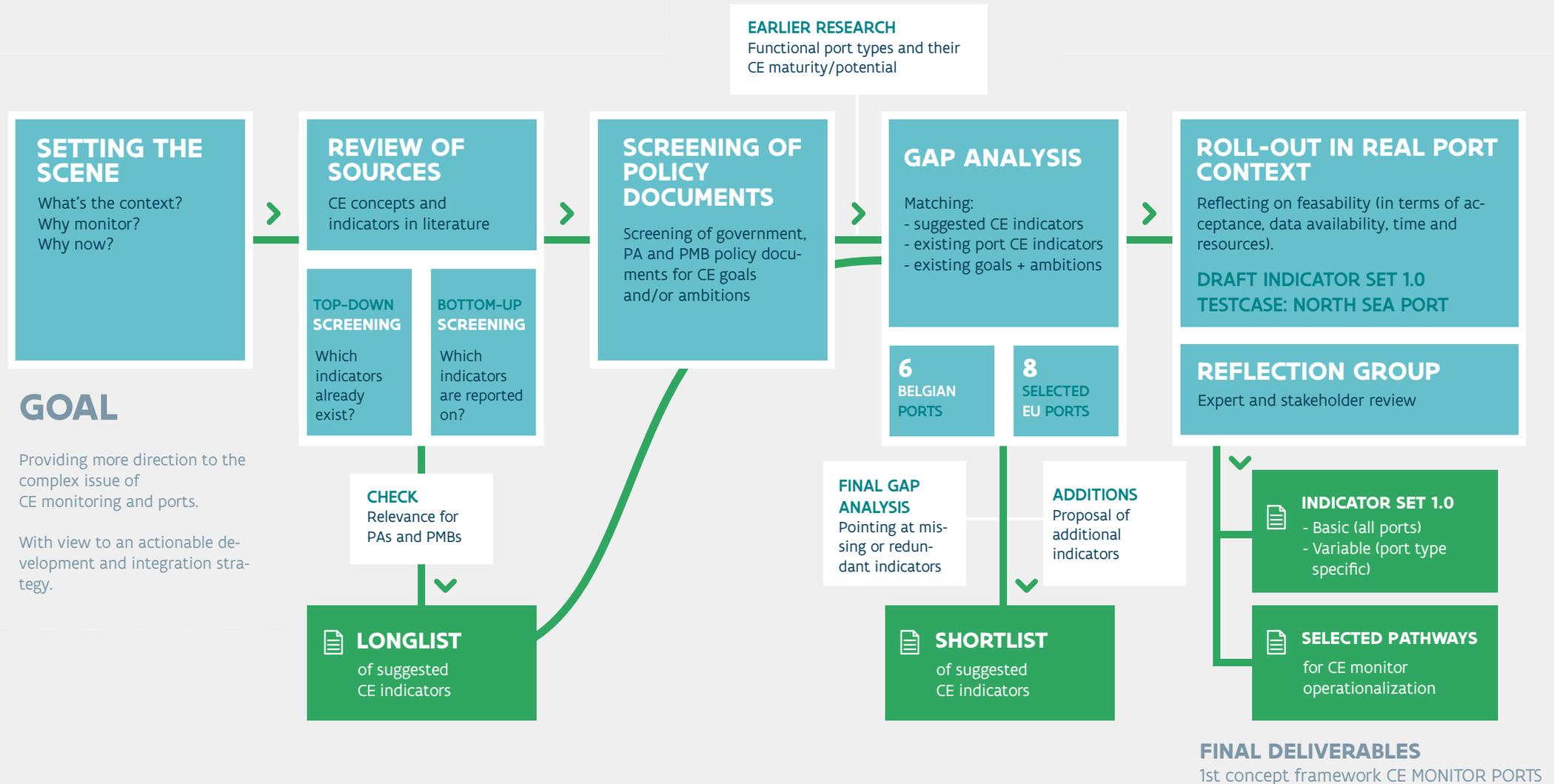
- the **operationalization of the Flemish port strategy**, including clarifying the role of actors with regard to a circular economy agenda for ports;
- the baseline development and necessary gradual development (broadening-deepening) of a CE MONITOR PORTS in the context of a **broader operationalization of a regional (Flemish) CE Monitor**;
- the **individual development trajectories of the Flemish ports** to integrate circularity into (sustainability) monitoring and evaluation systems;
- the **growing culture of continuously learning and taking steps** toward integrated sustainability monitoring and reporting systems at a European level.

## CONTACT

### For more information, please contact:

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### GOAL

Providing more direction to the complex issue of CE monitoring and ports.

With view to an actionable development and integration strategy.

- = Output
- = Workflow steps
- = Enrichment

CE = Circular Economy  
 PA = Port Authority  
 PMB = Port Management Body

**FINAL DELIVERABLES**  
 1st concept framework CE MONITOR PORTS