

EU Taxonomy: Overview of All “Green” Economic Activities as of June 2023

Knut Henkel

University of Applied Sciences Emden/Leer, Emden, Germany

Jenny Lay-Kumar

Regionalwert Research gGmbH, Leipzig, Germany

In June, the EU Commission published an update of the economic activities that can be classified as “green”. The article provides an updated tabular overview of now 152 economic activities in total, covering 17 sectors. In particular, the table shows in which of the four different delegated regulations the technical screening criteria for the economic activities are located. These are necessary in order to determine whether a concrete economic activity is taxonomy aligned.

Keywords: EU, sustainable finance; taxonomy, green, sustainability, overview, economic activities, CSRD, ESRS

Introduction

On 13.06.2023, the EU Commission published additional 47 economic activities that can be classified as “green”.¹ For the first time, 35 economic activities relate to the environmental objectives in the narrow sense (i.n.s.; Objectives 3 to 6) and a further 12 to the climate objectives (Objectives 1 and 2). In addition, 37 technical screening criteria of already published economic activities concerning the climate objectives (Objectives 1 and 2) have been changed.

For the preparation of a CSRD-compliant sustainability report, it is important to be up to date despite the current high frequency of changes in the relevant economic activities and their technical screening criteria. Therefore, this article and especially the tabular overview contained therein provide an overview of all economic activities that can be classified as “green” as of June 13, 2023.

Green Economic Activities

According to the EU Taxonomy Regulation, all economic activities that contribute substantially to one or more of the following six climate and environmental objectives (objectives; O) can be classified as “green” or “sustainable”:

1. climate change mitigation (O1: climate change mitigation),
2. climate change adaptation (O2: climate change adaptation),

Knut Henkel, Dr., Prof., Department of “Financial Accounting” and “Taxation”, University of Applied Sciences Emden/Leer, Emden, Germany.

Jenny Lay-Kumar, Dr., managing director, Regionalwert Research gGmbH, Leipzig, Germany.

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3. the sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources (O3: water & marine),
4. the transition to a circular economy (O4: circular economy),
5. pollution prevention (O5: pollution prevention),
6. the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems (O6: biodiversity).

In addition to the criteria to contribute substantially to one or more of the climate and environmental i.n.s. objectives, the activity has to do no significant harm (DNSH) to any of the other five objectives. As a third condition, a minimum social safeguard must be met. If all of these three criteria are met, the economic activity is “taxonomy-aligned” and thus “green” or “sustainable” within the meaning of the EU Taxonomy Regulation.

Technical screening criteria are used to determine under which conditions a specific economic activity contributes “substantially” to one or more of the six objectives and does “not significantly” harm any of the other five objectives. These criteria are published by the EU Commission in so-called Delegated Regulations and thus concretize the general requirements of the EU Taxonomy Regulation.

First, on December 9 2021, technical screening criteria for “climate change mitigation” (O1) and “climate change adaptation” (O2) were published within the framework of the Climate Delegated Regulation ((EU) 2021/2139). 88 economic activities were related to Objective 1 (Cell F4 in Table 1) and 95 economic activities were related to Objective 2 (Cell J4). Many economic activities are mentioned in both objectives, as they can contribute substantially to both O1 and O2.

On May 15 2022, a first amendment to the Climate Delegated Regulation ((EU) 2022/1214) was published, which includes six additional economic activities of certain energy sectors (Cells G4 and K4). On June 27 2023, the EU Commission published a further amendment to the Climate Delegation Regulation (C(2023) 3850). This amends both technical screening criteria of already published economic activities and adds new economic activities to the first two objectives (O1 and O2). Specifically, a total of 37 changes were made to technical screening criteria of already published economic activities, of which 22 are to the climate change mitigation objective (O1; Cell H4) and 15 are to the climate change adaptation objective (O2; Cell L4). Which of these changes are more editorial and which are more extensive can be seen from the different symbols in Columns H and L of Table 1.

Furthermore, 12 new economic activities have been added, of which seven are economic activities related to “climate change mitigation” (O1; Cell I4) and five new economic activities are related to the objective “climate change adaptation” (O2; Cell M4).

In addition, on June 27 2023, an Environmental Delegated Regulation (C(2023) 3851) was published by the EU Commission, which contains a total of 35 economic activities relating to the four environmental i.n.s. objectives (O3 to O6). Specifically, six economic activities are related to “water & marine” (O3; Cell N4), 21 activities are related to “circular economy” (O4; Cell O4), six activities are related to “pollution prevention” (O5; Cell P4), and two economic activities are related to “biodiversity” (O6; Cell Q4).

Table 1

Economic Activities per Climate and Environmental i.n.s. Objectives

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	M	N	O	P	Q
1	<div> <div>Objectives (O)</div> <div>Climate/environment</div> <div>Objectives (O)</div> <div>Economic activities</div> <div>Number</div> </div>					Environment (E)												
2						Climate									Environment i.n.s. (in the narrower sense)			
3						O1 Climate change mitigation				O2 Climate change adaptation					O3 Water & marine	O4 Circular economy	O5 Pollution prevention	O6 Bio-diversity
4						88	6	22	7	95	6	15	5	0	6	21	6	2
5	Seq. No.*	No.	Alt. No.**	Sector/Economic activities Deleg. Regulation		1.1a	1.2a	1.3a	1.3a	1.1b	1.2b	1.3b	1.3b		2a	2b	2c	2d
6		1.		Forestry														
7	1	1.	1	Afforestation		x				x								
8	2	1.	2	Rehabilitation and restoration of forests, including reforestation and natural forest regeneration after an extreme event		x				x								
9	3	1.	3	Forest management		x				x								
10	4	1.	4	Forest conservation		x				x								
11		2.		Environmental protection and restoration activities														
12	5	2.	1	Restoration of wetlands		x				x								
13		3.		Manufacturing														
14	6	3.	1	Manufacture of renewable energy technologies		x				x								
15	7	3.	2	Manufacture of equipment for the production and use of hydrogen		x				x								
16	8	3.	3	1.1.	Manufacture of low carbon technologies for transport	x		O		x								
17	9	3.	4	Manufacture of batteries		x				x								
18	10	3.	5	Manufacture of energy efficiency equipment for buildings		x				x								
19	11	3.	6	Manufacture of other low carbon technologies		x				x								
20	12	3.	7	Manufacture of cement		x				x								
21	13	3.	8	Manufacture of aluminum		x				x								
22	14	3.	9	Manufacture of iron and steel		x				x								
23	15	3.	10	Manufacture of hydrogen		x				x								
24	16	3.	11	Manufacture of carbon black		x				x								
25	17	3.	12	Manufacture of soda ash		x				x								
26	18	3.	13	Manufacture of chlorine		x				x								
27	19	3.	14	Manufacture of organic basic chemicals		x				x								
28	20	3.	15	Manufacture of anhydrous ammonia		x				x								

29	21	3.	16		Manufacture of nitric acid	x				x								
30	22	3.	17		Manufacture of plastics in primary form	x				x								
31	23	3.	18		Manufacture of automotive and mobility components					x								
32	24	3.	19		Manufacture of rail rolling stock constituents					x								
33	25	3.	20		Manufacture, installation, and servicing of high, medium and low voltage electrical equipment for electrical transmission and distribution that result in or enable a substantial contribution to climate change mitigation					x								
34	26	3.	21		Manufacturing of aircraft					x								
35	27	3.	22	1.1.	Manufacture, installation and associated services for leakage control technologies enabling leakage reduction and prevention in water supply systems										x			
36	28	3.	23	1.1.	Manufacture of plastic packaging goods											x		
37	29	3.	24	1.2.	Manufacture of electrical and electronic equipment											x		
38	30	3.	25	1.1.	Manufacture of active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) or active substances												x	
39	31	3.	26	1.2.	Manufacture of medicinal products												x	
40		4.			Energy													
41	32	4.	1		Electricity generation using solar photovoltaic technology	x				x								
42	33	4.	2		Electricity generation using concentrated solar power (CSP) technology	x				x								
43	34	4.	3		Electricity generation from wind power	x				x								
44	35	4.	4		Electricity generation from ocean energy technologies	x				x								
45	36	4.	5		Electricity generation from hydropower	x				x								
46	37	4.	6		Electricity generation from geothermal energy	x				x								
47	38	4.	7		Electricity generation from renewable non-fossil gaseous and liquid fuels	x				x								
48	39	4.	8		Electricity generation from bioenergy	x				x								
49	40	4.	9		Transmission and distribution of electricity	x				x								
50	41	4.	10		Storage of electricity	x				x								
51	42	4.	11		Storage of thermal energy	x				x								
52	43	4.	12		Storage of hydrogen	x				x								
53	44	4.	13		Manufacture of biogas and biofuels for use in transport and of bioliquids	x				x								
54	45	4.	14		Transmission and distribution networks for renewable and low-carbon gases	x				x								
55	46	4.	15		District heating/cooling distribution	x				x								
56	47	4.	16		Installation and operation of electric heat pumps	x				x								
57	48	4.	17		Cogeneration of heat/cool and power from solar energy	x				x								
58	49	4.	18		Cogeneration of heat/cool and power from geothermal energy	x				x								

[illegible]

88	78	5.	16	2.3.	Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS)									x			
89	79	5.	17	2.1.	Phosphorus recovery from waste water										x		
90	80	5.	18	2.2.	Production of alternative water resources for purposes other than human consumption										x		
91	81	5.	19	2.3.	Collection and transport of non-hazardous and hazardous waste										x		
92	82	5.	20	2.4.	Treatment of hazardous waste										x		
93	83	5.	21	2.5.	Recovery of bio-waste by anaerobic digestion or composting										x		
94	84	5.	22	2.6.	Depollution and dismantling of end-of-life products										x		
95	85	5.	23	2.7.	Sorting and material recovery of non-hazardous waste										x		
96	86	5.	24	2.1.	Sorting and material recovery of non-hazardous waste											x	
97	87	5.	25	2.2.	Treatment of hazardous waste											x	
98	88	5.	26	2.3.	Remediation of legally non-conforming landfills and abandoned or illegal waste dumps											x	
99	89	5.	27	2.4.	Remediation of contaminated sites and areas											x	
100		6.			Transport												
101	90	6.	1		Passenger interurban rail transport	x			x								
102	91	6.	2		Freight rail transport	x			x								
103	92	6.	3		Urban and suburban transport, road passenger transport	x		o	x		o						
104	93	6.	4		Operation of personal mobility devices, cycle logistics	x			x								
105	94	6.	5		Transport by motorbikes, passenger cars and light commercial vehicles	x		o	x		o						
106	95	6.	6		Freight transport services by road	x		o	x		o						
107	96	6.	7		Inland passenger water transport	x		O	x								
108	97	6.	8		Inland freight water transport	x		O	x								
109	98	6.	9		Retrofitting of inland water passenger and freight transport	x		O	x								
110	99	6.	10		Sea and coastal freight water transport, vessels for port operations and auxiliary activities	x		O	x								
111	100	6.	11		Sea and coastal passenger water transport	x		O	x								
112	101	6.	12		Retrofitting of sea and coastal freight and passenger water transport	x		O	x		o						
113	102	6.	13		Infrastructure for personal mobility, cycle logistics	x		o	x		o						
114	103	6.	14		Infrastructure for rail transport	x		O	x								
115	104	6.	15		Infrastructure enabling low-carbon road transport and public transport	x		o	x		o						
116	105	6.	16		Infrastructure enabling low carbon water transport	x		O	x		o						
117	106	6.	17		Low carbon airport infrastructure	x		O	x								
118	107	6.	18		Leasing of aircraft				x								

119	108	6.	19		Passenger and freight air transport				x									
120	109	6.	20		Air transport ground handling operations				x									
121		7.			Construction and real estate activities													
122	110	7.	1		Construction of new buildings	x		o		x		o						
123	111	7.	2		Renovation of existing buildings	x		o		x		o						
124	112	7.	3		Installation, maintenance and repair of energy efficiency equipment	x				x		o						
125	113	7.	4		Installation, maintenance and repair of charging stations for electric vehicles in buildings (and parking spaces attached to buildings)	x				x		o						
126	114	7.	5		Installation, maintenance and repair of instruments and devices for measuring, regulation and controlling energy performance of buildings	x				x		o						
127	115	7.	6		Installation, maintenance and repair of renewable energy technologies	x				x		o						
128	116	7.	7		Acquisition and ownership of buildings	x				x								
129	117	7.	8	3.1.	Construction of new buildings											x		
130	118	7.	9	3.2.	Renovation of existing buildings											x		
131	119	7.	10	3.3.	Demolition and wrecking of buildings and other structures											x		
132	120	7.	11	3.4.	Maintenance of roads and motorways											x		
133	121	7.	12	3.5.	Use of concrete in civil engineering											x		
134		8.			Information and communication													
135	122	8.	1		Data processing, hosting and related activities	x				x								
136	123	8.	2		Data-driven solutions for GHG emissions reductions	x												
137	124	8.	3	8.2.	Computer programming, consultancy and related activities					x								
138	125	8.	4	8.3.	Programming and broadcasting activities					x								
139	126	8.	5	8.4.	Software enabling physical climate risk management and adaptation								x					
140	127	8.	6	4.1.	Provision of IT/OT data-driven solutions for leakage reduction										x			
141	128	8.	7	4.1.	Provision of IT/OT data-driven solutions											x		
142		9.			Professional, scientific and technical activities													
143	129	9.	1		Close to market research, development and innovation	x												
144	130	9.	2		Research, development and innovation for direct air capture of CO ₂	x												
145	131	9.	3		Professional services related to energy performance of buildings	x												
146	132	9.	4	9.1.	Engineering activities and related technical consultancy dedicated to adaptation to climate change					x								
147	133	9.	5	9.2.	Close to market research, development and innovation					x								
148	134	9.	6	9.3.	Consultancy for physical climate risk management and								x					

					adaptation													
149		10.			Financial and insurance activities													
150	135	10.	1		Non-life insurance: underwriting of climate-related perils					x								
151	136	10.	2		Reinsurance					x								
152		11.			Education													
153	137	11.			Education					x								
154		12.			Human health and social work activities													
155	138	12.	1		Residential care activities					x								
156		13.			Arts, entertainment and recreation													
157	139	13.	1		Creative, arts and entertainment activities					x								
158	140	13.	2		Libraries, archives, museums and cultural activities					x								
159	141	13.	3		Motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities					x								
160		14.			Disaster risk management													
161	142	14.	1		Emergency services							x						
162	143	14.	2		Flood risk prevention and protection infrastructure							x						
163	144	14.	3	3.1.	Flood risk prevention and protection infrastructure									x				
164		15.			Services													
165	145	15.	1	5.1.	Repair, refurbishment and remanufacturing											x		
166	146	15.	2	5.2.	Sale of spare parts											x		
167	147	15.	3	5.3.	Preparation for re-use of end-of-life products and product components											x		
168	148	15.	4	5.4.	Sale of second-hand goods											x		
169	149	15.	5	5.5.	Product-as-a-service and other circular use- and result-oriented service models											x		
170	150	15.	6	5.6.	Marketplace for the trade of second-hand goods for reuse											x		
171		16.			Environmental protection and restoration activities													
172	151	16.	1	1.1.	Conservation, including restoration, of habitats, ecosystems and species													x
173		17.			Accommodation activities													
174	152	17.	1	2.1.	Hotels, holiday, camping grounds and similar accommodation													x

Legende:

* Seq. No. = sequential number






** Alt. No. = alternative number: number according to the Deleg. Regulation that differs from the sequential number used here

*** different names for Objective 1 and Objective 2; the name of Objective 2 is listed in the brackets

x = newly introduced economic activities

O = significant changes in existing economic activities

o = small changes in existing economic activities

<p>Legislation in chorological order</p> <p>1. Climate Delegated Regulation</p> <p>1.1 Deleg. Regulation (EU) 2021/2139 of 04.06.2021 (published on 09.12.2021)</p> <p>1.1.a Annex 1</p> <p>1.1.b Annex 2</p>	
<p>1.2 Deleg. Regulation (EU) 2022/1214 of 09.03.2022 (published on 15.07.2022)</p> <p>1.2.a Annex 1</p> <p>1.2.b Annex 2</p>	
<p>1.3 Deleg. Regulation C(2023) 3850 of 13.06.2023 (published on 27.06.2023)</p> <p>1.3.a Annex 1</p> <p>1.3.a Annex 1; no new economic activities, but new technical screening criteria</p> <p>1.3.b Annex 2</p> <p>1.3.b Annex 2; no new economic activities, but new technical screening criteria</p>	
<p>2. Environmental Delegated Regulation</p> <p>C(2023) 3851 of 27.06.2023</p> <p>2a Annex 1</p> <p>2b Annex 2</p> <p>2c Annex 3</p> <p>2d Annex 4</p>	
<p>Table Prof. Dr. Henkel downloadable as excel file</p> <p>→scroll to the end of the web page</p>	
<p>EU Taxonomy Compass downloadable as excel file</p>	