

What's so new about Circular Economy in our region?

Project: Western Balkan Circular and Climate Innovation Beacons

PROJECT GOAL

CE Beacons project started this year and his goal is to develop a CE ecosystem and services that will enable the transition to CE in the Western Balkans.

FUNDING SOURCE

EIT Climate-KIC through INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS - Cross European Ecosystems Programme.

BUDGET

The Total Budget of the Project for 2020 is € 269,827

PARTNERS

- Wuppertal Institute of Climate, Environment and Energy, Germany
- Cleantech Bulgaria
- Timis Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (CCIAT), Romania
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia
- Athena Research and Innovation Center in Information, Communication and Knowledge Technologies, Greece
- CirEkon, Serbia

Our 2020 plan

This year, CE Beacons' goal is to conduct a complex analysis of business needs and assess the potential for a systemic business collaboration for (post COVID) CE transition in our region.

The objective for 2020 is to implement a resilient, regionally fit implementation framework for circular sustainable solutions into business, while directly connecting experiences from 6 Balkan countries and 2 other European countries.

"We are carefully supporting you through systemic circular transition times and invite you to become part of our network!"

CE Beacon partners follow a common thread of collaboration, abbreviated as VIRE:

VIRE- four pillars of connecting



Our essence is VIRE sharing!

Project activities:

WP 1 We focus on Experience transfer, Train the Trainers and circular implementation framework design.

WP 2 Circular economy implementation in 4 companies in Romania and Serbia.

WP 3 Co-designed sustainability. We plan to thrive together in years to come.

WP 4 Promoting circularity in architecture and construction sectors.

WP 5 Internal project management, communication and administration work package.

Planned results:

· 20 trained local CE consultants/trainers in Serbia and Romania

· 4 business clients who are actively implementing circular measures in their companies

· Train the Trainers curriculum for local workforce skills development

· Policy barriers white paper

· Circular urban area feasibility study

· First of a kind common knowledge and experience pool connecting 4 regional countries (Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania) and 2 West/South Europe countries (Germany and Spain)

· Circular business Implementation Framework

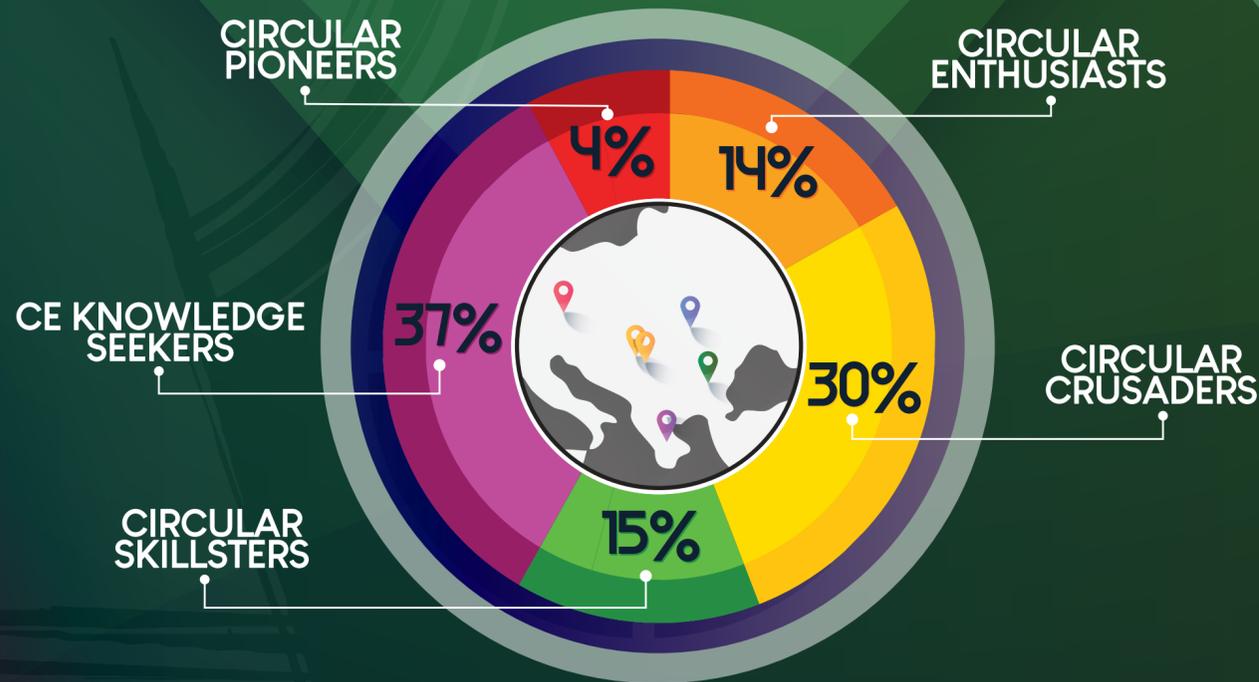
WHAT IS IN IT FOR US?

Our team was able to get the first insights based on our webinar participants feedbacks, that we will try to follow next months. We aim to build a co-creative network that lively communicates, where we listen and give our best to accommodate major recognized needs. Likewise, we will give our best to connect innovation actors with new business enthusiasts in order to support you.

Balkan countries are still on the awareness rising step towards circular economy, but slowly starting to investigate ways to improve their business and/or start new product lines or complete business on the lines of CE.

We have preliminary created four interest groups based on which CE Beacons will develop services and materials. These are actors that:

- Inquire for general CE related knowledge and new information (37%) – **CE Knowledge seekers**
- Seek to improve their business with circularity (30%) – **Circular crusaders**
- Search for ways to improve personal skill sets / consultancy acumen (15%) – **Circular Skillsters**
- Want to build new product lines / new business (14% of participants) – **Circular enthusiasts**
- Are already looking for financing models for CE solutions (4%) – **Circular Pioneers**



We will continue tracking interests and needs from our peers and general business audience, with the aim to precisely pinpoint priority areas where we can help the market development. Therefore, we need you to join us and co-create our common circular future!

Stay tuned!

WHY IS SYSTEMIC CHARACTER SO IMPORTANT FOR CIRCULAR ECONOMY?

Circular Economy is an **economic ecologic system** that is waste-free and resilient by design, where products and services are traded in **closed loops**. It is an **umbrella model** that includes **concepts** like reconditioning, remanufacturing, reuse, co-use, emotional durability, disassembly, recycling, composting and others.

Circular Economy **aims primarily at** creating added value, competitiveness, autonomy and preparedness for the disruptive times which lie ahead. For this, we need to retain as much **value** as possible the value within the **systems** we operate, in **cycles** that involve minimal losses.

This goal can be achieved by continually **recirculating and revaluing available assets** (raw materials, subassemblies, products etc.), **limiting the acquisition of external resources**, using **eco-design** for products, services, processes and business models, **acting efficiently and effectively**, as well as **capturing and reintegrating the value** back into the systems together with the partners.

Such approaches are **very attractive to businesses and communities**, because they generate wealth and sustainability, open new opportunities and markets, facilitate partnerships, strengthen customer relationships and create famous brands. One **example** in this sense is the industrial symbiosis developed by British Sugar, that shaped 12 additional successful products and can be found **here**.

If you wish to **find out more** about how to improve your business with the help of system and life-cycle thinking, please apply for the **webinar** we organize on the 17th of August.

Details are here: [link](#).

INTERESTED IN IMPLEMENTATION OF CE?

Here is one hot funding opportunity!

C- Voucher CIRCULAR ECONOMY 2ND OPEN CALL FOR ADAPTERS

Deadline:
October 30th, 2020 at 17:00 CET (Brussels Local Time)

C-Voucher - is financed by the European Commission within Horizon 2020 Programme and offers financial (up to €15.000,00 equity free) and mentoring support to 66 European SMEs transitioning from linear to circular business models.

Adopter SMEs represent a European SME applying in C-Voucher's 2nd Open Call for Adopters, addressing an industrial challenge in one of 5 prioritized domains: Manufacturing, Textile, Blue Growth, Agri-Food or Health.

More information can be found via this [link](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

UNDERSTANDING THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY AT SYSTEM LEVEL FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
AUGUST 17, 2020
12:00-13:40 CET

We are to enact a cross border circular cooperation and dive in the concept of Circular economy and its principles while introduce systems that enable business development.

Agenda main topics: Introduction to Circular Economy, why it is attractive to businesses; Strategies to capture value; System and products and how system change.

Speakers:
Dr. Eng. & Mgt. Marian C-hin VASILE
Eng. & Sustainable Development Expert Andrei CHURICAN

Moderator:
M.Sc. Industrial Ecology Milan VESELINOV

Please register via this link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/15832473045>

WHAT'S NEW IN OUR COUNTRIES?

CE Beacons had organized the first in series Webinar titled: **Circular Economy in Balkan countries. The state of play 2020.**

A hundred participants were present from 16 countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Qatar, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, The Netherlands, USA.

Some of the most interesting conclusions are outlined on next page

Sustainability transition in the World, Europe and the role of CE

Climate emergency is in effect - We must keep the rising temperature below 1.5C and it is important to cut carbon emissions by 7.6% per year (68% by 2030).

UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network presented 6 major transformation pathways to achieve SDGs:

- 1. Education, gender and inequality
- 2. Health, wellbeing and demography
- 3. Energy decarbonization and sustainable industry
- 4. Sustainable food, land, water and oceans
- 5. Sustainable cities and communities
- 6. Digital revolutions for sustainable development.

The **European Green Deal (EGD)** announced the following policy area changes:

- 1. Biodiversity
- 2. From farm to work
- 3. Sustainable agriculture
- 4. Clean energy
- 5. Sustainable industry
- 6. Building and renovating
- 7. Sustainable mobility
- 8. Eliminating pollution
- 9. Climate action.

Being climate neutral by 2050 is the preeminent goal of EU with EGD triggering a number of actions; namely, the EGD Investment Plan, the Just Transition Mechanism, the European climate law, the European Climate Pact, the European Industrial Strategy, the **Circular Economy Action Plan**, the Farm to fork strategy, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the EU Strategies for energy system integration and hydrogen.

A new **Circular Economy Action Plan** for a Cleaner and More Competitive Europe

It announces initiatives along the entire life cycle of products, targeting for example their design, promoting circular economy processes, fostering sustainable consumption, and aiming to ensure that the resources used are kept in the EU economy for as long as possible.

Proposed investing priorities across Europe:

- Embrace EU taxonomy for sustainable investments
- Control of the pandemic
- Biomedical research
- Border security, safe travel, drugs, safe trade
- Renewable energy and circular economy
- Food security and Smart Agriculture
- Promotion of European supply chains (ICTs, batteries, etc)
- Secure ICT networks
- Sustainable Education, Training, Capacity, Building, and Innovation

CE Financing Alternatives- examples of new financing models :

- Crowdfunding
- Social-impact bonds
- Equity in people
- Community owned businesses

Business opportunities and EU Funding Situation,

Jana Nicolas, Wuppertal Institute

Findings from the Horizon 2020 CICERONE Project:

The survey results on funding for CE in European countries indicated that :

- 70% of the programmes are national programmes.
- 18% of the programmes is implemented at the regional level and
- Only 8% of the programmes are located at the European level
- Deficit in scaling up projects
- Need for programmes that bridge gap between research & implementation
- Lack of consumer and behaviour orientation (education, training, social behaviour)

Amount of Funding and Duration of Programmes: Most of the programmes are planned for a duration of 1 to 3 years and they consist either mostly 1-5 Million EUR or They are bigger projects that have a budget of over >13 Million EUR.

Focus of Funding Programmes:

- Resources: waste or biomass
- Lifecycle Phase: end-of-life phase, other phases show balanced picture
- Major Funding Type: technology and process optimisation
- Sectors: manufacturing and waste

REGIONAL / INDUSTRIAL LEVEL

Projects that are the most prominent and active in parallel are:

- Regional Waste Management Plans (GIZ-Regional plans for sanitary landfills in 3 regions and EIT Climate-KIC-Future Cities)
- Awareness raise programmes (Foodways-Circular Food Waste Management in Serbia)
- Business systems education (Academy for Circular Economy)
- Implementation in business systems (EIT Raw Materials-Zero waste recovery of copper tailings in the ESEE region; GIZ-Circular economy business action plans; Climate Innovation and Circular economy BEACONS; Chemical Leasing business model - Center for cleaner production)

LOCAL /COMPANY LEVEL INSIGHTS

Initiatives on this level are in the **incubation stage**, and mostly focused to reduce single-use, plastic use, digital solutions for waste tracking, recovery of resources in WEEE, Smart waste collection, IoT and sensor tracking in the field of CE, Circular Bio solutions.

We kindly invite you to watch the whole webinar via this [link](#):



THE STATE OF PLAY IN SERBIA



M.Sc. Industrial Ecology Milan VESELINOV, CirEkon, Serbia

Business and consumer **awareness** about risks of overconsumption and benefits of an innovative circular economy are **still low**. Serbian system starts with **changing the narrative from pure waste management to circular innovative industrial development**. Important international organizations still play a major role to catalyze changes. More national funding lines are necessary to be allocated to circular solutions and innovation. A policy framework is being built and major **strategic documents brought**. Serbian system needs to **unlock niche and bottom-up solutions** in order to slowly decrease dependence on policies. Finally, it is necessary to investigate the potential of industrial symbiosis, remanufacturing, reconditioning, and other tighter cycle industries, as well as to **start designing a system of indicators** that will guide further development in CE direction.

National level

Narrative in Serbia has changed from 2016 where it focused on waste management to Industrial economic development in 2019.

Main waste law amendments enable CE:

- Define “End of waste” and “criteria for by-products”
- Improved EPR for medical and pharmaceutical products in the waste
- More clearly defined ownership over waste in transactions and trade
- The decision brought on the usage of oxo-degradable and biodegradable bags that need additives

-Serbian EPR schemes focus is still on collecting and preparing for recycling waste that puts the system on the **lower part of the waste pyramid**.

- New key documents: Ex-ante analysis and Roadmap for Circular Economy (Ministry of Environmental Protection). Both documents are focused on the innovative side of CE, slowly departing from a pure waste management narrative.

Other circular related documents:

- Industrial Policy Strategy 2030
- Sustainable and integrated urban development strategy 2030
- Green Public Procurement through stakeholder synergy
- Analysis and assessment of EPR schemes in Serbia
- Analysis and assessment of Eco-Innovation for CE development

-Serbia is included in **ISO Technical Committee TC 323 Circular Economy ISO standard**.

-Forum WB6 and CEFTA report suggests to regionally **scale the Academy of Circular Economy** to provide a uniform education to businesses.

THE STATE OF PLAY IN ROMANIA



Dr. Eng. & Mgt. Marian C-tin VASILE , Managing Partner @ Zalmo Expert Consult SRL,

Mostly concepts under circular economy umbrella are about **asset recirculation, resource efficiency and productivity and the waste valorisation**.

The European Commission’s Environmental Implementation Review 2019 states that :

- Circular economy remains underdeveloped in Romania.
- Very low recycling of municipal waste (7 % material recycling and 7 % composting) and very high landfilling rates (approx. 70%)– highest in EU.
- Ecolabel products: 24 out of 71.707 in EU .
- Most Romanian companies have low environmental awareness.
- 33% SME implemented energy-saving measures and 31% waste-minimizing measures.

Some Initiatives and good practises are:

- **ECOREG**, First pilot project in Romania (2009–2011) aimed at testing the potential of industrial symbiosis.
- **Iași zero waste – RETRACE** with the goal: eco-design of material and energetic streams, so that waste is valorised in other processes.
- **UrbanWins** with the goal to develop participatory and scientific planning tools for waste management.

Romania has great potential for circular economy in following areas:

- Mining waste, packaging waste, textiles, construction, agriculture and food
- Compost, sewage sludge
- Reconditioning of electric, electronic and metallic parts (including motors)
- Reuse of products, services and tools

Romania must develop visionary integrated and cohesive national and local regulations to provide necessary instruments for transition to circular economy.

We kindly invite you to watch the whole webinar via this [link](#):

In consortium with:



THE STATE OF PLAY IN BULGARIA



Mariyana Hamanova, Executive director of Cleantech Bulgaria

Circular economy regulation in Bulgaria

Expected policies to be implemented in the short term (until 2022)

- Circular economy remains underdeveloped in Romania.
- Very low recycling of municipal waste (7 % material recycling and 7 % composting) and very high landfilling rates (approx. 70%)– highest in EU.
- Ecolabel products: 24 out of 71.707 in EU .
- Most Romanian companies have low environmental awareness.
- 33% SME implemented energy-saving measures and 31% waste-minimizing measures.

Main Challenges

- **Setting** the right **CE indicators** and metrics in the Operation programs design
- Combine efficiently funds and resources
- Supporting the business within time with the **right skills** and measures
- Choosing the right **flagship industry** sectors for CE pilots and demonstrations
- Close the innovation gap for CE products and services

What Circular Economy means for Bulgarian business

- **Resource productivity** remains hugely **under-exploited** as a source of wealth and competitiveness
- Combination of cost savings and new business opportunities
- Flexibility in dealing with price increases and fluctuations
- **Independence from material prices**
- **Resilience against supply risks**
- Opening of **new markets**

Cleantech Bulgaria Achievements in CE transition

- Three regional innovation hubs under the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)–Climate–KIC
- More than 200 green start-ups supported
- International Forum „Circular Economy and Clean Technologies”
- More than 30 investments in innovative green Bulgarian companies attracting over 5 mln.€ additional funding
- Centre of Competence “Clean& Circle” .

We kindly invite you to watch the whole webinar via this [link](#):

THE STATE OF PLAY IN GREECE



Prof. Dr. Phoebe Koundouri, Athena Research and Innovation Center In Information, Communication And Knowledge Technologies, Greece

The transition should be inclusive and leave no one behind. Finance should be directed to those that are sustainable, but also to those who are willing to commit and be monitoring henceforth to learning how to become sustainable.

National Circular Economy Strategy published by the Ministry of Environment and Energy, Hellenic Republic is based on 5 concepts:

- Product design
- Production process
- Consumption
- From waste to resources
- Innovation, investment, and other cross-cutting issues

The **synergy between Circular Economy Transition** (CE) Smart Specialization Strategy is an innovative approach that aims to boost the growth and jobs in Europe enabling each **region to identify and develop its competitive advantages**.

- CE related to the important emerging technologies for clean energy progress.
- **Global Initiative Sustainable Shipping and Ports** in order to reach zero-emission by 2050
- **Adaptation and Mitigation of Climate Change** on the municipality level of sustainability transition
- Systemic economic change within management, taxes, emissions trading system

We kindly invite you to watch the whole webinar via this [link](#):

AUGUST
2020

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CE Beacons newsletter

“We are carefully supporting you through systemic circular transition times...”

