



PGI05807 – REPLACE
REgional PoLicy Actions for CircularEconomy

Regional Stakeholders Group meeting

September 2021



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1. Setting the scene

Date: 19th of July 2021 (Online meeting)

Number of participants: 225

CCDRC is one of the 8 partners of the Interreg Europe REPLACE – REgional PoLicy Actions for Circular Economy project, which has the goal of improving the management, implementation and monitoring of regional policy instruments targeted at facilitating the transition towards a Circular Economy, while boosting sustainable development. The self-proposed indicator established by CCDRC within the REPLACE project was the launch of a dedicated call, using additional Circular Economy assessment criteria.

As stated in the project's proposal, REPLACE also assumed the goal of integrating, deploying and capitalising on lessons learnt through the Horizon 2020 'SCREEN – Synergic Circular Economy across European Regions' project (www.screen-lab.eu), that was implemented between November 2016 and October 2018, a coordination and support action in which CCDRC also participated. The project aimed at defining a replicable systemic approach towards a transition to Circular Economy in European regions within the context of their Smart Specialisation Strategies.

A specific action of the SCREEN project dealt with the discussion and elaboration of a specific set of evaluation criteria for circular economy projects. Considering the already existing criteria for the management of ESIF, and namely for the evaluation and selection of project proposals to be approved, SCREEN developed a criteria table for the evaluation of the level of “circularity” of different investment projects.

This tool was conceived with the intent of being user-friendly, to be used by both applicants and evaluators. The third version of this tool was validated by more than 160 European Stakeholders through an online questionnaire. In 2019, an improved version was published (Deliverable proposing Assessment Criteria for Circular Economy Projects: <http://www.screen-lab.eu/deliverables/Table-rev4.pdf>), with instructions and a practical example on its application.

Thus, in the context of its participation in REPLACE, CCDRC took upon the challenge of developing and testing the inclusion of Circular Economy assessment criteria in a call from the Regional Operational Programme (ROP), as Managing Authority, benefiting from what had been developed within the SCREEN project.

2. Organisation of the meeting

The Regional Operational Programme (Centro 2020) was created for the period 2014-2020 and it was established (as all the existing Portuguese Operational Programmes) in the Partnership Agreement between Portugal and the EU (Portugal 2020 – PT 2020) being, therefore, under its

regulatory framework. The governance system, established by Decree Law, is the same for all Portuguese Programmes funded by European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF).

A multi-level governance model was foreseen, promoting articulation between the central, regional and local levels with a common national coordination (a political and a technical one).

From the RIS3¹ stakeholder engagement process, besides the expressed desire to have more regionalised TO 1 and 3 calls², regional stakeholders have been pointing out as a useful instrument that could help to fulfil their research and innovation investment needs within Centro RIS3, filling in a gap in the innovation value chain, completing the portfolio available. These discussions later resulted in the preparations for the launch of a Proof-of-Concept call.

The “Proof-of-Concept” is an instrument foreseen in the Portuguese list of instruments available for TO1 (in RECI, the Specific Portuguese Regulation of the Competitiveness and Internationalisation Domains) but that was never operationalised. Overall, regional relevant stakeholders agreed on the relevance of this new proposed call, stressing how much it could support some of their activities and, most importantly, how the launching of this call would help to close a gap already identified (as this is an important stage of the innovation cycle, which is missing support from public funding). Given the timely opportunity to develop and launch such a call, – boosted by the fact that CCDRC is involved in a different 4th call of Interreg Europe project, called IMPROVE, within which the launch of a Proof-of-Concept call was planned in order to achieve the established policy goal (of developing new instruments aligned with the regional RIS3 priorities) – and anticipating the high-quality potential level of the demand, CCDRC considered it could be interesting to test Circular Economy evaluation criteria and thus foster the appearance of projects aligned both with this approach and the S3 priorities.

As stated in the project’s proposal, the launch of ROP calls within TO1 and TO3 is conditioned by the governance model of PT2020, which establishes that such calls are to be discussed and coordinated within the established national networks. Thus, it was known that the defined goal was an ambitious one. Nevertheless, it was understood that it was important to pave the way for the regional and national discussions on the establishment of Circular Economy criteria within the framework of Regional Operational Programmes funded by European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and to try to raise awareness on the potential and importance of Circular Economy as a framework for the regional development of Centro of Portugal.

¹ CCDRC not only is the Managing Authority of the Regional Operational Programme (ROP), but also the responsible entity for managing Centro’s Smart Specialisation Strategy (Centro RIS3),

² Centro 2020 is particularly oriented for the reinforcement of companies’ competitiveness and for jobs creation, promoting a knowledge-based economy and intensifying the knowledge transfer between the scientific and technological system and the regional economic base. Evidently, TO1 and TO3 play a central role in Centro 2020, representing almost 40% of the Programme’s total budget. As for Circular Economy, although it is a transversal and broad concept, it largely depends on knowledge and innovation activities that are mainly supported by TO1 and TO3.

The event was moderated by Jorge Brandão, from the Managing Board of the Regional Operational Programme of Centro, and it benefited from the participation of Miguel Antunes, from the National Innovation Agency – who presented the main features of the PoC call – and Alexandra Rodrigues, from the Regional Development Department (CCDR) – who presented the REPLACE project and the Circular Economy criteria. As expected (since, as said before, this is a new instrument, never operationalised), attendees had many technical doubts; therefore, a great number of questions was received and answered by the speakers. The Q&A session took around 45 minutes. Overall, the meeting took, roughly, two hours.

The main goal of this meeting was to provide important information about this Regional Operational Programme Proof of Concept (PoC) call and its evaluation criteria (namely, the Circular Economy assessment criteria), promoting the participation of regional stakeholders and clarifying participants' doubts. As this was an online meeting, CCDRC tried to reach as many entities as possible and, as a result, 225 participants attended the meeting (maximum number of attendees at the same time). However, the number of registrations was even higher, with 288 applications received: 137 from Higher Education Institutions; 108 from interface entities³; 24 from companies; 11 from representatives of the public administration sector; 2 from organisations of the social sector; and 6 from other types of entities.

The event was disseminated in CCDRC's website: http://www.ccdrc.pt/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3476:sessao-de-divulgacao-sobre-projetos-de-prova-de-conceito&catid=1573:destaques&Itemid=756.



	A	B	C
	Critério	Descrição	Métrica de referência
Produção	1	Design Circular	Kg / ano de material virgem evitado pelo novo processo E / OU pelo prolongamento da vida útil do produto
	2	Novo processo de produção a partir de "matérias-primas secundárias"	Kg / ano de material virgem evitado através do novo processo
Consumo	3	Re-uso, Re-Manufatura, Remodelação, Reparação	Kg / ano de material virgem evitado pelo prolongamento do ciclo de vida do produto
	4	Redução de resíduos	Kg / ano
Deposição	5	Símbiose industrial: massa de resíduos recuperados e reintroduzidos num ciclo de produção como matéria-prima secundária	Kg / ano
	6	Projeto que promove a reciclagem de resíduos	Resíduos recolhidos pelo alvo definido Kg / ano
Clima	7	"Balanço líquido de energia em relação ao sistema anterior" ou "Quantidade de energia recuperada"	Número que pode ser inferior ou superior a 1
	8	Redução de emissões	Emissões de CO2 (ou emissões equivalentes de CO2, no caso de outros poluentes)
Emprego	9	Saldo líquido de empregos	Número de novas unidades de trabalho a tempo inteiro no novo processo

Figure 1 – Circular Economy assessment criteria table (ROP PoC call)

³ It includes technological and/or research infrastructures; technological centres; parks of science and technology; collaborative laboratories; clusters; incubators; and entrepreneurial and/or industrial associations.

In what regards the project's evaluation process, that was presented in the Regional Stakeholders Group meeting the methodology for the selection and ranking of projects is based on the Project Merit (MP), which takes project's quality and project's impact into consideration. One of the sub-criterion (B1) to assess projects' impact is related to the Strategic impact. In the case of this sub-criterion, proposals are evaluated in terms of their alignment with Centro RIS3 as well as, in line with CCDRC's self-proposed indicator, coming from the REPLACE project, their contribution to a Circular Economy.

As it was the REPLACE project's ambition (that assumed, as previously said, the goal of integrating, deploying and capitalising on lessons learnt within the SCREEN H2020 project, in which CCDRC also participated), the Circular Economy table that was used for the evaluation of this sub-criterion was inspired by the one proposed by SCREEN for the evaluation of project's contribution to a circular economy: the testing of the SCREEN assessment table is a clear objective of REPLACE project.

Although it is a pilot initiative, the launch of this TO1 call through Centro 2020 and the inclusion of Circular Economy evaluation criteria could pave the way for some discussions on upcoming instruments in the context of the next Programming Period and for other Operational Programmes.

3. Conclusions of the meeting

CCDRC considers this meeting was timely and highly participated. Therefore, the evaluation is very positive. Apart from the technical details (more demanding due to the online format), both the agenda and the time schedule revealed to be adequate. It should be highlighted that the organisation of this meeting required a coordination effort between the REPLACE team, the team from the Regional Operational Programme of Centro and the National Innovation Agency (that will act as intermediate body in the management of the call).

Additionally, the high number of registrations received seems to be a good indicator of the high level of interest from regional stakeholders. On the other hand, being an open online meeting that only required a registration, the number of attendees was considerably high, making it impossible to create a real moment of debate - all comments and questions had to be put forward in written format, in the chat. They were, nevertheless, all addressed by the speakers. To allow for a (even) broader access to this information, all the questions were later compiled and a document with FAQs was elaborated and published online.



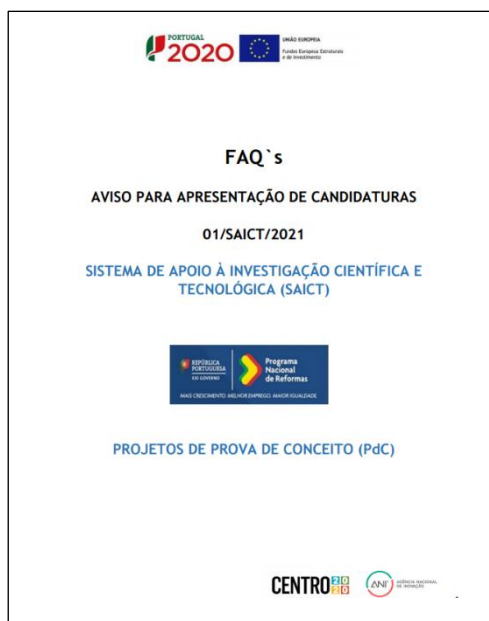


Figure 2 - FAQ's' document

The outcomes of this pilot call - such as the number of applications received and the number and type of projects approved - will be closely followed by CCDRC. They will nurture a discussion around the results, both at regional and at national level, allowing for the identification of what went well and what could have been improved during the whole process, which will be important to fine tune the instrument in the next programming period.

The goal of CCDRC is to test Circular Economy evaluation criteria in a TO1 call and raise awareness, among the regional stakeholders, on the importance of CE in fostering the regional development. This is to be done through the launch of a call that tackles a gap in the innovation cycle that should stimulate the preparation of proposals with high innovative potential that capitalize the results of previous R&D projects.

Given the Portuguese context and the governance model of ESIF (briefly explained above), if CCDRC, through Centro 2020, accomplishes the task of testing a Circular Economy evaluation methodology and criteria in a pilot TO1 call, it could be a success case that might pave the way for the next Programming Period and for other Operational Programmes.

4. Annexes

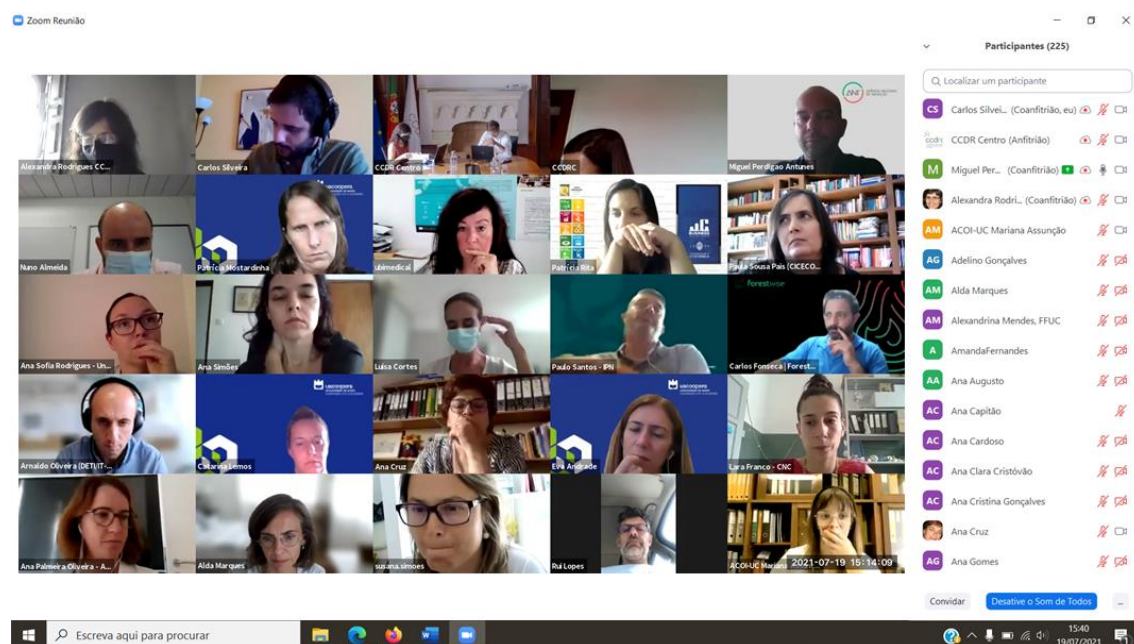


Figure 3 – List of participants (total of 225)

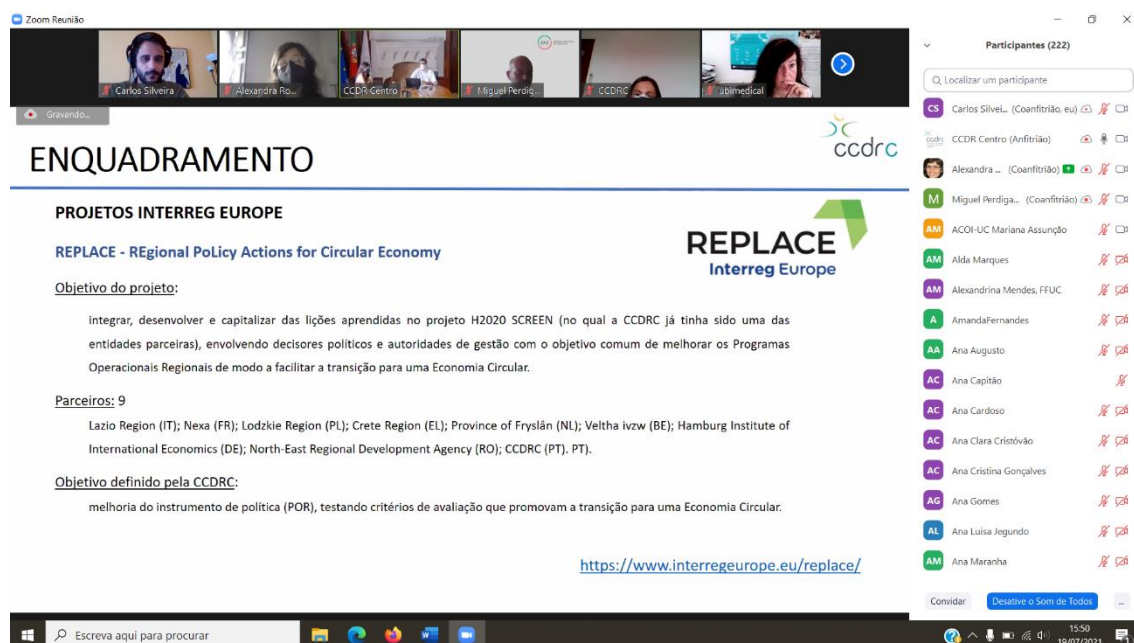


Figure 4 – REPLACE presentation

Zoom Reunião

Gravando...

CRITÉRIO B – IMPACTO DO PROJETO

N	A	B	C
	Crítério	Descrição	Métrica de referência
Produção	1	Design Circular	Kg / ano de material virgem evitado pelo novo processo E / OU pelo prolongamento da vida útil do produto
	2	Novo processo de produção a partir de "matérias-primas secundárias"	Substituição, total ou parcial, de materiais virgens por "matérias-primas secundárias"
Consumo	3	Re-uso, Re-Manufatura, Remodelação, Reparação	Prolongamento do ciclo de vida de um produto que de outra forma seria descartado
	4	Redução de resíduos	O novo processo gera menos desperdício
Deposição	5	Símbolo Industrial: massa de resíduos recuperados e reintroduzidos num ciclo de produção como matéria-prima secundária	O novo processo gera resíduos que podem ser reutilizados no mesmo processo ou outro processo produtivo
	6	Projeto que promove a reciclagem de resíduos	Campanha promocional com um alvo específico que produza um resíduo específico
Clima	7	"Balanço líquido de energia em relação ao sistema anterior" ou "Quantidade de energia recuperada"	A energia (KWh) utilizada no processo antigo por unidade de produto é superior à energia utilizada no novo processo para a mesma unidade de produto
	8	Redução de emissões	As Emissões de CO2 geradas pelo processo antigo por unidade de produto são superiores às emissões utilizadas no novo processo para a mesma unidade de produto
Emprego	9	Saldo líquido de empregos	O número de novos empregos criados pelo projeto de economia circular é superior ao número de empregos perdidos no processo linear anterior

ANEXO A1 - Tabela de suporte à avaliação da aplicação da majoração prevista no subcritério B1 – Impacto Estratégico

SCREEN

REPLACE Interreg Europe

Participantes (220)

Q Localizar um participante

- CS Carlos Silveira (Coanfitrião, eu)
- CCDR Centro (Anfitrião)
- Alexandra ... (Coanfitrião)
- M Miguel Perdigão (Coanfitrião)
- AM ACOI UC Mariana Assunção
- AM Alida Marques
- AM Alexandrina Mendes, FFUC
- A Amanda Fernandes
- AA Ana Augusto
- AC Ana Capitão
- AC Ana Cardoso
- AC Ana Clara Cristóvão
- AC Ana Cristina Gonçalves
- AG Ana Gomes
- AL Ana Luisa Jegundo
- AM Ana Maranhã

Convidar Desative o Som de Todos

Escreva aqui para procurar

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Figure 5 – Circular Economy criteria presentation