




# REPLACE

Interreg Europe



REPLACE will enable the transition to a circular economy by facilitating, implementing and financing local and cross-regional circular value chains using a systemic operational and normative framework.

[www.interregeurope.eu/replace](http://www.interregeurope.eu/replace)

Province of Fryslan, Interreg Europe REPLACE

## Action plan

Final version, July 2022

## ACTION PLAN

Produced by each region, the **action plan** is a document providing details on **how** the lessons learnt from the cooperation will be exploited in order to improve the policy instrument tackled within that region. It specifies the nature of the actions to be implemented, their timeframe, the players involved, the costs (if any) and funding sources (if any). If the same policy instrument is addressed by several partners, only one action plan is required.

### Part I – General information

Project: REPLACE

Partner organisation: Province of Fryslân

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant): Centro, Hamburg

Country: The Netherlands

NUTS2 region: Friesland (NL)

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### Part II – Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact: ☐ Investment for Growth and Jobs programme

Name of the policy instrument addressed: **Programme ERDF 2021-2027 North Netherlands**

In the ERDF programme North Netherlands 2021-2027, the province of Fryslân works together with the provinces of Groningen and Drenthe. Through the new EFRO programme, we invest in the innovative capacity of our region based on the principles of smart specialisation described in Regional Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization (RIS3). The transition to a circular economy is central in both RIS3 and ERDF programme 2021-2027.

In this new ERDF programme, cross-border working is an integral part of the approach aimed at smart specialisation. The programme actively points out the possibility of participating in cross-border and transnational programmes and the instrument mix



promotes an international orientation aimed at contributing to the knowledge and competences necessary to capitalise on and connect opportunities in one's own region and elsewhere in Europe. New international partnerships may emerge from this that we cannot foresee at this time. Possible types of interventions are:

- Stimulating and facilitating the participation of regional partners in international consortia and vice versa;
- Stimulating and facilitating SMEs and other target groups to participate in international consortia aimed at taking advantage of innovation opportunities

The ERDF programme 2021-2027 has yet to start. With feeding in the lessons from REPLACE project we would like to improve the component of cross border working within this policy instrument.

The original policy instrument that the Province of Fryslan wanted to improve through REPLACE was the ERDF programme 2014-2020. Because this programme has already been closed down, in this action plan we choose to strengthen its successor, the ERDF programme 2021-2027.

### Part III – Details of the actions envisaged

#### ACTION 1

##### 1. The background

REPLACE project aims at improving the management of regional policy instruments dealing with circular economy by exploiting cross-regional cooperation, REPLACE is structured in 4 logically linked steps:

1. Local Analysis
2. Cross-regional synergies
3. Funding Instruments: focus on sectors
4. Assessment Criteria

In addition, REPLACE developed **the Circular Benchmark Tool** to offer public authorities an easy to use assessment method to evaluate the state of the art of circular economy in the territory.

The cooperation activities suffered from the lack of interpersonal exchange, caused by the impossibility to travel for the most part of phase 1 of the project: the consortium recovered all learning activity through online events.

The **Local Analysis** applies a methodology, previously built through interregional cooperation by 17 European regions within the SCREEN H2020 CSA (coordination and support action) project [www.screen-lab.eu](http://www.screen-lab.eu), to assess local capabilities and potentials, while mapping relevant stakeholders, research and educational capacities. The Local Analysis reflects the approach used to identify the RIS3 sectors, namely the EDP (entrepreneurial discovery process), and further explores regional potentialities at a micro-level, involving stakeholders from the Quadruple Helix.

In the *first REPLACE learning event held in Fryslan (3-4 December 2019)* we learned how to develop and structure the local analysis based on the SCREEN methodology. From this lessons, we drafted our regional Local Analysis. Yet *on the third REPLACE web meeting (25 June 2020)* we presented

our regional local analysis to the consortium. Performing our local analysis, we identified opportunities within water, plastics and education. Engaging with regional stakeholders in process of our local analysis, we learned to strengthen our entrepreneurial discovery process.

On the business level, a growing knowledge cluster among the theme of circular plastics has been identified. For example, The National Test Centre of Circular Plastics located in Heerenveen (Fryslân) is a research centre for improving the sorting and recycling of plastic packaging and offers new and necessary opportunities for knowledge, cooperation and innovations within the plastic chain. [National Test Centre Circular Plastics | NTCP](#) Additionally, the Circular Friesland Association works on a plastics transition agenda. Together with Circular Friesland we were able to map emerging projects and ideas.

The mapping performed within the local analysis was taken further into the REPLACE project step of looking for **cross regional synergies**. During *REPLACE 2nd web-meeting (20 May 2020)* the cross-regional synergies step of the project was introduced to us. At *REPLACE 11th web-meeting (17 June, 2021)* all project partners presented the results of their local analysis with the aim of looking for synergies between the partners. In this event we learned from partner regions Centro and Hamburg that they also identified circular plastics as a regional strength and theme.

From this date on, Hamburg, Centro and Fryslân further explored these cross regional synergies. *On December 23, 2021 the partners had a meeting* to further explore possible synergies on the theme of plastics. In this meeting we dived deeper into the strengths of each region, in terms of existing SME en research infrastructure on the theme.

On *February 15, 2022* this exploration was taken a step further by directly involving stakeholders from the participating regions. Fryslân presented the case of Circular Friesland Association with the transition agenda on circular plastics. From Hamburg we learned a best practice for triple helix cooperation named 'The Hamburg Bottle'. Centro's stakeholder CENTIMFE presented their case a regional research centre playing a pivotal role in the innovation ecosystem around circular plastics. In this meeting, the partners identified three themes within circular plastics to be further explored in interregional cooperation:

- 1) Society: 1a) waste / consumers en 1b) youth / education
- 2) Research: Applied research - facilities & knowledge exchanges
- 3) Business: closing the gaps / problem solving / business2business

We agreed to further explore how to capitalize these cross regional synergies in phase 2 of the Interreg Europe REPLACE project.

From these meetings, we have learned where there are opportunities for cooperation between the regions to connect value chains and link knowledge positions within one region to those of the other regions. This form of cross border working and knowledge exchange is an important part of the policy instrument we want to influence in this action plan: the ERDF programme North Netherlands 2021-2027. Therefore, we can use the learnings from REPLACE to further improve the policy instrument.

In order to do so, another knowledge gap was filled in phase 1 of the REPLACE project. Within REPLACE **The funding instruments and opportunities** are studied at sectorial/value chain level, in order to understand how the region is supporting areas endowed with high potential for the circular economy transition. Fryslân learned on multiple occasions some best practices from partner regions on available instruments to support activities in line with the circular economy transition. During the *first REPLACE learning event in Fryslân (December, 2019)* we participated in a roundtable organised by partner NEXA on the sharing of good practices on ERDF use for Circular Economy. We there learned from the best practice of partner CENTRO, the Circular Economy Voucher. A simplified mechanism that aims at creating an opportunity for SMEs to have a first interaction with the Circular Economy approach. This voucher system might be an example to create an opportunity for SMEs to have a first impulse for cross border cooperation within circular economy as well.



Finally, aligned with the project's ambitions, REPLACE developed a **Circular Benchmark Tool (CBT)** to offer public authorities an easy-to-use assessment method to evaluate the state of the art of circular economy in the territory. Fryslân was the lead project partner for the development of the CBT. The first design of the CBT was discussed during the *1<sup>st</sup> REPLACE Learning Event, in Leeuwarden (december 2019)*. Other sessions held to design and implement the CBT with the project partners were held at the *project's 5<sup>th</sup> web meeting on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020*, that focused on the CBT, the *8<sup>th</sup> web meeting on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020*, dedicated to the exchange of good practices and the CBT, the *9<sup>th</sup> web meeting on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021*, dedicated to Funding Synergies introduction and the CBT, as well as in the CBT dedicated web meetings on *January 21<sup>st</sup> and January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021*. Finally, we presented the CBT during the European Week of Cities and Regions on *October 12, 2021*. With growing numbers of regions both inside and outside the REPLACE consortium using the CBT, we learned that the CBT is a very useful tool for starting interregional and cross border exchange on best practices between European regions. Therefore, from the network of regions created with the CBT we can feed in lessons for further cross border cooperation. With this, we will also improve our policy instrument.

## 2. **Action** (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

Design and introduction of a voucher scheme on cross border cooperation for circular economy.

The policy instrument to be influenced is the new ERDF programme North Netherlands 2021-2027 by introducing a new project (design of voucher scheme) to the programme (action type 1).

With the design of the voucher scheme we aim to improve the theme of cross border cooperation within the ERDF programme North Netherlands 2021-2027.

The policy instrument to be improved is the ERDF Programme 2021-2027 Northern Netherlands. Within this programme, cross-border working is an integral part of the approach aimed at smart specialisation. The 'what-question' in this policy instrument is therefore clear. The lessons learned within REPLACE project are used to answer the 'how-question': how do we promote cross-border working with the use of ERDF funding? With a focus on cross-border working within the circular economy transition.

## 3. **Players involved** (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

Province of Fryslân: executing the pilot action. The Province has a direct capacity to influence policy instrument, since its core task and competence is policy making. We are directly involved in the development of the ERDF programme.

Circular Friesland Association: the regional network organization of organizations (mainly business) working on the transition towards a circular economy. Circular plastics is one of the themes the association is working on. Therefore they represent the needs of the business society in the project.

Northern Netherlands Alliance (SNN): SNN is the managing authority of the ERDF programme North Netherlands 2021-2027.

## 4. **Timeframe**

The implementation of this action already started in parallel to Phase 1 of the REPLACE project, and continues into the monitoring phase. For the implementation of the action we rely on the approval of the ERDF programme which is expected in September 2022. The timeline of the actions is as follows:

Phase 1 REPLACE project	Learning – see previous section on <i>the background</i>
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	<p><i>Local analysis</i> All of the participating regions executed a local analysis of their circular economy potential. Fryslân identified opportunities within water, education and plastics.</p> <p><i>Cross regional synergies</i> Regions of Hamburg, Centro and Fryslân identified a common strength in circular plastics. Further exploration on possible international value chains and knowledge exchange</p> <p><i>Funding instruments</i> Common learning about possible funding instruments for cross border exchange</p> <p><i>Circular Benchmark Tool</i> Regions for cross border exchange identified both inside and outside the REPLACE consortium</p>
January 2021 – December 2021	ERDF programme North Netherlands 2021-2027 is being developed based on RIS3 strategy. Circular economy and interregional cooperation are both important elements of the programme. In December 2021, the programme is handed to the European Commission for formal decision making. Concurrently, revisions have been made on basis of feedback European Commission.
September 2022	Expected start of the ERDF programme North Netherlands 2021-2027
September 2022 – December 2023	In Phase 2 of REPLACE project, meetings with partner regions Centro and Hamburg to further explore cross border cooperation on circular plastics.
September 2022 – December 2023	Two regional stakeholder meetings to gather input for design of voucher scheme
December 2023 – May 2023	Design of common voucher scheme to support local beneficiaries within the circular plastics value chain to develop, test and exchange innovative ideas. And to connect local expertise, knowledge, ideas and SMEs from the participating regions
January 2023 – May 2023	Parallel meeting with the managing authority to discuss the design of the voucher scheme. Discuss possible funding of the designed voucher scheme by REPLACE partners under the new ERDF programme.
May 2023 – July 2023	<p>Early May 2023: Capture the lessons learned from designing and executing the pilot action with the ERDF programme and share these with the managing authority and regional stakeholders in a stakeholder meeting.</p> <p>End of June 2023: The lessons are saved in a document and submitted to the programme to be used for the further operationalization of the ERDF programme.</p> <p>July 2023: Expected decision on next steps and funding by the programme</p>

## 5. Costs

Staff costs	Further explore cross border cooperation on circular plastics. Design of common voucher scheme to support local beneficiaries within the circular plastics value chain	20% of time for 12 months	€22.000
Staff costs	Parallel meetings with the managing authority to discuss outcome and lessons learned.	20% of time for 12 months	€22.000
Voucher scheme	Voucher scheme for cross border cooperation within circular economy		€50.000

## 6. Funding sources

Staff costs: inkind contribution Province of Fryslan

Voucher scheme: ERDF programme 2021-2027 Northern Netherlands

**Date:** July 15, 2022

**Organisation:** Province of Fryslan, Economic and European Affairs Department

**Signature:**

