

COLOR CIRCLE

*The circular economy,
shared*

- ↪ Project outcomes
- ↪ Perspectives
- ↪ Future prospects



Environment
& resource
efficiency



**COLOR
CIRCLE**
Interreg Europe



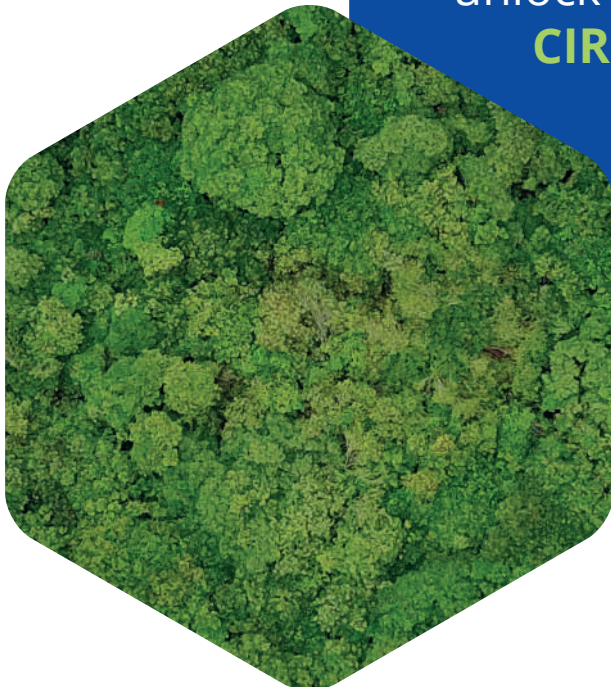
European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



What does
the project stand
for?



COLOR CIRCLE is all about
COnnecting and empowering
LOcal authorities with
REsearch capacities to
unlock the full potential of
CIRCular economy.



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"We are 6 partners from 5 European countries (regional authorities, development agencies and universities) working on improving public policies. We share experiences of cooperation between local authorities and researchers that help develop circular economy."



PROJECT AND PROGRAMME

According to Eurostat...

"A circular economy aims to maintain the value of products, materials and resources for as long as possible by returning them into the product cycle at the end of their use, while minimising the generation of waste. The fewer products we discard, the less materials we extract, the better for our environment. This process starts at the very beginning of a product's lifecycle: smart product design and production processes can help save resources, avoid inefficient waste management and create new business opportunities."





The project and programme in a nutshell

About the project

COLOR CIRCLE's mission is to unlock the full potential of the circular economy (CE) by reinforcing the role and capacities of local authorities and strengthening their cooperation with local research communities. This booklet describes the project's journey, its partners, contributors, milestones, and achievements along the way.

Launched as an **Interreg Europe project** in 2019, COLOR CIRCLE brought together **six partners from five countries**, including regional and local councils, public development agencies and universities: **HESAM Université (FR)** and the **Regional Council of Bourgogne-Franche-Comté (FR)**, the **County Council of Granada (ES)**, **Van Hall Larenstein University** from Northeast Friesland (NL), the **Regional Development Agency of Centru (RO)**, and the **Central Bohemian Innovation Center (CZ)**.

The partners identified and mobilised stakeholder groups in each of the five partner regions to **create new forms of collaboration**. Project partners held regular meetings and organised study visits to share their knowledge and expertise while building up a body of **'good practices'** covering regional policies and activities that benefit the circular economy, including methodology, key players, challenges, and solutions.

Many of these experiences are included in this booklet and a good practice guide has been produced for other regions and the Interreg Community to draw on in the future.

The **Good Practice Guide** elaborated by COLOR CIRCLE includes several innovative initiatives on circular economy that have inspired partners from their exchanges in 2019-2022, from helping doctoral students in public administration studies to better engage in environmental subjects, to stimulating circular economy principles in everything from agriculture to food retailing.

About Interreg Europe

Interreg is a key European Union Cohesion Policy instrument for supporting cooperation across borders through project funding. Its aim is to tackle common challenges and find shared solutions in fields, such as **health, environment, research, education, transport, sustainable energy, and more**. Drawing on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Interreg is invested in **cooperation programmes** (cross-border, transnational, and interregional) responsible for managing project funding. Interreg Europe had a budget of MEUR 359 between 2014 and 2020.

COLOR CIRCLE's focus on the circular economy was a clear match with Interreg Europe's interregional cooperation mission which increasingly supports projects at the crossroad between the environment, research and innovation, and local development.



COLOR CIRCLE in numbers

Transforming Europe's economy into a circular economy is a mammoth task requiring not only cross-sectoral input but also interregional cooperation. Yet, the process starts locally. Each country, each region, faces a series of challenges on the way to a circular economy and must develop new approaches to overcome these challenges in a way that fosters cooperation between the research community and local authorities.

These approaches can serve as a blueprint for regional actors in partner countries. **COLOR CIRCLE**, an Interreg Europe project, underlined not only the importance of cross-sectoral cooperation but also cooperation among regions in the European Union.



6 partners



50 local meetings



5 countries
(France, Czechia, Romania, Spain, the Netherlands)



80 beneficiaries



20 cross-border meetings



15 good practices



5 interregional learning events



5 action plans



Partner summaries

HESAM Université, France

HESAM UNIVERSITÉ

HESAM Université is a French federal university with the national status of a public scientific, cultural, and professional institution (EPSCP). It is made up of **14 French higher education institutions** forming educational, research and corporate networks in several disciplines, including architecture and engineering. HESAM Université, whose campuses span the entire French territory, maintains close ties with regional authorities and local governments.

HESAM Université led the project proposal with the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté region and is acting as the **lead partner** for COLOR CIRCLE, contributing its **capacity of coordination**, and its expertise in **cooperation between research, regions, and local communities**. Born from the need to strengthen the connection between research and public authorities at the regional level and to enable the circular economy, it created the **"1000 doctoral students for the territories"** programme. Not only is the programme recognised as a good practice within COLOR CIRCLE, but it was also instrumental in the development of the project itself.

Concerning research and circular economy, HESAM Université and its members meet the sectors identified by the European Commission as being particularly relevant for the circular transition through **6 chairs**: EFF&T and "le logement demain" Chairs at ENSAPLV, Kering Fashion Sustainability Chair at IFM, ESSOR Chair dedicated to the city of the future and circular economy at CESI, Urban Mines Chair at ENSAM. These chairs focus on textiles, construction and buildings, packaging, plastics with a circular economy approach.

Region of Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, France

RÉGION BOURGOGNE FRANCHE COMTÉ

Situated between Paris, Lyon and Strasbourg in France and sharing borders with Switzerland and Germany, the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté region is native not only to vineyards, mountains and canals but also to numerous industries such as metallurgy, aeronautics, and digital technology, to name but a few. The region is 47.783 km² wide with 2.805.580 inhabitants. Its unique geography and myriad industries are further enhanced by university and its myriad research centres.

With its high quality of life and its research and innovation capabilities, **the region is developing the technologies of tomorrow and has become fertile ground for start-ups and thus for the circular economy**, making it a strong partner in the COLOR CIRCLE project. Its circular economy project booster exemplifies the regional dynamism in this area.

The role of the Region is to **encourage the emergence of initiatives**, to support them, including with research and innovation resources, to **initiate virtuous changes**, to **implement intelligent and flexible devices** so that rural areas and rural people can innovate, invent and contribute to the general interest and the common good.





Central Bohemian Innovation Center, Czechia



The Central Bohemia Region, consisting of 12 districts and 1.144 municipalities, is located in the centre of Czechia and, with an area of 10.928 km², is the largest region in the country, bordering only domestic regions, including the capital Prague. Its population amounts to 1.123.931 inhabitants.

Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is the second highest in the country, thanks to the region's strong agricultural sector, which benefits from the fertile soils of the northeast, and strong industry, including companies of national importance. Academic institutions add to the strength of the region.

So far, circular economy principles have been considered mainly in the **region's waste management strategy** for the period 2016 to 2025 and the **Research and Innovation Strategy for the Smart Specialisation of Central Bohemia (RIS3)** with input from the Central Bohemian Innovation Center (SIC). Established in 2015, SIC, the region's agency for innovation and local development, counts **30 research institutions and universities and more than 2.000 innovative companies**. SIC participates in the COLOR CIRCLE project with its inspiring "online course on circular public procurement".

Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands



Van Hall Larenstein University (VHL), based in Northeast Friesland, the Netherlands, offers study programmes in agriculture, food and flowers, where the Netherlands is the number one in Europe. High-quality applied research is at the heart of VHL. That is why it relies on its **20 applied research groups, which mainly focus on sustainable innovations in the areas of nature conservation and land and water use, biodiversity, food security and transition to a bio-based circular economy**.

Northeast Friesland, the province where VHL is located, is a small province with 650.000 inhabitants, covering an area of 869 km². Agriculture is the main economic activity, but there are also 20.000 businesses, most of which are SMEs. The region's suitability for the sharing economy is explained by a culture of **cooperation between research institutes and local authorities**, and industry-leading knowledge on topics such as **water technology, recycled plastics, and agri-food**.

Based on these principles and the entrepreneurial spirit of its residents, especially in relation to the circular economy, **the Province of Northeast Friesland promotes the circular economy through the Acceleration Agenda and has commissioned VHL to run the Circular Economy Field Lab (Fjildlab) in the province**, which is a good practice of COLOR CIRCLE.





PROJECT AND PROGRAMME

Regional Development Agency Centru, Romania



Composed of the six counties of Alba, Braşov, Covasna, Harghita, Mureş, Sibiu, the Centru Region is located in the centre of Romania, covering the central and southern part of the well-known historical province of Transylvania (2.251.268 inhabitants, 34.082 km² area).

Its eponymous Regional Development Agency Centru (RDA Centru), a non-governmental organisation acting as a bridge between private and public organisations, has been tasked with supporting the economic development of the region and providing solutions to local challenges. RDA Centru is also a managing authority of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

Integrating the circular economy has become a defining element of Centru Regional Development Plan, the main planning document at the regional level. Faced with numerous obstacles, such as the lack of awareness of the sharing economy among local authorities and urban policies that focus on the built environment rather than citizen empowerment, **RDA Centru joined COLOR CIRCLE with its circular plastic waste management solution** tested in Alba Iulia. COLOR CIRCLE has led to a better understanding of circular economy principles, governance, the full potential of local resources and concrete measures to improve prosperity in the region.

County Council of Granada, Spain



Encompassing 174 municipalities, the County Council of Granada is the governing body of the Province of Granada, located in south-eastern Andalusia. Its territory is characterised by some of the highest peaks on the Iberian Peninsula and a subtropical coastline, coupled with a vast array of cultural and heritage sites, as well as predominantly rural areas. Its territory, spanning 12.531 km², is home to 914.338 inhabitants.

The Provincial Council has an urban agenda for the province and supports the municipalities and their associations in the elaboration and implementation of urban agendas guided by the framework of the European Urban Agenda. Thanks to COLOR CIRCLE, **these agendas are based on projects that build on the university's knowledge and focus on the circular economy.** Making this information more accessible to local institutions will allow them to play a greater role in introducing the circular economy approach. The communities receive students in their final year of study who design projects tailored to the needs of the region. They have previously been trained in several key areas, including circular economy issues. The University of Granada and the Provincial Council of Granada have reached an agreement to work more closely together and link research and territory through information systematisation tools and working group tables.

The County Council of Granada contributed to COLOR CIRCLE with several good practices, including **Ecopark**, a benchmark for inclusive recycling.

PARTNERS IN ACTION

Action plans document how the lessons learnt from the cooperation will be implemented to improve the policy instrument COLOR CIRCLE addressed within the region. It specifies the nature of the actions to be implemented, their timeframe, the stakeholders involved, the costs and funding sources as well as the way the action derives from the project.





HESAM Université

HESAM UNIVERSITÉ

Good practice shared: *1000 doctoral students for the territories*

In line with the desire to build bridges between public bodies and academic institutions, a founding principle of COLOR CIRCLE, HESAM Université launched the state-funded “1000 doctoral students for the territories” programme, an initiative that has helped to increase the employment of doctoral students in the humanities in local public authorities. This programme has been the object of a transfer of knowledge between HESAM Université and the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté region as well as the County Council of Granada.

Read our [Good Practices Guide](#) for more stories like these.

Action plan

Mission:

As a lead partner in COLOR CIRCLE, HESAM is committed to strengthening research links between universities and authorities at the local and regional levels to lay the groundwork for the sharing economy. HESAM Université has been particularly involved in the design and implementation of the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté policy instrument since the first phases of the project.

Goals:

The research laboratory LaBoMaP (Laboratoire Bourguignon des Matériaux et Procédés) has been particularly involved in the COLOR CIRCLE project. LaBoMaP is a research lab of Arts et Métiers, Institute of Technology (ENSAM). This engineering school is a member of HESAM Université. Its activities focus on manufacturing processes, especially the machining of wood in the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté region. In COLOR CIRCLE, researchers from LaBoMaP have exchanged with European entrepreneurs, associations, and universities about the process of recovering wood in the short supply chain.

For more information, please see “**A collaborative approach to seeing the wood for the trees**” on page 28.





"The COLOR CIRCLE project exemplifies the role higher education institutions can play with local and regional authorities. At the time of submission in 2019, it was intended as a bridge between researchers and policymakers. We aim to facilitate exchanges between research laboratories within the HESAM community, which had already tested solutions in various areas: agriculture, textile, food and local policy. LaBoMaP, at Arts et Métiers Cluny, a major player involved in the use of local wood in short production chains, was asked to participate due to its scientific expertise in the transformation of primary resources and its recognised cooperation with local authorities. LaBoMap took part in several exchanges of good practices between partners aimed at improving the processing of local wood and better understanding its potential for the production of local products (construction and carpentry)."

Michel Terré
President
HESAM Université



PARTNERS IN ACTION

The Bourgogne-Franche-Comté region

**RÉGION
BOURGOGNE
FRANCHE
COMTE**

Good practice shared:

The circular economy project booster

Since 2018 the Regional Council of Bourgogne-Franche-Comté in collaboration with the regional branch of the State Agency for the Ecological Transition (ADEME), has organised an annual call for proposals to support local authorities, public and private organisations in the development of their circular economy-related projects, which are part of the regional policy for circular economy. The funds can be used for project leadership, studies, or investment. The selection criteria are based on the innovative potential of the project: its contribution to reducing resource consumption, its local impact, and its replicability.

Action plan

Mission:

The circular economy is a transversal approach, whose development implies the reinforcement of all the strategies carried and developed by the Regional Council. The action plan of the region aims to strengthen partnerships between local authorities and the research community to deploy the sharing economy in the future. It is guided by the Regional Planning and Equality of Territories Scheme (SRADDET), which gives local departments leeway in implementing measures to achieve the region's strategic goals.

Programme and priorities:

The Regional Circular Economy Roadmap (FREC) is the operational and active part of SRADDET. It works together with the Regional Energy Transition Strategy and the Regional Waste Prevention and Management Plan (PRGD), to save resources and raw materials.

Goals:

The region is monitoring initiatives that can contribute to the FREC action for research and innovation. This monitoring helps to develop a more systematic approach, similar to the one employed by Fjildlab in Friesland, which is developing a way to organise the circular economy at the regional level. COLOR CIRCLE's good practices methodology allowed the region to respond to some of its most pressing challenges. The Bourgogne-Franche-Comté region hosts a large research community in the field of ecological and energy transition. The promotion of research and innovation is one of the most important areas of transition to support the relevant sectors on their way to maturity and competitiveness. Regional policy can also evolve through the actions of local actors. It is therefore important to strike a balance between the support of local projects through regional policy and the ongoing contribution of local initiatives and innovations to this policy.

Read our [Good Practices Guide](#) for more stories like these and see our Storytelling section 'A collaborative approach to seeing the wood for the trees' on page 28.



"We adopted a regional public policy for the circular economy in June 2020 called 'Regional Roadmap for the Circular Economy', which is guided by four strategic lines:

- ↪ *Creating the conditions for the diffusion of the circular economy in the region.*
- ↪ *Working with local actors to develop a territorial circular economy and promote responsible consumption and practices.*
- ↪ *Engaging the regional economy to conserve resources and produce sustainable goods.*
- ↪ *Setting an example by dividing the resource footprint of the regional authority by 4."*

**Download
the full
action plan**

Stéphanie Modde,
Vice-president in charge of
ecological transition: energy,
biodiversity, food, circular
economy, water
The Regional Council of
Bourgogne-Franche-Comté



PARTNERS IN ACTION

Central Bohemian Innovation Center



Good practice shared: *The catalogue of construction waste and recycled products*

The catalogue provides stakeholders with a list of possible uses for construction materials so that end users can choose recycled content over raw materials. The University Centre of Energy Efficiency Buildings aims to set a market standard and communicate the advantages of recycled content over raw materials. The catalogue contains two sections: an overview of secondary raw materials and recycled products, as well as legal requirements, relevant regulations, standards, and test procedures for the application of recycled products in practice.

Read our [Good Practices Guide](#) for more stories like these.

Action plan

Mission:

The action plan complements the Central Bohemia Regional Strategy by providing principles for the implementation of circular economy projects in the public and private sectors. This is done through consultation with regional stakeholders, application of the Good Practices Methodology prescribed by the COLOR CIRCLE project and monitoring by the Central Bohemian Innovation Center (SIC).

Programme and priorities:

The measures are based on regional policy instruments, including the Central Bohemia Regional Development Strategy 2019-2024 and the Research and Innovation Strategy for the Smart Specialisation of Central Bohemia (RIS3 Strategy). These local policies are being developed on the basis of the Circular Economy Action Plan under the auspices of the European Green Deal. Three main priorities have been identified:

- People for Innovation,
- Competitive and Innovative Businesses,
- Quality Public Research and its Benefits for the Region's Development.

Goals:

The action plan introduces the SIC Platinn for Circular Economy programme as a complement to the existing SIC Platinn programme, where regional entrepreneurs can access advisory services in areas of business development, organisation, cooperation, and finances. Equally, the circular economy theme will be an integral part of the RIS3 policy and will offer specialised guidance, coaching and mentoring services. The Central Bohemian innovation Center is monitoring the action plan's implementation.

Two good practices of COLOR CIRCLE partners served as inspiration for the action plan: "Circular itineraries using biomimetic canvases" - a service for SMEs supporting their uptake of circular economy principles, developed in the province of Granada and "the circular economy project booster: a regional call for proposals to support local CE projects", originally implemented in the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté region.

HARMONOGRAM PROJEKTU



PARTNERS IN ACTION

Fáze 1

- 1. 8. 2019 – 31. 7. 2022
- Zaměřena na výměnu zkušeností a přípravu akčního plánu
- Celkem realizováno 5 mezinárodních setkání (InterRegional Learning Events - IRLE), kde dochází k výměně zkušeností
- Pravidelně min. 1x za 6 měsíců se koná setkání expertní skupiny (Regional Stakeholder Group)

Fáze 2

- 1. 8. 2022 – 31. 7. 2023
- Implementace akčního plánu

Download
the full
action plan

"... we have managed to open up the topic of circular economy with municipalities and to renew the working group for waste management, where we share examples of good practices and focus on sustainable waste management."

Jana Skopalíková
Regional Councillor for the
Environment and Agriculture
Central Bohemian Region



PARTNERS IN ACTION

Van Hall Larenstein University



**van hall
larenstein**
university of applied sciences

Good practice shared: *'Fjildlab', fieldlab for implementing circular agriculture in Northeast Fryslân*

The "Fjildlab", a field laboratory dedicated to the implementation of the circular economy in Northeast Fryslân, contributes to an economically lean and ecologically responsible agriculture in Northeast Fryslân that strives to be as circular as possible. The Fjildlab (Living Lab) is structured as a quadruple helix in which the private sector environment, authorities, NGO sector and academia work together to find specific solutions for the circular economy. The "Fjildlab" relies particularly on cooperation between local authorities and stakeholders. The Living Lab aims to improve system understanding, product knowledge and quality, and knowledge of agricultural practices in connection with all conceivable technologies.

Read our [Good Practices Guide](#) for more stories like these and see our Storytelling section "**Knowledge-sharing, a fast-track to good practices**" on page 30.

Action plan

Mission:

The purpose of the action plan is to support and implement local policy on circular economy in Northeast Friesland. To achieve this goal, the University and the Region rely on cooperation between local stakeholders and the improvement of purpose-driven policy instruments. Regular meetings with regional stakeholders are organised and complemented by liaising sessions with COLOR CIRCLE partners. Based on "Agenda Netwerk NoordOost, (ANNO) I and II" and inspired by the lessons learnt from COLOR CIRCLE, this will contribute to the improvement of local policy instruments and objectives that will ultimately inform the third iteration of ANNO III. The tasks under the "Green and Blue" theme of ANNO III are dedicated particularly to regional development in the areas of climate adaptation, new agriculture, and biodiversity.

Programme and priorities:

The actions taken in Northeast Fryslân aim to fulfil the objectives of the ANNO III action plan, which will run from 2022 to 2025. Concrete objectives under the ANNO III Green and Blue theme are:

- Participate in inter-administrative actions and link to ongoing initiatives.
- Reinforce cohesion in the region, including in terms of goals.
- Work towards a territorial agreement with landowners.



Goals:

The regional stakeholder group in North Friesland has identified the following actions for its action plan.

1. A contract for eco-services provided in the agricultural landscape: The agricultural sector believes that agriculture can make an important contribution to achieving regional goals. Reason enough for three important stakeholder groups, the agricultural collectives, Noardlike Fryske Wâlden, Groningen-West and Central Groningen, to develop an approach that integrates nature and circular economy principles, so that after 40 years the goals of soil quality, clean water and clean air can be achieved at last.

2. Project vouchers to promote the circular economy: The action aims to structure the existing governance organisation to eventually implement a long-term programme of small-scale projects on innovative, nature-inclusive, or circular methods with individual farmers/landowners.

Download
the full
[action plan](#)

*"Soil is the only place
where actual recycling
takes place"*

Theo Mulder
owner of
Mulder Agro

*"Agriculture is the
foundation of our
circular bioeconomy."*

Emiel Elferink,
Applied Research
Professor
Van Hall Larenstein
University



PARTNERS IN ACTION

Regional Development Agency Centru



Regional
Development
Agency
Centru

Good practice shared:

Smart circular economy solution for the management of plastic wastes in Alba Iulia, Romania

This solution aims to improve the plastic packaging waste chain using a circular economy approach. Citizens were involved in separating waste and disposing of it in the right container. The project involved authorities, innovators, local business, and citizens. An advanced IT and IoT-based approach was used to encourage citizens to sort more and improve the quality of their sorting. The process is in line with the EU Waste Framework Directive.

Read our [Good Practices Guide](#) for more stories like these.

Action plan

Mission:

The action plan identifies solutions for better implementing circular economy actions in small urban areas of Romania's Centru Region. This is achieved by improving policy instrument(s) and supporting developments based on identified good practices and needs at the regional level.

Programme and priorities:

Regional Development Agency Centru's action plan is primarily based on the Regional Operational Programme 2021-2027 for Centru Region (Priority Axis 3) and takes into account several activities from the Regional Operation Programme 2014-2020, the European Green Deal, Circular Economy Action Plan and NextGenEU initiatives.

Specific objectives under Priority Axis 3 are:

- Promoting energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Improving the protection of nature and biodiversity, green infrastructure, especially in urban areas, and reducing pollution.

Goals:

A key component of its action plan was the Urban Living Lab, an 'experimental' form of governance that facilitates innovative and visionary thinking. A Circular Urban Living Lab captures the idea of a lab designed to strengthen the circular economy. Based on this concept, the action plan aims to set up five regional working groups, involving the quadruple helix organisations to provide a background for a strategic Circular Urban Living Lab project and ensure that an idea generator is developed at the regional level. The Circular Urban Living Lab was inspired by the Dutch Fjildlab, a living lab for strengthening circular economy and sustainable agriculture in North-East Friesland.

See our Storytelling section "[Knowledge sharing - a fast track to good practice](#)" on page 30.

Download
the full
[action plan](#)

"COLOR CIRCLE is a project which shows us that implementing the circular economy is quite simple- all you need is ambition and dedication. The examples presented within the project demonstrated once again that there are many ways of exploiting the resources sustainably and that knowledge and innovation play an important role in creating added-value products. The best way to build circularity models is to start from the local specificities and characteristics, and to use the existing resources, and, why not, even the customs that are imprinted in the identity of communities"

Simion Cretu
General Manager
Regional Development
Agency Centru



County Council of Granada



Good practice shared: *Ecopark, an inclusive recycling benchmark*

The Ecopark is premised on circular and inclusive economic activities: people with special needs are integrated into the labour market through recycling actions. Using the recycling plant as a starting point, activities have been diversified and have been promoting changes, both in the environmental education of specific groups and in general awareness of recycling as well as labour inclusion.

Read our [Good Practices Guide](#) for more stories like these.

Action plan

Mission:

The action plan defines how the County Council of Granada will implement circular-economy principles in its local area, underpinned by the adaptation of the “Urban Agenda” and Policy Learning Practices (PLP) to the local context. Chiefly, this will be accomplished by identifying local needs and working closely with the local research community as well as local and supra-institutional actors.

Programme and priorities:

Actions in the Granada Province aim to create local development policy instruments allowing for circular economy principles to be implemented in the future. The Granada Urban Agenda corresponds with the need to adapt the Spanish Urban Agenda to the local context, while supporting local municipalities in implementing it. It is a strategy aimed at all public and private agents that seek balanced, fair, and sustainable development from their respective fields. The different actors should develop their own action plans that determine how they want to and can implement the objectives of the agenda; in this sense the County Council of Granada performs a double action:

- As an advisory body to local authorities, it supports those municipalities that wish to do so in implementing their own action plans and advises them on their implementation.
- It carries out a specific action plan at the provincial level in its area of competence and geography.





Action plan:

To implement its action plan and analyse the local feasibility of measures, the County Council of Granada's technical team formed a local stakeholder group (RSG), which includes the University of Granada. All activities undertaken by the local stakeholder group, especially the analysis of reference good practices from other European regions, are geared towards building local governance capacity to implement circular economy principles locally.

As part of its action plan, the Provincial Council of Granada has adapted the programme "1000 doctoral students for the territories», created by HESAM Université, to the local context under the name "Puentes" (Bridges). Puentes focuses on Master students and allows them to intern at local municipalities during the last 6 months of their degree. Within the Local Urban Agenda of municipalities, students receive training in local development and the principles of the circular economy. The objective of this programme is to match the research needs of academic institutions, especially the University of Granada, with the priorities of local territories. It contributes to the development and implementation of a comprehensive knowledge transfer model to promote the circular economy locally.

"The COLOR CIRCLE project has meant rethinking our way of working: it's a useful opportunity to connect research teams with the needs of the territory."

Ana Muñoz Arquelladas
Deputy for Employment
and Sustainable
Development
Granada County Council

Esteban Romero Frías,
Director of the
Participation and Social
Innovation Lab
University of Granada

"COLOR CIRCLE has arrived in Granada at the best moment when we are planning our provincial urban agenda in which the circular economy will play an essential role."

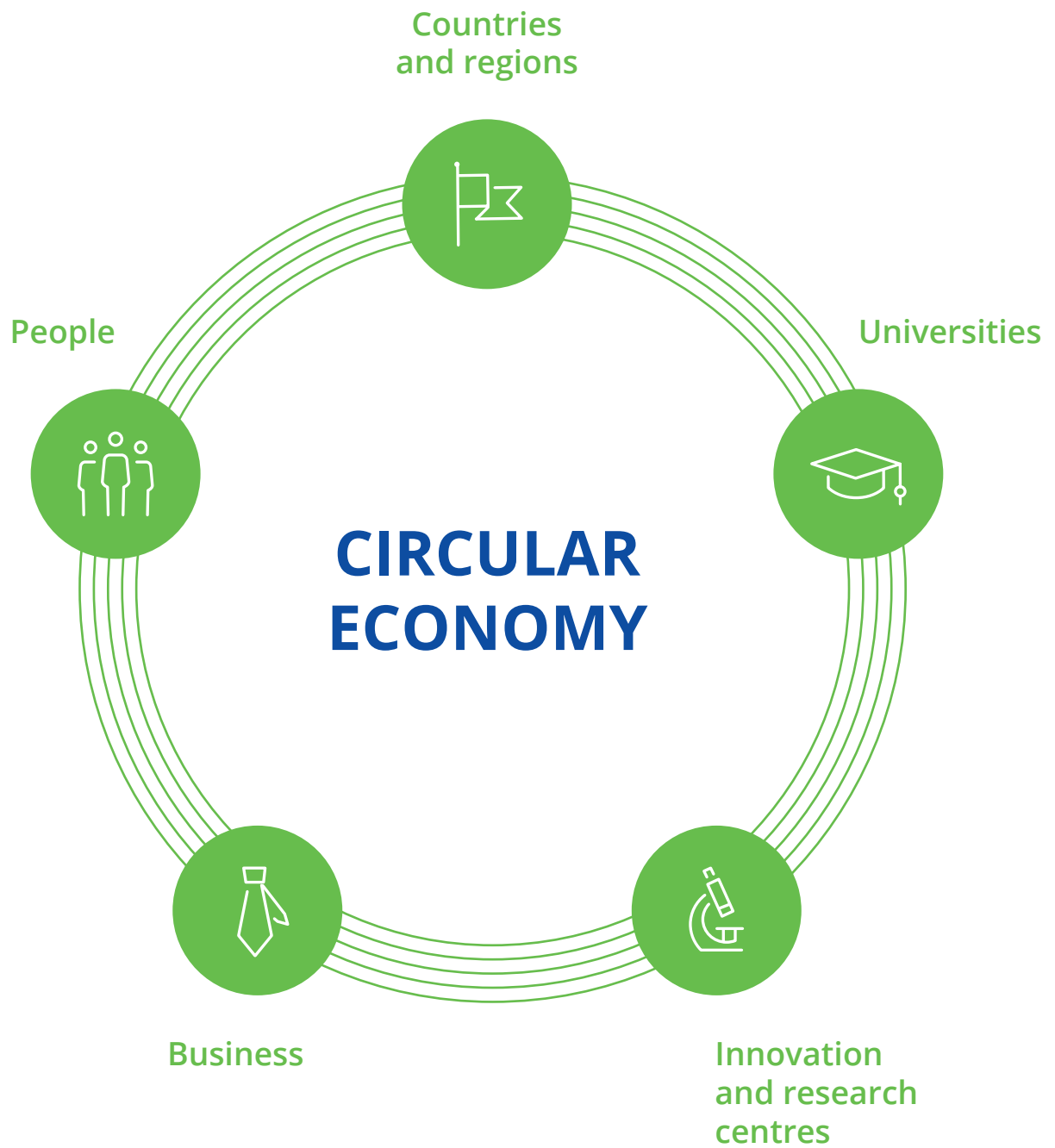
José Entrena Ávila
President of the
Provincial
Granada County

**Pilar Aranda
Ramírez**
Rector of the
University of
Granada

**Salvador del Barrio
García**
Vice – Rector of
Institutional Policy
and Planning
University of
Granada



PARTNERS IN ACTION



CIRCULAR STORIES

This section features stories of partners transforming their economies from linear to circular and adopting inspiring solutions from other regional partners to address local challenges.





How cities and regions in the EU are reducing their carbon footprint

COLOR CIRCLE partners hosted an EU side event at COP26 entitled 'Circular economy & local governments: sustainable resource management to mitigate climate change'. The session aimed to give a better understanding of why we must shift from a linear to a circular economic model if we are to tackle climate change effectively, especially at the regional level.

On the 6th of November 2021, COLOR CIRCLE, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability and ACR+ organised the COP26 session "Circular economy & local governments: sustainable resource management to mitigate climate change". The EU side event aimed to better understand why we must move from a linear to a circular economic model if we are to effectively tackle climate change and to show the different levers available to local and regional governments to bring about this transition.

The session featured some of the main voices on the circular economy, highlighting how cities and regions in the EU are taking steps to reduce the carbon footprint in several key sectors by implementing ambitious but achievable waste prevention strategies and supporting the shift to sustainable consumption and production.

Ms Stéphanie Modde, Vice-President in charge of ecological transition: energy, biodiversity, food, circular economy, water in the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté region (FR), presented the COLOR CIRCLE project, which aims to improve regional policy through the exchange of local good practices between six European partners. Appropriately, she also introduced the "1000 doctoral students for the territories" programme, which was the lighthouse project that inspired COLOR CIRCLE.



**UN CLIMATE
CHANGE
CONFERENCE
UK 2021**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY



Common Ground is only a scan away

The Central Bohemian Innovation Center and Van Hall Larenstein University, two partners of the COLOR CIRCLE project established common ground during an interregional learning event in Leeuwarden, Friesland, on the topic of circularity.

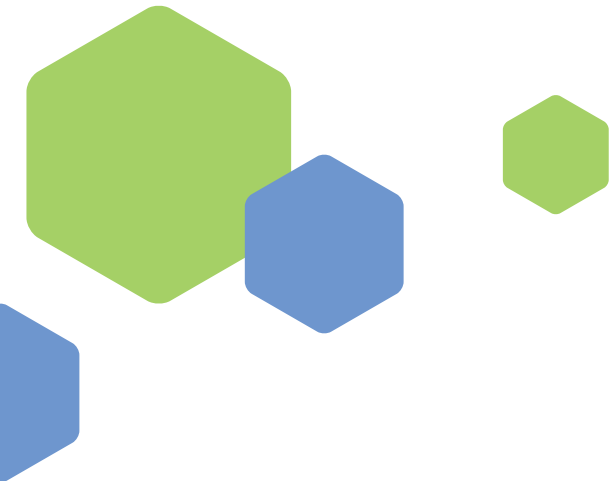
Two heads are better than one, so they say. This sentiment also rings true in the context of the circular economy, a topic requiring not only technical and cross-sectoral expertise, but also sharing of ideas among practitioners, or interested parties.

As the sharing economy represents a significant departure from our traditional linear model of material flows, enormous creativity and collective ingenuity are required to move to circularity. Rarely does this occur when stakeholders from the same context gather to exchange ideas. The missing piece to a challenge like circularity is more likely to originate from an outside source.

The meeting between the Central Bohemian Innovation Center (SIC) and VHL, University of Applied Sciences as part of Interreg Europe's COLOR CIRCLE's project was truly revelatory. During this meeting, it came to light that Friesland was employing a "resource analysis" or a circularity scan to establish a baseline for its circular economy strategy.

This approach not only happened to perfectly align with the overarching development plan of Central Bohemia, but it also helped to inform regional mapping and even future circular economy projects in the region. According to Jana Skopalíková, Regional Councillor for the Environment and Agriculture of Central Bohemian Region, the implementation of the COLOR CIRCLE project has not only helped to raise awareness of the circular economy agenda in the region, but also to create the Central Bohemia Circular Scan. This tool is expected to make a significant contribution to decision-making on projects, especially in the field of waste management.

Beyond providing SIC with a tool to uncover new opportunities to employ circular economy principles in the local context, it also strengthened the bond between these two partners.





A collaborative approach to seeing the wood for the trees

During a thematic workshop on wood and circular economy hosted as part of the COLOR CIRCLE project, regional partners from Spain and France explored ways to work together, especially on how to use their common resource, wood, and more generally, on ways to set up successful cooperation between research providers and local communities.

Where one sees problems, another sees novel opportunities, even better, shares them with others. This was the case with the forests around the town of Cluny in the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté region, which has been plagued by unsightly and worse, warped trees unfit for forestry. Enlisting the help of LaboMap at Arts et Métiers in Cluny, a member of HESAM Université, and a master student, who helped with the research, the town supported the development of an innovative logging process that made it possible to peel wood into thin sheets that could be processed into products of value, such as window frames.

It would be unfortunate to withhold this knowledge from others, especially since wood is an abundant and renewable resource in Europe in line with circular principles. Therefore, COLOR CIRCLE, via its partners HESAM Université and the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté Region, asked LaBoMaP to share their expertise with other regional partners, such as the County Council of Granada and its research partner, the University of Granada (UGR).

Strengthening regional leadership on the circular economy is at the heart of every partner of the COLOR CIRCLE project. Wood, like no other resource, embodies this importance by requiring cooperation “associated with the industry of the future, and completed with sustainable development and short supply chains approaches” according to Louis Denaud, a researcher at LaboMap. Professor Antolino Gallego, a professor at UGR who is gravely concerned about the decline of poplar groves around Granada, stresses that “wood is a core dimension in the policies of both regions to reduce the carbon footprint” and expects further cooperation between the two regions and their partners in the future. Professor Antolino Gallego from UGR explained how fast-growing forest plantations can contribute to promoting a circular and sustainable economy, thanks to their transformation into structural technical wood, a product increasingly demanded by the construction sector on its way to reducing carbon emissions. “The poplar groves of the Vega de Granada (Granada Meadow) are part of its historical landscape, but they have been on the path to extinction as a result of their under-use as packaging or biomass”, says Antolino Gallego. Therefore, the University and the Provincial Government of Granada collaborate on preserving the local poplar via the project LIFE WOOD FOR FUTURE. The results will be shared with the partners.



On the governance side of circular economy, the Granada Provincial Council built its action plan based on the “1000 doctoral students for the territories” programme, run by HESAM Université, with several successful projects in the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté region. The “1000 doctoral students for the territories” programme for local communities was one of the cornerstones of COLOR CIRCLE: it provides opportunities for matching communities and doctoral students to develop circular projects at the local level where specific expertise and research are needed and brings doctoral students closer to the field. The programme has been adapted to the context of Granada and is a structured collaboration between the Provincial Council and the University of Granada called Puentes (Bridges).

Please see page 12 for more on HESAM Université’s “1000 doctoral students for the territories” programme.

Please see page 22 for more on Granada’s programme.





Knowledge-sharing, a fast-track to 'good practices'



COLOR CIRCLE partners in Romania and the Netherlands discover new ways to learn from each other in bilateral discussions about living labs and more...

When new situations demand big changes, such as transforming the way we do things to unlock the potential of the circular economy, it is much smarter to see what already works first, to translate the lessons already learned. This is exactly what partners from Romania and the Netherlands are doing in the Interreg Europe COLOR CIRCLE project as a fast-track to circular economy developments in both regions.

One bilateral exchange between Van Hall Larenstein (VHL) University of Applied Sciences in The Netherlands, and the Regional Development Agency of Centru (RDA) in Romania has already yielded positive results for the partners. Knowledge-sharing like this is an integral part of Interreg Europe's cross-regional cooperation mission.

During the first Interregional event, in early 2020, in Friesland, the Netherlands – just before COVID-19 made travelling impossible –, VHL presented the benefits of applying modern '4-helix' open lab methodology to boost the circular economy and sustainable agricultural sector to all partners. The interest from RDA Centru was strong, and the dialogue was continued at distance for two years. As soon as travelling resumed, a bilateral meeting was organised to further learn from the Dutch good practice and prepare its inclusion in RDA Centru's action plan.

"This bilateral meeting was a very good opportunity to better understand how a living lab works and how to better design the urban circular living lab proposed in RDA Centru" noted the RDA team after the exchange.

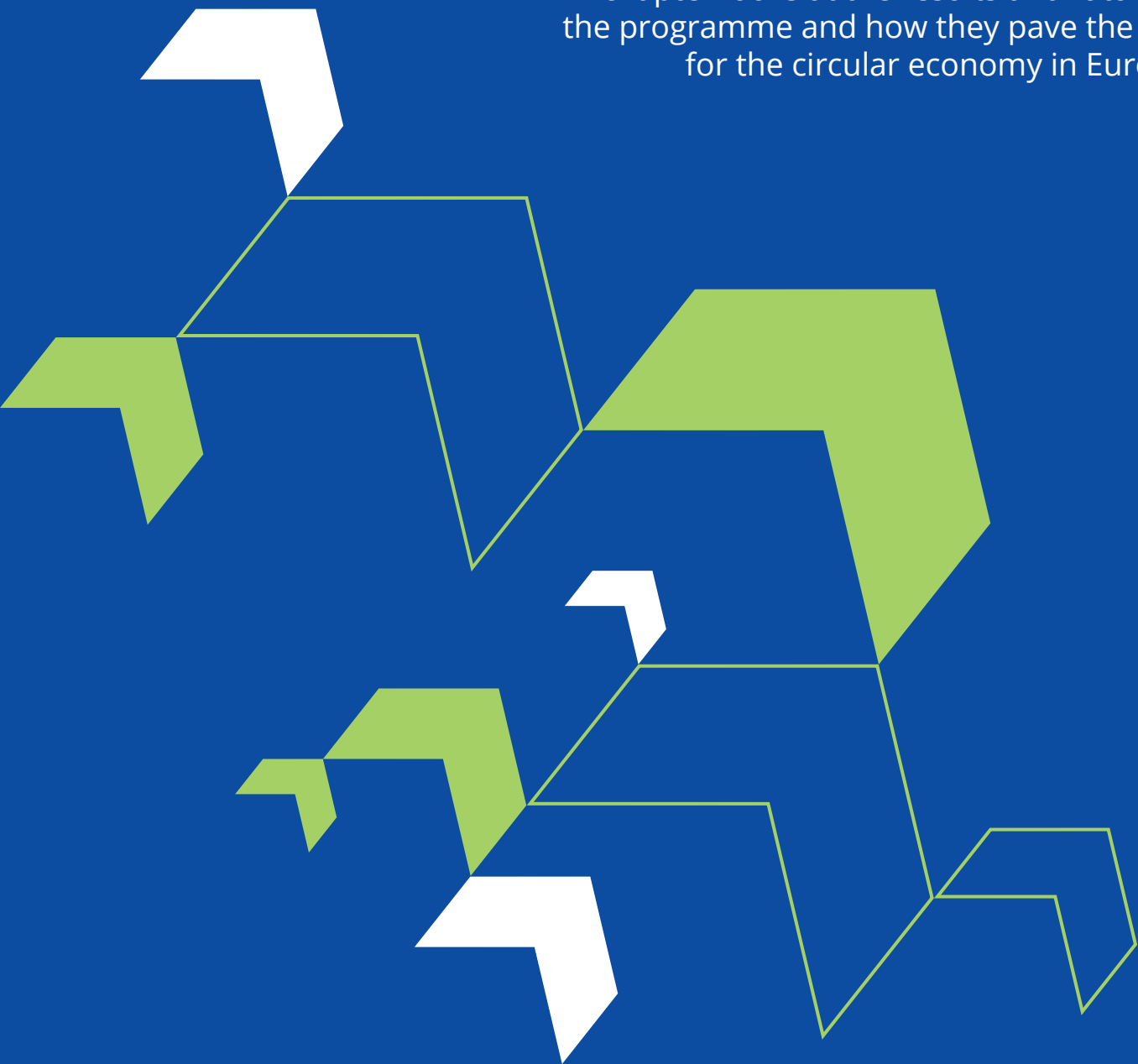
Partners shared insights with the aim of delivering clear guidance and feedback on how to implement an effective living lab even in very different regional settings. The win-win exchanges also strengthened ties and cooperation between both partners.

"The meeting with RDA Centru was very inspiring" noted the Dutch partners, concluding that this kind of meeting is useful not only because of the knowledge exchange and experience, but also because it *"leads to real partnerships"* and a stronger spirit of cooperation.

More info on the [Interreg site](#)

OUTCOMES AND FUTURE PLANS

COLOR CIRCLE aims to facilitate cross-sectoral cooperation between local stakeholders to strengthen progress on the circular economy based on the new “Action Plan for a Circular Economy for a Cleaner and More Competitive Europe” added to the European Green Deal in 2020. This chapter looks at the results and future of the programme and how they pave the way for the circular economy in Europe.





OUTCOMES AND FUTURE PLANS

Improving existent policy instruments and creating forward-momentum regionally

Without a doubt, one of the most important contributions of the COLOR CIRCLE project has been the enhancement of regional policy agendas and the forward momentum it has created as a result. In some instances, project partners had already firmly established circular economy principles in their local agendas, in others COLOR CIRCLE provided the impetus to change course or establish a new governance structure aligned with the European Green Deal.

Two principles of COLOR CIRCLE have been instrumental in improving local governance and inspiring forward action on the circular economy:

1. COLOR CIRCLE's emphasis on the sharing economy as a cross-cutting priority by strengthening cooperation between research and local communities and by empowering local authorities.
2. The exchange of good practices that highlights the wide range of levers that regional policy can use to make the circular economy a reality, from community-led research to SME-support programmes.

Accelerating Europe's Green Deal

COLOR CIRCLE, funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), has been a landmark project for the implementation of the EU Circular Economy Action Plan, which sees the circular economy as essential for achieving climate neutrality targets by 2050. By fostering new collaborations between different stakeholders on circular economy issues and disseminating them across Europe, COLOR CIRCLE has made an important contribution to embedding the European Green Deal locally while stimulating regional economies or at least creating new framework conditions for them.

Stronger Interregional cooperation through Good Practice sharing

COLOR CIRCLE is all about collaboration. At the local level, the project aims to unlock the full potential of the circular economy by strengthening the role and skills of public authorities through increased cooperation with the research community. However, the project only reaches its full potential through cross-border collaboration and sharing of good practices with other participating regional partners. The COLOR CIRCLE project has certainly led the way in effective cooperation and should be regarded as a beacon of hope inspiring further similar programmes in the future.

The project will share lessons learnt and discuss future developments at a final conference in Brussels, which is expected to take place on the 30th of March 2023.



We thank our project partners for their contributions and support!



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