

## PLASTIX deep dives into plastic circularity in Catalonia

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Interreg Europe project PLASTIX tackles the growing problem of plastic waste, its recyclability and its replaceability as part of the transition towards more sustainable, carbon free circular economy. Project is based and contributes to EU plastic strategy and EU circular economy action plan. Reasons why EU is investing plastics circularity are use of single use plastics, plastic pollution in the oceans, microplastics and low rates of plastic waste collection and recycling. Project has 8 partners from 6 countries: Finland, Italy, The Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden.

By identifying good practices and novel solutions through interregional exchange and co-creation, the project aims at helping regional policy makers to improve and create policy mechanisms which facilitate industrial transition towards a resource-efficient economy. As the main result of the project, the addressed regional policy instruments are improved to better – and faster – facilitate the shift towards a society where plastic use is sustainable. The project supports companies by improving policy instruments and strengthen co-operation and exchange practises between regional clusters, companies and innovation actors.

### Plastics ecosystem

The project aims to produce a comprehensive picture of plastics circular economy in Europe and especially in partner regions and therefore, a partner of the PLASTIX project, ACCIÓ, made a very comprehensive survey of plastics. Study covers information of the plastic manufacturing in Europe and worldwide, markets of bioplastics, forecast of plastics production, legislation supporting the change towards circular economy, and partner regions plastics ecosystems.

In Europe, 35 % plastic is sent for recycling. Recycling rates vary between different participating regions. The regions with the highest recycling rates are Catalonia, Lombardy and Savinja-Šalek. Regarding the incorporation of recycled material in new plastic products, Catalonia and Fryslân report that 25% of recycled plastic is incorporated again in the manufacture of products. Recycled content in new product application is higher in the plastics used in agriculture and construction.

According to the study, all the countries participating in the project have elaborated strategies and policies aligned with the EU directives on issues of plastics and circular economy. In the case of Finland, its plastics roadmap and the circular economy strategy and the law limiting the use of single use of plastics can be highlighted. Sweden has a strategy and action plan for a circular economy, as well as an action plan for plastics.

### Deep dive into Catalonia's plastic circularity

The second partner and stakeholder meeting was held in Barcelona 28–29 November 2023, and we heard how plastic circularity has been developed in legislation and innovation both on cluster and company level. Spain has a circular economy strategy and a law limiting the use of plastics. Spain established plastic packaging tax 0,45 euros/kg in 2022, and it is targeted ex. to non-reusable packaging that contains plastic. They also have voluntary agreements such as the bag agreement (2009) to cut down the use of plastic bags, and a circular fashion agreement (2022) to make the fashion sector more circular.

In Spain, post-consumer plastic packaging has producer responsibility, and one producer organisation scheme takes care of all the packaging collection from the households. Plastic producer responsibility is about to expand to industrial packaging, and Spain has new legislation related to it.

GCR is one of the plastic recyclers in Spain, and their Ciclic is a high-quality recycled and recyclable polyolefins product line. They produce environmentally-friendly and premium plastic pellets of rPP, rHDPE, rLDPE, and rLLDPE, resulting from upcycling waste to value-added materials keeping similar material properties as virgin plastic. Recycled plastic originates from post-industrial source but recycled plastic raw material can be used in consumer or industrial solutions and packaging.

<https://gcrplasticsolutions.com/products/>



### PLASTIX project in short

Partners: The Baltic Institute of Finland (FI) | Council of Tampere Region (FI) | Catalan Agency for Business Competitiveness (ACCIÓ) (ES) | Province of Fryslân (NL) | Faculty of Environmental Protection (SI) | Värmland - Paper Province (SE) | Intelligent Factory Lombardy Cluster (AFIL) (IT) | Development Agency of Savinja-Šalek Region (SI) <https://www.interregeurope.eu/plastix>

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PLASTIX supports the transition towards circular economy by addressing the reusability, recyclability and replaceability of plastics.