

A Plastics Circular Benchmark Tool for Regions

European regions face pressing challenges with plastic consumption, recyclability, and microplastics contributing to climate change. To accelerate the circular transition of the plastics chain, regional action is crucial. The Interreg Europe project PLASTIX with its eight partners aims at helping regional policy makers to improve and create policy mechanisms which facilitate industrial transition towards a resource-efficient economy. Therefore the Province of Fryslân on behalf of the project PLASTIX, initiated to further develop the circular benchmark tool. This time focused on circular plastics.

Spearheaded by the Province of Fryslân, a prototype benchmark tool is currently being developed to support knowledge-sharing in the regions. Originally from the Interreg Europe project Replace (www.circularbenchmarktool.eu) and Horizon Europe project Frontsh1p, this tool is tailored for circular plastic regional ecosystems and developed by ProActBlue and Rademaker Consulting. Regions can utilize this tool to grasp their specific requirements around plastics, assess their current status and enables them to measure and compare their progress, aiding strategic planning for improvement.

As observed from Figure 1, the PLASTIX CBT is developed based on the insights obtained from the PLASTIX regions and a literature deep-dive resulting in total to an overview of 270 relevant metrics for regions in relation to managing plastics.



Figure 1 – Five step approach in developing a tool for PLASTIX regions

After carefully assessing and analyzing of the 270 metrics, there are seven overarching indicators identified which are described below.

1. **Circular Procurement:** Stimulating and applying circular procurement criteria for goods with plastic substances and business/service models in the region.
2. **Access to funding:** Measures taken by the region to provide access to public/private funding for plastics eco-system partners.
3. **Circular society:** Engaging and activating society* to take responsibility for sustainable production and usage of goods with plastic substances.
4. **Value chain activation and eco-systems:** Organizing and mobilizing the circular value chains from source to product and back within the plastic eco-system.
5. **Good governance:** Operationalizing governance models to be able to execute a real circular transformation in the plastic ecosystem.
6. **Integrated policy system:** Promoting and encouraging compliance with plastic related regulatory frameworks and applying circular economy principles in the different policy domains.
7. **Plastics resources management:** Enabling and facilitating the logistics, separation and reuse of plastics sources in waste streams.

The seven indicators are evaluated at the regions using sixteen simple yes/no statements, all derived from extensive research as depicted in Figure 1. These questions are categorized into four criteria: Mapping, Planning, Doing, and Checking and Acting. Each region's assessment results in a spider chart, as illustrated in Figure 2.

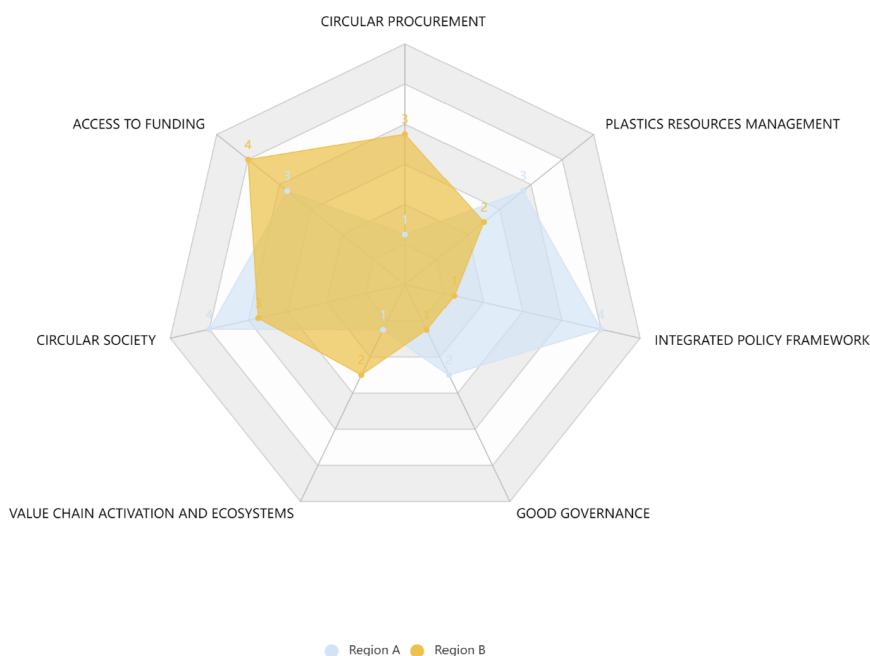


Figure 2 – Example visualized results of the assessment.

The tool's aim is to allow regions to benchmark their progress, pinpoint areas for improvement, implement changes, and exchange best practices, all with the purpose of fostering a more sustainable and circular future for plastics. The results should not be viewed

as a final verdict on regional circularity, but rather as a starting point for identifying strengths and weaknesses and developing strategies and action plans for improvement. It is important to keep in mind that the CBT tool is only a means to an end, and the real value lies in the insights gained from the assessment results.

Currently, the tool has been drafted and is tested by the various PLASTIX regions. Following their feedback, it is anticipated that several iterations are made to enhance the tool further. Consequently, the tool ready to use for all regions, allowing an acceleration of a circular economy for plastics in Europe and beyond.

Are you ready to delve into exploring how to maximize the benefits of your CBT Plastics assessment? Stay tuned for the final version launch of the prototype!