

# Policy Learning Platform on environment and resource efficiency

## Webinar brief

**CIRCULAR BUSINESS MODELS**

27 NOVEMBER 2018, 14.00-15.30 CET

# Table of Contents

Introduction ..... 3

Presentations..... 3

Key messages: ..... 3

Other relevant information ..... 4

Annex A: Agenda ..... 5

## Introduction

The Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform organised a thematic online discussion on [Circular Economy Business Models](#). The webinar was held in on 27 November 2018, 14-15.30 CET.

Resource efficiency and circular economy are increasingly relevant topics on the regional policy agenda. Since the launch of the Interreg Europe programme, 17 interregional project partnerships decided to join forces for improved resource efficiency and circular economy models. The role of businesses in the transition to circular economy is one of the key priorities tackled by the participating regions in this context. Consequently, the interactive webinar held on 27 November was designed as an opportunity to exchange on **circular economy business models (CEBMs)**, a topic that already triggered first discussions during events on circular economy and resource efficiency held by the team of the Policy Learning Platform in Brussels and Seville in the second half of 2017.

Led by Venelina Varbova and Ruslan Zhechkov, Thematic Experts for environment and resource efficiency, and moderated by Raluca Toma, Communication Manager of the Policy Learning Platform, 27 representatives of Interreg Europe project partners and other stakeholders, as well as representatives of Interreg Europe's Joint Secretariat contributed to the discussion.

The link to the webinar replay is available [here](#).

## Presentations

The webinar started with an official welcome by Raluca Toma who presented the speakers and explained the technical details of the webinar. Venelina Varbova gave an overview of the platform's activities on circular economy and resource efficiency. Complementary to her introduction, Ruslan Zhechkov provided insights into **circular business models (CEBMs) in the context of interregional learning**. The webinar continued with interventions from three partners of running interregional cooperation projects on project experiences and identified good practices:

- **Systemic Design: delivering circular business models for regions**, a [presentation](#) delivered by Ms. Carolina Giraldo Nohra, Politecnico di Torino, [RETRACE project](#)
- **FISS - Finish industrial symbiosis system**, a [presentation](#) delivered by Ms. Iida Holck, HAMK, Häme University for Applied Sciences, [SYMBI project](#)
- **Food crossing district: a systemic approach for industrial symbiosis at regional level**, a [presentation](#) delivered by Ms. Sara Picone & Mr. Ugo Mencherini, Aster/Emilia-Romagna region (Italy), [TRIS project](#)

The interventions paved the ground for an interactive discussion between the thematic experts and the four project representatives on circular business models at regional level.

## Key messages:

### Setting the frame

- Among the most urgent policy actions that need to be taken at regional level, the panellists highlighted the advancement of the **market for secondary raw materials**, improving the **regulatory framework**, as well as **supporting SMEs** to enter circular economy. Regional authorities can play a crucial role in facilitating the **cooperation between research and business sector** as exemplified by the presentation of the ERDF-funded Food crossing district. Being a tool for better decision making, the presented Systemic Design approach can be useful for other regions when designing new scenarios of economic profit and cooperation.

### ***Making the business case for circular economy***

- Key challenges that hinder further adoption of CEBMs are related to measuring profitability and financial benefits, missing exchange of information on material flow data, perception of CEBMs as well as technological and operational issues. As confirmed by participants via an online poll during the webinar, **financial challenges** are considered as most pressing for regions. Consequently, in order to overcome the current constraints, financial benefits and CEBM parameters need to be demonstrated through **concrete examples and sectoral analysis**.
- Researchers still need to study the business case for different CEBMs and their impact on economic sectors, society and the environment. However, from the presented CEBMs, **industrial symbiosis** is considered to have the **biggest potential for quick uptake** at regional level, as confirmed by 47% of the participants via a poll during the webinar. Such potential is considered lower for green (and circular) public procurement with 20%, water reuse and circular/biological streams with 13% of the votes.
- CEBMs have multiple dimensions reaching from material sourcing and production to sustainable consumption and waste management. Discussing the potential of different industrial sectors to uptake circular economy, **agri-food** was outlined as one of the most promising sectors for activating change. The Food crossing district initiative can be a positive example for other regions on how to encourage the deployment of new technological solutions in the agri-food sector and promote industrial symbiosis at regional level. At the same time, persistent challenges can be observed for the **building and construction sector**, due to unclear regulatory aspects and limited cooperation among the key actors involved.

### **Get inspired**

- Real-life regional examples have motivational power and should be widely disseminated and studied. The examples of the **Finish industrial symbiosis system and Food crossing district** could serve as an inspiration for other regions in Europe to take action. Specifically, the Finnish industrial symbiosis system can provide a helpful insight for its systematic approach to help companies and other organisations to create partnerships and new business opportunities through more efficient use of raw materials, technology, services and energy. Focusing on the agri-food sector, the Food crossing district initiative illustrates how the cooperation between research centres and businesses creates opportunities for new market products based on more efficient use of resources.

## Other relevant information

- Policy Learning Platform, Policy brief on [food waste](#)
- Policy Learning Platform, Policy brief on [industrial symbiosis](#)
- Policy Learning Platform, Policy brief on [sustainable management of bio-waste](#)
- Policy Learning Platform, Policy brief on [green public procurement](#)
- Policy Learning Platform, Policy brief on [resource efficiency](#)
- Policy Learning Platform, Article on [circular procurement](#)
- A report on [Best Environmental Management Practice for the Waste Management Sector](#) published by the European Commission's [Joint Research Centre](#)
- ESPON, Interact, Interreg Europe and URBACT, [Pathways to a circular economy in regions and cities](#), Policy brief, 2016
- EEA, [Circular by design, Products in the circular economy](#), No 06/2017, 2017
- EEA, [More from less - material resource efficiency in Europe](#), EEA Report, No 10/2016, 2016

## Circular business models



**Webinar, 27 November 2018, 14:00-15:30 CET**

*Objective of the webinar* Resource efficiency and circular economy are increasingly relevant topics on the regional policy agenda. Since the launch of the Interreg Europe programme, 17 of the ongoing projects target resource efficiency and circular economy which illustrates the growing interest of Europe's regions to move in this direction. The role of businesses in the transition to circular economy is one of the themes that is being tackled by Interreg Europe projects. The thematic focus of this interactive webinar will be on circular business models, a topic that has been highlighted during platform's events held in Brussels and Seville last year. The purpose of the webinar is to build on previous thematic exchange and facilitate interregional learning among Interreg Europe projects and other relevant stakeholders. Participants will also have the opportunity to learn about several good practices on circular business models and participate in an interactive discussion on the topic.

14:00-14:10	<b>Welcome and introduction</b> <b>Raluca Toma</b> , Communication Manager, Interreg Europe Policy learning platform <b>Venelina Varbova and Ruslan Zhechkov</b> Thematic Experts – Environment and resource efficiency, Interreg Europe Policy learning platform
14:10-14:25	<b>Circular business models in the context of interregional learning: overview of thematic issues addressed by Interreg Europe projects</b> <b>Venelina Varbova and Ruslan Zhechkov</b> Thematic Experts – Environment and resource efficiency
14:25-14:40	<b>Systemic Design: delivering circular business models for regions</b> <b>Ms. Carolina Giraldo Nohra</b> , Politecnico di Torino, RETRACE project
14:40-14:50	Good practice: <b>FISS - Finish industrial symbiosis system</b> <b>Ms. Iida Holck</b> , HAMK, Häme University for Applied Sciences, SYMBI project
14:50-15:00	Good practice: <b>Food crossing district: a systemic approach for industrial symbiosis at regional level</b> <b>Ms. Sara Picone &amp; Mr. Ugo Mencherini</b> , Aster/Emilia-Romagna region (Italy), TRIS project

15:00-15:15	<b>Panel discussion with the presenters on circular business models at regional level</b>
15:15-15:30	<b>Wrap-up and conclusions</b> <b>Venelina Varbova and Ruslan Zhechkov</b> Thematic Experts – Environment and resource efficiency

Contact:

**Venelina Varbova and Ruslan Zhechkov**

Thematic Experts – Environment and resource efficiency

---

**Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform**

[v.varbova@policylearning.eu](mailto:v.varbova@policylearning.eu)

[r.zhechkov@policylearning.eu](mailto:r.zhechkov@policylearning.eu)

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