



## Building Eusair S3 network: A push for strengthened internationalisation: Green transition in macro regions- workshop 1st PART: Building Eusair S3 network: A push for strengthened internationalisation: Green transition in macro regions- workshop

The above titled workshop was organized in the frame of Mediterranean coast and macro-regional strategies week on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September. The Even was organized in two parts: the first part organized by GODCP as the lead partner of EUSAIR Facility point and the second – afternoon part organized by Pillar one Coordinator. This report covers the first part of the event.

### Background of the chosen theme

Climate change and environmental degradation are an existential threat to the European Union and to the world. To overcome these challenges, European Green Deal is Europe's new strategy, which will transform the Union into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy. The European Green Deal aims to make Europe climate neutral by 2050, boost the economy through green technology, create sustainable industry and transport and cut pollution. Turning climate and environmental challenges into opportunities will make the transition just and inclusive for all.

But what are the measures to take the green transition? What is green transition and how is it connected to circular economy? What are the horizontal and vertical measures to foster it? What are the best practices across the region? What are the scenarios of our future with or without the green transition?

The purpose of the event is to build our capacities in terms of existing resources and generate our joint knowledge on how macro regional strategies processes could foster the green transition.

The agenda of the event was organized around a series of presentations in the first part of the morning and workshops around specific themes involving circular economy and innovation in the second part of the morning. The agenda of the workshop was as follows:

8.30-9.00	<i>Welcome coffee: Gathering at the place/connecting online</i>	
9.00-9.05	Welcoming words	<i>GODC tbc</i>
9.05-9.25	The role of Circular Economy in achieving Green Deal goals	<i>(Marjana Dermelj, GODC)</i>



	Green transition and the role of circular economy S5 in Slovenia (upgrade from S4)	<i>Gorazd Jenko (GODC)</i>
9.25-9.45	From theory to practice: Best practice examples of Circular Economy	<i>Nina Meglič (SRIP Circular Economy, Slovenia)</i>
9.45-10.00	Approaching transition to Circular Economy- case in EUSALP (Circular 4.0 project)	<i>Technology Park Ljubljana (SRIP Factories of the Future)</i>
10.00-10.15	<i>Coffee break</i>	
10.15-10.45	Promotion of circular economy initiatives in other MRS: - EUSDR (10 minutes) - EUSALP (10 minutes) - EUSBSR (10 minutes)	EUSDR, EUSALP, EUSBR, UNECE
10.45-11.00	Inspirational speech on future scenarios of EUSAIR region (Innovations and Circular Economy)	<i>ESPON TEVI 2050 project (Marko Peterlin, Institute for spatial policies)</i>
11.00-11.45	Workshop: How can we support Circular Economy within EUSAIR: - Group 1: Vertical/horizontal instruments/measures ( <i>Moderator: Nina Meglič</i> ) - Group 2: Role of the government, what is needed ( <i>Moderator: Marjana Dermelj</i> ) - Group 3: Green skills ( <i>Moderator Gorazd Jenko</i> )	<i>How can we support/motivate Circular Economy in EUSAIR Debate by the participants</i>
11.45-12.15	Presentations	
12.15-13.00	Open discussion and conclusions	
13.00-14.00	Lunch	
14.00-16.30	EUSAIR Pillar I: Innovation for Sustainable Blue Economy	Eusair Pillar 1 coordinator European Commission

Some of the more interesting points of the presentations given were:

- a.) The role of Circular Economy in achieving Green Deal goals: Green transition and the role of circular economy – Marjana Dermelj, GODCP:

- The so-called safe operating space<sup>1</sup> is mainly exceeded, and even more concerning is that lately the green water is also exceeding safe operating space.
  - The reason for exceeding safe operating space is the conflict of the two systems: socio economic vs. earth system.
  - This resulted in European Green deal, where circular economy is a vital part of the green deal.
  - Circular economy action plan places focus on sustainability of products, empowerment, focus on most resource intensive sectors, waste reduction, and circularity at regional/urban level.
  - Transition to circularity warrants for a systemic change involving all aspects of life and systemic innovation.
  - The focus of systemic innovation in Slovenia for transition to circular economy should be on: creation circular communities, fostering circular development, circular policy design.
- b.) S5 in Slovenia (upgrade from S4) - Gorazd Jenko (GODCP)
- Green transition is the main goal of the newly developed Slovenian sustainable smart specialization strategy.
  - Green transition cannot be achieved without the change in mindset, change in knowledge and skills.
  - Key enabling technologies as well as circular transition are convergent factors around all 10 priorities even if Circular economy remains a vertical priority of the S5.
  - For transition to circular economy, a unique financial and policy mix is proposed: R&D, entrepreneurship, skills, digitalization; non-financial support and innovation support.
  - International cooperation adoption of new technologies, creation of partnerships for open calls and creation of joint interregional calls creating and improving of value chains are of key importance.
- c.) From theory to practice: Best practice examples of Circular Economy - Nina Meglič, SRIP Circular Economy, Slovenia
- The structure, mission, and accomplishments of SRIP Networks for transition to circular economy was presented.
  - A specific best practice project H2GreenTech HYDROGEN CENTER which started from Interreg Slovenia-Austria and is now continuing with new financial sources towards full implementation.
- d.) Approaching transition to Circular Economy- case in EUSALP (Circular 4.0 project) – Majda Potokar, Technology park Ljubljana, (SRIP Factories of the Future)
- CIRCULAR 4.0 an Interreg Alpine space funded project was presented. The overall objective of the project is the creation of circular economy community of practitioners in Alpine space – resulting in connecting and involving 50 experts; and supporting 280 involved SMEs;

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<sup>1</sup> Acknowledging the profound anthropogenic impact on ecosystems, “safe operating space” (SOS) refers to the situation where the capacity of the planet Earth to provide life-support systems for humanity is not endangered, and the adaptive capacities of human societies might not be overburdened.

- EUSALP subgroup on circular economy: strengthen the support to SMEs from the Alpine space to accelerate the transition to circular economy – adoption of digital and advanced green technologies.
- e.) Promotion of circular economy initiatives in other MRS: EUSDR (10 minutes); EUSALP (10 minutes); EUSBSR (10 minutes) – Individual cross regional funding programmes were presented.
- f.) Inspirational speech on future scenarios of EUSAIR region (Innovations and Circular Economy) - ESPON TEVI 2050 project - Marko Peterlin, Institute for spatial policies – the conclusions of analysis and presentation of social economic ecosystem was presented as well as impact on the quality of life of humanity.
- g.) After the presentations the attendees were divided into three groups for an interactive workshop: How can we support Circular Economy within EUSAIR: Group 1: Vertical/horizontal instruments/measures (Moderator: Nina Meglič); Group 2: Role of the government, what is needed (Moderator: Marjana Dermelj); Group 3: Green skills (Moderator Gorazd Jenko).

**The conclusions of this workshop are:**

- 1. Group 1: Vertical/horizontal instruments/measures (Moderator: Nina Meglič);**
  - Needs analysis- a continuous process
  - A constant process of building up (recycling) value chains, also internationally
  - Establishing intermediate companies for handling waste, to be included in value chains
  - Cooperation is needed especially in small economies
  - Small economies also used as test beds
  - Presenting economic, social, environmental benefits (benchmarking studies) for improvement of quality of life (Raising awareness (marketing))
  - Creation of knowledge hubs - connecting experiences would be of added value
  - Results of already funded projects should be brought together, to join knowledge and experiences, also to be upgraded with needs analysis.
  - Increasing number of pilot projects of cities and companies as they have more margin of error and less risks.
  - Presenting pilot project results to the policy makers,
  - Consider circularity principles when creating spatial planning.
- 2. Group 2: Role of the government, what is needed (Moderator: Marjana Dermelj);**
  - Collaboration at all (policy) levels: Walk the talk at the political level
  - Investments needed to support transition
  - Circular Economy (CE)= objective in the programming
  - The real meaning of the word circularity should be promoted: it is about re-designing value chains, addressing entire value chain needs (not only waste management)

- Current legislation does not accelerate and even enable transition to Circular Economy (also preventing experimentation)
- Translation of requirements to the users (intermediaries) is needed
- Companies are in need for a comprehensive/good knowledge of the local legislations on circularity.
- Difficult to achieve volume of scale (the question of profitability): instruments to scale up: S3 (Smart specialization strategies) at the macro level, internationalization.
- Creation of networks, network of contacts for exchange of experience and knowledge transfer is needed to encompass circularity in vertical and horizontal measures and instruments
- Mapping of synergies and common interests between regions
- A HUB of stakeholders could be created to connect all relevant and interested parties  
Test beds for specific topics should be established and be interregional (by policy makers)
- EU green regulation: exchange of good practices, certification of companies in CE within the EU should be provided, digital passports at the EU level for waste exchange, certificates
- Streamlining and connecting financial instruments also between regions would provide for better impacts (Tax incentives)
- Capacity building should be provided for public sector (C, business models, skills, knowledge)- establishing network governance (apacity building of policymakers should also be towards green and innovative procurement)
- Circular transition should be introduced to the educational system, promotion to the public
- Cooperation with local authorities (and good practice exchange)- promoting food waste prevention at the local level

### **3. Group 3: Green skills (Moderator Gorazd Jenko):**

- Companies have interest to take circular economy principles and doctrines due to the value of the circularity in the market and for the customers
- Educational system should integrate circularity principles and transition and this should be included vertically in the whole system
- Skills training, education, values
- Focus should be put on institutionalization of existing systems, such as competence centers
- The whole society should be included in the circular transition.
- Setting the institutional framework
- Best practice examples presented, knowledge transfer
- Using S3 tools for stronger implementation



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