



# CICERONE



# PROJECT UPDATE

June 2019



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# ABOUT CICERONE

We are committed to setting priorities for the EU's circular economy agenda, performing an impact assessment of joint programming on circular economy research & innovation projects, and developing a policy toolkit to promote the priorities and foster adoption by policy-makers.



## CLOSING THE LOOP ON CIRCULAR ECONOMY PROGRAMMES AND FUNDING

CICERONE is building a joint platform for efficient circular economy programming. If our societies are to make the switch to circular practices, all actors need to be involved and actively commit to transitioning to a more sustainable economy.

This is why we work in close cooperation with a variety of practitioners including government bodies, research & technology organisations, civil society, industry, innovative SMEs, startups, cities and investors.

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# PROJECT TIMELINE

Below is a list of the main phases of the project, as well as upcoming activities stakeholders can get involved in.

TASK	MORE INFO
<b>PHASE 01</b> RESEARCH AND BENCHMARK OF CIRCULAR ECONOMY PROGRAMMES	<b>KEY FINDINGS BELOW – FULL DELIVERABLES TO BE PUBLISHED SHORTLY ON OUR WEBSITE</b>
<b>PHASE 02</b> DEFINING KEY PRIORITIES AND INNOVATION FIELDS	<b>RESULTS OF 1ST WORKSHOP</b> <b>JOIN OUR ONLINE CONSULTATION FOR PROGRAMME OWNERS</b>
<b>PHASE 03</b> JOINT PROGRAMMING PLATFORM FOR EFFICIENT CIRCULAR ECONOMY	<b>REGISTER YOUR INTEREST FOR NEXT WORKSHOPS</b>



## STATE OF THE ART – CIRCULAR ECONOMY PROGRAMMES BENCHMARK

CICERONE assessed 104 Research & Innovation projects to provide an overview of the current R&I priorities in European countries and regions,

Based on the assessment of 104 Research & Innovation (R&I) programmes, our study found that at present, R&I for circular economy in Europe overwhelmingly consists of **national programmes**, lasting on average **1 to 3 years**. The focus is predominantly on **waste or biomass**, and the most frequently addressed product life cycle phase is the **end of-life phase**.

Most funding goes towards **technology and process optimisation**, and the most frequent beneficiary sectors are the **manufacturing and water sectors**. With regard to Technology Readiness Levels (TRL), programmes are mostly **field pilots** or referred to market introduction.

When looking at the overall volume and duration of project funding, there seems to be a deficit with regard to **long-term up-scaling projects** that would bridge the gap between successful research and actual implementation on an industrial level. This challenge seems to be of specific relevance for the circular economy R&I programmes that face the necessity of **interdisciplinary cooperation** of actors from different sectors alongside the value chain; this is often related to high uncertainties and economic risks, as well as business opportunities.

Looking at the objectives and key performance indicators, the results did not really provide a consistent strategic idea of a European circular economy approach.

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The different member states and regions seem to follow different, and sometimes even contradictory strategies. And although member states and regions have very varied potentials and **framework conditions** for transformations towards a circular economy, the differences worked out in this report highlight the need for a more consistent **European R&I strategy** on circular economy.

Of course, the overall results are much more differentiated and complex. Nevertheless, this initial spotlight can point to the fact that a **consolidation of research and innovation** in the context of circular economy needs to be carefully developed, and should be more integrative with regards to resources, sectors, funded activities and beneficiaries addressed.

It can also be seen in the context of **legislation** and the development of technology and business fields - where we notice that the situation in Europe is still very fragmented and context-dependent.

A large momentum of aligned **instruments** cannot yet be observed, although most countries are now working very intensively on the development of circular economy instruments and strategies. The implementation status is very diverging.

At the same time, consumer-oriented programmes, for example in the fields of **education, training and social behaviour**, are not very high on the agenda of circular economy funding at present. Programmes tend to focus more on technology and process optimisation, indicating to potential gaps potentially arising from production-side oriented R&I in the context of circular economy.

As circular economy is an innovation agenda for the economy and the society, technology innovation has to be flanked with fundamental **social & behavioural innovation** which need to be supported too.

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## GOING CIRCULAR: WHERE SHOULD WE PUT OUR EFFORTS TO INCREASE IMPACT?

If transitioning to a circular economy means changing the entire system we live and operate in, where should we even start? CICERONE hosted a Workshop at the 2019 World Resources Forum to identify key priorities for the circular economy in the EU.



The transition to a circular economy will require maximum action on all fronts to reach our desired future scenario: becoming low-carbon and sustainable societies.

To tackle this challenge, CICERONE is developing **common priorities** for the circular economy across the EU, so that programme owners and funders know where to invest to optimise impact.

To this end, the project brought together stakeholders from the public sector, industry, academia and civil society to pinpoint priorities, needs and pathways for coordinated research and innovation around four key challenge areas: **Cities, Industry, Value Chains and Territory & Sea.**

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# PROGRAMME OWNER VIEW ON FUTURE CIRCULAR ECONOMY PROGRAMMING

In the early stages of the CICERONE project, an initial **survey** was carried out among national, regional and local policy makers, as well as mandated organisations that decide on Circular Economy programmes.

The survey provided a lot of input on **priority issues** and **international orientation**. These outcomes are currently being compared with the analysis of the performance of current circular economy programmes. The survey also gave some clear starting points for CICERONE's **joint programming platform** for circular economy. This input is translated into concrete pointers for the both the platform and strategic agenda.

## POINTERS FOR THE STRATEGIC RESEARCH AGENDA

There is a clear need among programme owners, for new resource-efficient policies, increased collaboration between actors, and more attention for a resource efficient society and education. Programme owners also ask for more attention on breakthroughs

in ICT, repair, procurement, new ways of cooperation and technologies for raw materials.

A substantial number of programme owners expressed the need for a **common strategic European vision** on the road to a circular economy transition - as a basis for research demands - as well as the design of **evidence-based** tactical interventions. This common approach, together with enhanced cooperation in the supply and consumption chain - and trust - are critical conditions for success.

There is a need to develop practical learning tools, such as a taxonomy related to circular economy, easy to understand by both the public and the institutions involved, and systematic and tailored exchange of knowledge.

A significant number of interviewees mentioned the need for extra attention towards **non-technical knowledge**, such as how to create a resource efficient society, influence behaviour and establish structural cooperation between actors.

Other needs expressed include:

- **Monitoring** mechanisms and joint vocabulary / **definitions**
- **Standards** for recycled materials, and recycling technologies
- Focus on **plastics** (also with stakeholders involved in the production of natural raw materials and the production of their substitutes)
- **Intelligent energy** and material saving construction
- Focus on **food**, especially in the context of bio-products and waste minimisation.

## POINTERS FOR THE JOINT PROGRAMMING PLATFORM

A clear majority of respondents underline the importance of a practical approach for the platform. It should provide thematic and sectoral

information to help fill in knowledge gaps between Member States, for example by providing information about past and ongoing projects in circular economy sectors.

Most respondents also plead for a **systemic approach** and cooperation in cities, national and regional circular networks and industrial chains.

The platform should build on linkages between the principles of sustainable development and circular economy, and design new policy instruments and practical tools to support circular businesses. It should also be end-user focused and provide information about key actors at EU level working in specific sectors of circular economy.

Ideally, the platform should be keyword-searchable and would allow access to experts and knowledge related to circular economy (one-stop shop for those interested in getting more information, relevant actions, policies, projects).





Further suggestions for creating added value include:

- Give **visibility** to leading actors, experts in circular economy and up-and-coming experts, as well as organisations from lagging countries/regions
- Add knowledge on **cross border** and common solutions
- Increase stakeholder involvement and **dissemination**, if procedures are accessible and easy
- Create **synergy** and reduce fragmentation
- **Share results**: prevent double funding in Europe
- Key topics should be **policy** and **standardisation**
- Existing initiatives like the **Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform** should play a role
- Provide easy access to **centralised knowledge**, partners and further opportunities to collaborate to advance the circular economy

- Share **good practices**, ensure information is up-to-date
- Consider the different **legal systems** in the circular economy that also have an impact on its design
- The platform must have significance and up-to-date information
- Different **formats** are possible: from virtual meetings to other formats where topics can be discussed further. It is also necessary to conduct meta studies to bundle all the knowledge.

## CONCLUSION

The report on the survey will be published on the website shortly. In the meantime, if you are a Programme owner and would like to continue contributing to the project, join our **online consultation**.

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