

THE DANUBE GOES CIRCULAR

Experience in supporting SMEs in transition towards
a Circular Economy in the Danube Region



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Disclaimer:

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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
About the MOVECO project	5
MOVECO pilot	9
Circular Economy Toolbox	11
Information materials	11
Qualification programme	11
Collaboration tools	12
Financing tools	12
Categorizing the Danube region countries into three innovation groups	13
MOVECO pilot programmes in numbers	16
Lessons learned: Recommendations for establishing an SME-focused programme	16
Good practice examples	20
Virtual marketplace and statistical data	24
Conclusions	25
Partners	26

Introduction

The role of business in the transition to a circular economy is undisputed. While 'economic growth' has in the past been associated with selling more goods to more people, such business models will be unsustainable in the future. Maintaining current business models will lead to increasing environmental issues, resulting in unanticipated business risks and costs. Thus, future business successes demand that growth be delinked from increasing resource consumption and environmental impact.

However, moving towards a different model, such as the circular economy, requires a transformation of production and consumption patterns, value chains and sectors.

In December 2016, a consortium was formed to deliver an ambitious goal. With diverse backgrounds and expertise, we have united our forces to support eco-design, producer responsibility and green innovation – simply, to promote and disseminate the idea of a circular economy.



About the MOVECO project

'Your trash is my treasure'

Sixteen partners from ten countries along the Danube River have been fulfilling the motto above by implementing the EU co-funded project **MOVECO - Mobilising Institutional Learning for Better Exploitation of Research and Innovation for the Circular Economy**. Various organizations including business support and research bodies, government ministries, NGOs, chambers of commerce and clusters have started to foster transnational cooperation across businesses and research organizations through several pilot programmes outlined within this report.

We recognise the **importance of the circular economy (CiE)** for the sustainable societies of the future. Although attracting a great deal of attention at both European and national levels, **there is still lack of accessible tools, opportunities, support and capital**, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to apply a circular approach in their day-to-day operations. They may experience difficulties and lag behind during the already begun circular transition. However, there are great opportunities hidden in these new business models, including an expanded customer base.

Under the framework of the Danube Transnational Programme, MOVECO is an Interreg project, co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). The project duration is 12/2016-08/2019.

Figure 1: Geographical area of DTP countries¹



¹ DTP participating countries, more on: www.interreg-danube.eu/about-dtp



Scan the following QR code or visit our website for more information on MOVECO and the circular economy:

www.interreg-danube.eu/moveco

The circular economy in a nutshell

As our economies grow, we need more and more raw materials for the production of goods which, at the end of their life cycle, are usually disposed of or incinerated. This current economic model can be thought of as **'take-make-use-dispose'** and is called the **linear economy**.

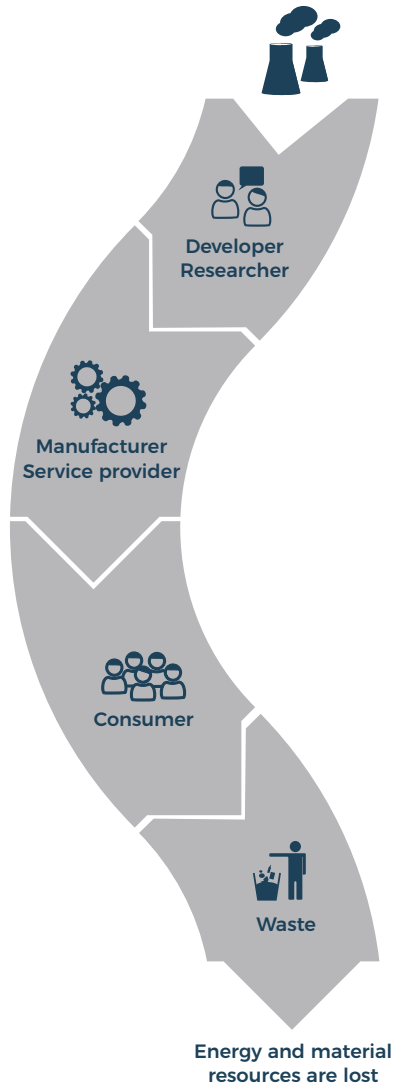
In contrast to this linear, throwaway economy, the **circular economy** aims to limit the extraction of raw materials and the production of waste. The circular economy is rather a **'make/remake-use/reuse'** economy. Its inspiration is found in natural ecosystems where no waste exists and one species' waste is another's food. The circular economy is based on the continuous cycling of materials and products, so-called **closed loops**. A material or product that is no longer in use shouldn't immediately become 'waste' but be treated **as a resource** and become part of a new cycle of use. In new material loops products, components and materials are repeatedly recovered and restored over numerous cycles through strategies like **reuse, repair, remanufacture** or (in the last resort) **recycle**. Moreover, products are redesigned to be reused or disassembled at the end of life stage. The goal is to keep products and materials in the economy at their highest value for as long as possible.

The circular economy isn't about one manufacturer changing one product. It's about the entire **value chain**, i.e. all the interconnecting companies that form our infrastructure and economy will come together.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY



LINEAR ECONOMY



Driving forces for companies to become circular

Today, more and more companies recognise that implementing a circular approach as a business strategy doesn't solely bring environmental and social benefits, but also economic prosperity.

Companies will experience positive effects in the form of reduced costs and risks on the one hand, while increasing returns and market share on the other.²

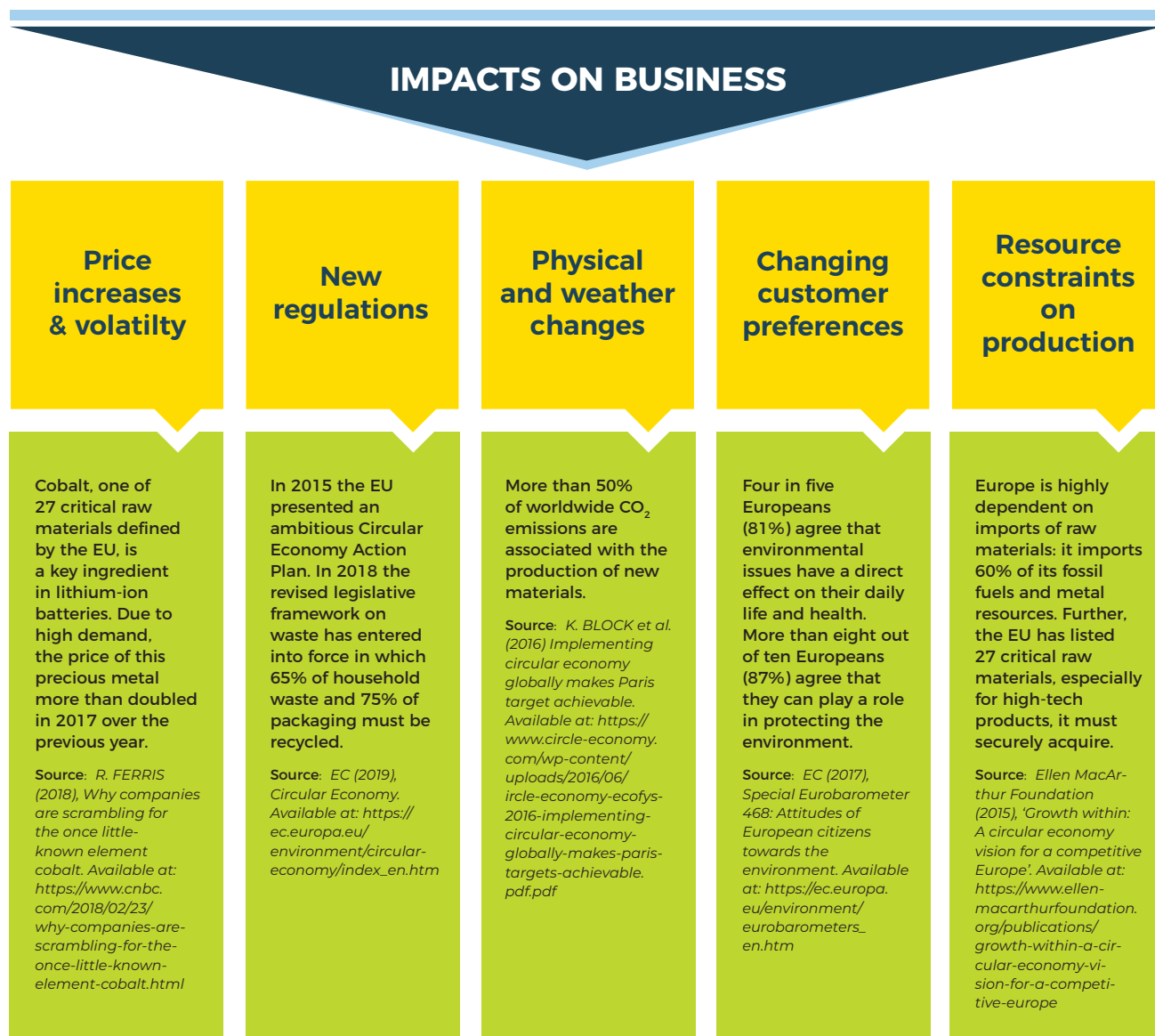
The stimulus leading many organizations to consider circular economy is driven by **necessity** and **opportunity**. Necessity-related drivers include a scarcity of resources as well as price increases, market volatility and climate change. New laws and regulations and changing customer preferences are also viewed as external necessities³. The circular economy is increasingly perceived as a business opportunity due to its inclusion of a sustainable revenue model, better supply chain cooperation, product innovation through smarter use of resources and materials and the lower costs and risks associated with increasing returns through waste reduction⁴.

² G. Braam et al. (2018), Circular Route: A Roadmap for a Circular Business Model. Delft: Eburon Academic Publishers

³ A. Walrecht et al. (2018), 'Let's help SMEs to go circular'. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/sme/pdf/Training%20materials_English.pdf.

⁴ G. Braam et al. (2018), Circular Route: A Roadmap for a Circular Business Model.

Figure 2: Global sustainability megatrends: Impacts on business environment⁵

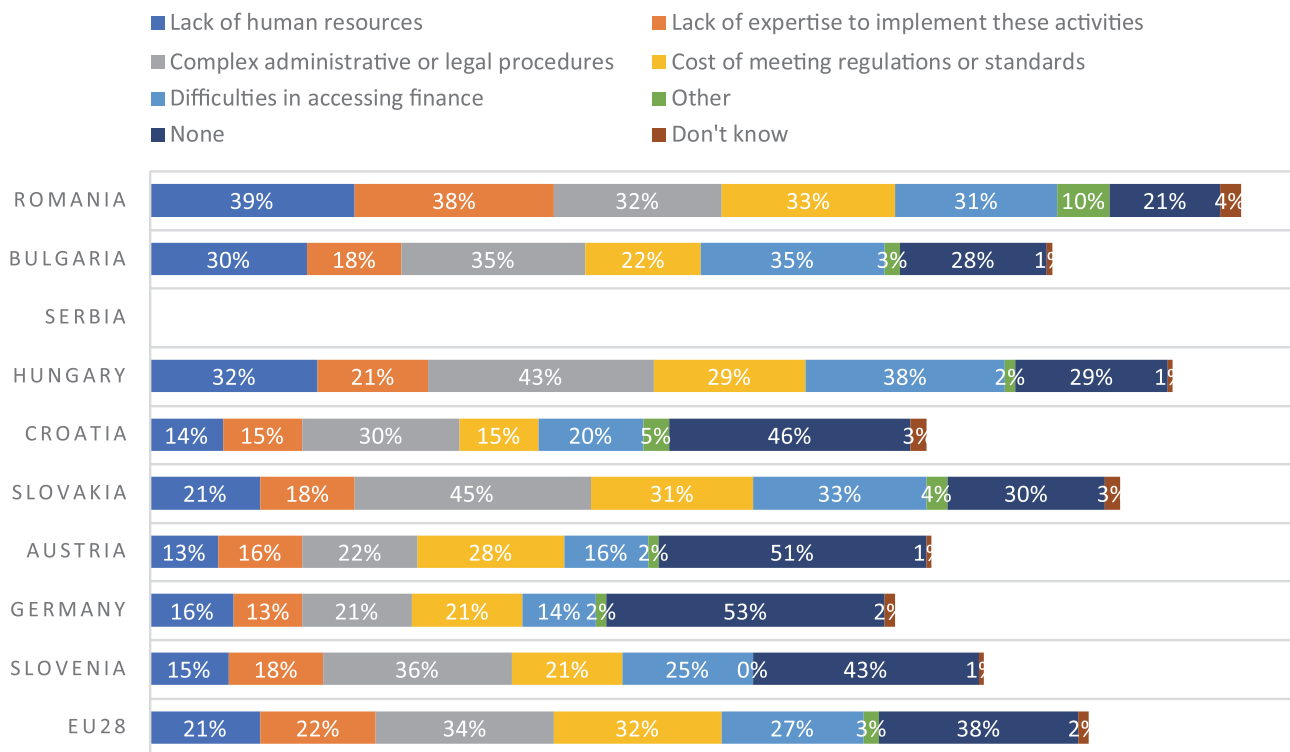


⁵ A. Walrecht et al. (2018), 'Let's help SMEs to go circular'. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/sme/pdf/Training%20materials_English.pdf.

MOVECO pilot

In the European Union, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are considered the backbone of the EU economy. They represent 99% of all businesses in the EU. Over the past five years, they have created around 85% of new jobs and provided two-thirds of the total private sector employment in the EU. Despite the fact that SMEs are key to ensuring economic growth, innovation, job creation and social integration within the EU, they have experienced various difficulties in the transition to a circular economy. The major barriers faced by SMEs include complex administrative procedures, the cost of meeting the regulations and standards, difficulties in accessing financial support, a lack of human resources and a shortage in the expertise needed to implement these activities.⁶

Figure 3: Difficulties in implementing circular economy in the Danube region countries⁷



⁶ EC (2019), Entrepreneurship and Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes_en.

⁷ Ibid.

According to the results of 'Flash Eurobarometer 441: European SMEs and the Circular Economy', 34% of the companies in the study reported difficulties with complex administrative procedures and 32% were concerned with the cost of meeting regulations and standards. Over a quarter (27%) faced difficulties in accessing finance. The lack of human resources and expertise to implement these activities were felt by 21-22% of companies.⁸

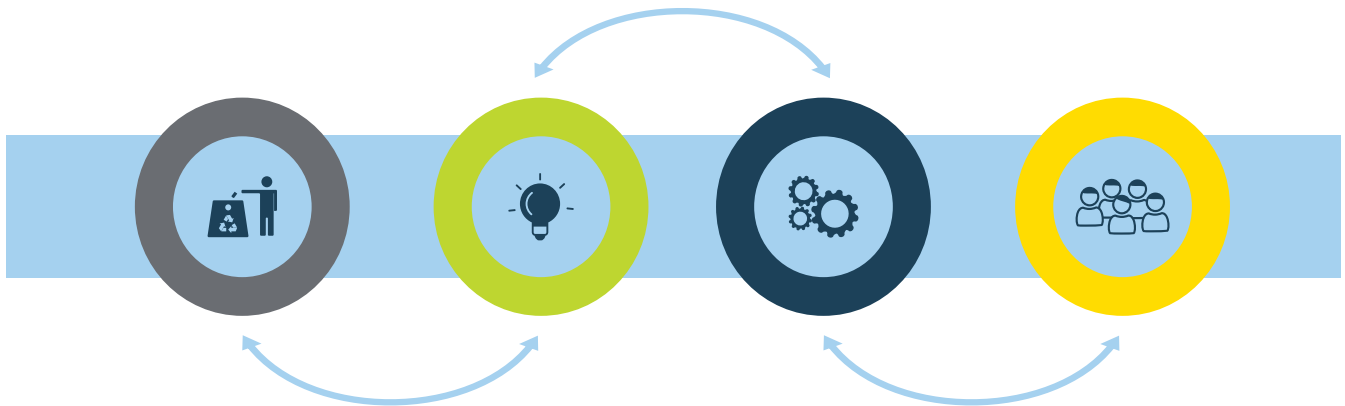
Even though the picture varies across Member States, a multitude of companies in the nine Danube region counties (DR9) (outlined below) encountered the above-mentioned difficulties.

In order to help companies, especially SMEs, to overcome these difficulties, MOVECO project partners developed and tested the Circular Economy Toolbox.

MOVECO partners carried out an analysis focusing on the potential of extended producer responsibility (EPR) schemes to support SMEs. The transnational report **'Extended Producer Responsibility Schemes and their influence on innovation in the TransDanube region'** provides an overview of how EPR schemes are implemented in the Danube region countries, an overview of indicators monitored by Eurostat and the European Environmental Agency.

⁸ EC (2016), Flash Eurobarometer 441: European SMEs and the Circular Economy. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/green-growth/docs/fl_441_sum_en.pdf

Circular Economy Toolbox



Information materials⁹

- brochure '[Your trash is my treasure](#)'
- [Checklist to support SMEs](#)

Qualification programme

[Qualification programme](#) covering a multitude of aspects concerning the circular economy:



- [Principles of the circular economy](#)
- [Circular economy - schools of thought](#)
- [New material pathways](#)
- [Business skills for green entrepreneurs](#)
- [Business models for the circular economy](#)
- [EU legislation](#)

⁹ To learn more about the checklist and fact sheets, please click here: <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/moveco/section/circular-toolbox>.

Collaboration tools

A set of face to face Collaboration tools divided into four thematic blocks:

- Discover
- Define
- Deliver
- Design

Online collaboration tools available at the platform Danube Goes Circular:

- 'Challenges and Solutions' forum
- 'Partnering Opportunities'



Financing tools

- Funding instruments for the circular economy - an overview of funding possibilities on how to finance circular economy projects
- Public-private partnership investment opportunities in the circular economy
- Investor Day - a concept focusing on crowdfunding and match-making tools
- Interregional Match making tool

Categorizing the Danube region countries into three innovation groups

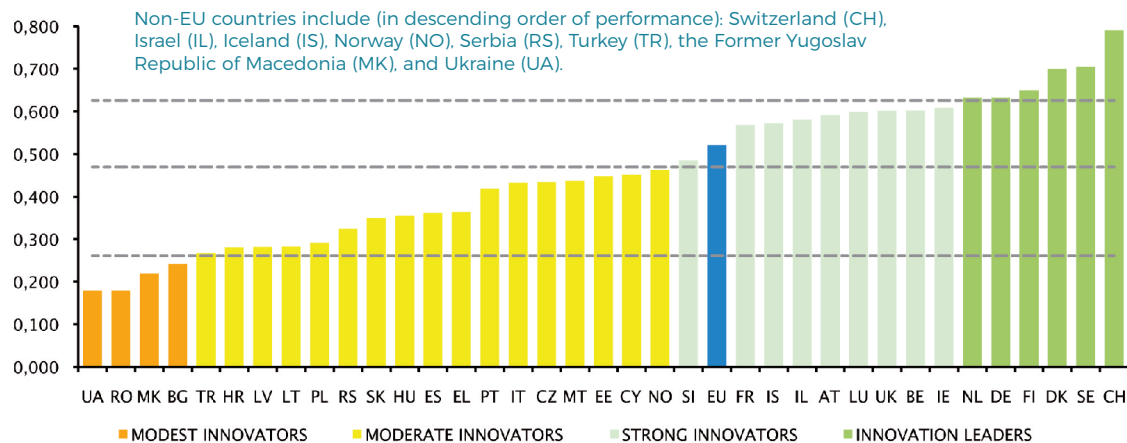
The partnership committed to tests of all the tools and materials in pilot actions and projects that took place from September 2018 until June 2019.

The MOVECO partner countries vary significantly concerning innovation activity. Based on the results of the European Innovation Scoreboard,¹⁰ three **MOVECO Innovation groups** were created, so that each partner could adjust the pilot actions to the conditions in each country.

Because of the high number of tools, each country tested only a limited number. A detailed table depicting the materials tested per country can be found in the Appendix.

- Innovation Group 1 – ‘Strong innovators’: Germany, Austria, Slovenia
- Innovation Group 2 – ‘Moderate innovators’: Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia
- Innovation Group 3 – ‘Modest innovators’: Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania

Figure 4: Innovation performance in Europe¹¹

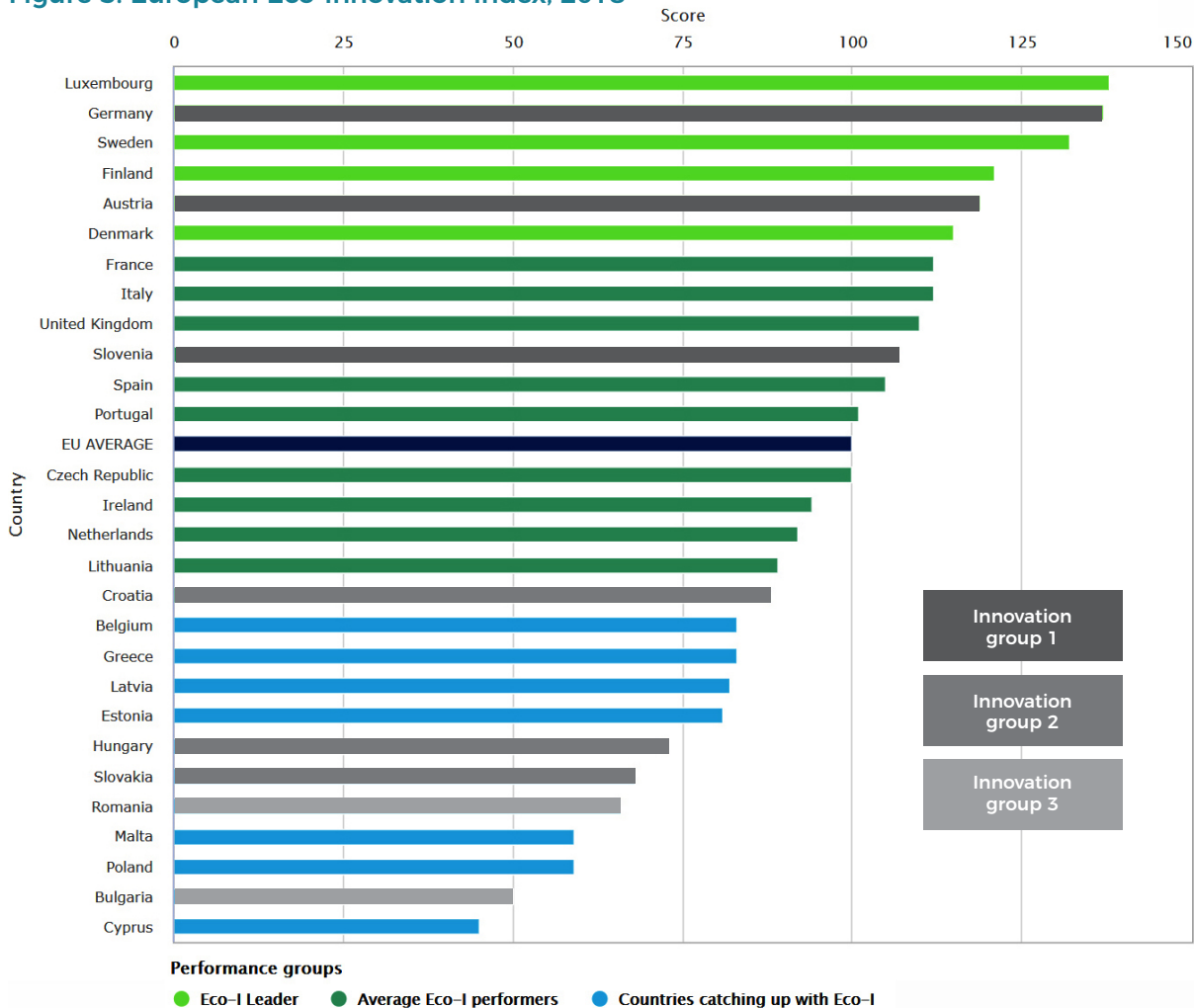


¹⁰ The measurement framework used to develop the European Innovation Scoreboard distinguishes between three main types of indicators and eight innovation dimensions, capturing in total 25 different indicators. Within this framework, the **Enablers** captures the main drivers of innovation performance external to the firm and cover three dimensions of innovation: human resources; open, excellent and attractive research systems; and finance and support. **Firm activities** outlines the innovation efforts at the business level, grouped into three innovation dimensions: firm investments; linkages and entrepreneurship; and intellectual assets. **Outputs** covers the effects of firms’ innovation activities in two dimensions: innovators and economic effects.

¹¹ EC (2016), European Innovation Scoreboard 2016. Available at: <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/6e1bc53d-de12-11e6-ad7c-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-31234102>

In addition to innovation activity, it was necessary to take into account the readiness level of SMEs in partner countries when planning the pilot actions. The Eco-Innovation Index illustrates eco-innovation performance across EU Member States.

Figure 5: European Eco-innovation index, 2018¹³



¹³ Source: EC (2019), The eco-innovation scoreboard and the eco-innovation index. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecoap/indicators/index_en

As the Eco-Innovation Index 2018 indicates, most of the DR9 countries have performed at a level below the EU28 average.¹²

Under [this brief](#), the overview of the trends across the EU28 are shown by the 2018 Index.

Although no single indicator can serve as a measurement for the entire circular economy, several existing indicators can help measure performance in areas that directly or indirectly contribute to the development of the circular economy.

Visit the dedicated website of the European Commission to find out more about circular economy indicators: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecoap/indicators/circular-economy-indicators_en.

For more information about the performance of DR9 countries see the '[Transnational Strategy to Accelerate Transition Towards a Circular Economy in the Danube Region](#)' and the transnational report '[Extended Producer Responsibility Schemes and their Influence on Innovation in the TransDanube Region](#)'.

¹² The Eco-Innovation Scoreboard (Eco-IS) and the Eco-Innovation Index illustrate eco-innovation activities across EU Member States. They attempt to capture the different aspects of eco-innovation by applying 16 indicators grouped into five dimensions: (1) Eco-innovation inputs comprised of investments (financial or human resources), which trigger eco-innovation activities; (2) Eco-innovation activities, illustrating to what extent companies in a specific country are active in eco-innovation; (3) Eco-innovation outputs, quantifying the outputs of eco-innovation activities in terms of patents, academic literature and media contributions; (4) Resource efficiency outcomes, placing eco-innovation performance within the context of a country's resource (material, energy, water) efficiency and GHG emissions intensity; (5) Socio-economic outcomes, illustrating to what extent eco-innovation performance generates positive outcomes in both society (employment) and the economy (turnover, exports). For a full explanation, see https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecoap/indicators/index_en.

MOVECO pilot programmes in numbers

The pilot actions were carried out in the period from September 2018 until June 2019. During this time, the partnership committed to testing all tools included in the MOVECO Circular Toolbox and each Innovation Group committed to testing tools from all four categories. Each partner made a selection of concrete tools at a project meeting held in Munich in June 2018 according to organizational capacities and experience.



Lessons learned: Recommendations for establishing an SME-focused programme

Despite the varied approach of MOVECO project partners, some common features have been identified:

What worked well?

» Information and examples of best practices

Information tools: The information materials were the most commonly used tools, usually tested in combinations with others. The practical materials were well received by both companies and stakeholders, in particular the brochure 'Your trash is my treasure', which presents helpful examples from the DR countries, was well received by all parties.

What changes were required?

» Attention to focused decisions and practical workshops

Qualification programme: The modules of the programme consisted of a theoretical presentation and practical exercises. In most cases, the presentations were shortened and more time was dedicated to discussion and practical exercises, including local circular solutions. One of the key success factors recognised was the invitation to companies who presented their own examples of best practices.

Financing tools: As the needs of companies are highly individual, it may be necessary to conduct additional research and develop further materials. For example, in the case of funding, where a company or a concept is not eligible for EU funding, the inclusion of national funding opportunities is necessary.

Collaboration tools: A diverse set of collaboration tools were included. While the business fairs and roundtables were well received in all Innovation Groups, some of the 'advanced' formats, e.g. value chain collaboration formats or special interest groups, needed adjustment according to country specifics. IG2 and IG3 lack the networks and coordinating bodies to implement the tools as described in the Circular Economy Toolbox. Further, the Circular Design Guide is a very complex tool, requiring enough time to deliver real results. One-day workshops turned out to be insufficient for all phases of the process. Dedicating more than one day to the workshop or providing additional support is recommended. In addition, working with individual companies seems to be the most efficient way to come up with and test new ideas.

What were the biggest challenges?

In general, attracting companies and preparing events were the biggest challenges faced by partners. Planning an early start for preparations and cooperating with local partners and stakeholders helped overcome these obstacles. Providing useful information (e.g. concerning new legislation and funding opportunities) was one of the key success factors of the pilot actions.

Bellow we provide some of the lessons learned and best practices discovered through the pilot process:

Lessons learned

» Testing the tools in combinations

While project partners applied various approaches to test the tools (e.g. individual contact with the target groups, organizing events, participation of other events, etc.), thanks to their combined use project partners could provide target groups with a comprehensive package of information and support, increasing the interest of the target groups in the pilot actions.

» Providing additional individual support

In addition to the provision of information and networking opportunities to introduce potential partners, SMEs also need individual support. Although company visits and individual meetings can be time consuming, they are a great opportunity to discuss the needs of individual companies in order to provide tailor-made services, find partners, define priorities or recommend specific measures. As the circular economy requires a complex approach, MOVECO tools were complemented by other services and individual support was provided to the companies.

» Best practices and the exchange of information

The level of familiarity with the concept of the circular economy varies significantly across DR9 countries. However, companies in all partner countries were highly interested in best practice examples and the mutual exchange of experience. Presentations and discussion with the companies enhanced these exchanges and identified gaps and the potential for collaboration.

» Establishing new partnerships

As a circular economy requires cross-sectoral cooperation, none of the partners will have the capacity to provide all required technical and theoretical expertise. Therefore, many entities have established partnerships with new organizations that complement their own experience and capacities. **A well-developed network of stakeholders** as well as a **wide range of communication channels** can help reach the target groups. Also, linking up with other initiatives and events (fairs, conferences, etc.) is an efficient way to reach the target groups and carry out pilot actions.

» **Internal and external expertise**

Considerable and relevant expertise is necessary to respond to the needs of companies. As the level of knowledge concerning the circular economy varies across DR9 countries, the involvement of external experts brought additional expertise in organizations without internal capacities. Additional training and further education helped improve the competencies of internal experts.

» **Thematic orientation on specific topics and networking**

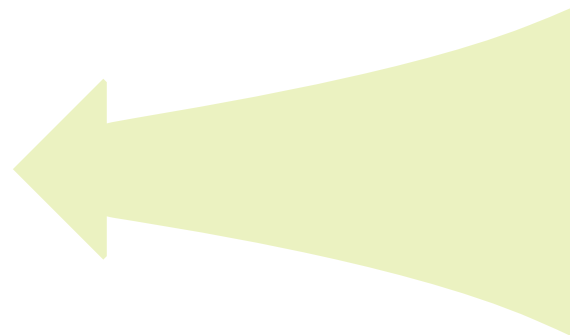
Selecting the 'right topic' for the events was one of the key success factors. However, providing expert information and creating opportunities to connect to peers and potential partners along and across value chains is crucial in order to help companies discover opportunities, as well as to understand barriers to closing the loops. A thematic orientation on specific topics enables the grouping of companies with similar interests.

» **Legislation and funding**

Legislation and funding were recognised as some of the major drivers of, as well as barriers to, the efforts of SMEs to move towards a circular economy. For example, companies have difficulties dealing with the amount of new or pending legislation. SMEs without an environmental department often encounter difficulties adjusting to new legislation. Therefore, the provision of clear information, consultancy and funding opportunities is key in supporting SMEs in their efforts. In the case of funding, there seem to be very little available for SMEs. At the national level, a lack of systematic and continuing support has been identified. The support that exists is fragmented. Therefore, it is difficult for SMEs to learn about opportunities. In addition, the administrative burden is oftentimes excessive, and SMEs need assistance in finding appropriate tools and applications.

» **Trust**

Getting to know each other and building trust are key preconditions to establish cooperation.



Good practice examples

» **Combination of tools**

(ECN, Hungary)

Information tools (checklist and fact sheets) and the Qualification programme (New material pathways) were combined and piloted at a training on New material pathways. Using the New material pathways handbook and presentation slides, trainers gave seminars on the legal background of the circular economy in Hungary, finding New material pathways and Life Cycle Assessment (LCA), and best practices in CiE. Afterwards, participants received and worked with checklists and fact sheets, which SMEs found useful in analysing and receiving a 'reality check' on the functioning of their own businesses.

(UCB, Germany)

UCB organized a workshop called 'Think Circular', during which UCB piloted tools from all four categories of the Circular Economy Toolbox. Besides the presentation of the Information tools, the platform 'Danube-goes-circular' and Financing tools, different principles as well as seven schools of thought (Qualification programme) were introduced to participants. During the second part of the workshop, a roundtable discussion (Collaboration tools) with three experts took place.

» **Providing additional support and services**

(TERA, Croatia)

As a part of the exhibition 'Be the role model', TERA piloted one of the Financing tools: Investor Days. An Investor Day is a great opportunity for start-ups to present their ideas to potential investors and learn more about alternative forms of financing (crowdfunding). In linking the event with other projects, TERA was able provide the winner of the competition with financial support. The award for Best Business Plan was EUR 15.000.

(BizUp, Austria)

Based on the experience from BizUp and other partners, the team learned that company visits are time-consuming, but also a very effective way of obtaining information about their needs and interests. In addition to organizing events, it is a great opportunity to discuss potential projects and cooperation with individual companies and provide tailor-made services.

(SBA, Slovakia)

One of the companies visited by the SBA staff presented their transition plan to a circular economy in order to divert 100% of waste material from landfills. The company faced difficulties identifying potential partners that would be able to process some of the waste materials. In order to find a business partner for the company, SBA carried out research in cooperation with an external expert and connected the company with a potential partner in the Czech Republic.

» Best practice presentation and exchange of experience

(BizUp, Austria)

As a part of the MOVECO piloting, BizUp organized a tour to visit a company in Hörsching, Austria. The MOVECO Qualification programme with a special focus on EU legislation and Business Models based on the circular economy were piloted. The theoretical part was shortened to allow more time for focused discussion. Also, one of the special interest group meetings (Collaboration tools) was held on-site. It was a special meeting and workshop for Health-Safety-Environment managers to exchange experiences.

(CCIBN, Romania)

Presentations of good practices were included in several events organized by CCIBN, e.g. during a workshop focused on the Principles of the circular economy (Qualification programme) and a value chain collaboration workshop (Collaboration tools). Detailed information about best practices brought added value to the theoretical presentations and stimulated interest from the participating companies.

» Establishing new partnerships

(SBA, Slovakia)

Collaboration with new partners, including the Ministry of Environment, Institute of Circular Economy, Embassy of Netherlands, regional chamber of commerce and the Slovak plastic cluster was established during the implementation of the project. In this case, cooperation with external experts was a key factor in selecting the topics to be discussed, designing the events, identifying examples of best practices and potential speakers, as well as reaching companies. Thanks to mutual support, the preparation and promotion of the events (e.g. 'Plastics - from design to recycling', focused on connecting companies along the value chain) was efficient and attracted a high number of companies. Moreover, the cooperation among stakeholders led to the establishment of a platform called 'Circular Slovakia'.

(BAYFOR, Germany)

BAYFOR carried out several consulting meetings with companies and events (e.g. "Circular Economy Workshop" or "Rethink Workshop"), the aim of which was to learn about the needs, level of understanding of circular economy in companies, as well as their level of readiness to move circular economy. Involvement of stakeholders and engagement of external experts was identified as one of the key success factors.

» Internal and external expertise

(BCCI, Bulgaria)

BCCI organized two seminars to pilot two modules of the Qualification programme: Fundamental Business Skills and Business Models based on the circular economy. The success of the pilot programmes depended to a large extent on the highly qualified and experienced external experts invited to present during the two seminars.

(CCIS, Slovenia)

Excellent knowledge of upcoming and existing legislation was key to discuss concrete challenges within the company and develop ideas or projects on how to solve these challenges during company visits in Slovenia. During the events organized by CCIS, external experts, either consultants or experts from relevant governmental institutions (e.g. for EU legislation) were also involved.

(PUPIN, Serbia)

During the implementation of the project, one of the staff members acquired a Certificate from the Circular Economy Academy organized by the Climate-KIC project and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia. As an expert, she was very successful in contacting companies and stakeholders and disseminating MOVECO results.

» Thematic orientation on specific topics and networking

(TERA, Croatia)

TERA organized a one-day workshop for manufacturers and users of disposable plastic packaging about regulatory changes in the fields of plastics and packaging. The workshop focused on the creation of new materials and recycling of existing ones. Within the event, a panel discussion with producers and users was held, contributing to knowledge dissemination, exchanges of experience and the promotion of good practices from Osijek-baranja County.

(CCIS, Slovenia)

Linking the circular economy to other relevant legislation, for instance packaging and food contact materials or chemicals, was identified as a best practice in Slovenia. CCIS prepared a workshop that emphasized packaging and waste packaging. The presentation included a short overview of how EU legislation has evolved and what can be expected in the future.

» Legislation

(PUPIN, Serbia)

PUPIN piloted two modules of the Qualification programme: Principles of the circular economy and EU legislation. The involvement of legislative experts and the allowance of enough time for discussions concerning the situation in the country helped stakeholders understand the status quo and actions necessary to align Serbian legislation with EU regulations.

(UCB, Germany)

During an event entitled 'Closing loops: Chances through the new packaging law', discussions took place in five groups that covered different topics, mainly on the new German packaging law. The World-café concept,

designed to facilitate knowledge sharing, was used as a part of the event and recognised as a great tool for networking and intensive discussions.

» **Trust**

(CCIS, Slovenia)

Companies often find it difficult to deal with the massive amount of new upcoming legislation related to the circular economy. CCIS provides them with information and functions as a consultancy. In order to facilitate the creation of partnerships, CCIS organized several events bringing together companies that might benefit from mutual cooperation.

(SUA, Slovakia)

Previous collaboration and provision of R&D services helped SUA involve companies in MOVECO activities. One of the companies took part in the pilot actions and was presented with a MOVECO Innovation award.



Virtual marketplace and statistical data

The Danube-goes-circular platform is an open-access virtual space which aims to promote the transition to a CE by facilitating policy dialogue among stakeholders in the DR9 and by disseminating activities, information and best practices regarding the circular economy. The facilitates cooperation and matchmaking between stakeholders in the Danube region (i.e. government agencies, business support organizations, research and development facilities and civil society organizations) on topics relevant for boosting the circular economy.

The MOVECO platform services (tools) can be divided into four main sections:

- **Virtual Marketplace** (<http://danube-goes-circular.eu/?q=Marketplace>)

The virtual marketplace is a space where those interested in the demand and supply of circular products, waste and reusable materials meet to foster eco-innovation in the Danube region. Registered users can browse the contents of the marketplace using the options in the marketplace menu. Over 200 companies, either offering or seeking circular products and services, materials and products available for re-use or recycling, are registered in the virtual marketplace.

- **Collaboration** (<http://danube-goes-circular.eu/?q=companies>)

In order to support collaboration, the platform allows users to search and retrieve information on:

- » R&D organizations
- » For-profit organizations

The **Mapping of Research Activities** related to the Circular Economy identified the main players currently active in research and development (R&D) regarding the circular economy in the DR and the services they offer relating to EPR schemes. Currently over 90 R&D organizations are listed in the database. The search service allows the user to select the R&D company of interest and send a message via contact form. In addition, registered users can post questions and ideas or initiate new discussions and collaborations.

- **Circular Economy Toolbox** (<http://danube-goes-circular.eu/?q=tools>)

This section presents our Circular Economy Toolbox, including information, collaboration, qualification and financing tools to promote the transition towards a circular economy.

- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes** (<http://danube-goes-circular.eu/?q=epr-schemes>)

The objectives of Activity 3.1, Analysis of EPR schemes and innovation potential, was to identify the current extended producer responsibility schemes implemented in the DR and analyse how they support eco-innovation. As a result of this activity 25 different EPR schemes were added to the platform.



Conclusions

Although the circular economy can bring major economic benefits, the mode of transition from a linear to a circular economy is not a simple process. This transition will be especially difficult for countries that already lag behind in waste management and innovation, including a majority of the DR9 countries. MOVECO has responded to these challenges by setting the objective to not only improve the framework and policy instruments for eco-innovation and the transition to a circular economy, but also to improve the collaboration and the interface between science, business, the political sphere and civil society to enforce the potential for environmental technologies and sustainable growth.

The aim of the pilot programs and actions was to support companies, especially SMEs, form new collaborations along the value chain, adapt to new requirements and demands and recognise the benefit these adaptations have for their day-to-day operations. The implementation of the pilot actions helped not only better understand the needs of SMEs and the barriers they face in their efforts to become more circular and to develop the capacities of their partner organizations, but also to gain invaluable experience in implementing activities supporting SMEs transitioning towards the circular economy.

We strongly believe this material will be a useful source of information for anyone interested in providing support services to companies. For those interested in receiving more information about the MOVECO pilot programme, do hesitate to contact MOVECO project partners:

Partners

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