

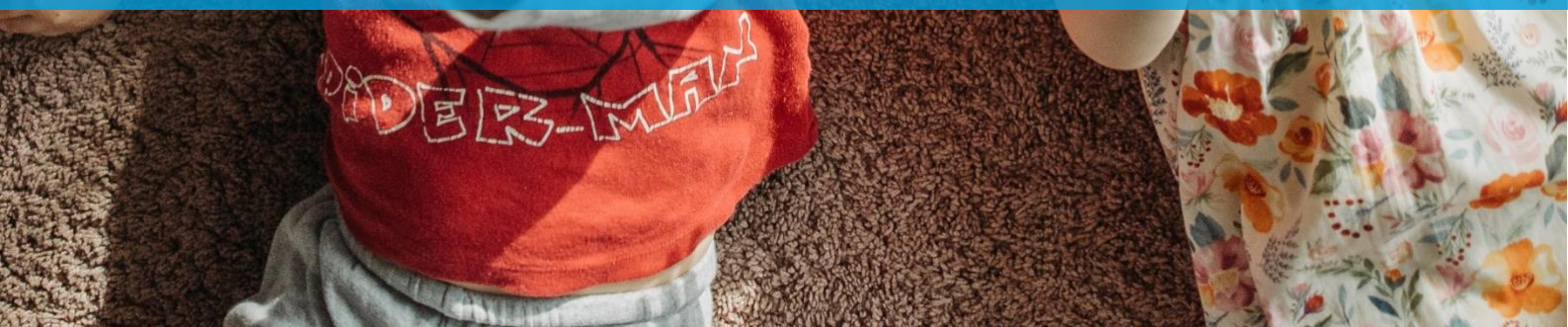


UNITED NATIONS
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION



Global consultations on circular economy 2022-2023

Report of the regional preparatory meeting for the
Eastern European Group





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I. Introduction

1. The General Conference, in its resolution [GC.18/Res.7](#), requested the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) to organize consultations on circular economy for experts from Member States with a view to facilitate exchanges on best practices, emerging innovations and the promotion and adoption of circular economy principles and practices by industries of Member States.

2. The objective of the global consultations on circular economy is to consider ways and means to promote circular economy principles and practices, in particular in developing countries, identify barriers and devise action-oriented solutions.

3. The global consultations will be convened using the UNIDO System of Consultations¹ as a guiding framework, taking into account developments since its adoption, lessons learned, outcomes of the respective evaluations and restrictions imposed by the current COVID-19 pandemic.

4. A series of regional preparatory meetings was convened in September 2022 to allow Member State representatives and other stakeholders, in particular from developing countries, to present their initial views on the topic of circular economy and identify issues that will shape the debate at the global consultations.

5. Member States were invited to communicate to the Secretariat topics for discussion at the consultations. As a result, the following topics and guiding questions were selected:

a) Topic 1: Climate-neutral industry and circular economy

- Which circular economy approaches can facilitate the decarbonisation of industry?
- Can you share experiences in integrating circularity and climate action in industry from your country or organization?

b) Topic 2: Governance, policies and roadmaps for circular economy

- What policy and regulatory frameworks, institutional arrangements and collaboration mechanisms should be put in place to enable the just transition to a circular economy?

¹[https://open.unido.org/api/documents/4792485/download/THE%20SYSTEM%20OF%20CONSULTATIONS%20\(1648e.en\)](https://open.unido.org/api/documents/4792485/download/THE%20SYSTEM%20OF%20CONSULTATIONS%20(1648e.en)).

- Do you have a circular economy roadmap in your country? If so, what arrangements are in place to enforce and facilitate its implementation?
 - Can you share good practices of engaging a broad range of stakeholders, including industry and businesses, in designing and implementing circular economy strategies and roadmaps?
 - Do you have examples of building the capacity of entrepreneurs, businesses and enterprises for adopting circular economy practices?
- c) Topic 3: Enabling environments and investments in circular businesses.
- What is the business case for the circular economy?
 - How to attract private investments and finance to accelerate the transition towards a circular economy?
 - How can public finance support this transition?
6. The global consultations on circular economy are tentatively scheduled to take place in the first half of 2023.

II. Organizational and procedural matters

7. The regional preparatory meeting for the Eastern European Group on circular economy was held in hybrid format on 23 September 2022. The meeting was conducted in English.

Participation

8. The following seven Member States of UNIDO participated in the meeting: Armenia, Belarus, Czech Republic, Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovenia.

9. The following United Nations entities were represented: the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN ECE), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (UN ESCWA), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

10. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: the Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production Centre (RECPC NGO) and the Polish Academy of Sciences.

Opening of the session

12. The meeting was declared open by Mr. Stephan Sicars, Director, Division of Circular Economy and Environmental Protection, Directorate of Technical Cooperation and Sustainable Industrial Development, UNIDO, at 3 p.m. (CEST) on 23 September 2022.

Facilitator

13. The meeting was facilitated by H.E. Mr. Armen Papikyan, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Armenia to UNIDO.

Agenda of the meeting

14. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.
2. Introductory presentation by regional partner, UN ECE.
3. Interventions:
 - (a) Interventions by Member States;
 - (b) Interventions by observer organizations.
4. Moderated discussion.
5. Conclusions and adjournment.
6. Announcements by the Secretariat.

III. Proceedings

Welcoming remarks

15. H.E. Mr. Armen Papikyan, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Armenia to UNIDO welcomed the participants and emphasized the importance of promoting circular economy principles and practices to accelerate the progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as to fully implement the Paris Agreement, the emerging Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework and stop plastic pollution. Mr. Papikyan further advised that circular economy-based measures should be at the core of collective efforts of the global community to build back better and greener in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Introductory presentation by the Secretariat

16. Ms. Alla Metelista, Senior Advisor, Strategic Planning and UN Engagement Division, UNIDO, presented the mandate, objectives and expected outcomes of the global consultations on circular economy as well as the guiding questions for the regional preparatory meetings.

17. Mr. Harikrishnan Tulsidas, Economic Affairs Officer, UN ECE delivered an introductory presentation on trends, case studies and lessons learned in the adoption of circular economy principles and practices in the region.

Interventions by Member States

18. Armenia stated that green economy is as a priority in the Government Programme for 2021-2026. The country has developed a strategy and roadmap on biomass use for heating and outlined medium- and long-term perspectives for using biomass as an alternative source of energy. The EU4Environment Programme has been supporting Armenia in pursuing its path of green transformation. In collaboration with UNIDO, Armenia continues to work on the effective implementation of resource-efficient and cleaner production practices, with the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises involved in plastics production and fisheries, among others. Armenia stressed the need for increased technical assistance and capacity-building to ensure the effective development and implementation of the national green economy document.

20. Romania informed about the adoption of a national strategy for circular economy and the intentions to develop its action plan. The strategy offers a new vision that enables economic sectors to explore circular economy principles and practices. The agriculture, forestry, automotive and construction sectors, as well as the consumer (food and beverages), packaging, textile and electrical and electronic equipment, have the highest potential. The main objective of the strategy is to foster economic development while preventing environmental degradation. The strategy is in line with the SDGs, the climate targets, as well as the EU Green Deal.

Interventions by observer organizations

21. UNWTO acknowledged the opportunities to pilot circular economy principles and practices in tourism. Circular economy was presented as a key strategy to boost a green transformation in the sector. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic became an opportunity to rethink tourism, this vision was presented as the key focus of the World Tourism Day 2022. At the United Nations Climate Change Conference COP26 in Glasgow, UNWTO launched the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism to accelerate mitigation and adaptation efforts by tourism stakeholders who have to report annually on progress. By assessing the progress of national tourism policies in the integration of circular economy, UNWTO found 13 national policies advocating circular economy principles. UNWTO stressed the importance of collaboration, especially with the Ministries of Environment and the Ministries of industry.

22. RECPC NGO provided an overview of the situation of Ukraine regarding the transition to a circular economy of national industrial enterprises. RECPC NGO remarked that companies are ready to implement circular economy since it fosters economic savings. Medium-sized enterprises were identified as the most vulnerable, as they were said to lack circular economy expertise. Sectoral guidelines and work packages are needed to inform how to set up circular economy business models and to guide small and medium-sized enterprises in their transition to a circular economy. The importance of having accessible tools in national languages was also highlighted. At the national level, a new department on circular economy was created. Circular economy is mentioned in the 2030 National Economic Strategy while the action plan on circular economy is under development. RECPC NGO stated that priority should be given to raising awareness of the different national and international support programmes and encouraging cooperation between municipalities, regions and government.

Conclusions and adjournment

23. Mr. Sicars highlighted the need for finance for small and medium-sized enterprises and raising the public awareness on the matter, as well as the importance on accelerating the adoption of circular economy as means to support the achievement of the SDGs and fully implement the Paris Agreement. He thanked the participants for their engaging interventions and the exchange of inspiring experiences. Mr. Sicars encouraged the participants to learn from successful circular economy initiatives, take them on board and replicate in their respective countries as appropriate.

24. Mr. Papikyan closed the meeting at 4.17 p.m. (CEST) on 23 September 2022.



Vienna International Centre
Wagramerstr. 5, P.O. Box 300,
A-1400 Vienna, Austria



+43 1 26026-0



www.unido.org



CircularEconomy@unido.org



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INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION