

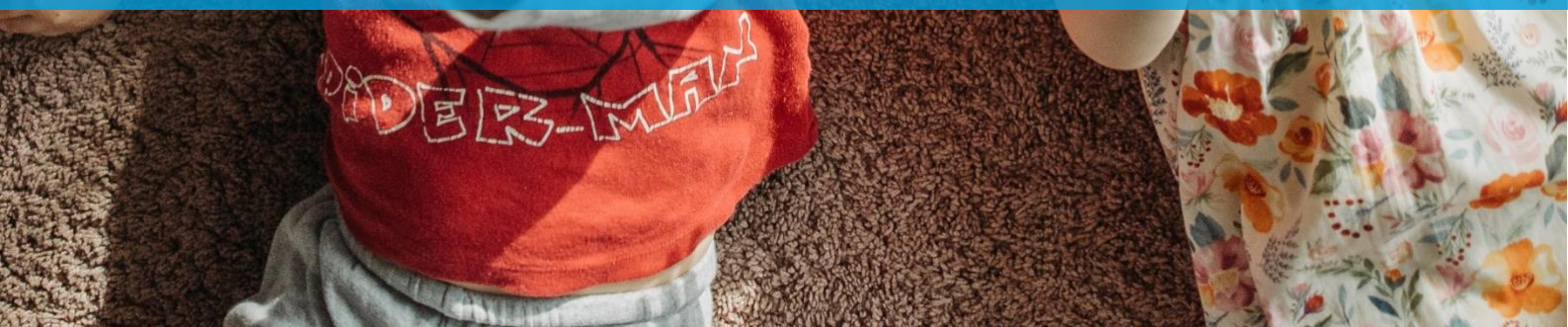


UNITED NATIONS
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION



Global consultations on circular economy 2022-2023

Report of the regional preparatory meeting for the
Western European and Other States 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 Western European and Other States Group on circular economy was held in hybrid format on 26 September. The meeting was conducted in English.

Participation

8. The following seven Member States of UNIDO participated in the meeting: Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Japan, Spain and Türkiye.

9. The following United Nations entities were represented: the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA).

10. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: the AFRY Management Consulting, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL).

Opening of the session

11. 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 10 a.m. (CEST) on 26 September 2022.

Facilitator

12. The meeting was facilitated by H.E. Ms. Anne Vasara, Ambassador for Circular Economy and Energy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland.

Agenda of the meeting

13. 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

14. H.E. Ms. Anne Vasara, Ambassador for Circular Economy and Energy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland, welcomed the participants and emphasized the importance of promoting circular economy principles and practices to accelerate the progress on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as fully implement the Paris Agreement, the emerging post-2020 Biodiversity Framework and stop plastic pollution.

Introductory presentation by the secretariat

15. H.E. Ms. Anne Vasara, 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.

16. Mr. Harikrishnan Tulsidas, Economic Affairs Officer, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 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

17. Finland developed a national roadmap for circular economy in 2016 and is currently engaged in its second edition, prepared in 2019 in close cooperation with a variety of stakeholders from the public and private sectors.

18. Following an assessment on the state of circularity in the national context, Cyprus intends to prepare schemes to help small and medium-sized enterprises and industries to invest in circular economy by financing innovative projects. The Ministry of Energy, Commerce, and Industry has launched a communication plan on the positive results achieved through the implementation of circular economy practices. Cyprus is willing to cooperate with UNIDO on this issue.

Interventions by observer organizations

19. AFRY Management Consulting stated that the circular economy roadmap of Finland was developed through extensive cooperation and collaboration between the public and private sectors, such as the convening of the World Circular Forum. Emphasis was placed on the need to integrate circular economy education at all levels, from primary school to university.

Conclusions and adjournment

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

21. Ms. Vasara closed the meeting at 10:50 a.m. (CEST) on 26 September 2022.



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