



Circular Economy Skills Ecosystem and Methodological Framework

Peer Reviews Report

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CICLO

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Circular Economy Skills Ecosystem and Methodological Framework

IO1 - CICLO PEER REVIEWS REPORT



Introduction

This report contains the answers and considerations on the CICLO project's questionnaire designed to collect Focus Group members' opinions about the IO1 "Circular Economy Skills Ecosystem and Methodological Framework" developed under the framework of the CICLO project. The respondents to the questionnaire were experts external to the organizations implementing the project, aware of the current dynamics and development of circular economy. The questionnaire includes four open questions and a comments sections, so experts could provide as much information as they felt necessary. The answers to these questions are analysed and compiled following the same structure as in the questionnaire.

Regarding the value of the conclusions, suggestions, recommendations and guidelines regarding Circular Economy and the training for Circular Economy...

The first question inquired if the IO1 provided practical conclusions, suggestions, recommendations and guidelines regarding Circular Economy and the training for its development. The answers were all positive and highlighted the fact that it contained comprehensive concepts and definitions as well as specific data and interviews with recommendations. The participants also agreed that the document analyses the situation of business interested in a green economy in a thorough and clear way. It was explained that the document covered a wide range of relevant issues while every topic offered relevant information and references. In addition, the results of each country's questionnaires and focus groups were said to be of high of value, as they are considered an up-to-date image of the level at which Circular Economy has been developing in partner countries. The document also presented valuable conclusions and recommendations regarding the training needs for Circular Economy in partner countries.

Other opinions stated that the documents provided suggestions, recommendations, and guidelines regarding Circular Economy and its development resulting in an overall satisfactory performance, since the recommendations are specified for the training contained within the report. However, these recommendations could be confused with other that apply to a macro level and beyond the scope of the project, something that should be fixed in order to achieve an overall improvement on the clarity of the report. Such recommendations would need a system-level scope in order to be considered as part of the project, since this measure would allow the development of a more specific link between the report and the next stages in the project.



The overall idea gathered was that the document offers an accurate explanation of the situation in each of the countries involved in the Circular Economy project as well as the European and national legislations. It also explains the different approaches of individual countries based on previous experience and practices dealing with several financial aspects, territorial disparities, and consumer engagement. The main practical conclusions are clearly explained and describes the types of barriers society may face in the adoption and establishment of Circular Economy systems.

Regarding the quality of the research about Circular Economy and the corresponding legal framework and the best practices included...

The second question of the document addressed the research and best practices carried out in the different countries and the corresponding legal framework. The opinions obtained in this section were more varied than the ones concerning the previous section. Some of the respondents agreed that the document offers comparative research that allows to understand the Circular Economy phenomenon in different corners of Europe, mainly due to the different references concerning each partner country. Moreover, such research is also extended to other countries outside the partnership that in some way contributed to the development of Circular Economy over the years, something useful in order to see what kind of measures can work and which cannot. Regarding the legal framework, the information provided is very complete to the point of defining the conformity with EU standards. The set of good practices presented also gives an idea of how steps have been taken in the direction of Circular Economy, giving important food for thought on the results already obtained.

Among the answers, it was mentioned that it would be quite useful to present more best practices in partner countries or other EU countries, or even better outside the EU since, this way, the reader would gain a better understanding of the current situation. Furthermore, it was also suggested that it would be interesting to search for gaps and challenges in the presented best practices and suggest ways in which the implementation of those best practices could deliver more effective or broader results.

The mixed feedback about this question continued as other participants explained that even though the document achieved its purposes in providing reliable research regarding circular economy in each of the participating countries, the best practices, as well as the corresponding legal framework could be improved. This was suggested because even though there are many examples of best practices in each of the corresponding countries, it is provided only one example for each of the participating countries, which even though it is not necessarily wrong, is missing the goal of providing the reader with an array of



examples. The availability of several specific examples is highly beneficial both in the presentation of the issue the project is facing and the motivation to develop a circular economy system at a collective and individual level. As far as the legislation concern, one respondent suggested that the analysis had evident inadequacies, especially in the case of Cyprus, since the report should have examined each participating country's legislation, if not in detail, at least with a holistic approach.

Overall, the information was perceived to be well presented and understandable, bringing new perspectives on the problems of the circular economy and views on future activities that need to be done to support this system. However, it was mentioned that it would be greatly appreciated if the document clearly stated that it is an executive summary of the national reports, to make clear that only a sample of the information is included.

Regarding the incorporation of stakeholders and focus groups' opinions...

The next question addressed the role of stakeholders and focus groups' opinions within the document, presenting them in a well-reflected, fair and transparent manner. In general, all answers were positive explaining that, with the amount of information collected and the number of people who participated in the different activities, the information is totally reliable and transparent. It was stated that:

“The document offers the opportunity to deviate from statistical/ legislative references by listening to the direct opinion of stakeholders from many countries in the EU. This info is then summarised through graphs and tables that make the reading very smooth and understandable. The analysis of the results does not force the reader to be convinced of something but is limited to describe the facts in a completely objective way.”

Other participants said that while, the document had taken into consideration the opinion from stakeholders and focus groups relevant to the project in a fair and transparent way,

“the main concerns in this respect are methodological since the focus groups used by the reviewer in each country are far from being considered adequate and undouble this may have imposed substantial confounding factors and inadequacies in their findings, a fact that should be taken into serious consideration. However, even though their effort in this regard is considered below the acceptable standards, this does not affect the overall picture, hence the aforementioned methodological deficiency can be overlooked.”

In conclusion, the answers to this question were varied, and every respondent took their time to explain their point of view. They all highlighted the style and analysis of the documents which was 'well presented, easy to read and consistent' even though some of them missed relevant information regarding the different industries that can be involved



in the establishment of a circular economy system such as industry and waste management companies.

Regarding the structure, clarity, and usefulness of the document for stakeholders and as a solid base for the rest of CICLO activities...

In the next section, participants were asked if the document provided useful information for the stakeholders and a solid base for the rest of the activities of the CICLO project. All respondents agreed that the premise of the question was true since the document is 'an excellent starting point due to the transparency and completeness of the information provided'. It also 'creates an interesting and useful base for the later development of the project's activities since it is useful for potential stakeholders and they can easily use it as a theoretical basis for their training activities.'

Regarding the way, the information is presented, all answers said that the information was clear, and the structure of the document is effective, creating a useful resource for stakeholders. Regarding the usefulness of the document it was suggested that it would be interesting 'to circulate a final copy of this report to all those that made a contribution.'

Regarding comments...

The final section of the document asked the participants to give any suggestion or commentary regarding the issue presented. There were suggestions about enriching the project including more practices in EU or non-EU countries and a more critical approach. There were also several commentaries hoping that 'this project reaches as many people as possible, especially those who are not aware of the Circular Economy'. This is a common opinion among respondents since they emphasised the importance of communication and dissemination in a project as relevant for society as this one.

Some other suggestions included that 'the current and future legislative framework in each country must be adequately examined and the corresponding section of the document should be enriched accordingly, in order to include additional sectors and aspects of circular economy.' Methodologically speaking, it was suggested that 'the focus groups should be chosen in the future in a sufficient and appropriate way for the specific research purposes, in order to better reflect the views of each country's stakeholders and interested parties.'

Additionally, it was mentioned that it would be beneficial to mention the scope of the research so the expectations of future readers are well managed. It was also stated that



it would be interesting to involve more best practices into the document not only one for each country but more if they are interesting and relevant enough.

Conclusions

The peer review of the IO1 proved to be a very useful tool in the analysis of the IO1. Thanks to this, the partnership could identify areas to work on and improve in the future, as paying more attention to state clearly what is the IO and what it includes or improving the methodology of certain parts. On the other hand, the overall feedback was positive and encouraging. The partnership will make use of the feedback provided to improve their future work.