CIRCULARITY KNOWLEDGE SHARING NETWORK

COP31 PRESIDENCY ACTION AGENDA TARGET

The Circularity Knowledge Sharing Network seeks to contribute to the COP31 Presidency's target of increasing the global circular material use to at least 15% by 2035.

BACKGROUND

Increasing the global circular material use rate is critical to reducing dependence on virgin materials, lowering the environmental and climate impacts of production, and strengthening the resilience of industrial value chains. The transition to a circular economy is therefore increasingly important for advancing climate action, resource efficiency, and resilient economic development. Yet only 6.9% of materials used globally currently come from secondary sources. This continued reliance on linear models of extraction, production, consumption and disposal not only increases pressure on natural resources but also contributes to rapidly growing waste volumes. UNEP projects that global municipal solid waste generation will increase from 2.1 billion tonnes in 2023 to 3.8 billion tonnes by 2050 under current trends.

To support the COP31 Presidency's ambition to increase the global circular material use rate in production and manufacturing to at least 15% by 2035, waste prevention, reuse and circular business models will need to be adopted at significantly greater scale. However, the transition towards circular economy approaches remains uneven across countries and regions, with developing countries facing particular challenges in accessing finance, technology, infrastructure and technical expertise. Addressing these challenges requires strengthened international cooperation, knowledge sharing, technology transfer and capacity building, taking into account different national circumstances and development priorities.

Key barriers to accelerating waste prevention and circular material use include:

- **Insufficient waste infrastructure:** Many cities and regions lack reliable systems for separate collection, sorting, recycling and environmentally sound disposal, limiting their ability to divert waste from landfills, open dumps and open burning.
- **Financing and project-development gaps:** Zero waste and circular economy systems frequently require upfront investment, while many municipalities face constrained budgets, limited project-development capacity and insufficient pipelines of investment-ready projects.
- **Fragmented policies, weak enforcement and limited incentives:** Misaligned regulations, inadequate enforcement, low disposal costs and insufficient producer-responsibility mechanisms can weaken incentives for waste prevention, reuse and circular production.

- **Insufficient data and institutional capacity:** Gaps in waste data, greenhouse gas accounting and institutional systems make it difficult to establish baselines, set priorities, develop measurable targets and indicators, track progress, target investments and develop credible proposals for climate and development finance.
- **Dispersed knowledge, tools and implementation experience:** Relevant solutions, methodologies and leading practices already exist, but they are distributed across numerous organisations, networks and initiatives. Stakeholders seeking to implement circular approaches may therefore struggle to identify appropriate models, understand the conditions under which they have worked, and connect with organisations able to support replication.

Addressing these barriers requires more than making information available. Governments, cities, industries and implementation partners need access to relevant experience and expertise, as well as practical pathways for translating policy priorities into implementable measures, sectoral projects, and investment opportunities. They also need stronger connections to technical-assistance providers, technology partners, project-development support and appropriate financing mechanisms.

Building on the momentum generated by United Nations General Assembly resolution 77/161 on promoting zero-waste initiatives, the COP31 Presidency seeks to further advance practical international cooperation on waste prevention, resource efficiency and circular economy approaches, with particular emphasis on knowledge sharing, technology cooperation and capacity building, especially in developing countries.

In this context, there is therefore a need for a collaborative mechanism that connects organisations and networks with relevant policy, technical, project-development and financing expertise to countries and stakeholders seeking to implement, adapt, and scale circular economy solutions. By combining knowledge exchange with practical implementation cooperation, such a mechanism could help reduce fragmentation, strengthen institutional capacity and accelerate the development and replication of effective circular economy policies and projects.

OBJECTIVE

The Circularity Knowledge Sharing Network is envisaged as a voluntary and flexible Network will connect existing initiatives, platforms, institutions and stakeholders working on circular economy solutions. Building on existing mechanisms rather than duplicating them, the Network will bring together interested countries, international organisations, existing networks, industry, academia, civil society and implementation partners working across circular economy, zero waste, and resource efficiency.

The Network's main objective is to help public- and private-sector stakeholders to accelerate the integration of circular economy approaches into climate policies as well as translate knowledge and experience into practical projects and scalable implementation approaches. Particular attention will be given to the needs and capacities of developing countries, including their access to relevant technologies, technical assistance and financing opportunities.

It will do so through four mutually reinforcing functions:

- **Support policy learning and application** by sharing practical approaches, methodologies, and experience that may inform circular economy policies, climate strategies, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and investment plans.
- **Strengthen implementation capacity** by enabling countries and other stakeholders to exchange experience on translating circular economy priorities into policies, targets, indicators, projects and implementation measures.
- **Improve connections to technical and financial support** by signposting relevant technical-assistance providers, financing opportunities, implementation partners and existing project-development mechanisms.
- **Enable the adaptation, replication and scaling of effective practices** by sharing evidence, implementation lessons, enabling conditions and relevant contacts from circular economy initiatives.

Across these functions, the Network will help stakeholders navigate existing knowledge, tools, expertise, technical assistance, financing opportunities and implementation partnerships. Its added value will lie in connecting currently dispersed actors and resources and helping make existing experience more accessible and applicable, rather than creating parallel programmes or duplicating established platforms.

COP31 could act as a catalyst by convening interested countries and organizations, establishing an initial collaborative framework and laying the foundation for an open and voluntary global knowledge-sharing platform that facilitates cooperation across regions and sectors. Any announcement under the COP31 Action Agenda will be subject to sufficient partner engagement, a credible initial work programme and clarity on coordination arrangements.

INITIATIVE OUTLINE

1. Implementation pillars

The initiative will follow a phased and demand-driven implementation approach. During the initial phase, one or two interested countries and sectors with strong links to climate action and the potential to deliver tangible and replicable results will be selected as priority areas.

Initial sectors will be identified in consultation with prospective partners and participating countries, considering climate relevance, stakeholder demand, the availability of credible implementation partners, complementarity with existing initiatives, potential for practical results and opportunities for replication. Based on implementation experience, demonstrated demand and the availability of appropriate partner capacity and resources, the Network could gradually expand to additional sectors.

Pillar 1	**Policy Integration of Circular Economy Approaches** Support participating countries in integrating circular economy approaches into relevant climate policies, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and investment plans.
Pillar 2	**Sectoral Solutions and Implementation** Assist the identification, adaptation and replication of circular economy practices, projects, and solutions in selected priority sectors.
Pillar 3	**Financing and Project Development** Facilitate collaboration and connections to support the development of project pipelines, improve access to project preparation and technical assistance, connect relevant projects with potential investors and financial institutions, and encourage the exploration of appropriate financing models for circular economy implementation.

2. Delivery

Knowledge-sharing, peer learning, connection and collaboration will operate across all three pillars. The Network will use these functions to connect existing expertise and resources with country and stakeholder needs, rather than duplicating existing programmes or directly providing all forms of technical or financial support.

Pillar 1: Policy Integration of Circular Economy Approaches

In order to accelerate the integration of circular economy approaches into climate policies, the policy integration pillar focuses on sharing policy approaches and national experiences, supporting policy analysis and development, and developing relevant targets and indicators. It will also support participating countries in identifying opportunities to integrate circular economy approaches into NDCs, NAPs and investment plans, while facilitating peer-to-peer policy learning and knowledge exchange.

Pillar 2: Sectoral Solutions and Implementation

To support the efficient deployment of circular economy projects, the sectoral solutions and implementation pillar focuses on facilitating the exchange of sectoral good practices, the development and sharing of pilot projects, and technology cooperation and transfer. It will also promote technical assistance and capacity building, strengthen collaboration among research institutions and the private sector, and support the replication and scaling-up of successful practices. This is demand-based and will initially focus on priority sectors and specific pilot projects. In the long-term, this can be expanded to include further sectors.

Pillar 3: Financing and Project Development

Access to finance and technical assistance remains a key barrier to the effective deployment of circular economy projects. Therefore, the third pillar aims to help address this gap by fostering collaboration among relevant stakeholders and facilitating connections that can support the development and preparation of circular economy projects. Through the Network, participating stakeholders may also be connected with development banks, financial institutions, technical assistance providers and potential investors, while opportunities to explore appropriate financing models for circular economy implementation can be identified collectively.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND PARTNERS

The Circularity Knowledge Sharing Network will be launched under the leadership of the COP31 Presidency of Türkiye, with the participation of interested countries, international organizations and relevant stakeholders.

Türkiye will facilitate the establishment of the Network and engagement with prospective partners during the COP31 Presidency.

To ensure the long-term sustainability of the Network beyond COP31, its governance and coordination arrangements, including potential secretariat functions and the establishment of a Steering Committee, will be developed in consultation with interested partners and international organizations. In this regard, priority will be given to building on existing international organizations and mechanisms to ensure continuity, effective coordination and access to relevant expertise and resources. The initiative has received expressions of support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions, and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) in Türkiye. Engagement with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is also ongoing.

Informed by ongoing consultation and exchange with stakeholders engaged in *Axis 1: Transitioning Energy, Industry and Transport* of the Global Climate Action Agenda, the Circularity Knowledge Sharing Network will support efforts to advance the Global Climate Action Agenda's objectives.

PARTICIPATION

The Circularity Knowledge Sharing Network will bring together governments, international organizations, research institutions, civil society, the private sector, technology providers and financial institutions around a common agenda for advancing circular economy approaches and their contribution to climate action.

Parties may contribute to the Network on a voluntary basis, in accordance with their respective national circumstances, priorities and capacities, including through the sharing of relevant policies, practices, projects and lessons learned, participation in technical discussions and working groups, and other forms of cooperation.

International organizations, research institutions, civil society organizations, private-sector entities, technology providers and financial institutions may participate in the Network in accordance with their respective mandates, expertise and areas of interest, including through technical cooperation, knowledge exchange, capacity building, project development and financing support.

Countries and other interested stakeholders wishing to participate in the Network are kindly invited to submit an expression of interest through their respective UNFCCC national focal point, by e-mail to the address indicated below. Participation will be voluntary and will not entail any legal or financial obligations. The same e-mail address may also be used by other interested stakeholders to share their expression of interest.

CONTACT

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