

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 1

About Start Circles

Due to numerous directives towards resource efficiency, both at European and at national level, new challenges arise for companies:

They need to use much more than previously **recycled material and to innovate new technologies to improve material recycling**. This was the motivation to launch the Start Circles project in the Austrian-Slovenian border region, in which representatives of research institutions and companies on both sides of the border take on the task.

Start Circles has been developed from the perspective and needs of the SME and R&D organizations to help SMEs from initiating innovation collaboration to the launch of new products and providing new & sustainable support services for each phase.

The creation of a **cycle-oriented economy**, where the value of products and resources within the economy will remain as long as possible and waste minimized, will change the economy sustainably and create lasting competitive advantages for the programme area. With regard to a promising introduction of circular economy, the **following services are developed and offered** in Start Circles:

- Documentation and long-term use of research and innovation competences for the circular economy for SMEs.
- New opportunities for cooperation development, especially in cycle-oriented value chains.
- Support for SMEs in cooperation with colleges or universities.
- Support in the development and introduction of new products through the development of business models.
- Best practice examples and recommendation of the use of business models in the circular economy.

Presentation of Start Circles at the workshop in St. Veit an der Glan

On 22th Februar 2018, Kompetenzzentrum Holz GmbH organized a workshop in the Gymnasium in St. Veit an der Glan, where the project Start Circles was also presented. With the presentation we wanted to get **some potential companies to join us on the way to the circular economy**, that they start to think about cross-border cooperation with Slovenia, and offer companies a support in designing of new products or business models.

The project was presented with the project NoWaste, which is based on the **exploitation of biodiversity, environmental and cultural resources**, while the Start Circles puts more emphasis on the use of natural, renewable resources such as wood and biodegradable resources such as biopolymers. Projects NoWaste and Start Circles combines care for a better tomorrow with no waste and a circular economy.

For more information about NoWaste, please contact:

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Figure1: Start Circles presentation in St. Veit an der Glan

Possible synergies with Green2Green

As a project partner we are also involved in the project “Green2Green”, which is funded by the Austrian Ministry of Technology (BMVIT). In this project **hemp plant has been utilized as sole resource for renewable energy**. The goal of the project was to develop the structural components of the small wind turbines, where the small wind turbine has a rated power of 3.5 kW and the overall length of rotor blade is 1.75m. Hemp offers many different uses that can promote a more sustainable world.



Figure2: Overview of obtaining renewable small wind turbine blade from initial industrial hemp cultivation to final structural component.

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Invitation to Water Management Workshop in Ljubljana

One of the Start Circles partners, Limnos Company for applied ecology decided to support organisation of a workshop on nature based solutions. The event will take place on **May 23rd in Ljubljana (Slovenia)**. The aim of the event is to bring together communities and practitioners on several subjects that affect municipalities in improving their resilience. **Major topic** will be water management.

The presentations will cover the aspects of resilient cities, integration of nature based solutions (water recycling, energy savings, flood protection), identifying ecosystem services (renaturing cities) and other.

The topics are **interrelated to circular economy**, mostly in terms of water reuse, energy savings and degraded area revitalisation.

The goal of the workshop is to identify urban and rural resilience obstacles and test the tool for selection of potential nature based solutions on local level.

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The Annual Strategic Conference of Trade at the Brdo Congress Center



On 17.10.2018, the **Annual Strategic conference of Trade** was held in the Brdo Congress Center, Ljubljana, which was hosted by the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce.

Univ.-Prof. Tobias Stern from the University of Graz was invited as speaker with the contribution "The role of retail in a circular bioeconomy".

A critical examination of the bioeconomy and circular economy was conducted at the beginning. **The Core of the concepts** is to use materials and products multiple times to increase the utilization time and resource efficiency.

Especially **new challenges** for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) were discussed. In this context, the Interreg Project "Start Circles" was highlighted with the objective to improve sustainable innovation and resource efficiency of SMEs. In addition, access to information and cooperation with research partners were promoted.



Presentation of Start Circles at the 5th meeting of RETRACE project stakeholders in Ljubljana



On 5th December 2018, **Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy of Republic of Slovenia** organised 5th meeting of RETRACE project stakeholders in Ljubljana. Aleš Ugovšek from Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia presented the project Start Circles with an aim to find the synergies with other organisations working in the field of Circular Economy for more efficient common work in the future.

The Project Partners of START CIRCLES:

- LP: Gospodarska zbornica Slovenije
- PP02: Kompetenzzentrum Holz GmbH
- PP03: LIMNOS doo, Podjetje za aplikativno ekologijo
- PP04: asteenergy - Ingenieurbüro für erneuerbare Energie, Forst- und Holzwirtschaft
Christoph Aste Dipl.Ing, Msc.
- PP05: Fakulteta za tehnologijo polimerov
- PP06: Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz
- PP07: Forschung Burgenland GmbH