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Start Circles at the new business model conference in Berlin!

New Business Model Conference¹, Berlin, 1-3 July 2019

Everything was about new circular business models from 1st to 3rd July in Berlin. In spite of the high number of participants, the project partners of the University of Graz had the opportunity to present the first results of the assessment tool at the conference.

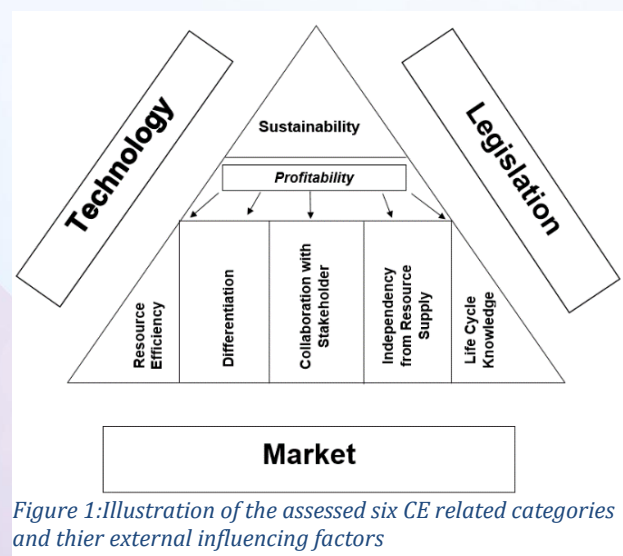


Figure 1: Illustration of the assessed six CE related categories and their external influencing factors

¹ Conference proceedings: <https://www.nbmconference.eu/dl/FullNBMConference2019Proceedings.pdf>
Conference videos: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTIQ4F99uUjp1fPl1MODTafS4qwUu_bjD

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Mind the gap: How to increase circularity in SMEs?

Holzer, Daniel, MA from the University of Graz presented the first results on an Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) to identify improvement opportunities for local small and medium-sized companies (SMEs).



Figure 2: Presentation by Start Circles 3 July 2019

This study contributes to a better understanding of factors that drive the promotion of the circular economy in SMEs. The findings allow researchers to identify topical areas for strategic changes towards circularity in the respective companies. A generalization is not possible in this exploratory study, however tendencies within this study for market-oriented enterprises can already be recognized that the most significant improvement gap can be found in the variables resource efficiency and differentiation. Resource efficiency is regarded as a central argument of the circular economy, but the transition to the circular economy through market differentiation to increase market attractiveness could prove to be a promising incentive for our sample.

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Slovenian plastic processing industry partly oriented towards circularity

Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia organised the event for the plastic converters on 19th September 2019 in Smlednik, Slovenia. There were over 50 participants. The leading point of the event was the transition of the plastic processing industry into a circular economy. The companies pointed out that they already use recyclates in their products, but mostly procure them abroad. Some companies are already oriented towards circularity, while others are striving for it, but they miss the support of the state. Alenka Dovč from Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia presented the Start Circles project and lead the participants through the questionnaire about the state of CiE in the companies used in the scope of our project.



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Start circles and Innovation day 2019

Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia hosted and organised the biggest Slovenian national innovation event on 25th September 2019 at Brdo pri Kranju. Start circles was part of the event with organisation of B2B and B2C meetings, holding a special workshop entitles “Innovation for sustainable development and circular economy” which was moderated by Antonija Božič Cerar, whereas Maja Mešl from Faculty of Polymer Technology presented possibilities of using the waste biomass for development and production of biocomposites. Start circles was also a project partner of Innovation day 2019.



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Conference on Nature based solutions in LJUBLJANA



The Conference on Nature based solutions that was organised in Ljubljana in May 2019 highlighted several topics on circular economy, particularly water and sewage sludge reuse. Treated wastewater to be conditionally used for irrigation purposes,

sewage sludge should be considered as soil conditioner. Excess storm water can fill urban green infrastructure, small water retention measures enable recreational space and stimulate biodiversity. Nature based solutions generally are inspired and supported by nature, are cost-effective, simultaneously provide multiple (environmental, social and economic) benefits and help build resilience.

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Circular Packaging for a green future

Ljubljana, September 27, 2019 - Faculty of Polymer Technology and Pulp and Paper Institute in cooperation with SRIP (Strategic Development and Innovation Partnership) - The circular economy of the Styrian Chamber of Commerce successfully concluded with the 1st International Conference on Circular Packaging, held in Ljubljana on September 26-27, 2019.



The conference was attended by over 90 participants, who witnessed more than 20 expert contributions from domestic and foreign experts. There were presented many of the latest developments on innovative materials, eco-design, environmental solutions and packaging development opportunities for the circular economy. The conference was also a great opportunity to exchange good practices on the sustainable management of packaging waste, bringing together researchers, academics, industry representatives and designers.

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The keynote speakers at the conference were Dr. Maurizio Crippa, CEO of gr3n, who spoke about plastic circularity, Julio Vidal Navarro, researcher at the Spanish AITIIP Technology Centre, who presented development trends and strategies for moving packaging from linear to circular, and Dr. Gregor

Radonjic from the University of Maribor, who explained many false and realistic perspectives on sustainable packaging.

Dr. David Ravnjak from Vevče Paper Mill and Silvester Bolka from the Faculty of Polymer Technology have provided an overview of basic technologies and trends.

The following companies presented their approaches to sustainable packaging solutions; DS Smith Slovenia, Gorenje, Amba CO, Skaza Plastics, Evegreen, MakeGrowLab, etc.

The world is facing an increasing share of packaging waste as a result of the growth of the packaging market. According to forecasts from leading packaging research and consulting firms, Smithers Pira and Packaging Europe, the European packaging market

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is projected to grow by as much as 1.9% annually in 2018-2023, which is more than the total market growth over the previous five-year period.

As awareness of environmental concerns and environmentally-friendly materials is increasing, businesses are being forced to think and act sustainably in the packaging field.

At the conference the Director of Faculty of Polymer Technology, Maja Mešl, presented the project Start Circles and its objective to increase sustainable innovation and resource efficiency in the program area, especially for SMEs.

By bringing together knowledge carriers from the wider region and leading companies from the manufacturers and users of packaging, the conference thus contributed to the creation of new partnerships and circular value chains.

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Best Practice example on circular economy: PET to PET

PET to PET Recycling Austria GmbH was founded in April 2006 and is run by leading companies in the Austrian beverage industry. The company has been in operation since 2007 and attaches great importance to the highest quality and ongoing development in terms of sustainability. In 2010, the recycling plant in Müllendorf was further expanded and supplemented by a granulation plant. Five years after laying the foundation stone for PET to PET, a new automatic bottle sorting stage was started and a silo plant was installed. With its investments, the company contributes to ensuring a complete and resource-saving recycling of PET bottles.

PET bottles are lightweight, practical, unbreakable and easy to recycle. By means of a modern, energy and material-saving process, the PET to PET recycling from old PET bottles is used to produce the raw material for new bottles. Around 930 million or 23,300 tonnes of PET bottles are traversed in the globally unique recycling cycle annually.

In Müllendorf, used PET bottles are used to produce valuable starting material for new PET bottles. The PET to PET recycling plant has been in operation since 2007 and was further expanded in 2010 and expanded by a granulation plant.

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The beverage industry is using the PET recycling plant to meet the sustainability agenda signed jointly by the Lebensministerium, Wirtschaftskammer, Handel and Abfallwirtschaft.

Among other things, this provides for a purposeful ecological recycling of PET bottles and attaches great importance to CO2 savings and the promotion of reusable bottles in addition to a seamless packaging cycle. The focus of the company is the production of high quality and food-grade PET recycled, which is used for "bottle-to-bottle recycling" - in which old bottles are replaced by new ones.

Homepage: www.pet2pet.at

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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