#EUCircularTalks
on Education, Learning and Skills for a circular economy

Collaboration between the EIT Circular Economy Initiative and the ECESP Defining discussion group

Concept Note

September 2020

Introduction

Moving to more circular economic models promises a much brighter future for the European economy. It is one of the main objectives of the European Circular Economy community today. It would allow Europe to meet current and future challenges of global pressure on resources and the rising insecurity of supply. Pumping resources back into productive use repeatedly, cutting waste and reducing dependence on uncertain supplies is a direct route to improving resilience and competitiveness. By helping to decouple economic growth from resource use and its impacts, the circular economy offers the prospect of sustainable growth that is durable.

The EIT Circular Economy Initiative together with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the European Commission (coordinators) will organise a series of discussions groups on various themes, in the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ECESP).

The first discussion group of this series will occur during the second half of 2020 on the theme of Education and Skills for a Circular Economy.

Objective

The aim is to define the current main challenges related to Education, Learning and Skills for a Circular Economy. This topic covers three different perspectives of lifelong learning:

- Childhood and school education
- Education and training of students (I-VET[1] and Higher Education)
- Adult learning and education (C-VET[2] and adult general learning)

This collaboration will be implemented through a three-stage process:

- Phase 1: Preparatory online experts' workshop
- Phase 2: Online open discussion group on the ECESP
- Phase 3: Final (possibly physical) open workshop

Education and skills – Discussion Process

Phase 1: Preparatory online experts' workshop

The coordinators will organise an invitation-only workshop with a number of relevant experts to define the current main challenges related to Education, Learning and Skills for Circular Economy.
This group will identify 25 relevant experts to discuss the three different suggested topics (see below). The group will also identify and propose an initial set of discussion points for the experts to discuss. However, the experts will determine the final agenda on priorities and challenges.
The experts will participate in an online workshop on 9th October to identify and discuss the main priorities and challenges faced by the sector in terms of education, learning and skills.
The coordinators propose the following initial topics including discussion points:

Childhood and school education:

- CE education at schools
- Teachers' training

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1   Initial vocational education and training

2   Continuing vocational education and training

- New ways to educate children in new consumption habits
- CE education as part of environmental sustainability education

Education and training of students (I-VET and Higher Education):

- Inclusion of Circular Economy in curricula and extra-curricula activities
- Cross-Sectorial collaboration, new skills covering several sectors at the same time
- Design for Circularity
- Circular Economy could be either a new specific educational area in I-VET or higher education or considered in existing educational areas such as Agro Food, Business, Economy, Engineering, Environmental Sciences, Manufacturing, Materials, Product design, Social Sciences, Urban planning, etc.; any area related to CE should include specific knowledge about CE
- New methods of teaching & learning (interactive, hands-on, computer-based, coaching and mentoring)
- Collaboration with business for work-based learning
- CE education as part of environmental sustainability education

Adult learning and education (C-VET and adult general learning):

- Relevant participation of business defining current gaps
- New skills related to new technologies and practices supporting implementation of a CE such as reuse, repair, remanufacturing, recycling, waste valorisation, digitalisation, etc.
- New methods of training & learning (interactive, hands-on, computer-based, coaching and mentoring..)
- Continuing vocational training and professional development
- Specific training for civil servants at local, regional and national level
- Circular Procurement training
- CE Responsible at Council Towns training
- New ways to educate adults in new consumption habits (for the citizen perspective)
- CE education as part of environmental sustainability education

The outcome of this workshop will be a document developed by the EIT Circular Economy Initiative including all main conclusions related to Education, Learning and Skills for a Circular Economy.

Phase 2: Online open discussion group on the ECESP

The outcome document of the expert workshop will be available online for discussion through the ECESP's dialogue forum on the ECESP website. The ECESP responsible contacts will create a discussion focused on Education, learning and skills for a Circular Economy.

The expert workshop outcome document will be used as a guidance document to initiate the online discussion. This discussion will be open to all interested participants through the usual ECESP participation mechanism. The coordinators will use their usual communication channels to promote the discussion. The EIT Circular Economy Initiative will moderate the online discussion for a period of 2 months.

Phase 3: Final workshop

The coordinators will organise a final workshop, open to any interested participants, to show the main conclusions from the first online expert workshop and the online discussion.

Given the ongoing sanitary situation, the details about this final workshop will be discussed at a later stage. This final workshop could take place during the second half of January 2021 and will provide final insights from the CE community.

The EIT Circular Economy Initiative will finally compile the inputs resulting from the three different actions to

develop a final document to be shared with the coordinators and the ECESP. This document could be used as reference material for any possible action/initiative developed to improve Education, Learning and Skills for a Circular Economy at European, national or local level.

Organisers

ECESP: The [European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform](#) is a joint initiative by the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee to implement the circular economy. The platform brings together stakeholders active in the broad field of the circular economy in Europe.

Through its website, the platform offers a virtual open space that aims at promoting Europe's transition to a circular economy. As a "network of networks", it facilitates dialogue among stakeholders and help disseminate activities, information, and good practices on the circular economy.

Stakeholders can contribute to the Platform by participating in the annual conference and by interacting and/or contributing to the website with good practices, knowledge, strategies and events.

The members of the Coordination Group contribute to the annual Stakeholder Conference, accelerating or facilitating the transition by cooperating in setting up specific activities with their networks, and overall enrichment of the website content with strategies, events, publications or good practices.

EIT Circular Economy Initiative is an initiative by EIT RawMaterials (Coordinator) , EIT Digital, EIT Climate-KIC KIC, EIT Food, EIT Manufacturing and EIT UrbanMobility to strengthen the collaboration and coordination of internal and external activities related to the circular economy. In this particular context, one of its objective is to establish a collaboration with the ECESP to create both online and face to face discussion groups related to specific areas agreed with the coordination group.