European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform

European Commission

European Economic and Social Committee

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Annual Activity Report

2017 – 2018

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Executive Summary

- The European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ECESP), established in 2017 by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in partnership with the European Commission's DG GROW and DG ENV, has begun contributing to implementation of the Circular Economy Action Plan. ECESP supports civil society organisations and public authorities accelerating the transition to a circular economy across Europe by fostering dialogue, sharing knowledge and exchanging good practices.

- As of the October 2018 meeting of the ECESP Coordination Group (CG), the multi-stakeholder platform is fully operational: Ladeja Godina Košir, Founder and President of Circular Change, was elected to chair the CG and coordinate its Workplan for 2019, the virtual platform (circulareconomy.europa.eu) is growing into a multi-lingual digital one-stop shop on the circular economy in Europe, and planning is underway for the next annual stakeholder conference, to be held in Brussels 6-7 March 2019.

- The ECESP Coordination Group consists of 24 path-breaking European business associations, trade unions, environmental groups, national waste management, environmental research, and recycling platforms, think tanks, research institutes, and other public authorities. Its members range from 13 countries, but drive the conversation on circular economy across Europe.

- The Workplan strengthens existing platforms and creates opportunities for collaboration on new initiatives. The actions are currently grouped in three thematic clusters (exchanging good practices, fostering dialogue, and sharing knowledge and identifying barriers), with 50% of the pilot initiatives completed or ongoing as of October 2018.

- The ECESP website was first launched in November 2017, and has been upgraded with two incremental developments since. Starting from a static database of good practices, the virtual platform has evolved into a knowledge database interlinked with a dedicated forum.

- The Annual Conference remains the flagship policy and networking event on the circular economy in Europe, with successful iterations in both 2017 and 2018 attended by over 500 participants.

- With ECESP developing into a fully-operational platform, guidance will continue to be sought from the Coordination Group on the Platform's success and lessons learned to ensure further performance remains aligned with stakeholder needs.

I. Establishing the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ECESP)

The transition towards a circular economy (CE) requires the commitment and involvement of public authorities, businesses and civil society. The European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform is a "network of networks" that goes beyond sectoral activities and highlights cross-sector opportunities and challenges. It is a hub of knowledge, a place for dialogue and a bridge between existing initiatives. It contributes to spreading the concept of the circular economy at national, regional and local level by making the information more easily accessible, and by providing a framework for exchange and discussion.

1. Context

The circular economy and the corresponding transition from linear patterns of production and consumption to CE models are attracting considerable attention in Europe. The European Commission has taken several pioneering steps in driving the CE transition with its Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) (December 2015) and subsequent initiatives (e.g. 2018 package, which included among others the first EU wide Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy and a Monitoring Framework of indicators to measure progress in this transition). However, in 2015:

- there seemed to be no clear concept or vision of what the circular economy represents and how this transition is to take place
- there was **little structured dialogue** among CE stakeholders. National, regional and local initiatives were plentiful but developing in isolation
- intra-sectoral discussions occurring in e.g. construction, fashion and municipal waste showed **willingness among industry and public services to transition, but did not link up sufficiently** to develop synergistic business models.

2. Background

In December 2015, the European Commission adopted a Circular Economy Package, including *Closing the Loop – an EU action plan for the Circular Economy* (CEAP) and four legislative proposals on waste, waste packaging, landfill, and electrical and electronic waste. CEAP itself features measures including *"Engagement with stakeholders in the implementation of this action plan through existing fora in key sectors"* and *"Support to a range of stakeholders through actions on public-private partnerships, cooperation platforms, support to voluntary business approaches, and exchanges of best practices"*.

The call for a stakeholder platform was initiated and echoed by EESC Opinions on the circular economy and wider new economic models. These urged the Committee to take initiative in moulding the European vision on this horizontal topic through innovative structures linking civil society to European institutions:

- **NAT/652** *"calls for the launch of a major participatory foresight initiative at European level"*
- **NAT/676** expressed the EESC's desire to *"explore the feasibility of an open European platform for the circular economy bringing together stakeholders and civil society from the public, semi-public or private sectors involved in resource-efficiency, hosted by EESC"*

- **INT/784** – *"In order to cope with the fundamental shift to a new economic model with major systemic consequences in many areas, it is recommended that a new cross-cutting and permanent body be set up in the EESC to analyse these developments"*
- **INT/793** – *"… in order to tackle the transition to a new economy with significant systemic consequences, it is recommended that the EESC create a permanent horizontal structure to analyse these emerging phenomena"*
- **SC/048** *"The EESC could contribute to these efforts by establishing a new economy observatory, as it has already recommended in a number of opinions"*

All other EU institutions echoed this call: from the June 2015 European Parliament's Report on Resource Efficiency to June 2016 Council of the European Union conclusions and Committee of the Regions Opinion on CEAP, all institutions underlined the importance of involving actors from a broad variety of sectors.

3. 2017 stakeholder conference

The EESC and the European Commission perceived strategic alignment in their respective objectives on stakeholder engagement with regard to the circular economy and began talks on establishing a stakeholder platform in late 2016. Bilateral engagement with circular economy stakeholders, including bilateral meetings with existing national and European civil society organisations, was overwhelmingly positive, reflecting a true civil society wish for innovative but structured dialogue on the transition to a cohesive and prosperous circular economy.

To shape the ECESP in line with stakeholder expectations and requirements, the EESC and European Commission organised a CE stakeholder conference 9 – 10 March 2017, at which the aforementioned institutions jointly launched the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform. Civil society (industry and entrepreneur networks, trade unions, consumer associations and environmental NGOs), and public authorities (national, regional and local) also provided input about their respective needs and recommendations for a platform dedicated to the circular economy transition.

The March 2017 conference, titled *Circular Economy: one year after adoption, working together for the future* was well attended, with 700 participants underscoring civil society and public authority enthusiasm for the circular economy concept, the transition thereto and a Europe-wide network supporting those facilitating this transition. The operational conclusions of the 2017 conference suggested that the Platform should have as objectives. :

- **Exchanging of good practices and learning experiences, based on voluntary contributions of members;**
- **Fostering an overall circular economy network in Europe, raising awareness and supporting stakeholders;**
- **Acting as a European information and dialogue space for stakeholders;**
- **Helping identifying barriers and obstacles through multi-stakeholder exchange and networking from a socio-economic and cultural perspective;**
- **Strengthening policy dialogue between policy-makers and stakeholders, including on social and labour-related aspects of the transition.**

4. ECESP Terms of Reference

Following the March 2017 stakeholder conference, the EESC and EC formally established the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform in June 2017 with the adoption of the ECESP Terms of Reference. Developed from the stakeholder contributions and operational conclusions from the conference, this mandate sets out the platform's aims as:

- Advancing the circular economy concept in Member States, regional and local governments, civil society and businesses;
- Strengthening the cooperation among stakeholders' networks to facilitate the exchange of expertise and good practices on the circular economy; and
- Contribute to identify social, economic and cultural barriers to the transition towards a circular economy intended for policy makers at all level of governance.

The platform is structured as an open platform with three pillars:

1. Policy dialogue:
    - Annual flagship **two-day conference on circular economy**, with a first day focused on policy, and a second on exchanging good practices
    - **Participation in, organisation of, and dissemination for external meetings** to raise awareness on national and European initiatives while gathering local evidence
2. Coordination group:
    - 24-member group that brings together existing networks pioneering the circular economy in Europe, and a Workplan to augment their contribution
    - Secretariat provided by the EESC to support the Platform's activities overall and prepare Day Two of the annual conference, host the virtual platform, and provide business continuity in particular
3. Virtual platform:
    - Website that functions as a one-stop shop for CE knowledge and digital meeting place to exchange contacts, advice and best practice
    - Brand built on consistent visual identity and communication policy

II.   Developing ECESP

From the formal establishment of the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform in June 2017 up to the 2nd meeting of its Coordination Group in October 2018, the Secretariat has focused its efforts on rendering ECESP operational. To this end, the Coordination Group met for the first time in November 2017 and then informally on the fringes of the 2018 annual conference. The latter built on the resounding success of the 2017 conference, while featuring a more focused discussion on the practical delivery of *Closing the Loop*.

CG and EESC members also raised awareness of the European circular economy vision and ECESP at worldwide events throughout 2018. Alongside this networking of networks and policy dialogue, the Secretariat launched a dedicated ECESP website in three iterations, thus gradually creating a fully-fledged virtual platform on the circular economy in Europe.

5.   Launching the Coordination Group

The Coordination Group garnered much interest from the circular economy community in the July 2017 call, with 192 applications received. The 24-member group of circular economy stakeholders representing leading European organisations was selected in October 2017 by the EESC and European Commission while ensuring geographical and sectoral balance (for full detail please view Annex II - list of CG members). This Group, active in 13 EU Member States, Switzerland and beyond, includes representatives of:

- Multi-stakeholder networks/platforms
- Representatives of businesses, trade unions and wider civil society
- Networks of national, regional and local public authorities/bodies
- Organisations from the knowledge and research communities, think-tanks, universities

The ECESP Coordination Group held its first meeting in November 2017 at the EESC. Following a presentation on preparatory activities for the platform's operations by the Secretariat, the Coordination Group proposed the the following conclusions on expanding the Platform, grouped according to the thematic discussion:

Exchange of good practices by:

- Mapping, linking sectors and completing evidence gaps
- Gathering and promoting good practices from existing databases
- Filling geographic and sectoral gaps in GPs
- Impact on business, society and environment
- Creating an active event calendar

Fostering dialogue by:

- Structuring CG activities in a thematic workplan
- Providing tools for CG networking and on-demand support to national hubs

- Communicating information CG members can transmit nationally clearly and effectively
- Nurturing communities through focused collaboration with select CG

Sharing knowledge by:

- Mapping existing knowledge and populating gaps
- Surveying businesses and local authorities on the perception of CE
- Uploading existing content and expand its reach through CG, EESC and EC channels
- Prioritising indicators measuring platform success and monitoring transition
- Consistently engaging the Coordination Group, their respective member organisations and others

This meeting also set a guiding framework for Day 2 of the conference, with the CG recommending that the proceedings be structured around a limited number of concrete topics, moving from the discussing to mobilising stage. The first CG meeting thus provided guidelines for developing the website, themes and structure of the platform's workplan and the framework for joint CG-EESC planning of Day 2 for the 2018 conference.

6. Adopting the Workplan

The Coordination Group agreed, with the guidance of the EC and EESC, to develop a dedicated Workplan of activities that would support a meaningful transition to a new and circular economic model with concrete actions. The initial activities, 32 in total, are scheduled for 2018 and 2019 are classified according to the thematic structure used in the first CG meeting, with individual actions thus being clustered according to whether they contribute to:

- Exchanging **g**ood practices
- **F**ostering dialogue
- Providing **k**nowledge and identifying barriers

The Workplan was discussed in greater depth following the 2018 Circular Economy Stakeholder Conference, and published online as adopted in June 2018 (see Annex III for an overview of the workplan including details on implementation).

7. Raising Awareness

Members of the ECESP coordination group and dedicated EESC taskforce have raised awareness on the platform's activities through participation in 20+ events in Belgium, Ireland, France, Austria, Slovenia, and Italy. Representatives of the European Commission also raised awareness on ECESP continuously as part of wider ongoing policy dialogues.

Events hosted or participated in by the ECESP Coordination Group within the framework of this platform include, among others:

Event	Date	Location	ECESP Representative
Fashion policy lab	24 May 2018	Brussels (EESC)	Ecopreneur + EESC (Cillian Lohan)
Screen policy lab	31 May 2018	Brussels (EESC)	EESC (Bernd Dittmann)
SDG and circular economy conference	18-19 July 2018	Bologna, IT	ENEA + EESC (Bernd Dittmann)
Circular Economy and SDG 12	18 July 2018	New York	EESC (Peter Schmidt)
Bringing the action plan to life	20 September 2018	Vienna, AT	CEC4Europe + EESC (Bernd Dittmann)
Challenges and opportunity of the circular economy	5 October 2018	Madrid, ES	BusinessEurope + Ecoembes + DG ENV
Circular economy – Challenges, issues, best practices	3 October 2018	Brno, CZ	BusinessEurope + DG ENV
Workshop on city portal for the Urban Agenda on CE	11 October 2018	Brussels (EESC)	OVAM, ACR+ + EESC (Cillian Lohan)
11th International Environmental Congress	23-24 Oct 2018	Colombia	EESC (Cillian Lohan)
World Circular Economy Forum	22 – 24 October 2018	Yokohama, Japan	SITRA
Consumers in the CE Stakeholder meeting	25 October 2018	Brussels (EESC)	CSCP + EESC (Evangelia Kekeleki)
From Linear to Circular	25 October 2018	Copenhagen, DK	EESC (Bernd Dittmann)
industriAll Member Meeting	14 November 2018	Brussels	ECESP Secretariat
2nd intl. RREUSE conference	22 – 23 November 2018	Nijmegen, NL	EESC (Cillian Lohan)
Formal launch of the Italian Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform	03 December 2018	Rome, IT	ENEA + EESC (Antonello Pezzini)

8. A virtual platform

The EESC launched the ECESP virtual platform in November 2017 on the EUROPA domain (*circulareconomy.europa.eu*). This website is hosted by the EESC in partnership with an external contractor and managed by the ECESP Secretariat.

While the first version already gathered strategies, knowledge and good practices, a subsequent update in February 2018 enables stakeholders to submit content directly. This update also

introduced a section on voluntary commitments aligned with the Monitoring Framework for a Circular Economy.

To facilitate further interaction between European stakeholders interested and active in the circular economy, the ECESP Secretariat has developed a forum that enables direct interaction between website users and posting about content published on the website. This interactive discussion board, tested with assistance from the Coordination Group, was launched at the 2018 CG meeting in October.

9. Conference 2018

The 2018 conference, titled *Delivering on the Circular Economy – What's next?* was another success for the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform, drawing more than 650 participants on Day 1 and 350 on Day 2. Whereas the first day provided an avenue for high-level political discussion, in particular implementation of CEAP, the second day allowed for the gathering of perspectives from civil society organisations.

On this day the CG members and Platform secretariat organised 16 participatory circles with participation by 300 stakeholders. In these circles participants reflected upon the following three questions:

I.   Delivering the Circular Economy from Policy to Practice: How is civil society making it happen?
II.   A transition for all: How do we create a more inclusive and widespread community?
III. What's next: how can we boost the share and take-up of good practices?

Their perspectives on these questions can be viewed directly here, while an overview of the 16 circles is provided below:

Roadmap to ICT-enabled CE	Low carbon / low waste and the circular economy
Repairability and Serviceability Ratings of Applicances	The real potential of Extended Producer Responsibility
Circular Bioeconomy – the regenerative story	Circular approaches in the agri-food and forestry sector. How do we scale up existing ideas and promote new ones?
Product design for long-life products / industrialised maintenance and repair	Risk and reward of circularity in SMEs
Circular Economy and the international level	Social dimension of the circular economy
Bottom-up initiatives	Overcoming cultural challenges in the circular transition
Green Financing	Remanufacturing
How circular is the SME community over Europe?	Urban Agenda partnership for the Circular Economy

III.   Delivering ECESP

As the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform has been developed according to requirements and is now operational, the ECESP is entering a new phase of activity. An overview of the planned implementation for 2018 to 2019 by the Coordination Group, through their workplan, with support from EESC Secretariat is provided below.

The workplan, with 72% of the actions completed or ongoing as of October 2018, is on course to be fully implemented by 2019. Participation in, and organisation of, supporting and complementary events has been scheduled until end 2018, with awareness of the platform having gone beyond Europe, as requests to communicate the European vision on circular economy have reached ECESP from several interested stakeholders in Asia and South America.

The website is fully primed to serve as a virtual platform for knowledge and dialogue with the necessary structures to function as an interactive discussion hub directly linked to a database of good practices, strategies, knowledge, commitments, networks and contacts. A push for content, communications strategy and further technical upgrades should enable the ECESP to grow into *the* digital home for Europe's specialised circular economy community.

Planning for the 2019 annual conference is already underway, with due consideration being granted to ensuring continued effectiveness as the flagship policy networking event on CE in Europe.

10. Delivering the workplan

Out of 32 initiatives in the ECESP workplan, 9 have been completed to date and another 10 are ongoing. The table below provides an overview of workplan implementation by cluster:

| Status	Exchanging GPs	Fostering dialogue	Sharing knowledge	Total	%
Completed	3	5	1	9	28
Ongoing	8	5	1	10	43.75
Not started		5	1	6	18.75
Unknown		1	2	3	9.38

As the CG has proposed further initiatives and a thematic focus for 2019, the workplan will be updated to include these new partnerships in late 2018.
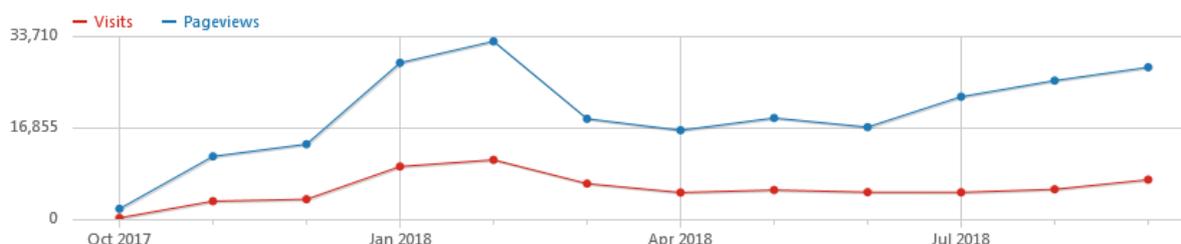
11. Website

Since its launch in November 2017, the ECESP website has received 205 external submissions. These are of varying quality, with a third being rejected. While the website launch garnered a lot of enthusiasm a gradual decline in Coordination Group and external submissions has led to a stagnation

in the number of good practices, which is being addressed by boosting content in-house. The number of items published on the virtual platform as of September 2018 is provided below according to content type and priority area of the CEAP:

Published	11/2018
Published	**11/2018**
Good Practices	184
Strategies	17
Commitments	3
Knowledge	70
Networks	16
Upcoming Events	15
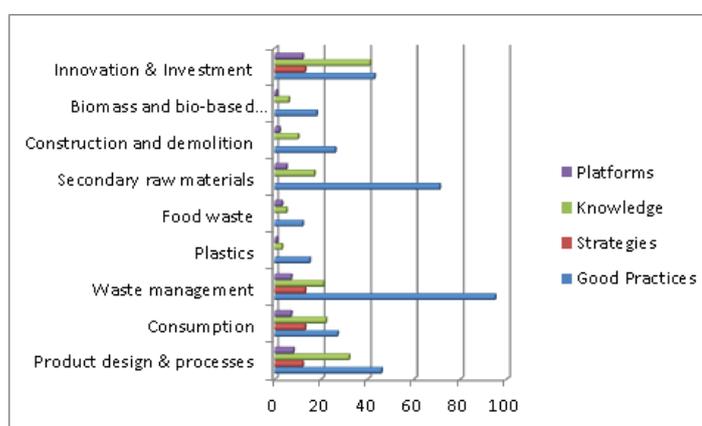
In October 2018, the **ECESP website had 4,933 unique visitors and 28,778 page views**. The graph below shows that interest in the virtual platform is steadily increasing for the year to date, with a peak to be found in the period surrounding the annual conference:

Alongside a push for more content and streamlined channels of communication within the platform, the Secretariat is preparing further technical upgrades to the ECESP website. These will aim to resolve pending development bugs, improve user experience, and provide the infrastructure to visualize the 65 pledges. Further content types such as financing, education and toolkits will also be considered for inclusion.

12. Studies

The EESC has commissioned two studies to support the CG workplan at the behest of, and in consultation with, Coordination Group members. These two studies, due to be completed in 2019, are described below:

I. ***Circular Economy Roadmaps: Identifying synergies and the potential for cooperation and alliance-building***
A number of national, local and regional Circular Economy (CE) strategies, or roadmaps, have been published on what is needed for the transition to a more sustainable, circular economic model. The purpose of this study will be to conduct a review of European Circular Economy

Roadmaps, and to identify the common threads that weave between each, as well as the synergies and the potential for co-operation and alliance building. The outcome of the study will feed in to the reflection on how to improve the effectiveness of ECESP, for example, through improved communication channels and links to different knowledge areas.

*II. **Identifying the Impact of the Circular Economy on the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry: Opportunities and Challenges for Labour Market, Supply Chains and Consumer Behaviour***

The aim of this study is to determine the opportunities, challenges and impact that a transition to circular economy may present to the labour market, supply chains and consumer behaviour within the Fast Moving Consumer Electronics sector, with a change to a circular economy.   The study also aims to determine the potential impact on consumer behaviour.

The CG will be consulted throughout the drafting of these studies in order to provide input and ensure deliverables align with the requests provided.

13. Conference 2019

Preparations have also begun for the 2019 annual conference. Day 1, to be planned by the European Commission, will take place in the Charlemagne building while Day 2, to be organised by the Coordination Group, will be hosted and supported by the EESC in its Jacques Delors building.

IV. A successful ECESP

Now that ECESP has been established and further developed to become fully operational, the activities for 2019 and beyond will be driven by the needs of the Coordination Group, reflecting the Platform's Terms of Reference. The ECESP Secretariat has surveyed all CG members and the ECESP institutional partners (the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee) on what a successful and effectively performing ECESP would look like to them. The findings of this mid-term review are synthesised below.

14. Taking stock

Is the platform meeting stakeholder expectations?

While acknowledging the relative infancy of this multi-stakeholder platform, CG members support the substantial efforts made by the European Economic and Social Committee and European Commission to establish and develop the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform. Its members recognise the platform as a living bridge between European policymaking and civil society activism on the ground and show enthusiasm to achieve common goals in accelerating the circular economy through improved collaboration.

What direction should the platform evolve towards?

The CG members outline a successful and coherent ECESP that strengthens existing networks through strategic coordination within the platform, delivers an impactful conference, provides a virtual one-stop shop on the circular economy in the European Union and develops closer links with other European stakeholder groups such as the food waste, sustainable development and CE finance platforms.

How can the Workplan become more effective, coherent and efficient?

Recommendations have been made to concentrate actions thematically, establish clear timeframes and define the purpose, objectives and desired outcomes of these actions. More regular and dynamic communication in addition to increased coordination between members, to be facilitated by the Secretariat where desired, could also support effective delivery towards the platform's goals and enable the CG to exploit synergies in topics of mutual interest.

Does the virtual platform serve its purpose and how can it reach a wider audience?

CG members are enthusiastic about the virtual platform, highlighting that there is potential for the ECESP website to become a one-stop shop on the circular economy in Europe. As the platform is successfully gathering evidence on the CE transition in Europe, some CG members have expressed interest in developing a framework to use this evidence and feed into policy research.

Simultaneously CG members also raised concerns about the website's user-friendliness, with the barriers to entry for submitting content or forum engagement being perceived as high. Further thought should be put into defining the target audiences this website is designed for, with the current structure and content being considered most helpful for those already in the know.

Recommendations have thus been made to include more resources welcoming newcomers to the circular economy and develop content types aimed at practitioners looking for resources to address a specific challenge they are encountering, e.g. funding sources, measurement tools or policy design guidelines. Continuing to promote the forum should also support the website in becoming a space for experts to discuss challenges being encountered on the ground.

How do CG members represent the platform externally and how can they widen its reach?

Most CG members actively promote ECESP through their respective domestic or global networks, but some recognise more can be done to raise awareness within these networks and to wider audiences. Increased collaboration in ongoing projects will provide natural channels to promote the platform and its objectives, but recommendations are also made to facilitate this by providing a communication toolkit and streamlining internal channels so CG members can play a greater role in promoting the stakeholder platform online, at events and otherwise.

15. Planning ahead?

How can the Secretariat improve collaboration and raise awareness?

- Facilitate matchmaking between CG members to encourage the development of mutually beneficial projects that connect unusual suspects and feed into policymaking
- Streamline internal channels of communication and provide a communication toolkit
- Promote the Platform and its members among other European agencies, platforms and institutions (EIT Climate-KIC, Committee of the Regions, EIB, EEA, etc)

How can Day 2 of the 2019 conference maintain high-level mobilisation?

- Define a clear purpose, key objectives and desired outcomes linked to the overall political context and Day 1 topics before fine-tuning the style and substance of Day 2 proceedings
- Clearly define outputs and their respective audiences beforehand, so good practices and knowledge shared and discussed at the conference are captured effectively, enabling both the institutional partners and CG to follow-up and disseminate among wider audiences
- Build on previous successes by organizing active participatory events relating to on-trend topics, with substantial flexibility for participants to shape workshops themselves
- Provide opportunities for spontaneous networking, including spaces for matchmaking and for national platforms to present their activities

How can the Secretariat support a more effective, coherent and efficient Workplan?

- Enhance collaboration within the platform, possibly through more (virtual) meetings
- Develop thematic actions in coordination with the ongoing projects of CG members
- Plan these actions with a clear intervention logic and in close alignment with CG priorities, and provide support only where necessary

How can CG be encouraged to share good practice and exchange knowledge via the website?

- Streamline the virtual platform to increase user friendliness, especially to stimulate external submissions of good practices and capacity of the CG to shape website directly
- Partner with CG platforms to exchange content, thus building on existing knowledge
- Collaborate pro-actively in disseminating ongoing projects and upcoming events
- Provide resources introducing newcomers to the EU policy framework on Circular Economy
- Be the one-stop shop sharing all relevant and necessary knowledge, e.g. on pledges, funding, toolkits and guidelines

How can the EESC and European Commission further support the CG?

- Deepen inter-institutional understanding of CG expectations, priorities and needs
- Request input from the 24 members on particular areas to make best possible use of the expertise and experience gathered in this CG
- Nurture close relationships with national Environment and Economy ministries to map innovations towards circular economy in policy, business and civil society across Europe
- Share this knowledge on the website to support stakeholder partnerships towards a resilient and cohesive transition on the ground

16. Next steps

The ECESP Steering Group is to be chaired by Ladeja Godina Košir from Circular Change in 2019, enabling the platform to focus on delivering with a clear governance structure.

Workplan: The Secretariat is collecting input from the Coordination Group about the next version of the Workplan to propose a thematically focused action plan for 2019. This workplan will strengthen ongoing projects, include new partnerships and support a more coherent implementation, for example through direct links with Day 2 of March 2019 annual conference.

Annual Conference (DAY 2): The Secretariat is drafting a concept note and programme on the basis of suggestions from the CG regarding substance and style.

Virtual platform: The Secretariat has created a Communication toolkit, shared it with CG Members, and is streamlining internal channels of communication so members can directly contribute to the website and collaborate easily. Steps are being taken as well to simplify the website's user interface, improve the editorial process to publish more content, and develop a forward-looking publication calendar to reach wider audiences and better promote CG activities.