



Case Study // Round Table SDG 12: Towards a circular economy: innovation for sustainable value chains

Transition to a Green Economy: National Strategy and Process

Slovenia

Level: national

Summary

In October 2015 the Slovenian Government adopted **the Framework Programme for Transition to a Green Economy**. With that, the government set out the process for transition and a long-term vision of development and common orientation for policies and strategies towards a green and circular economy. The objective was to further the competitiveness of the economy, and at the same time improve the preservation of natural resources and increase the quality and safety of life. The process started with the first systematic steps in linking sectoral policies and measures that include government action in many areas, including: the sustainable management of resources (water, waste, physical space, protected natural areas, forests, wood, opportunities for greater social inclusion); the greening of the economy with a smart specialization strategy; the promotion of green jobs along with the skills and knowledge necessary; green public procurement; sustainable urban development and sustainable transport policy; and green farming practices. The implementation continues through the preparation of **The Road Map towards a Circular Economy in Slovenia**, and the establishing of the **Circular Economy Hub** for support to all stakeholders (both underway).

Situation

Numerous examples of best practices in this area in Slovenia have evolved through an appropriate combination of development, learning, experience, and innovation. So, we are not starting from scratch; there are numerous examples of good practices leading the way. This involves companies and organisations which, despite a lack of umbrella efforts, showed a high awareness of the social and economic benefits, used their own knowledge and support, and recognised how important and necessary it is to create new green jobs, to operate with green responsibility, and to offer people green products and services. Their experiences, their knowledge, and their stories are extremely valuable, and a learning point for all. As such an invaluable source and partner, we work together to find systemic solutions.



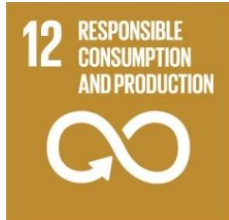
Strategy

The transition to a green and circular economy is a long-term process, which involves changes at many levels and within the whole society. The shift from linear to circular models is at the core. The approach chosen was to work with stakeholders, best practices, and people and companies. It is bottom-up, top-down, and horizontal cooperation at the same time, and represents experiential learning for improving policies. An active, structured, and continuous dialogue and involvement of key stakeholders is used for making the transition happen, as well as to find new efficient solutions.

To support the process and to encourage everyone to get actively involved as partners, investors, responsible citizens, or innovators with green knowledge and skills, the government also established the **Partnership for Green Economy of Slovenia**, led by the Office of the Prime Minister. The Partnership involves Slovenian governmental representatives and stakeholders from the commercial sector, the regional and local levels, academia, non-governmental organizations, and many others. Through the Partnership we are trying to encourage the transition in several ways: with the exchange of good practices, through awareness-raising and education, through international cooperation and exchange of knowledge, connecting different partners and supporting circular investment, etc. The process involves consultations, workshops, and cyclical meetings aimed at monitoring implementation of the measures laid out, as well as the achievement of targets, exchanges of opinions, defining priorities, and will also continue to evolve in future.

Results and impact

- Over 2,500 interested stakeholders involved in the Partnership
- Stakeholders mobilized – concrete proposals for policy improvements communicated and discussed directly with the government, some already underway for the implementation.
- Best practices identified – lessons shared with community of Partnership and interested public
- Circular economy included as a main stream of key development policies (Development Strategy of Slovenia, National Environmental Action Program, educational programs, etc.)
- Slovenia won the 2017 title as the first country in the world to become a green destination as a country;
- Cities as key circular enablers - capital Ljubljana won the title of European Green Capital 2016, and the City of Maribor is first in implementing the model of a circular city.
- The Government is bridging private and public sector – The Partnership for Green Economy is connecting more than 2,500 stakeholders, engaging and networking on national and international level. The results – new investments, new jobs, new mindset of a circular culture shared in Slovenia and in the region.
- The making of Slovenian Circular Economy Hub is joining Circular Economy, Social Entrepreneurship, and block chain technologies in the process, and promotes working hand in hand and under the same roof.



Challenges and lessons learned

- The major challenge and task is in **connecting all relevant stakeholders, policies, the economy, people, and knowledge**. This task is not an end in itself – we are seeking to establish strategically vital points at all levels of society, governance, and partners. It is important to link together all structures of administration, both **vertically**, i.e. from national to local, from policy and measures design to implementation, **and horizontally**, i.e. among individual sectors and also with branches and professions for developing innovative solutions. The challenge is to create **truly constructive, two way dialogues** in the spirit of common cooperation.
- **Shared vision** is crucial for greater consistency of policies: to recognize and exploit the inherent advantages of the Green breakthrough, and encourage changes in thinking and behavior management, both in individuals, companies, and countries.
- **Existing examples of best practices are indispensable** for seeking solutions and designing measures for specific needs. The possibility of involving everyone brings experience, knowledge, skills, and a willingness to connect in contributing creatively to new solutions. Cooperation between the various partners with a wide range of expertise also encourages the exchange and creation of new knowledge to support the development processes, and enriches the relationship of trust among those participating.
- Among the great challenges is to achieve **synergy among policies and their measures**, due to the prevailing traditional sectoral approach of acting in most countries and at the EU level. The breakthrough in this area also requires a shift in thinking and readiness for change.
- Given the new knowledge and skills, green growth is both a challenge and opportunity for the labor market and businesses. The transition brings changes in the economy as a whole and within numerous sectors that will create additional jobs. It is important to take in account the **adjusting of education and skills**.
- **More important than new measures in policies is to adjust the existing ones:** we must place **our** attention on key sectoral policies to reduce the obstacles for green solutions, better taking in account all elements of green development, and make them easier to implement.
- All new, green, and circular economic models require a substantial **shift of the public's mind-set and habits**, the ways of production, and our consumer patterns.

Potential for replication

The concrete steps can vary (due to existing national structures, conditions available, and cultural differences), but the general approach and lessons learned can be replicable basically everywhere.

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