

# RESOURCE

## Regional project development assistance for the uptake of an Aragonese circular economy

### D4.3 List of Evaluation Criteria

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Abstract	This deliverable, resulting from Task 4.2, presents a list of criteria for evaluating and selecting best practices in Circular Economy (CE), focusing on alignment with CE principles, scalability, sustainability, adaptability, and continuous improvement. These criteria were used to assess best practices during knowledge sharing sessions, with the findings compiled into a report to benchmark exemplary CE practices across Europe.
Keywords	Best practice selection, knowledge sharing, circular economy, evaluation criteria



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This deliverable, resulting from Task 4.2, presents a comprehensive list of criteria designed to evaluate and select best practices in Circular Economy (CE). The primary aim is to establish common evaluation elements that align with CE principles and project pillars, ensuring a standardized assessment framework. The criteria focus on key aspects such as alignment with circular economy principles, scalability and replicability, long-term sustainability, flexibility and adaptability in project scope and methodology, and commitment to continuous improvement and learning.

The evaluation process involves organizing online best practice knowledge sharing sessions with stakeholders from various European countries. During these sessions, projects have presented their organizations, activities, and lessons learned, which were then evaluated against the established criteria. The outcomes of these sessions were compiled into a report, summarizing findings and scoring the best practices.

This structured approach aimed to identify and benchmark exemplary CE practices, fostering knowledge sharing and innovation across European regions. By focusing on these criteria, the deliverable ensures that selected best practices are effective, impactful, adaptable, and sustainable, driving long-term success in circular economy initiatives.

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# ABBREVIATIONS

- CCRI** .....Circular Cities and Regions Initiative
- CE**.....Circular Economy
- EBN** .....European Business and innovation centre Network
- EU** .....European Union
- PDA** .....Project Development Assistance
- SIG** .....Special Interest Group
- SMEs**.....Small and medium-sized enterprises
- WP** .....Work Package
- ....

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Context and background

Circularity is an essential aspect of the industry transformation towards resource-efficiency, climate neutrality and long-term competitiveness.

The RESOURCE project is currently studying the private funding opportunities needed in circular projects and facilitating their development. RESOURCE's overarching objective is to develop new Project Development Assistance (PDA) services to fund regional circular economy investment projects. More precisely RESOURCE is:

- building an integrated expertise pool to support technically, economically, and legally the regional circular economy pilots SMEs,
- developing innovative financing schemes and business models,
- launching concrete investments.

The methodology developed for the RESOURCE project ensures the sustainability of those circular economy projects by potentially completing their private funding with other sources of financing (European, national, and regional public funds).

The RESOURCE methodology consists of seven steps:

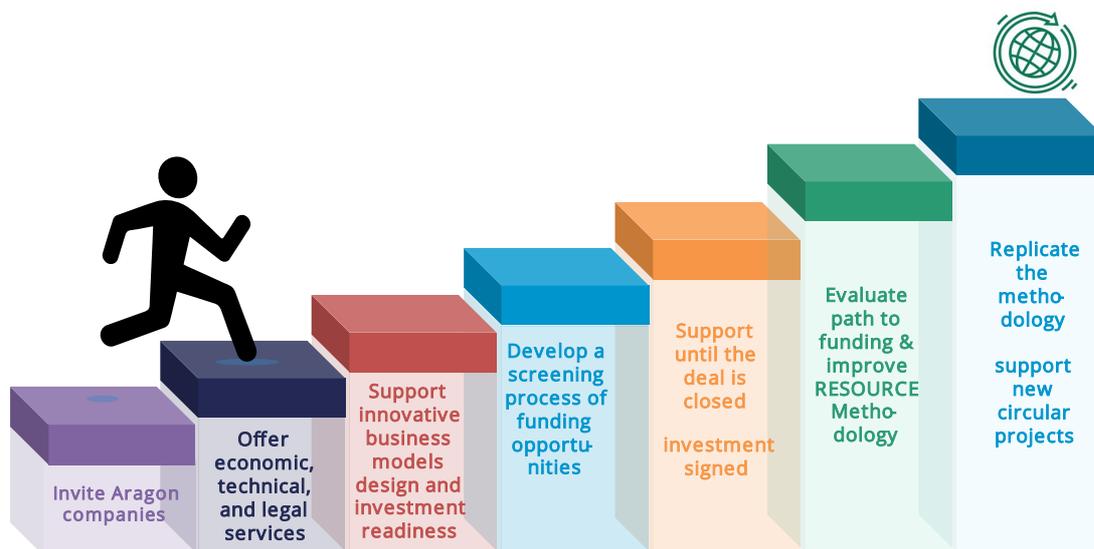


Figure 1 - The RESOURCE methodology in 7 steps

## 1.2 Expected outcomes

Circular economy is a priority for the Region of Aragon. The Region has launched a manifestation of interest and identified a portfolio of circular projects in need of funding. Nine of these projects will serve as pilots in the RESOURCE project.

The strong interest coming from Aragon companies to shift towards circular practices will guarantee a sustainable pipeline of projects to test the RESOURCE methodology. The final and overall objective of the RESOURCE project through the creation of a portfolio of project development assistance services, is to accelerate the development of the circular economy in Aragon and to reach €20M direct private investment in circular projects over a period of 36 months, until end of June 2025.

RESOURCE will in particular **reach out to and gather a circular economy community to develop an innovative regional** process and ecosystem to remove the technical, economic, legal, regulatory, and financial barriers the circular economy projects face.

The innovative RESOURCE solution will be co-created with **public institutions, intermediary organisations, finance stakeholders and beneficiaries**. A specific **outreach and communication campaign** will be conducted from the beginning of the RESOURCE project and throughout its entire duration **to engage the largest possible number of regional stakeholders** in the community. A set of **market intelligence and awareness-raising materials** (factsheets, publications, informational videos, etc.) and **knowledge and capacity-building activities** (including online training webinars, exchange of good practices and peer experiences, etc.) will be specifically developed. A similar campaign will be conducted to reach out to and engage with other circular economy ecosystems in the EU interested in replication.

## 1.3 Purpose of this report

This document, resulting from Task 4.2, presents a comprehensive list of criteria designed to evaluate and select best practices in Circular Economy (CE). The primary aim is to establish common evaluation elements that align with CE principles and project pillars, ensuring a standardized assessment framework. The criteria focus on key aspects such as alignment with circular economy principles, scalability and replicability, long-term sustainability, flexibility and adaptability in project scope and methodology, and commitment to continuous improvement and learning.

Deliverable D4.2 Best Practice Selection, is developed as part of the RESOURCE project funded by the European Union under the Horizon Europe research and innovation(R&I) programme

under grant agreement N° 101060142. It is part of Work Package 4 (WP) – Replicability on the EU scale: best practices and benchmarking.

A former deliverable, the D4.1 “Map of Circular Economy projects implemented across EU countries” that identified 25 best practices from which we selected five key ones. This current D4.2, now outlines the final five best practices that will be used to be benchmarked with the RESOURCE selected pilot projects. A first section explains the methodology employed to select those final five best practices, in sections 3 and 4 the best practices are detailed, and finally in the section 5.6 pillars are extracted from those best practices to serve as benchmarking pillars for the RESOURCE pilot projects.

The Methodology for Selecting Best Practices in Circular Economy projects’ support is covered in detail in Deliverable 4.2 previously submitted.

## 2 Methodology for Selection

Building upon the findings of Task 4.1, Task 4.2, led by EBN, focused on the selection of 25+ best practices to be benchmarked within the RESOURCE project. The selection process comprised the following steps:

- Organizing Sessions: five sessions were organized online and gathered stakeholders included in the mapping from different European countries and beyond leveraging the EBN pool of members across Europe.
- Presentation and Evaluation: projects presented their organisations, projects, activities, and lessons learned in each session. Project partners evaluated them based on pre-established criteria, including adherence to CE principles and geographic coverage.
- Selection of Best Practices: when the five sessions were completed, a compilation report of sessions minutes and findings was developed. Out of this report, a table of 25+ best practices were summarised and grouped as per the pillars of the project.
  - Capacity Building and Training
  - Access to Funding Components
  - Networking and Collaboration
  - Technical Support to SMEs
  - Policy, Advocacy, and Regulatory Frameworks

Project partners were then requested to score the best practices as per the criteria identified below:

- Alignment with Circular Economy Principles and Project Pillars: Assess the extent to which the practice embodies core principles of circular economy, and how much they are in line with the project pillars. How much they will contribute to the methodology of Resource.

- **Scalability and Replicability:** Assess the scalability and replicability of the practice across different industries, regions, and contexts. Consider factors such as ease of implementation, adaptability to diverse settings, and potential for widespread adoption.
- **Long-Term Sustainability:** Consider the practice's potential for long-term sustainability and resilience, including its ability to adapt to changing circumstances, and maintain positive impacts over time.

The identification of five best practices were intended to serve as benchmarks for the RESOURCE project support methodology. The methodology adopted ensured a rigorous and inclusive approach to selecting best practices in CE projects, thereby facilitating knowledge sharing and fostering innovation across European regions.

## 3 Criteria for Evaluating CE Best Practices

The following Grading Scale was used to assess the best practices:

- **Poor (1):** The practice does not adequately address the needs of the methodology.
- **Fair (2):** The practice has some effectiveness but could be improved significantly.
- **Good (3):** The practice is effective and meets the basic requirements for supporting SMEs.
- **Very Good (4):** The practice is highly effective and demonstrates a strong impact for the methodology and supporting SMEs.

### 1. Alignment with CE Principles and Project Pillars

Description: Assess the extent to which the practice embodies core principles of circular economy and aligns with the project's key pillars (Capacity Building and Training, Access to Funding, Networking and Collaboration, Technical Support to SMEs, Policy Advocacy and Regulatory Frameworks).

### 2. Scalability and Replicability

Description: Assess the scalability and replicability of the practice across different industries, regions, and contexts, considering factors such as ease of implementation, adaptability to diverse settings, and potential for widespread adoption.

### 3. Long-Term Sustainability

Description: Consider the practice's potential for long-term sustainability and resilience, including its ability to adapt to changing circumstances and maintain positive impacts over time.

### 4. Flexibility and Adaptability in Project Scope and Methodology

Description: Evaluate the practice's ability to maintain flexibility in project scope and methodology to adapt to evolving needs and challenges, ensuring ongoing relevance and responsiveness.

### 5. Continuous Improvement and Learning

Description: Assess the commitment to continuous improvement and learning, incorporating feedback loops and evaluation mechanisms to enhance processes and outcomes.

## 4 Process of Evaluation

The evaluation process for selecting best practices in the RESOURCE project was designed to ensure a thorough and inclusive assessment. This involved a series of structured steps aimed at gathering, presenting, and evaluating a diverse range of CE initiatives. The process began with the organization of online knowledge sharing sessions, bringing together stakeholders from various European countries. During these sessions, project representatives presented their organizations, activities, and key lessons learned. Following the presentations, project partners evaluated the practices using predefined criteria.

Finally, the findings from these sessions were compiled into a comprehensive report, summarizing and scoring the best practices to benchmark exemplary CE initiatives.

- Organizing Best Practice Knowledge Sharing Sessions: Sessions organized online, gathering stakeholders from different European countries.
- Presentation and Evaluation: Projects presented their organizations, activities, and lessons learned. Project partners evaluated them based on the above criteria.
- Selection of Best Practices: Upon completion of the sessions, a compilation report was developed, summarizing the findings and scoring the best practices.

## 5 Implementation

To effectively foster the adoption and growth of Circular Economy (CE) practices, a multifaceted approach is essential. This involves implementing a range of supportive measures that address the diverse needs of businesses and stakeholders within the CE ecosystem. The following sections outline key areas of focus, including capacity building and training, access to funding, networking and collaboration, technical support to SMEs, and policy advocacy and regulatory frameworks. Each area plays a crucial role in creating an enabling environment that drives the transition towards sustainable and circular business models.

- Capacity Building and Training: Providing comprehensive programs tailored to the needs of circular economy businesses.

- Access to Funding: Facilitating access to mixed funding sources.
- Networking and Collaboration: Enhancing collaboration among stakeholders.
- Technical Support to SMEs: Offering targeted technical support.
- Policy Advocacy and Regulatory Frameworks: Ensuring alignment with national and EU strategies.

## 6 Conclusion

The Best Practice Selection deliverable (4.2), conducted as part of the RESOURCE project, has successfully identified and benchmarked exemplary Circular Economy practices across Europe. Through a structured and rigorous evaluation process, involving online knowledge sharing sessions and collaboration with diverse stakeholders, the initiative has extracted 25 distinguished best practices, with a focus on five key areas: capacity building and training, access to funding, networking and collaboration, technical support to SMEs, and policy advocacy and regulatory frameworks.

The established criteria for evaluation—alignment with CE principles, scalability, long-term sustainability, adaptability, and commitment to continuous improvement—have provided a standardized framework to assess these practices effectively. This approach ensures that the selected best practices are not only impactful and effective but also adaptable and sustainable, contributing to the long-term success of CE initiatives.

By fostering knowledge sharing and innovation, this deliverable supports the broader goals of the RESOURCE project, facilitating the transition towards sustainable and circular business models across European regions. The insights and benchmarks provided will serve as valuable reference points for stakeholders, guiding the implementation and assessment of CE projects and promoting the advancement of sustainable practices.