

THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY BRIEF FOR COUNTRIES - TEMPLATE

ABOUT THIS TEMPLATE

This circular economy brief aims to support circular economy champions in starting a dialogue and making the case for circularity in their country. The template can be filled out using the information and prompts in the '**Circular Economy Briefing for Countries**' toolkit, available on [the Circularity Gap Report 2021 website](#).

To use the template, download this document or create a copy of it on Google Docs and follow along the exercises in the toolkit to fill in the blanks. An example of what a final result could look like is provided [here](#).

The toolkits are an initiative of [Circle Economy](#), an impact organisation that supports businesses, cities and countries in transitioning to a circular economy.



THE CHALLENGE

Exercise 2

Meeting the societal needs of everyone on Earth—from housing and nutrition to mobility and healthcare—is responsible for 59.1 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions and over 100 billion tonnes of materials used globally.

These figures are largely attributable to our 'linear' business practices: we 'take', we 'make' and we 'waste' rather than reuse, refurbish or recycle. This is according to a report by Circle Economy, which found that the global economy is only 8.6% circular¹.

¹ Circle Economy. (2020). Circularity Gap Report. Available online via: <https://circularity-gap.world/2020>

In [redacted] (year), [redacted] (country name) contributed about [redacted] to the global GDP. Though not a direct equivalence, this could roughly correspond to [redacted] tonnes of emissions and [redacted] tonnes of materials.

Exercise 1

(Pick one of) *Build countries*

As a lower or low-income country with a biomass-orientated economy, [redacted] (country name)'s contribution to the climate crisis does not begin to compare to those of other countries, but we will likely be first and most affected by its impacts, and we all need to do our part.

Grow countries

As an emerging economy and a (rapidly) industrialising country, [redacted] (country name)'s contribution to the climate crisis is only set to grow, but we have an opportunity to do better, and we all need to do our part.

Shift countries

As a high income, industrialised country, [redacted] (country name)'s contribution to the climate crisis likely vastly exceeds that of others—yet we will likely not be the first nor the most affected by its impact. We need to take responsibility for this and do our part.

WHAT ACTIONS HAS [redacted] (COUNTRY) TAKEN TO DATE?

Exercise 3

[redacted] (Country name) has already taken action on climate change. Current commitments and targets include:

- [redacted] (Commitment or target 1)
- [redacted] (Commitment or target 2)
- [redacted] (Commitment or target 3)

However, current policy and national climate pledges that focus on the energy transition alone are not enough to meet the full challenge of the climate crisis².

But countries wield immense power—especially now. Governments are poised to make significant expenditures to stimulate post-covid economies and calls to 'build back better' or to follow a 'great reset' are impossible to ignore. Critical facilitators to the circular economy, countries are well positioned to chart the course forward through nationwide roadmaps and policy and regulatory reform.

² Circle Economy. (2021). Circularity Gap Report. Available online via: <https://circularity-gap.world/2021>

Urgent course-correction is needed and the time for action is now.

THE OPPORTUNITY

We now have an enormous opportunity: the circular economy. The circular economy is an alternative to the linear ‘take-make-waste’ economy that harms people and planet. It seeks to design out waste, regenerate natural ecosystems and keep materials and products in use for as long as possible³. To this end, resources are not consumed and discarded, destroying their value. Rather, their value is retained by reusing, repairing, remanufacturing or recycling.

By roughly doubling our global circularity rate from 8.6% to 17%, we can bridge the Emissions Gap⁴.

To do so, we need to shift to sustainable food systems, design circularity into new stocks, make mobility clean, improve waste management and roll out other key reforms to healthcare, communications and manufacturing. This could reduce our global carbon footprint by as much as 39% and cut virgin resource use by 28%.

Exercise 4

Pick one of Build countries

Given our national context, priorities for the transition for us include reforming agricultural practices away from monocropping and deforestation; applying circular thinking across our necessary construction; ensuring infrastructure for distributed and accessible mobility solutions in growing cities and combining informal and formal waste management infrastructure.

Grow countries

Given our national context, priorities for the transition for us include prioritising sustainable agriculture, especially in products set for export; mainstreaming resource-efficient and low-carbon construction materials; satiating the growing appetite for energy with renewable sources where possible and establishing infrastructure for effective material cycling, including construction and demolition waste (C&DW).

Shift countries

Given our national context, priorities for the transition for us include taking responsibility for and reducing consumption by integrating circular strategies across construction, mobility, nutrition and consumer goods by transitioning from ownership to sharing models; making the most of goods—from buildings to vehicles—before, during and after their functional lifetimes and optimising how waste is valorised in the already mature waste management systems.

³ Ellen MacArthur Foundation. What is the circular economy?

<https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/circular-economy/what-is-the-circular-economy>

⁴ Circle Economy. (2021). Circularity Gap Report. Available online via:

<https://circularity-gap.world/2021>

For [REDACTED] (country name), this could mean [REDACTED] (Intervention 1), [REDACTED] (Intervention 2), and [REDACTED] (Intervention 3), for example.

Exercise 5

To get there, we could:

- [REDACTED] (Policy instrument 1) to support [REDACTED] (an aspect of intervention 1)
- [REDACTED] (Policy instrument 2) to support [REDACTED] (an aspect of intervention 2)
- [REDACTED] (Policy instrument 3) to support [REDACTED] (an aspect of intervention 3)

Exercise 6

Going circular can not only help us achieve our emissions-reduction goals and decrease our material footprint, it can also increase our resilience, future-proof our industries and help meet other key priorities for our country, including:

- [REDACTED] (Priority 1)
- [REDACTED] (Priority 2)
- [REDACTED] (Priority 3)

Though the possibilities are countless, we need more evidence to better guide our thinking.

WHO IS ALREADY DOING IT?

Exercises 7 and 8

The circular economy is already a reality in many places. In [REDACTED] (country name), a lot of initiatives already exist. For example:

- [REDACTED] (Case study 1)
- [REDACTED] (Case study 2)
- [REDACTED] (Case study 3)

We can also learn from other countries:

- [REDACTED] (Case study 1)
- [REDACTED] (Case study 2)
- [REDACTED] (Case study 3)

RECOMMENDATIONS

[Exercise 9]

Now is the time to make circularity a reality in our country and to pave the way for other countries to follow in our footsteps, alongside pioneers such as [Austria](#), [Norway](#) and the [Netherlands](#).

To make sure our transition is grounded in concrete evidence and involves the right stakeholders, we need to gain a clearer picture of how circular (country name) is, what opportunities exist for the labour market in transitioning to a circular economy and how the labour market will need to adapt to support a just and fair transition.

Global circularity experts at Circle Economy recommend using the Circle Scan approach, a tried-and-tested approach for businesses, cities and countries to begin their circular economy transition:

- Conduct **a baseline measurement of circularity** at the national level and identify the opportunities that the transition can provide in terms of the labour market, so as to better understand our starting point.
- Use this data to identify **key levers for change**: the interventions and the sectors needed to accelerate our country's circular transition.
- Use a **collaborative stakeholder engagement approach** to develop a vision for concrete and locally relevant scenarios to develop a roadmap towards this change.
- Identifying and **establishing circular pilots** alongside the local business community

REFERENCES

Circle Economy. (2020). The circularity gap report 2020 (pp. 1-64, Rep.). Amsterdam: Circle Economy. Retrieved from: <https://circularity-gap.world/2020>

Circle Economy. (2021). The circularity gap report 2021 (pp. 1-71, Rep.). Amsterdam: Circle Economy. Retrieved from: <https://circularity-gap.world/2021>

Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF). (n.d.). What is the circular economy? Retrieved from: <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/circular-economy/what-is-the-circular-economy>