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## BEYOND EXPERIMENTATION

Europe's leading role in mainstreaming circular practice



DEPARTEMENT  
ECONOMIE  
WETENSCHAP &  
INNOVATIE





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**EU CIRCULAR ECONOMY FORUM**  
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BEYOND EXPERIMENTATION

Europe 's leading role in mainstreaming circular practice



***Systemic innovation: Drivers for  
a more Circular Economy in  
Belgium and Europe***

slido



## Systemic innovation: Drivers for a more Circular Economy in Belgium and Europe

→→→

Before we begin, let's get to know each other !

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.



**Lionel Fourdrinier**  
**Moderator**  
**Program leader - CRM**  
**Group**

# Introduction



Join at  
**slido.com**  
**#1990**



**Vincent Lepage**  
Director of the Economic  
Policy Department at the  
Public Service of Wallonia



**SARA SAQUE**

- Economic analyst (Brussels Economy and Employment)



**WINNIE PONCELET**

- Policy Advisor (VLAIO)



**JOLIEN ROEDOLF**

- Projectleader Infinitex (Thomas More Hogeschool)



**KARLA BASSELIER**

- CEO (Fedustria)



**CAROLINE VAN DE POPULIERE**

- R&D Director (Unilin Panels)

Exemplarity law

# *The approach of the Brussels Capital Region*



**Sara Saxe**

**Economic analyst**

Brussels Economy and Employment

# *Exemplarity: what does it consist of?*

- Law adopted by the Brussels Capital Region (BCR) in July 2023
- Goal: Refocus public funding on SMEs that contribute to the economic transition
  - From March 2024 -> Increased aid: up to 45% more or an additional 100.000 euros in financial support for exemplary enterprises
  - As of 2030 -> limit access to financial support instruments exclusively to exemplary enterprises



# *Exemplarity: how to?*

- Two dimensions: social and/or environmental
- Simple criteria for showcasing exemplarity, for example through labels or other evaluations
- Aligned with the EU Green Taxonomy and Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive

# *Objectives and vision*

- Part of the carbon neutrality vision of 2050 set by the BCR
- Recognize pivotal role of SMEs & understand their challenges
- Inclusivity & accessibility in the circular economy movement

# ***Conclusion and takeaways***

- Brussels innovative approach **aligns with EU directives** and **places SMEs at the forefront of economic transition**
- The re-orientation of the financial instruments paves the way to a **sustainable and resilient future**

# *Living Labs Circular Economy*



**Winnie Poncelet**

Policy Advisor Circular Economy -  
VLAIO

winnie.poncelet@vlaio.be

***How can we induce  
systemic change?***

# Our mission



Stimulate growth and innovation



Promote Entrepreneurship



Support Cluster work



Create stimulating environmental factors



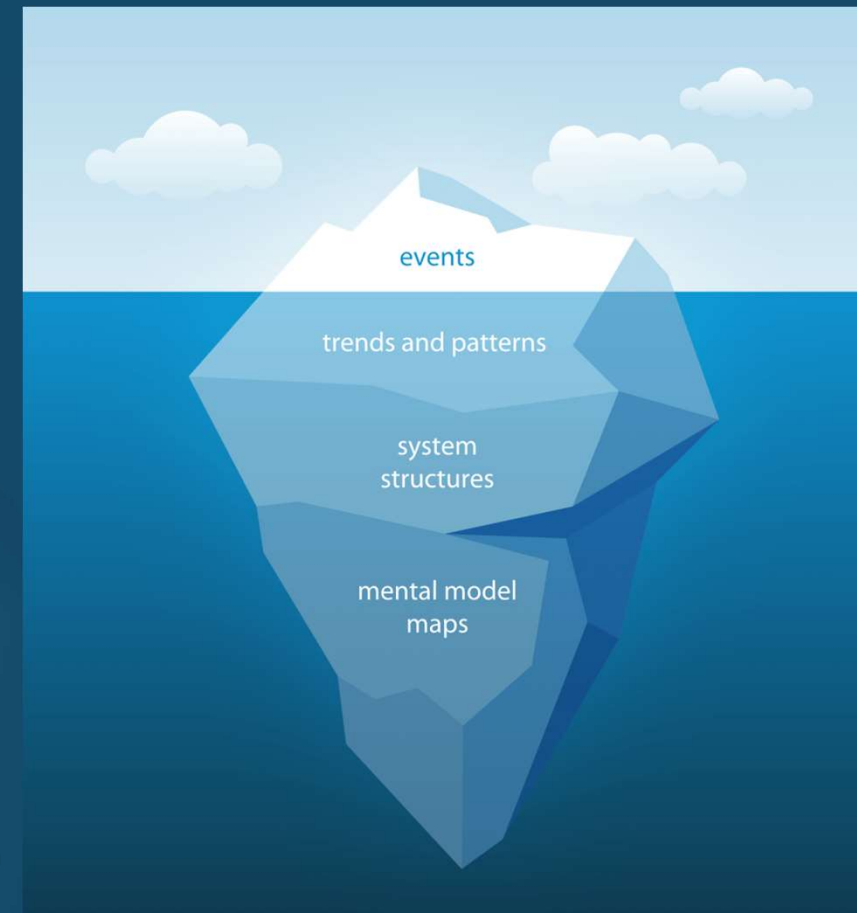
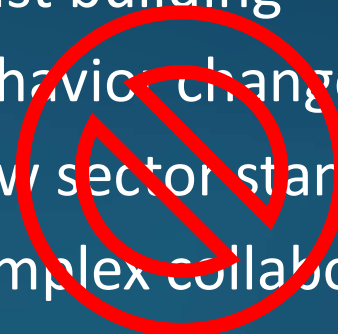
Encourage internationalization of business activities

# To get systems moving...

New funding instrument:  
living labs



- trust building
- behavior change
- new sector standards
- complex collaborations
- ...



# *Living Lab Architecture*

- Theory of Change: the desired change is central
- Reflexive Monitoring: iterate, “learning out loud”



## *Example: Reuse in Style Lab*

**Desired change:** to prolong the lifespan of garments in the use phase through higher quality, maintenance and repair



# Example: Reuse in Style Lab

- Subchallenges:
  - Wide range of **user definitions** of quality and sustainability and the relationship between them
  - **Willingness** to wear older clothing determines garment lifespan
  - A longer lifespan → **more traces of usage** → negative cultural perception
  - Users experience **barriers** concerning maintenance and repair

# *Unique features*

- Flexibility in execution
- Wide array of possible partners
- Wide array of possible activities
- Broad interpretation of innovation

As justified by the ToC

***(illusion of) risk minimization***

~~*(illusion of) risk minimization*~~

***Risk management***

***In practice?***

***Lessons learned***

# *Living Lab* **INFINITEX**



**Jolien Roedolf**

**Projectleader Infitex**

Thomas More Hogeschool



# Living Lab INFINITEX

**Aims to extend the lifetime of clothing by scaling up circular businessmodels (repair, resale & rental) in the apparel sector in Flanders**

**17 partners**

**7 fashion entrepreneurs**

**2 social economy partners**

**3 tech start-ups**

**1 research organization**

**1 fashion sector federation**

**→ 11 experiments**



Jolien Roedolf

Researcher Thomas More  
Hogeschool

# Context: challenges Belgian fashion entrepreneurs

Operational and financial challenges

Additional logistical processes

Short term profitability

Search for the right partner

Strategy & knowledge

Choosing strategic focus/FOMO

Theoretical knowledge & expertise

Evidence based approach

Internal support CBM

Market acceptance

Determine and attract target group

Guaranteeing transparency and credibility

Linear market limitations

Linear boundaries of the current system and business model

Limited market power in decentralized value chain

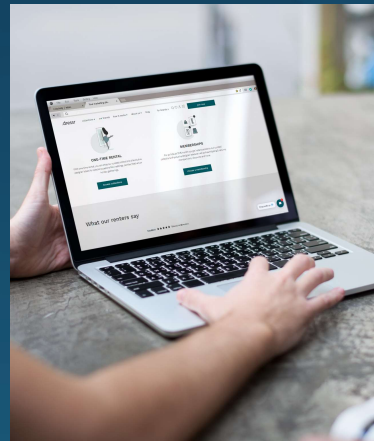
# How we (try to) work on system innovation

Operational and financial challenges



Gathering practical insights with experiments and forming partnerships (where relevant)

Strategy & knowledge



Knowledge sharing inside and outside the consortium (webinars, check-ins, tools,...)

Market acceptance



Integrating practice of behaviour change and intervention design

Linear market limitations



Use data to provide relevant policy recommendations

***Eco-design for  
Sustainable Products  
Regulation (ESPR)  
view from Fedustria***



**Karla Basselier**  
CEO - Fedustria

01

***CIRULAR ECONOMY IN THE  
TEXTILE, WOOD AND FURNITURE  
INDUSTRY***

# Circular economy in the textile, wood and furniture industry



Circular economy high on the agenda of our industry through push and pull effect



Mainly facilitated via legislation (EU)



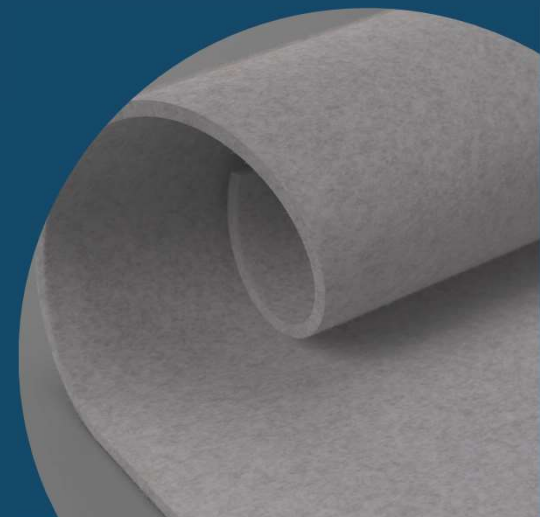
Eco-design important to circularity



Our industries are innovative and taking the lead - Innovation is a key factor



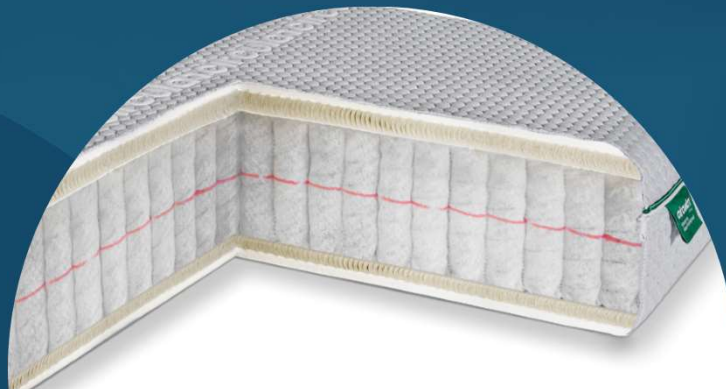
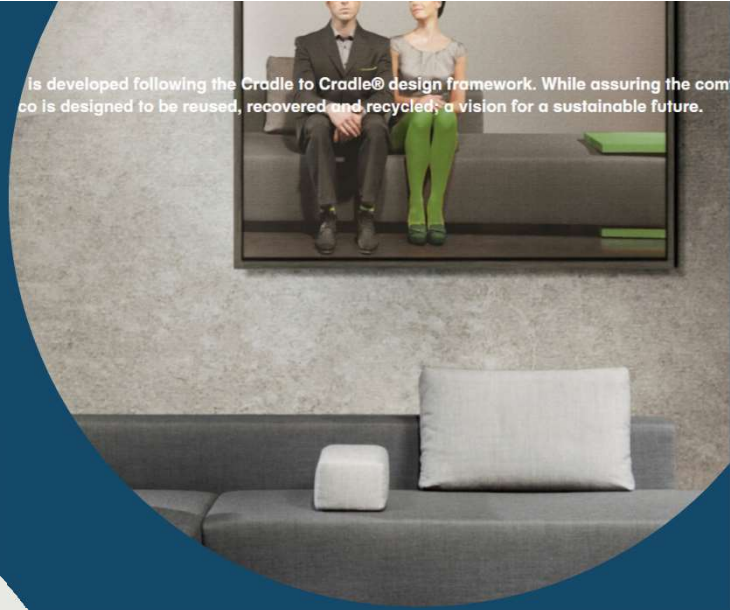
***Belgian textile, woodworking, and furniture companies are already at the forefront of innovation***



**Belgian textile, woodworking, and furniture companies are already at the forefront of innovation**



Oak Bok black dining chair  
as of 13.50 €/month



**WAT IS SOFAR?**

Nr. 02\_Sustain

**Onderhoud je SOFAR**

Welke SOFAR je ook kiest, al onze hoezen zijn makkelijk afneembaar en wasbaar. Bovendien krijg je via een QR-code die esthetisch verwerkt zit in elk model toegang tot je eigen digitaal gebruikersplatform met onderhoudstips en vlekkengids.

Nr. 03\_Adapt

**Pas je SOFAR aan**

Zowel je levensstijl als interieurwensen veranderen door de jaren heen. SOFAR is eindeloos aanpasbaar en groeit met je mee. Zo kan je jouw sofa op elk moment een nieuwe look-and-feel geven door te spelen met nieuwe hoezen of te kiezen voor een andere opstelling.

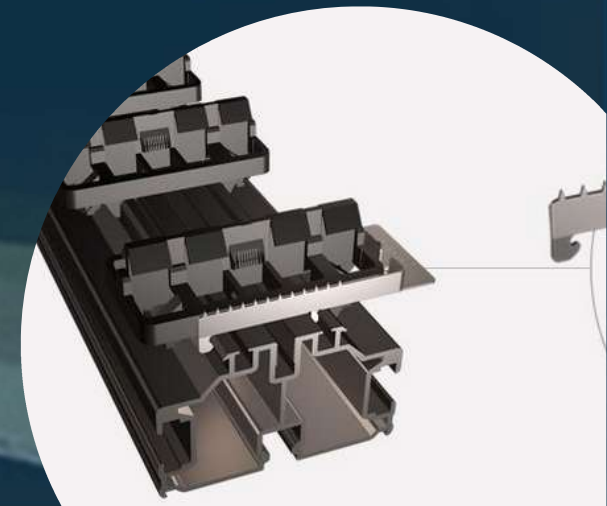
Nr. 04\_Give

**Geef te**

SOFAR is zo onderdelen zijn levensduur worden in e toch een m op je SOFAR zodat we op met die mat



***Belgian textile, woodworking,  
and furniture companies are  
already at the forefront of  
innovation***



02

***ECO-DESIGN FOR SUSTAINABLE  
PRODUCTS REGULATION (ESPR)  
FOR OUR SECTORS***

# *Eco-design for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR)*

- ESPR in line with Green deal and other European provisions on sustainability
- Textiles, furniture and mattresses are priority flows
- Eco-design is an important lever
- ESPR could be a real opportunity to develop better products, access new markets and facilitate the circular economy, but it is also a **challenge**

# ***Ecodesign for sustainable products regulation (ESPR) – Points of attention <sup>(1)</sup>***

- Need for accompanying measures and flexibility for SMEs
- Harmonization
- Incentives for innovation but neutrality on materials, technologies and business models
- Freedom and trust to companies how to embark the transition
- Shared responsibility
- Need for clear definitions (eg. 'recycling')

# ***Ecodesign for sustainable products regulation (ESPR) – Points of attention (2)***

- When developing delegated acts, consider the high degree of diversity
- Measures applying to one aspect should not negatively impact other areas
- Industry to be consulted throughout the development and decision-making process

# *Circular economy: from eco-design to systemic innovation*

Many ways of moving the circular economy forward

Need for a strategic orientation **and inclusion** in the **company's strategy**

CASE



**SYSTEMIC INNOVATION**

***Unilin as  
changemaker in the  
circular economy***



**Caroline Van De Populiere**

R&D Director - Unilin Panels

# UNILIN IN A NUTSHELL



FLOORING



PANELS



INSULATION







***THINKING CIRCULAR SINCE THE SIXTIES***



# 'ONE HOME' AS OUR COMPASS



PLANET HOME



YOUR HOME



OUR HOME

# *CHIPBOARD WITH 95% RECYCLED WOOD*



# **WORLD-FIRST TECHNOLOGY TO RECYCLE MDF**



# INNOVATIVE REACTOR TO RECYCLE POLYOL







# ***BRAND NEW LVT PRODUCTION LINE***



# TAKE-BACK PROGRAMME RECOVER



RECOVER  
TAKE BACK PROGRAM

by UNILIN

Please place only one type of  
OFF-CUT per bag

Pickup: [recover@unilin.com](mailto:recover@unilin.com)



More info



# AND WE DON'T STOP HERE...

- **Limit global warming by 1,5 °C by 2030** (compared to 2020) – as validated by the Science Based Targets initiative
  - -42% CO<sub>2</sub> eq. from our operations (scope 1 & 2)
  - -12,3% CO<sub>2</sub> eq. from our raw material sourcing and EOL products (scope 3)
- **More renewable and recycled content** in our products and packaging
- **Improve the recyclability** of our products and packaging
- **Zero insulation waste to landfill**



**SARA SAQUE**

- Economic analyst (Brussels Economy and Employment)



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## Audience Q&A Session

ⓘ Start presenting to display the audience questions on this slide.



**PHILIPPE LARRUE**

- Policy Analyst  
(OECD)



**VINCENT LEPAGE**

- Director of the  
Economic Policy  
Department (Public  
Service of Wallonia)



**MAGDALENA CYMERYS**

- Policy officer  
(European  
Commission)



**LUCIE BLONDEL**

- Policy officer  
(European  
Commission)

***Mission-oriented  
innovation policies:  
opportunities for  
circular economy***



**Philippe Larrue**

**Policy Analyst – OECD**

Science, Technology and Innovation Directorate

# Content

1. What are mission-oriented innovation policies?
2. What is systemic about mission-oriented innovation policies?
3. What are the different types of mission-oriented policies?
4. How are mission-oriented policies mobilised for achieving circular economies?



# What are mission-oriented innovation policies?

A co-ordinated package of initiatives tailored specifically to mobilise science, technology and innovation in order to address a societal challenge



aimed towards ambitious and concrete goals...



... to be met in a defined time-frame



spans several stages of the innovation cycle from research to demonstration and market launch



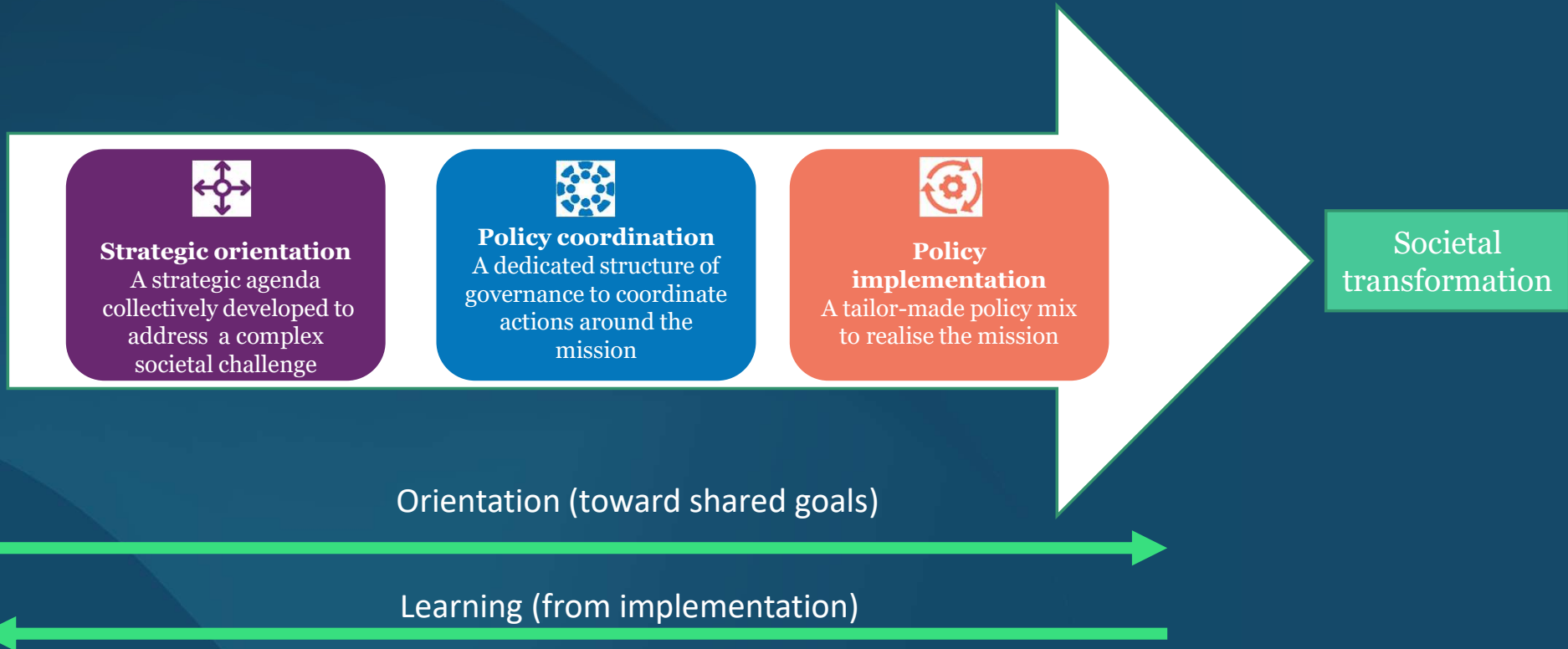
crosses various siloes (disciplines, sectors, policy areas, etc.)



uses various instruments (supply-side and demand-side; top-down and bottom-up)

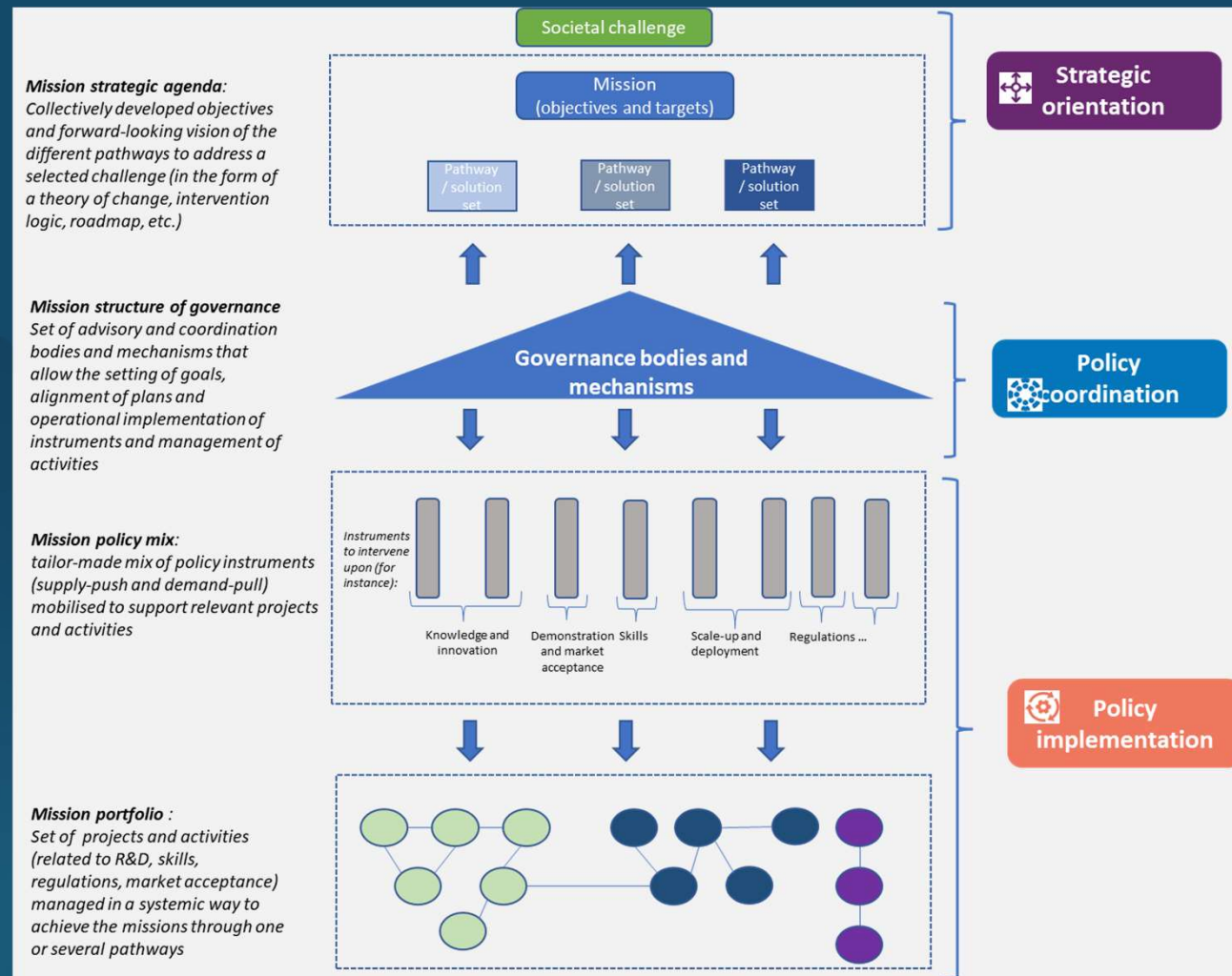
# What are mission-oriented innovation policies?

- MOIPs integrate the whole policy cycle around a shared challenge



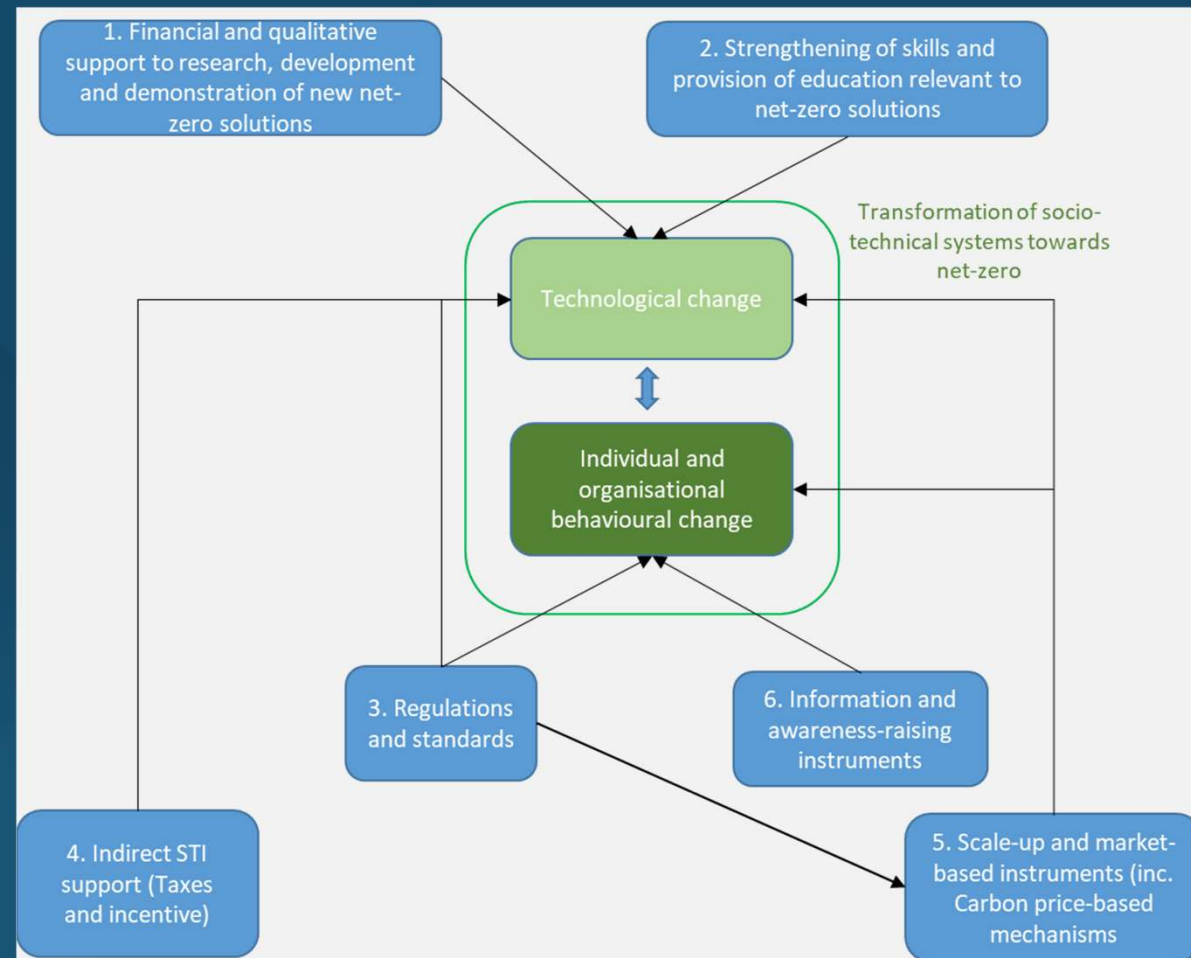
# What is systemic about MOIPs?

- Missions are a platform for collective action to address systemic issues
- The systemic dimension is essential in all three pillars of MOIPs
  - Strategic orientation (strategic agenda)
  - Policy coordination (cross-government and cross sectoral governance)
  - Policy implementation (policy mix and portfolio)






# What is systemic about MOIPs?

- Building a system of innovation around a challenge
  1. Starting from a shared understanding of a challenge to be addressed (theory of change)
  2. Progressively convene all the public and private actors that are necessary to solve the issue (building upon a first 'coalition of the willing')
  3. Coordinate and align plans of the different actors
  4. Implement, learn and adapt



# What are the different types of Mission-oriented innovation policies?

Type	Design and possible limitations	Selected cases
 <p><b>Overarching mission-oriented strategic frameworks</b></p>	<p>Large policy framework aiming to achieve ambitious, high level, national or transnational missions to address systemic challenges</p> <p>⚠️ <i>Loose coordination and integration</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horizon Europe's missions [EU]</li> <li>• Mission-driven Top Sectors policy [NL]</li> <li>• Acceleration Strategies [DE]</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Challenge-based programmes and schemes</b></p>	<p>Targeted agency schemes, aims to bring concrete solutions to a challenge</p> <p>⚠️ <i>Narrow and technological focus</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot-E [NO]</li> <li>• The Future Innovator Prizes [IE]</li> <li>• DARPA/ARPA agency programmes [US]</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Ecosystem-based mission programmes</b></p>	<p>Initiatives delegating to ecosystems the development and implementation of strategic agendas to address societal challenges</p> <p>⚠️ <i>Bottom up and not very transformative</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Innovation Programmes [SE]</li> <li>• Wallonia's Smart Specialisation Strategy [BE]</li> </ul>

# *How are mission-oriented policies mobilised for achieving circular economies?*

## Challenge Driven Innovation Initiative (Sweden)

- The 'Business model innovation for closed-loop furniture flows' aims to introduce a circular economy to furniture, especially office furniture.
- The 'Innovation Platform for Textile Sorting' aims to develop and scale usage of near-infrared red technology to sort textiles to promote high quality recycled products suitable for fiber-to-fiber recycling

## Smart Specialisation Strategy of Wallonia (Belgium)

- The 'Circular Materials' Strategic Innovation Area brings together innovative activities related to the "circularization" of materials, with a view to reducing resource consumption, increasing regional autonomy and developing new market opportunities

# How are mission-oriented policies mobilised for achieving circular economies?

## High Tech Strategy 2025 (Germany)

- One of the 12 missions was 'Create sustainable circular economies' which aims to work with industry, science and consumers to achieve a decoupling of economic growth from resource consumption, a significant reduction in greenhouse gases, waste and environmental pollution, and less dependence on imported raw material

*Target* : 30 per cent increase in overall raw material productivity by 2030 compared to 2010, which amounts to 1.5 per cent per annum

## Mission-driven top sectors (The Netherlands)

- 'Carbon-neutral industry with reuse of raw materials and products by 2050'

*Targets*: By 2030: - 50% fewer primary feedstocks will be used; - greenhouse gas emissions from production processes and the waste sector will have been reduced to approximately 36Mt of CO2 equivalent

- 'A sustainable and completely circular economy by 2050, with resource use halved by 2030'

# How are mission-oriented policies mobilised for achieving circular economies?

## INNOmissions (Denmark)

- 'Mission 4: Circular economy with a focus on plastics and textiles' aims to develop new technologies and manufacturing methods that can ensure plastic waste reduction.

*Target* : To remove 80pct. of plastic waste from incineration in 2030, which will lead to a reduction of CO<sub>2</sub>e from waste incineration of approx. 0.15 million t. CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2030

## KARPA (Japan)

- 'Plasma-based CO<sub>2</sub> free waste organic material as a basic raw material' aims to convert waste into a new type of resource that can be marketised and reproduced as a high value-added product

## Moonshot Moonshot Research and Development Program (Japan)

- Moonshot goal 4: Realization of sustainable resource circulation to recover the global environment by 2050

## Science Foundation Ireland's Innovative Prizes (Ireland)

- 'Plastics Challenge' aims to develop innovative solutions that enable the sustainable use of plastics in a circular economy.



# *Take aways*

- Mission-oriented innovation policies aims to foster systemic change through collective action to address societal challenges
- Different types of Mission-oriented innovation policies are experimented in different context, including to support circular economies
- These initiatives could help broaden the perspective on circular economies away from the support to narrow techno-fixing and firm-centered solutions

# *Wallonia systemic and innovation approach*

Circularity at the crossroad of public  
innovation strategies



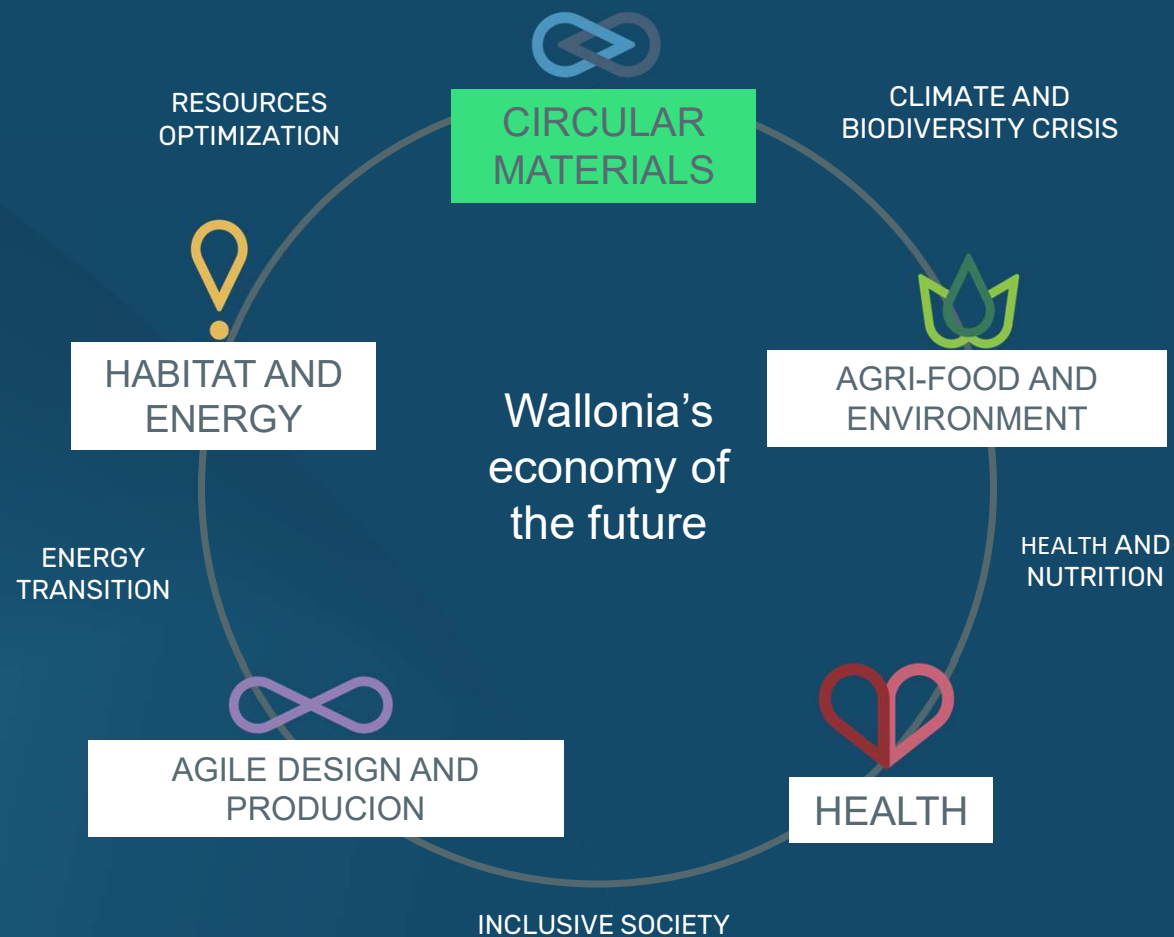
**Vincent Lepage**

**Director of the Economic Policy  
Department at the Public Service  
of Wallonia**

# Smart Specialisation Strategy / S3 Wallonia

**75 % of the annual walloon budget for research and innovation** concentrated on the priority sectors defined in the Walloon S3

**2021-2027: 2,7 billion € planned investment**





CIRCULAR  
MATERIALS

# Roadmap 2021-2027

## Innovative Ecosystems

### Ambitions

In 2030, Wallonia is one of the European and Mondial leader in terms of materials circularity

In 2030, Wallonia is inter-connected to close European region in order to concentrate circular materials

### Strategic areas

Circular Business models

Circular distribution, consumption and logistics

Circular production

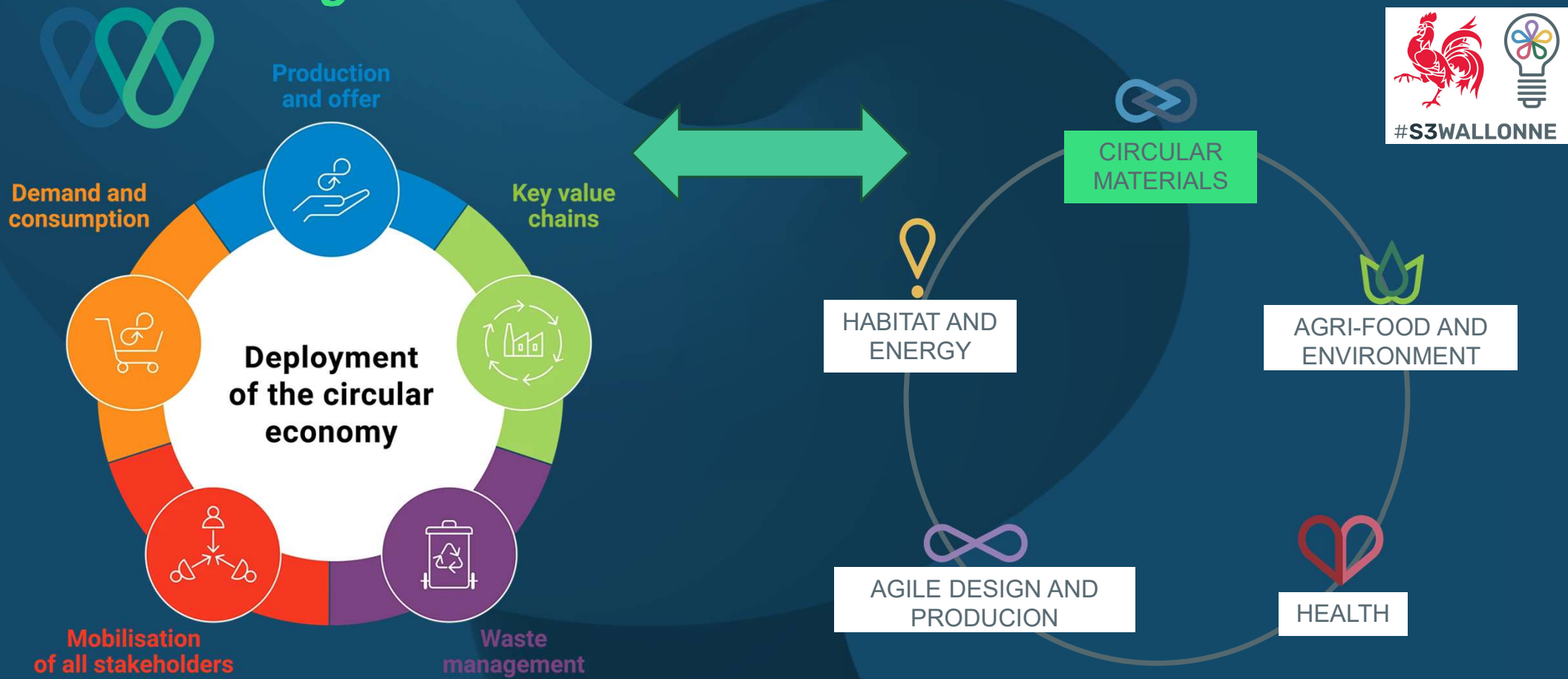
### Win4C

Become Europe's  
"Circular Valley"

### Valbowal

Resilient and diversified  
Walloon forest

# Strategic priority on circularity throughout two main strategies in Wallonia – Circular Wallonia and S3



# Synergies in practice



## Governance

- Shared policy design
- Common coordination of initiatives and actors
- Shared monitoring
- Ecosystems visualisation and valorisation

## In concrete

- University chairs >> Skills
- WIN4C >> Value chains polymer, construction and metallurgy
- Support to circular design for SME's (plastics, metallurgy and battery)
- Common funding schemes
  - Support to innovation projects + PoC
  - Support to industrial investment

## Europe

- European Circular Economy Innovation Valley
- Interreg VI – Innovation in Circularity
- Support actors for European projects
  - Europe path for batteries

# Smart Specialisation Strategy | S3 Wallonia



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**#S3WALLONNE**

Contact us !  [s3.economie@spw.wallonie.be](mailto:s3.economie@spw.wallonie.be)

## Circular Wallonia

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- ▶ [economiecirculaire.wallonie.be](https://economiecirculaire.wallonie.be)



# **INTRODUCTION TO TWO EU FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES**

- 1) *Regional Innovation Valleys***
- 2) *Circular Cities & Regions Initiative***



**LUCIE BLONDEAU**



**MAGDALENA CYMERYS**

**Policy officers, European  
Commission, DG Research &  
Innovation**



01

# ***ABOUT THE EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK***



# EU Circular Economy & Innovation Policy Framework



## European Green Deal (Dec 2019)

Is a set of policy initiatives with the overarching aim of making the European Union climate neutral by 2050

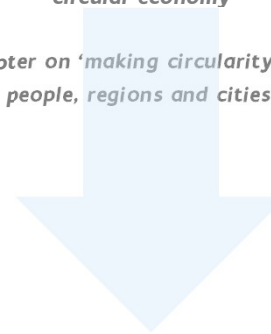
→ 1 block of the Deal on 'boosting the efficient use of resources by moving to a clean, circular economy'



## Circular Economy Action Plan (March 2020)

Includes 35 (legislative & non-legislative) actions to transition from a linear to a circular economy

→ 1 chapter on 'making circularity work for people, regions and cities'



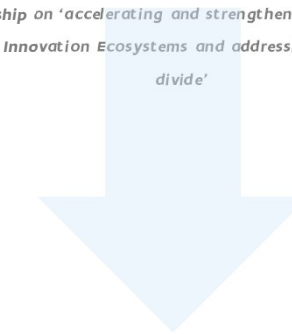
Circular Cities & Regions Initiative



## New European Innovation Agenda (July 2022)

Aims to position Europe as a leading player on the global innovation scene (5 flagships and 25 actions)

→ 1 flagship on 'accelerating and strengthening innovation in European Innovation Ecosystems and addressing the innovation divide'

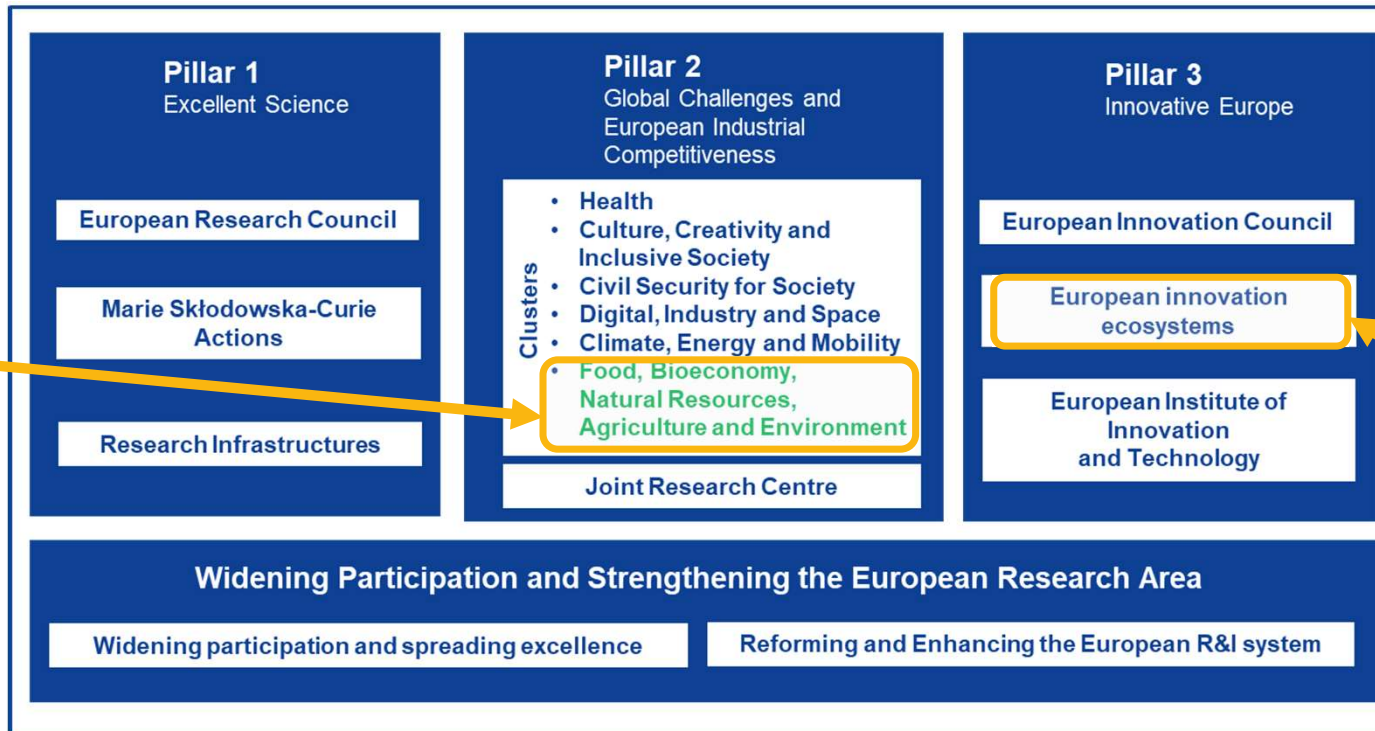


Regional Innovation Valleys

# Funding opportunities for Territorial Systemic Innovation under Horizon Europe (and beyond)

## Circular Cities and Regions Initiative

Dedicated calls under Horizon Europe, Pillar 2, cluster 6 (Food, bioeconomy, natural resources...)



Horizon Europe structure

## Regional Innovation Valleys

Dedicated calls under the European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE) part of Horizon Europe as well as the Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) Instrument (ERDF).

## Two EU initiatives supporting systemic innovation at territorial level

### Circular Cities and Regions Initiative

- ***Aim to accelerate territorial innovation, exploring framework conditions for a profound transformation at region/city level***
- ***Promote a systemic approach, supporting locally-tailored solutions across sectors and value chains***
- ***Provide access to finance through dedicated calls (e.g. under Horizon Europe)***
- ***Stimulate a new dynamic of cooperation between relevant (public/private) stakeholders***

Focuses mostly on societal innovation in  
Cities and Regions

### Regional Innovation Valleys

Brings a cross-border, interregional  
dimension. Also addresses more  
technological aspects.

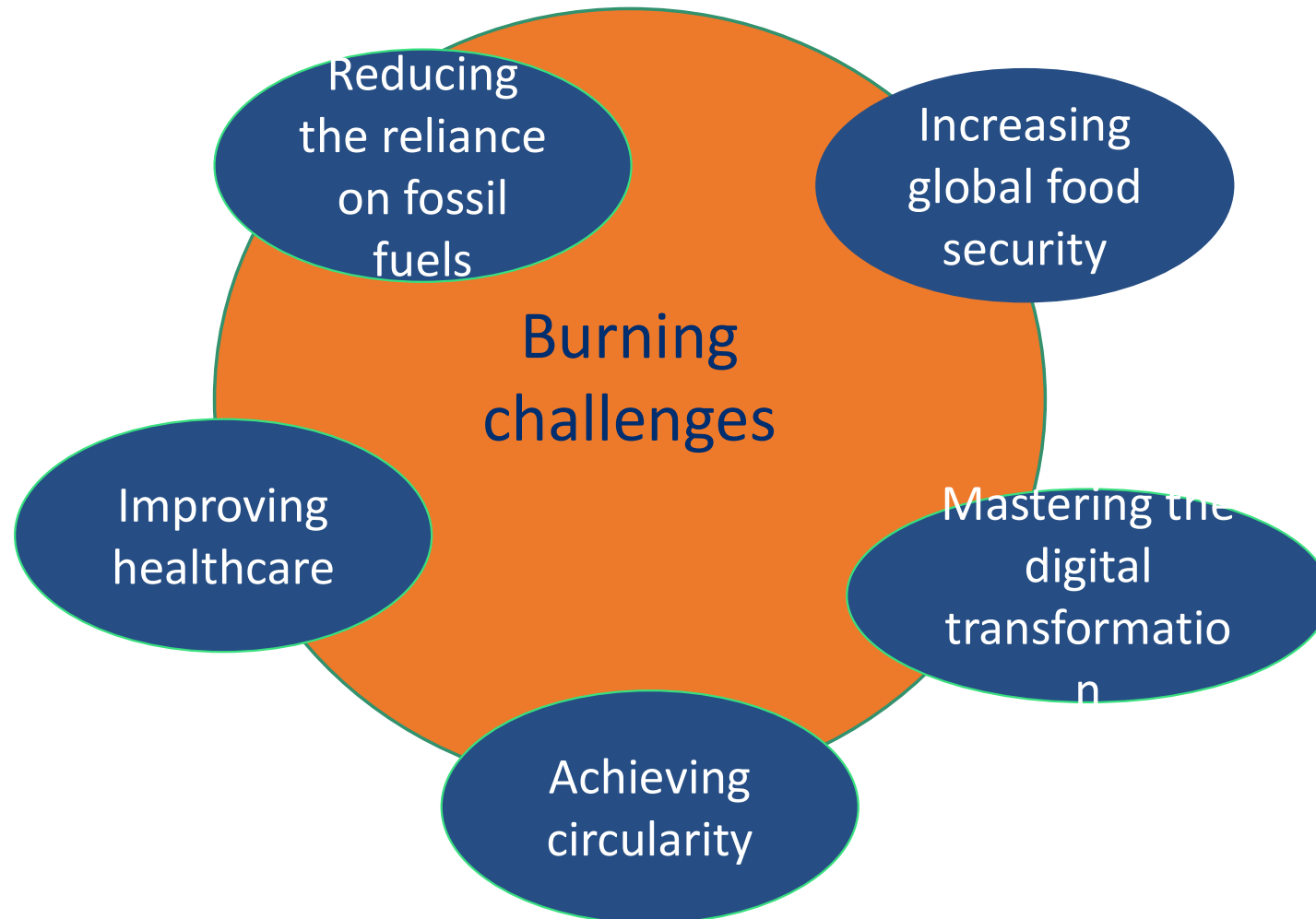
02

# ***ABOUT THE REGIONAL INNOVATION VALLEYS***

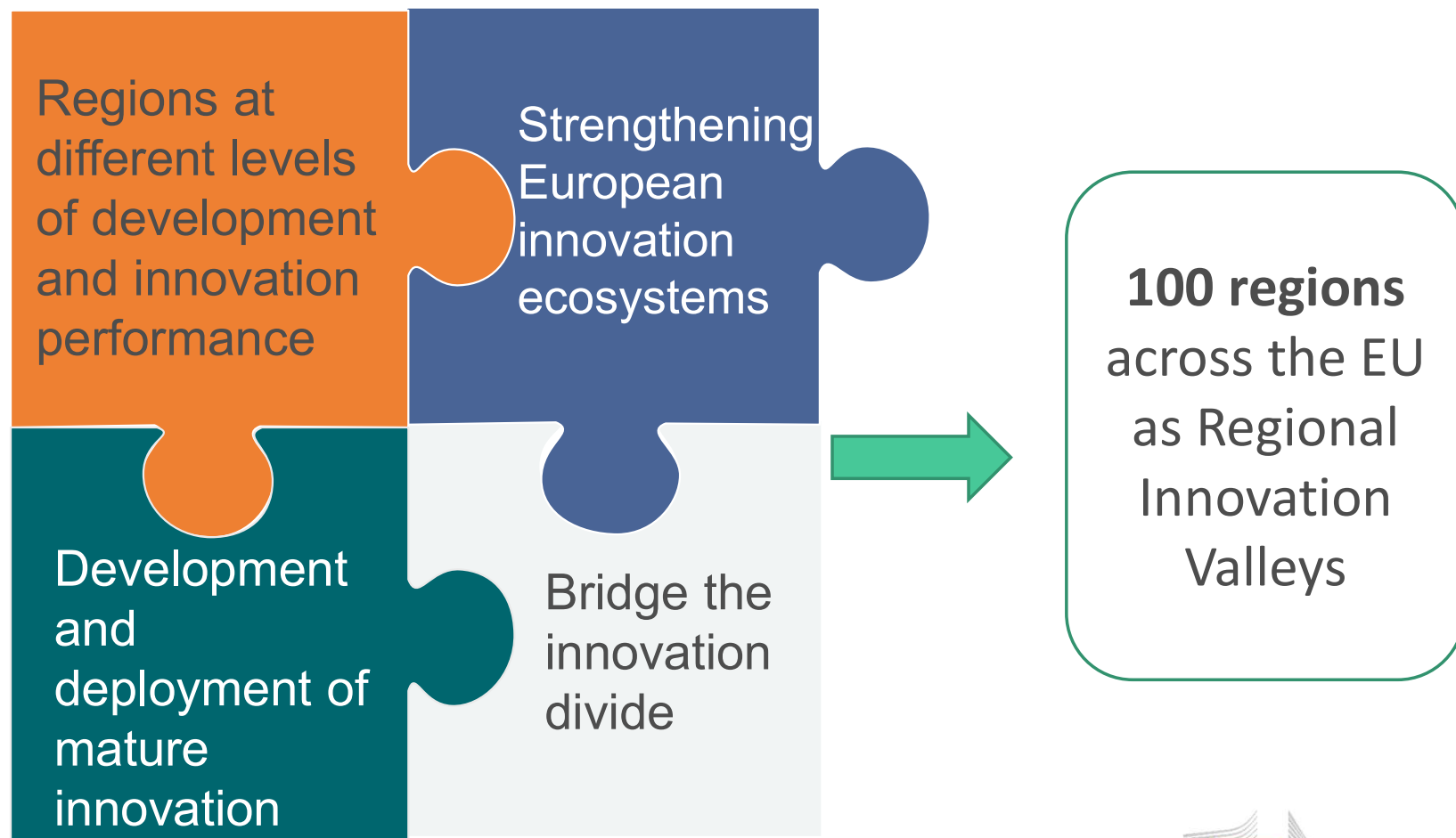


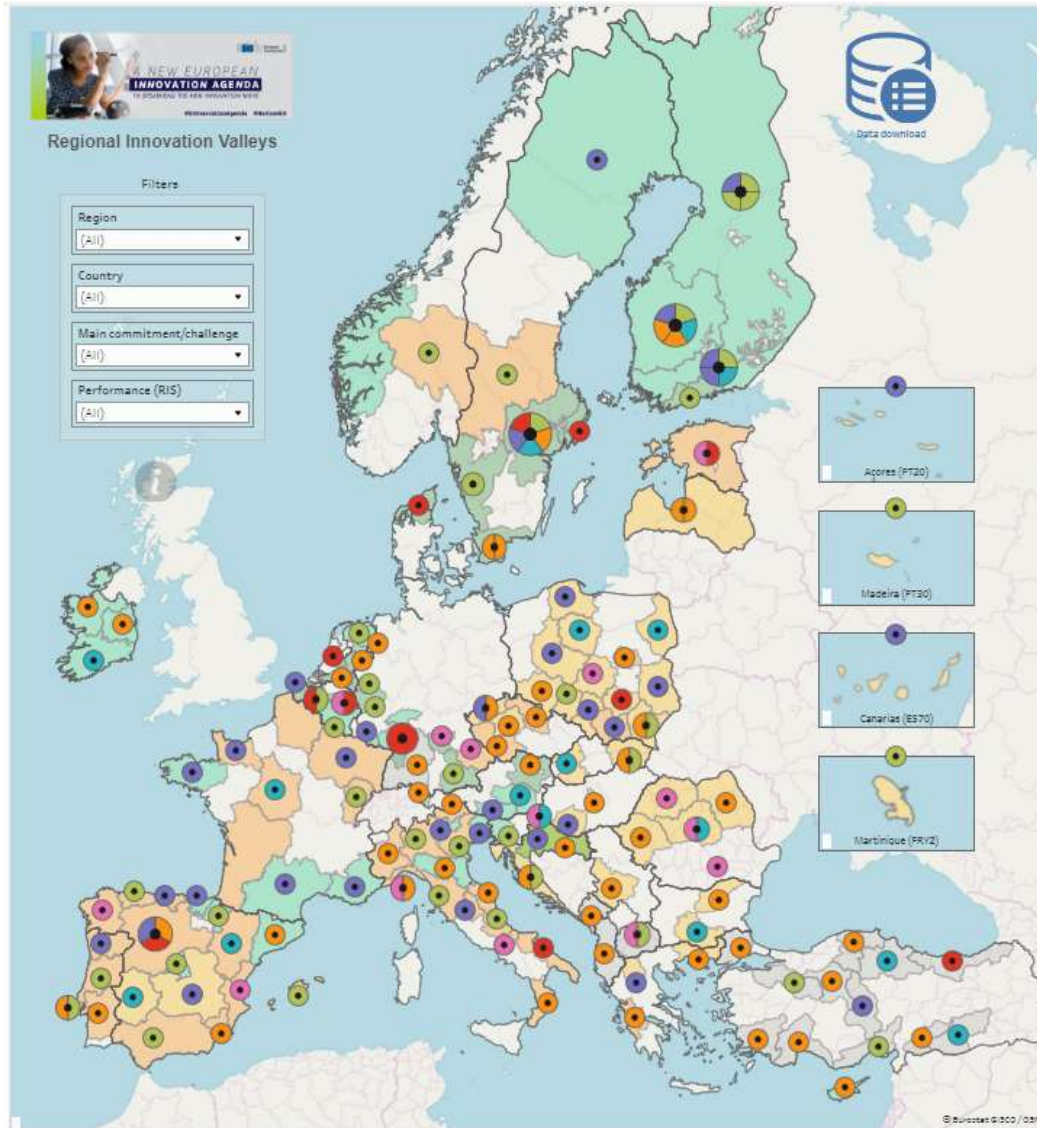
# New European Innovation Agenda

Fostering connected regional innovation valleys across the EU



## *Regional Innovation Valleys framework*





Background legend: Regional Innovation Scoreboard (RIS) 2023, performance categories by NUTS regions

<span style="color: #90EE90;">■</span> Innovation leader	<span style="color: #90EE90;">■</span> Strong innovator	<span style="color: #FFDAB9;">■</span> Moderate innovator	<span style="color: #FFDAB9;">■</span> Emerging innovator	<span style="color: #D3D3D3;">■</span> Not applicable
--	---	---	---	---

Object legend: Main commitment/challenge stated by applicants in Regional Innovation Valley survey (July - August 2023)

<span style="color: #90EE90;">■</span> Achieving circularity	<span style="color: #FF8C00;">■</span> Mastering the digital transformation	<span style="color: #4169E1;">■</span> Reducing the reliance on fossil fuels
<span style="color: #00CED1;">■</span> Increasing global food security	<span style="color: #DC143C;">■</span> Improving healthcare	<span style="color: #DDA0DD;">■</span> Other areas



03

# ***ABOUT THE CIRCULAR CITIES AND REGIONS INITIATIVE***



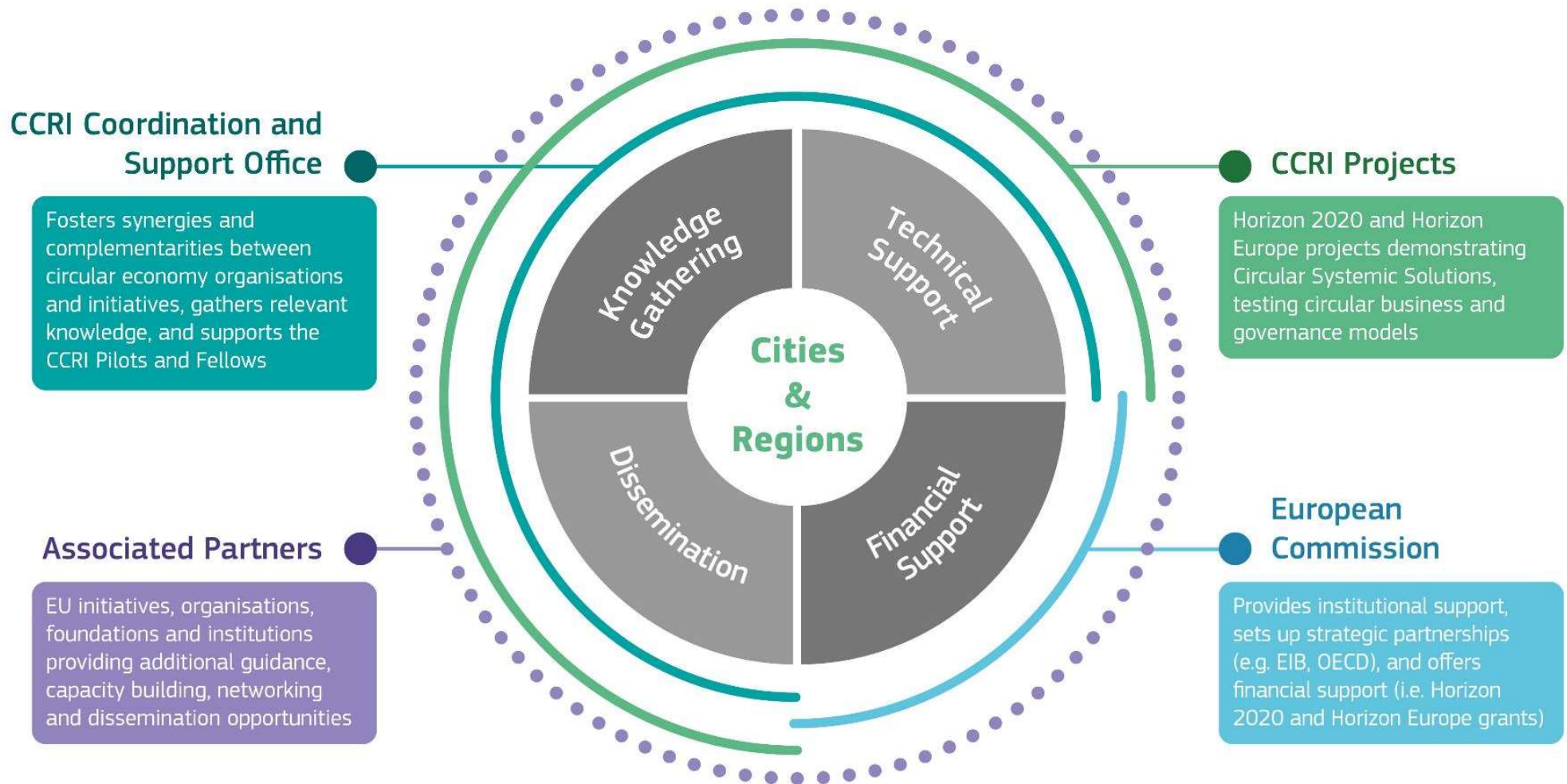
Circular  
Cities & Regions  
Initiative

## About the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative

- A **1<sup>st</sup>-of-its-kind collaboration and support scheme of the European Commission**, launched by DG Research & Innovation
- **Part of the EU Circular Economy Action Plan 2020**, and contributing to the policy objectives of the EU Green Deal as well as the EU Bioeconomy Strategy
- Supported by the EU's R&I funding programme (Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe): **more than €250 million in 2020-2024**
- Aims to support the **implementation of circular systemic solutions** in EU cities and regions, as well as **the development of new circular business and governance models**.



# A multi-stakeholder collaboration & support scheme



# What's in for EU cities and regions?

- Tailored (one-to-one) support
- Grouped (one-to-many) support (e.g. CCRI workshops, CCRI Thematic Working Groups)
- Informative/capacity-building events (e.g. CCRI Conference, CCRI webinars)
- Networking/matchmaking events
- Support tools and method
- Online website and related resource repository



...and more to come...

- **Knowledge Hub**
- **Mentoring & Peer-to-Peer programmes**
- **Communities of Practice**



04

# **EXAMPLES OF CCRI PILOT PROJECTS**



Circular  
Cities & Regions  
Initiative

# REGION OF CASTILLA Y LEÓN (Spain)

***Championing the transition  
from chemical to bio-based  
fertilisers***

***Establishing a regional  
nutrient's recovery hub for the  
bio-based valorisation of  
agricultural and forestry  
residues.***

## ***Expected outcomes:***

- ***Innovative governance and business model in place, engaging various stakeholders (farmers, forestry sector, technological and industrial sectors, investors).***
- ***Reduced dependency on critical raw materials imports (like phosphorous) thanks to the local bio-based fertilisers production (biomass recycling).***
- ***Increased soil preservation and conservation (including a sustainable nutrient cycle).***
- ***Reinforced local-based economy.***



## CITY OF ROUBAIX (France)

**Low-tech and resource-efficient  
approaches to circular urban  
regeneration**

**Stimulating local economic actors to  
innovate in the circular economy**

### **Expected outcomes:**

- **Revalorisation of abandoned land and buildings in an area with a very strong industrial history.**
- **‘Frugal use’ of local resources & greater stimulation of the local economy**
- **Increased awareness and capacities on circular economy thanks to dedicated trainings for professionals and a circular hub for industries**

# For more information

#Euinmyregion #EUinnovates #HorizonEU #CCRIEurope

## Regional Innovation Valleys

- [New European Innovation Agenda roadmap \(europa.eu\)](#)
- [Interregional Innovation Investments \(I3\) Instrument](#)
- [European Innovation Ecosystems \(europa.eu\)](#)
- [Regional Innovation Valleys Online Info Session](#)
- [Matchmaking Event for the territories interested to become Regional Innovation Valleys \(RIVs\)](#)
- [Inforegio - S3 Community of Practice](#)

## Circular Cities and Regions Initiative



<https://circular-cities-and-regions.eu/>



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Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI)





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## Audience Q&A Session

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**What was the most valuable takeaway for you from today's session?**

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