Circular Economy award & forum

2nd Cycle
2025
2026

Circular Business Practices

from AWARD WINNERS and

FORUM REPORT

Key Contents

This Report

Organizers team. From left to right: Marina Pugacheva, Jinal Zaveri, Sunil Thawani

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Letter From the Founder

> ***Yes, we are going ahead with our Forum. We have great trust and confidence in the UAE's Leaders and institutions.***
>
> **- Sunil Thawani**

Since August 2025, we had been working on the 2nd edition of Circular Economy Awards & Forum program scheduled to be held on 2nd of April 2026. By February 2026, we were all ready with a great line up of Award participants, Forum speakers, venue, trophies etc.

But then, something completely unexpected happened – conflict in the region. And with it came uncertainties, risks and dilemmas:

- Should we go ahead with the Forum or not?
- Will people attend or it will be just among few of us?
- What about last-minute emergencies?

Instead of us deciding, we thought – why not to ask Speakers, Award applicants, Forum attendees and Award assessors?

And guess what – they all wanted us to go ahead!
And That's what we did.
In this report we are sharing the winning practices, key messages from experts and outcomes of the 2nd Global Circular Economy Forum & Awards and much more.

Please enjoy it!

Sunil Thawani

Founder of Circular Economy Awards & Forum

Global Circular Economy Forum “Circularity in Action”

Organizers team. From left to right: Jinal Zaveri, Marina Pugacheva, Sunil Thawani

The 2nd Global Circular Economy Forum & Award Ceremony, held on 2nd of April 2026 in Dubai, brought together UAE Government leaders and officials, industry captains, policy makers, sustainability professionals, innovators and practitioners from diverse sectors of the economy across the world to advance one shared goal – Make Circular Economy Happen.

As industries face growing pressure to improve resource efficiency, reduce waste and build resilient systems, it becomes imperative to accelerate the transition from current linear to circular economy model, as it is essential to achieve long-term economic, environmental and social sustainability.

Esteemed Speakers from diverse organisations around the world such as United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Ehfaaz, Kearney, Ocean Recovery Alliance, DiPPa, Specialist Services etc., shared their strategies, experiences, challenges, best practices and techniques for making the Circular Economy work.

Discussions covered questions, such as:

- Does investing in the Circular Economy make business sense?
- How can government policies, technologies (Artificial Intelligence), and tools (Digital Product Passports) enable and accelerate the transition from a linear to a circular economy model?
- How does consumer behavior impact this transition?

The Forum served as a meaningful platform to have these conversations, share ideas, and showcase proven best practices that have worked in real-world scenarios. The Forum commemorated organizations from different countries and industries implementing circular practices.

Attendees contributed to sustainability in action by bringing unwanted electronic items and pre-loved clothes for “WAT” and “Thrift for Good,” one of our many proud partners of the Forum.

This Report captures the highlights, insights, and key moments from the Forum, serving as both a reflection of what was achieved and a reminder of the work that still lies ahead.

The Forum ensured that together we move beyond theory to action. We continue the Circularity journey from ambition to action.

Why Forum? Why not a conference?

There is a saying in Russian: *In the debate a truth is born*

It is through discussion and dialogue, through questioning our assumptions and beliefs, we can find the best solution.

Forum as format allows just that. Forum is two-way communication, rather than one-way lecturing.
This Forum is designed to encourage everyone’s participation, involvement, challenge assumptions, share ideas and bring Circularity to Life.








UN SDG 12

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Food waste, food loss and electronic waste are reaching unprecedented levels, while rising consumption continues to drive increases in domestic material consumption and material footprint. These trends are placing growing pressure on the environment, accelerating climate change and exacerbating global resource inequalities.

Momentum towards sustainable consumption and production is building at the institutional level. Governments are adopting supportive policies; Rising number of countries implement sustainability policies and procurement reporting. As of 2024, 530 policies related to sustainable consumption and production (SCP) were submitted across 71 countries[1].

Companies are expanding sustainability reporting, and participation in multilateral environmental agreements is increasing, reflecting strong institutional commitment.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goal No. 12 (SDG 12) is seeing strong progress in governance, reporting, and policy frameworks, but the world is not yet translating those commitments into reductions in material consumption, waste generation, or environmental pressure.

At the current pace, SDG 12 is unlikely to be fully achieved by 2030 without much faster shifts toward Circular Economy models, waste reduction, sustainable supply chains, and consumer behavior change.

As we can see from the above, much more concerted effort and commitment is needed to make a real impact on global consumption and production levels.

It is with the objective to support SDG 12 in particular, and all UN SDGs in general, we decided to focus on Circularity in Action and created the Global Circular Economy Forum and Awards program.

[1] *As per The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025, published by the United Nations - https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2025/*

Chief Guest

Circular Economy Transition

H.E. Eng. Alya Al Harmoodi
United Arab Emirates

H.E. Eng. Alya Al Harmoodi, Assistant Undersecretary for the Sustainable Communities Sector at the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCCAE), UAE.

Her Excellency highlighted the UAE's leadership and commitment to sustainability and to the transition towards a Circular Economy.

Quoting H.E.: "The UAE has long championed a future, where prosperity and sustainability go hand in hand, a future where communities thrive in a safe, secure and resource-resilient environment. Our Circular Economy Policy sets a comprehensive framework for sustainable governance and the responsible use of natural resources, with clear priorities spanning infrastructure, transportation, manufacturing, and food production and consumption.

> ***Forums such as this play a key role in turning ambition into action, convening innovators, businesses and governments to co-create the circular systems our planet urgently needs.***
>
> **- H.E. Eng. Alya Al Harmoodi**

Realizing this vision demands that we treat the Circular Economy as a strategic imperative and a defining opportunity of our time. Forums such as this play a key role in turning ambition into action, convening innovators, businesses and governments to co-create the circular systems our planet urgently needs. We are proud to stand alongside and celebrate the trailblazers who are making circularity a reality."

Recognition of Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, UAE

To translate the UAE Circular Economy Policy 2021-2031 into practice, Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCCAE), UAE actively builds coalitions and measures progress:

- **UAE Circular Economy Council**: Formed to oversee the policy's implementation, align federal and local strategies, and track circularity Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- **Circular Packaging Association**: Evolved from the CIRCLE Coalition established under MOCCAE sponsorship. It unites major private companies to tackle post-consumer packaging waste and pilot recycling infrastructure in the region.
- **Waste-to-Resource Targets**: Aligned with the UAE Environmental Policy, MOCCAE enforces directives to treat 85% of municipal solid waste by 2035 while aggressively reducing per-capita waste generation[1].

As a gesture of appreciation and recognition, a commemorative trophy was presented to H.E. Alya Al Harmoodi, Assistant Undersecretary for the Sustainable Communities Sector at the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, UAE, in acknowledgement of her presence as a Chief Guest at the Forum and MOCCAE's support to our initiative in advancing Circular Economy.

[1]*Official website of Ministry of Climate Change & Environment, UAE - https://moccae.gov.ae/*

Keynote Speaker

Resource Management and Circular Economy - What is needed to make Circular Economy in Action

Dr. Janez Potočnik

Slovenia

Dr. Janez Potočnik – our keynote speaker – is a co-chair of the International Resource Panel at the United Nations Environment Programme. He served as the European Commissioner for the Science and Research and Environment.

International Resource Panel (IRP) was launched in 2007 as a science-policy interface on the sustainable use of natural resources and in particular their environmental impacts over the full life cycle. IRP is hosted by UNEP and providing science in a wider UNEP framework.

Some of the important key takeaways from Dr. Janez's keynote speech:

- High-income countries use six times more materials per capita and are responsible for ten times more climate impacts per capita than low-income countries.
- Extraction and processing of natural resources drives all aspects of the Triple Planetary Crisis. 7 out of 9 planetary boundaries already been crossed.
- Climate breakdown is a symptom of ecological overshoot, caused by the deliberate exploitation of human behaviour.
- The material footprint is dangerously underdiscussed. Most climate solutions lack focus on the root cause of the crisis.
- Discussion often centres on carbon emissions, which are of course important. However, the broader concept of ecological overshoot highlights the material usage (including fossil fuels), waste output (the consequence of the still prevailing wasteful linear economy) and growth of human society. All of which affect the Earth's biosphere.

- It would be helpful to establish a “one-stop shop” public data infrastructure for insights on material flows and their environmental impacts.
- Energy transition, as much as needed, will not make our economy less wasteful and more just. We need to focus on all materials we use (including fossil fuels) in all our economic sectors, or better provisioning systems, delivering our needs.

> ***Circular economy should be seen as an instrument helping delivering decoupling of economic growth from resource use and environmental impacts in practice.***
>
> - Dr. Janez Potočnik

- We must make the necessary space for developing countries to be able to meet essential human needs while we all together stay within the planetary boundaries.
- Circular economy is an instrument delivering the necessary decoupling of wellbeing from resource use and environmental impacts. Excellent examples of Circular Economy are encouraging, but to make it a norm, we need a system change.
- Market signals to producers and consumers are critical but will not change quickly. Policy makers in higher income countries must set science-based material targets.

Dr. Janez’s session reinforced that Circular Economy is not just an environmental solution, but a necessary system change for the future.

His insights highlighted the importance of moving beyond carbon-focused discussions and addressing the broader challenge of resource use, material consumption, and global equity to create a more sustainable and balanced world.

Circular Future is Now

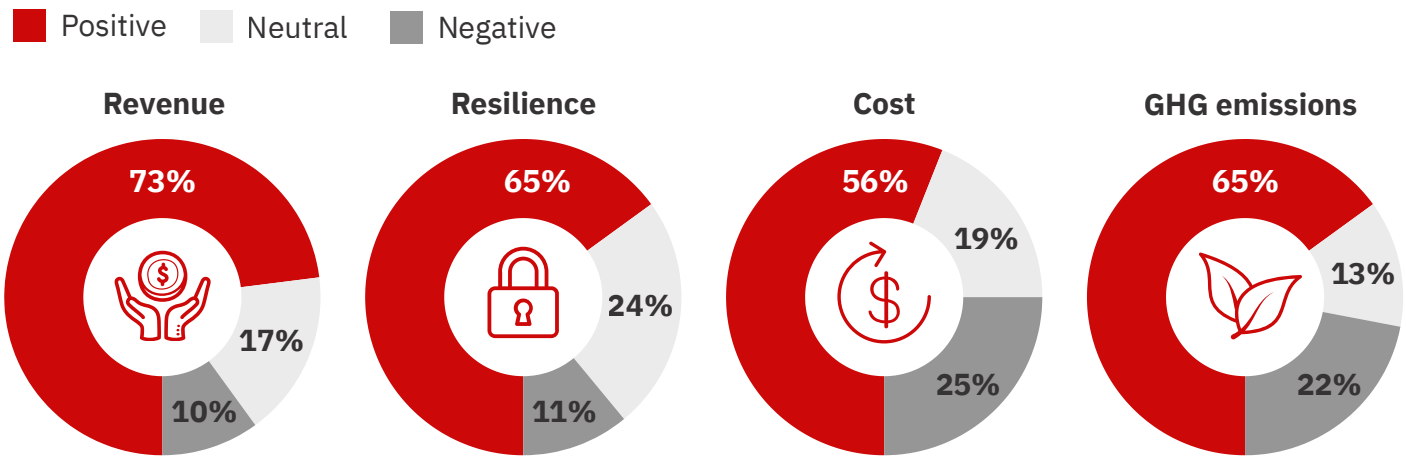
Sunil Thawani

United Arab Emirates

Sunil Thawani is an author, speaker, board member and fellow of American Society for Quality (ASQ). He is a CEO of Quality Indeed Consulting and a Founder of Circular Economy Forum & Awards. Sunil co-developed Circular Housing Guidelines for one of the UAE Government Entities according to the principles of Circular Economy, which were released during COP28 in the UAE.

Until recently, the main driver for organizations to transition from the linear to Circular Economy, were Government regulations. Now this is changing, as revealed by various research reports and publications:

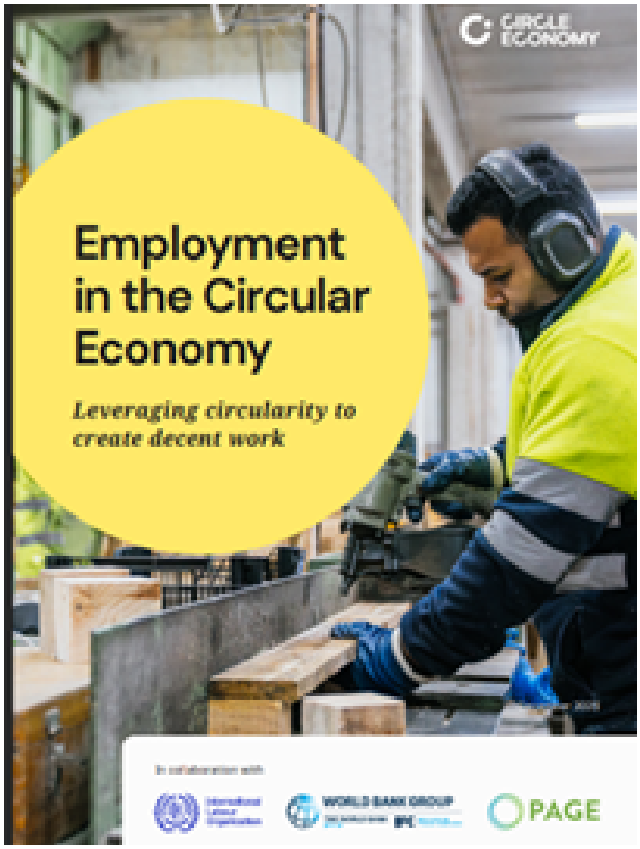
- Gaining competitive advantage, mitigating supply chain shocks, increasing revenue, lowering costs and enhancing customer experience. These are now the main drivers for businesses investing in circular solutions.
- This was further supported by the survey of 420 global manufacturing leaders, where 73% of respondents expect positive impact on revenue, 65% – on resilience, 56% – on cost and 65% – on GHG emissions[1].



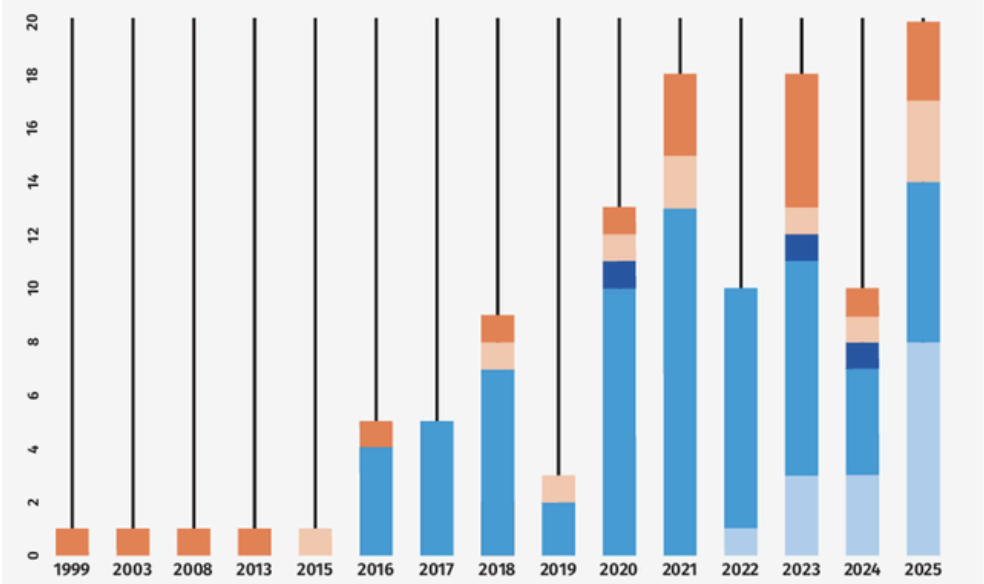
[1] *"The Visionary CEO's Guide to Sustainability 2025", BAIN & COMPANY*

- Till date about 101[1] nations have Circular Economy policy, roadmap, strategy or call to action – providing the needed push towards circularity.
- Adopting the Circular Economy model, the GCC region can save almost $138 billion by 2030[2].
- Repair, maintenance, manufacturing and waste management are the dominant sectors for Circular job opportunities[3].
- Currently about 121 to 142 million people are engaged in circular jobs mostly in the Global South.
- Digital Product Passports, Reverse Logistics, Used Material Banks and Building Capacity in Circular Economy principles are some of the current and future business opportunities.

In his closing message Sunil Thawani said that adoption of Circular Economy is growing rapidly as one of the strategies for tackling unsustainable resource consumption, extending product life and reducing waste generation.



Overview of published policy frameworks and those under development by geography and across years[4]



> ***Circular Economy is growing rapidly as one of the strategies for tackling unsustainable resource consumption, extending product life and reducing waste generation.***
> - Sunil Thawani

[1] *Global Stock take Of National Circular Economy Roadmaps And Strategies: 2025 Update by Dr. Jack Barrie (Independent Consultant), Dr. Patrick Schröder (Chatham House), Matthias Pfaff, Jerome Stucki (UNIDO)*

[2] *"Putting GCC cities in the loop: Sustainable growth in a circular economy", Strategy&*

[3] *Source: Joint report by Circle Economy, the ILO, and the World Bank*

[4] *Global Stocktake Of National Circular Economy Roadmaps And Strategies: 2025 Update by Dr. Jack Barrie (Independent Consultant), Dr. Patrick Schröder (Chatham House), Matthias Pfaff, Jerome Stucki (UNIDO)*

Circular Economy - Key Enabler for Responsible Banking

Kavita Sachwani

India

> ***Circularity is not just an environmental imperative; it is a financial strategy.***
>
> **- Kavita Sachwani**

Kavita Sachwani is a Circular Economy, Pollution and Implementation Guidance Coordinator at the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI).

UNEP FI has been catalyzing action across the financial system to align economies with sustainable development, and building professional expertise for over 30 years.

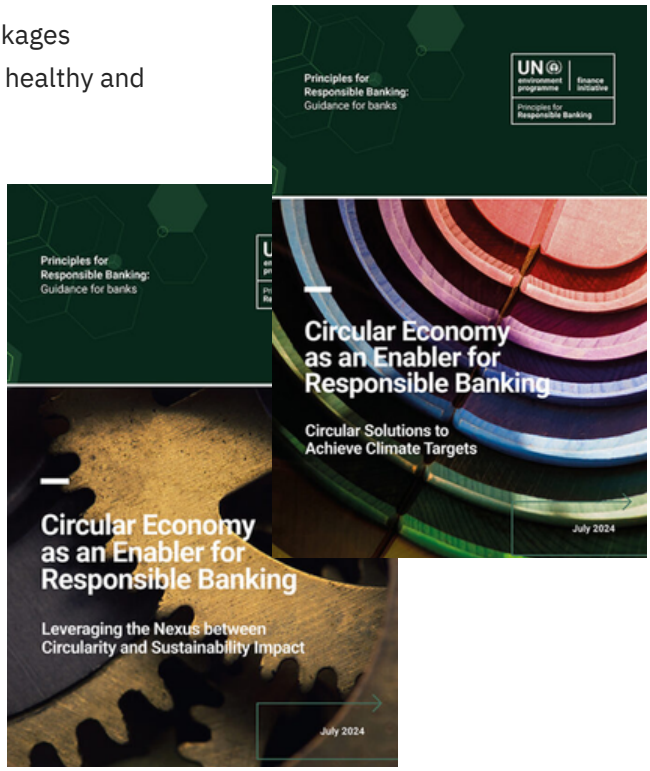
UNEP provides guidance in supporting the financial sector to limit GHG emissions, protect nature, promote a Circular Economy, foster healthy and inclusive economies and engage policymakers and regulators to help development of effective financial regulation and create an enabling environment.

Building on UNEP Finance Initiative's work, the session highlighted how integrating Circular Economy principles into client engagement, financial flows and portfolio strategies can help banks move beyond compliance toward real-economy impact.

Kavita emphasized the important role banks and financial institutions can play to support circular solutions to address climate change and nature loss:

- With over 55% of global GHG emissions and 90% of biodiversity loss and water stress is linked to resource use, Circularity is central to addressing the triple planetary crisis.
- Circular Economy is a multi-billion opportunity: a USD 160 bn market in 2020, projected to over USD 280 bn by 2030.
- Financial institutions are moving from the "What is Circular Economy?" to "How do we scale and finance it?".
- Managing the nexus between circularity and environmental and social impact can help banks create real world impact.

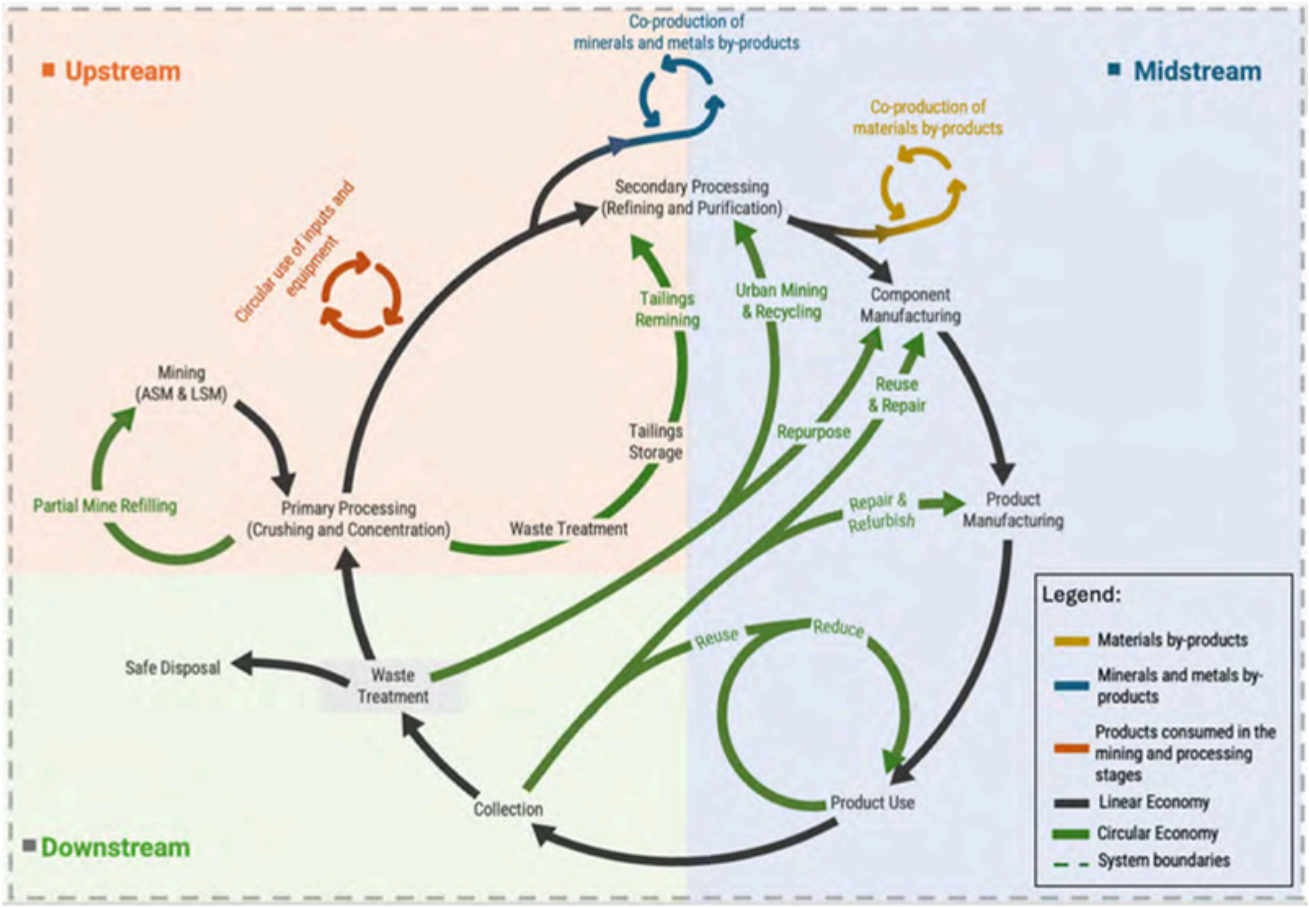
- Banks to adopt a holistic “nexus” approach to manage interlinkages between Circular Economy and climate, nature, pollution, and healthy and inclusive economies.
- Follow a value chain/ life cycle approach to Circularity: Circular design, Circular use, Circular value recovery and Circular support.
- Banks can use UNEP FI Guidance and Sectoral supplements covering high impact and high Circularity potential sectors for easier adoption such as textiles, buildings and construction, agrifood, minerals, metals etc.



To unlock Circular Economy financing and attract public and private capital:

- Circular Economy activities must be economically sound and financially viable.
- The business case for Circular Economy must be strengthened and documented through evidence-based analysis.

Material Flow - Retaining materials in the value chain[1]



Source: Simas, Aponte and Wiebe, 2022. Circular Solutions to Achieve Climate Targets in Minerals and Metals Value Chains, UN Environment Programme Finance Initiative

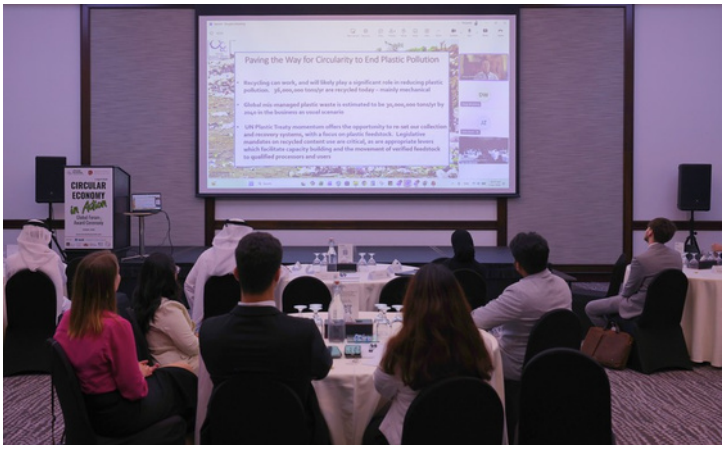
Caught in the Wrap - Plastic Solutions Unfolded

Douglas Woodring

Hong Kong

Douglas Woodring is the Founder and Managing Director of Ocean Recovery Alliance – a non-profit organization based in Hong Kong. He is the developer of the world's first plastic Footprinting methodology, Global Alert, the first app. that allows people to report trash hotspots in waterways and coastlines worldwide.

> ***Unnecessary packaging leaves little to no choice with consumers.***
>
> **- Douglas Woodring**

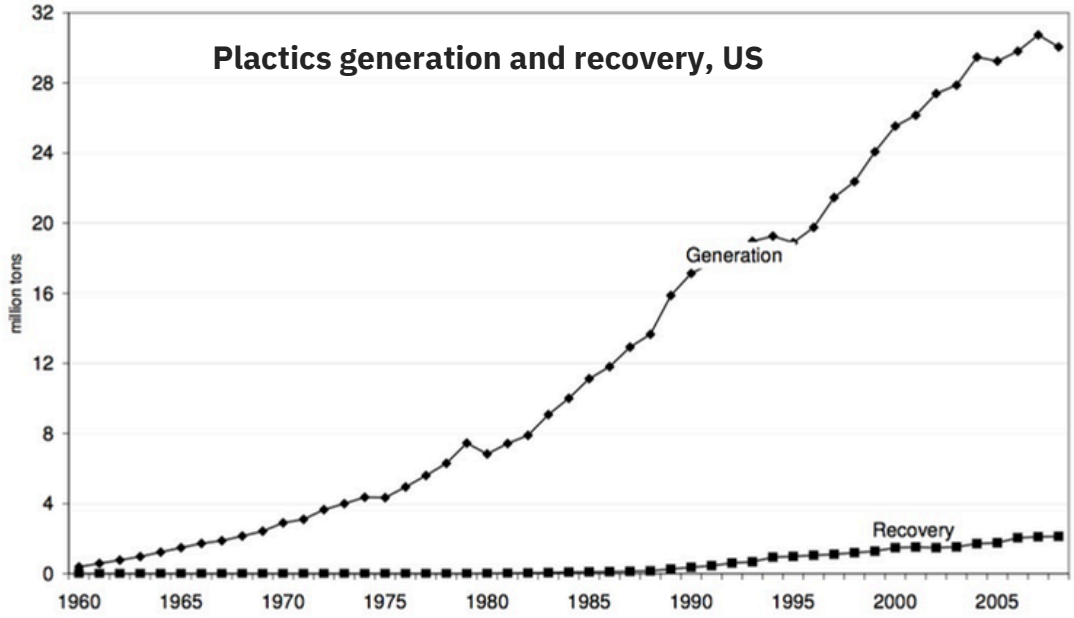


During his presentation, he highlighted several critical issues surrounding plastic pollution:

- Plastics is one of the most complicated issues of our life. It comprises of seven "families" of plastics, but over 40,000 variations, creating a huge task to sort, clean and recycle.
- Global mismanaged plastic waste is estimated to be 30,000,000 tonnes/year by 2040 in the business-as-usual scenario.
- Unnecessary packaging leaves little to no choice with consumers.
- Over 2 billion people are impacted by plastic pollution in terms of drinking water, cooking, washing, health, fishing, ecosystem, tourism and agriculture.
- Much of the UN Plastic Treaty discussions have focused on plans for reductions, reuse and some form of taxes (EPR). In the best-case scenario, studies have estimated that by 2040, this would reduce plastic use and potential pollution by 30%.
- We have not collectively focused on circularity, recycling, and how to work with the other 70% of material.

Circularity as a strategy to end plastic pollution:

- Continued recycling will likely play a significant role in reducing plastic pollution.
- UN Plastic Treaty offers the opportunity to re-set our collection and recovery systems, with a focus on plastic feedstock.
- Legislative mandates on recycled content use are critical, as are appropriate levers which facilitate capacity building and movement of verified feedstock to qualified processors and users.



There is large gap between global consumption and recycling/recovery

The real role of AI in enabling a Circular Economy

Dr. Darren Perrin
United Arab Emirates

Dr. Darren Perrin is a Partner at Kearney – a leading management consulting company. He is an expert in sustainability, resource management, and Circular Economy.

Dr. Perrin provided valuable insights into how AI can act as a powerful tool in facilitating Circular Economy practices and helping overcome key challenges within the transition towards more sustainable and resource-efficient systems.

Dr. Perrin emphasized the main AI impact levers in Circular Economy:

- Material visibility
- Monitoring and compliance
- Asset life extension
- Design optimization
- System-level optimization

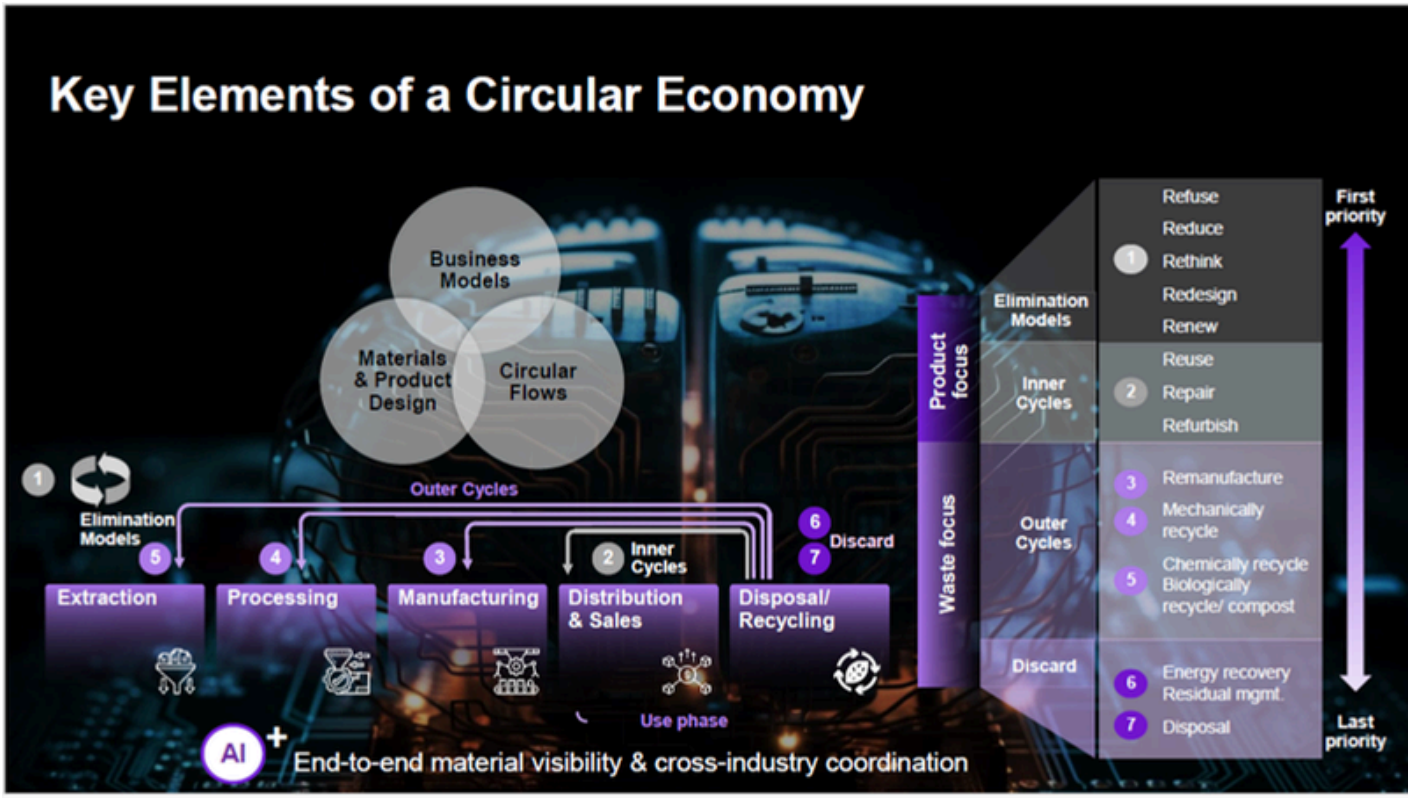
He gave some interesting examples of how AI is helping keep materials in circulation as long as possible and transforming the Circular Economy sector.

Stage	Use of AI Technologies
Waste Generation	• Smart audits via image analysis. • Smart bins with AI sensors report fill levels and predict volume spikes.
Sorting and Collection	• AI-powered contamination checks. • Robotic classification & separation of materials.
Transportation	• AI-optimized load planning and routing improves truck efficiency, reducing costs and emissions.
Treatment	• Robotic/AI sorting at material recovery facilities. • Facility automation. • Digital twins for treatment plants.
Disposal	• AI-enabled drones. • IoT devices to monitor landfills, detect illegal dumpsites, and predict leachate leaks.

While Dr. Darren spoke about being mindful of the unintended environmental consequences of using AI, he also demonstrated immense opportunity for application of AI in circular design, such as:

- **Extending product lifetime**: by predicting corrosion and fatigue, and making repair, refurbishment and reuse simpler.
- **Asset regeneration**: by designing biobased, biodegradable inputs for safe biodegradation life extension.
- **Closing the loop**: using AI-guided sensing and process control to turn tailings, scrap and end-of-life materials back into high-purity feedstocks.

> ***A circular economy has always been possible. The challenge has been:***
> - ***lack of visibility,***
> - ***lack of coordination and***
> - ***lack of predictive capability.***
>
> ***AI removes all three .***
>
> **- Dr. Darren Perrin**



Circular Hospitality in Practice: Lessons for 20 Cyprus hotels transitioning journey

Chrysostomos Adamides

Cyprus

Chrysostomos Adamides is a Business Consultant and Research Fellow at Circular Economy Alliance, based in Cyprus and is currently completing an Executive Doctorate in Business Administration at Ecole des Ponts Business School in Paris with a focus on stakeholder mechanisms to advance the circular transition in the hotel sector. He prepares hotels for their sustainability and circularity assessments and transition based on the Circular Economy ISO 59000 series.

Hospitality is an industry everyone can relate to, yet the adoption of circularity within this sector is often seen as limited. Chrysostomos emphasized the challenges involved in fully adopting Circular Economy practices in hospitality, while demonstrating with real life examples of how it is being achieved in various hotels around the world.

Chrysostomos stated that “Most hotels are doing the same things better but within a linear model system to mitigate their environment footprint”. It includes:

- LED lighting upgrades,
- Towel reuse programs,
- Waste sorting bins,
- Low-flow showerheads.

Environment footprint of hotels:
(global average)

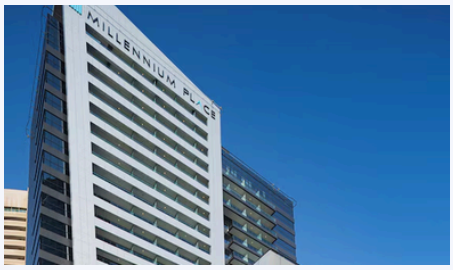
- ***300,000 tonnes of waste / year***
- ***1,500 liters water per room per day***
- ***300 Mt CO_2 of emissions / year***
- ***20 kWh energy use per guest per night***

Proposed adaptations to advance circularity

In order to transit to circularity, Chrysostomos suggested hotels to adapt the following, already available solutions:

- **Products-as-a-Service** - the model where manufacturer retains ownership of the product, maintaining it for maximum lifespan, which drives higher-quality goods. In hospitality this could be:
    - Light-as-a-Service
    - Chemicals-as-a-service
    - Furniture-as-a-service
- **AI-enabled food waste management systems** - systems that allow to track waste, identifying, weighing, and categorizing kitchen waste in real time to cut food waste, reduce cost and environmental impact.
- **Circular building initiatives, such as:**
    - Rooftop aquaponics: fish waste feeds plants, plants purify water, kitchen green waste feeds back into the system via compost
    - Geothermal storage to retain energy
    - Greywater from showers recirculated to toilets.

Circular Hospitality in the Gulf region



Millennium Place Marina, UAE

- Recycled ~130,000 kg of waste.
- Donated 500kg of discarded linen.
- Introduced waste compactor.
- Transitioned to water dispensers avoiding plastic waste.
- Trained employees on sustainability.

Eco Village at Madinat Jumeirah, UAE

- Conducted workshops to educate guests on reusing plastic.
- Established hydroponics farm.
- Introduced coral restoration programme.
- Implemented turtle rehabilitation project.

Shebara Resort & Desert Rock, Saudi Arabia

- Operates entirely on solar energy.
- Water self-sufficient with reverse-osmosis desalination.
- Treats wastewater and reuses it for irrigation .
- Captures rainwater to revitalize the local ecosystem.

Key Takeaways for Circular Hospitality from Chrysostomos Adamides:

1. **Eco-efficiency is necessary but insufficient.** Narrowing loops alone won't achieve circularity; slow and close loops are needed through business model innovation.
2. **The barrier is cognitive, not technical.** It is necessary to move from "doing things better" to "doing better things" — from being adaptive to being reformative to transformative.
3. **Stakeholder engagement is the key lever to circular transition.** Circular transition does not happen inside hotels. It happens between them, their partners, their people, and their governments.

> ***Stakeholder engagement is the key lever to circular transition. Circular transition does not happen inside hotels. It happens between them, their partners, their people, and their governments.***
>
> **- Chrysostomos Adamides**

Impact of Design on Circularity

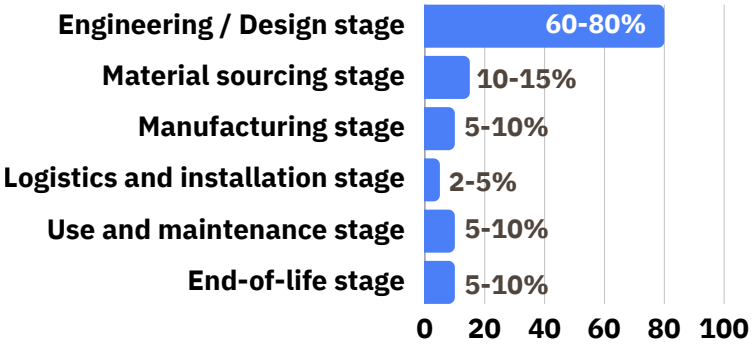
Kirankumar Nagare

UAE

Kirankumar Nagare is QHSE Manager at Specialist Services – a global supplier of modular buildings and packaging solutions for people and equipment serving oil & gas, utility, petrochemical, chemical industries, renewables, refineries and defense.

Kirankumar underscored the critical role of design in advancing circularity. He emphasized that failing to incorporate circular principles at the design stage means missing the greatest opportunity to enable circularity in a product. Design alone has the potential to influence up to 60-80% of a product's circularity.

As a product progresses through subsequent stages of its life cycle, the ability to significantly impact its circular performance steadily diminishes as follows:



The Engineering/Design stage is dominant, as it determines the key decisions that shape a product's sustainability and circularity, including:

- Type of materials, its specifications and quantities,
- Opportunities for waste reduction,
- Lifecyle of the product,
- Modularization and standardization opportunities,
- Disassembly and relocation potential,
- Maintenance and use,
- Reuse, recycle, refurbish / repurpose feasibility,
- Potential to upgrade,
- End-of-life pathways.

Kirankumar stated that product life can be extended beyond 30 years by integrating the following considerations at the design stage:

- Material selection & sizing — choosing appropriate materials and dimensions to withstand long-term loads and operating conditions.
- Protective coatings — applying suitable coatings to resist corrosion and harsh environmental conditions.
- Design for repairability — enabling easy repair and refurbishment (e.g., bolted joints instead of permanent welds).
- Repurposing potential — designing products for alternative future uses (e.g., converting containers into camps or workshops).

Thoughtful design decisions significantly enhance durability, resilience, and long-term value.

Design solutions with leftover and written-off materials can as well be achieved by:

- **Repurposing** leftover materials and written-off inventory for new infrastructure projects.
- **Reviewing** excess materials for potential future reuse before disposal.
- **Selling** or transferring unused materials to contractors if no internal use is possible.
- **Recycling** materials that are no longer reusable or suitable for resale.

In his closing message Kirankumar said that:

- Engineering influences all phases of a product's life cycle. There are opportunities to maximise circularity by enabling reuse, repairability, recyclability, increasing life of product and material recovery based on engineering choices.
- Circularity is engineered, not added later. The earlier circular design principles are integrated, the greater the environmental and operational benefits throughout the product lifecycle.
- Engineering decisions made early in the design phase help unlock up to 80% of a product's circularity.

> ***Circularity is engineered, not added later.***
> **- Kirankumar Nagare**

Activating Circular Economy with the Digital Product Passport

Marion Rouzeaud

Italy

Marion Rouzeaud is a transformation consultant who helps organizations leverage product-level data, lifecycle thinking, and transparency across value chains to support sustainability, circularity, and business innovation.

She is the author of the research-based book ***DiPPa: Rethinking the Way We Buy Things with Digital Product Passports***[1], developed through conversations with 61 experts from industry, academia, and policy.

To enable Circular Economy, it is absolutely necessary to have the availability of transparent and trustworthy data about products through their lifecycle. Marion demonstrated how Digital Product Passport as a tool can help in achieving this need.

Marion started her speech with the challenge of opacity in product and material flows:

- Information asymmetry between producers and consumers,
- Difficulty in distinguishing sustainable products from greenwashing,
- Deficit of trust in sustainability claims.

Digital Product Passport (DPP)[2] is a structured collection of product related data with pre-defined scope and agreed data management and access rights conveyed through a unique identifier and that is accessible via electronic means through a data carrier.

[1] *https://www.dippa.eu/book. The book is available on Amazon.*

[2] *As defined by CIRPASS – EU funded initiative to prepare for piloting and deployment of a standards-based DPP with an initial focus on the electronics, batteries, and textile sectors.*

DPP is a transformative approach to product identification, traceability and reporting for value creation, retention and recovery.

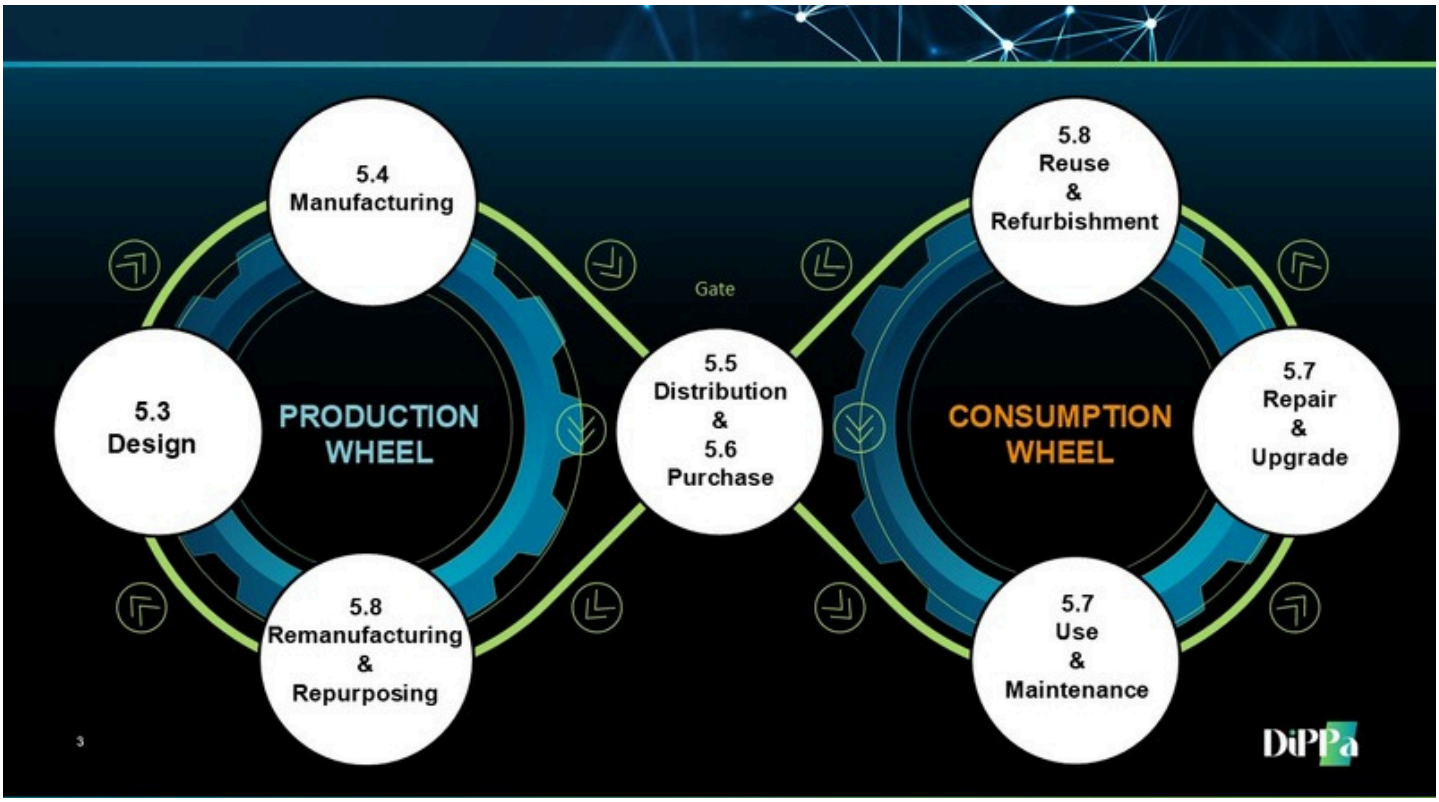
- Marion Rouzeaud

Digital technology provides transparency and helps to overcome this challenge, as it:

- Enables unprecedented visibility.
- Transforms businesses through information access.
- Reconnects production and consumption.

Marion spoke about how the Digital Product Passport is essential for achieving circularity goals and advancing Circular Economy aspirations. She emphasized that beyond compliance and traceability, transparency serves a broader purpose:

- Reconnecting people with the stories behind products.
- Enabling genuine choice based on values and evidence.
- Creating conditions for new relationship with the material world.



Global Circular Economy Awards

Global Circular Economy Awards recognize organizations implementing Circular Economy principles, practices and models, and making tangible and intangible impact. They are pioneers, role models and inspire other organizations to transition from linear to circular operations.

About the Award

During our meetings and interactions with global Circular Economy thought leaders, practitioners and researchers at the World Circular Economy Forums in Belgium and Finland, we realized that many people held a perception that nothing circular is happening in the Middle East. We decided to change this perception.

Firstly, we carefully studied organizations in the region and realized that they can be segmented into three distinct categories namely:

1. Organisations that have none or very little knowledge about Circular Economy,
2. Organisations that have some initiatives, but don't know that they are circular,
3. Organizations that are well aware of Circular Economy, practicing and leading the way to its implementation.

After that we conducted many awareness sessions and trainings on Circular Economy in the region and abroad. We initiated and completed a project for a UAE Government Entity on developing guidelines for building houses according to the principles of Circular Economy, which were released during COP28 in Dubai.

In line with the above we designed the first Circular Economy Awards program to:

- **Inspire** companies to adopt principles of Circular Economy.
- **Recognize** those who already adopting.
- **Share** best circular practices in a Forum to accelerate the movement.

Award program is open for any organization from any sector, including private, public, academia, profit, non-profit, from anywhere in the world.

Award criteria are built on proven and credible frameworks such as “Plan-Do-Check-Act” (Dr. Deming Cycle), Cause and Effect (Prof. Ishikawa) and ISO 59000 series of standards on Circular Economy.

Principles of Integrity, Impact, Improvement, Fairness, Transparency and Sustainability are embedded in the Award assessment process and Jury’s decision making while deciding the winners.

Jury comprises of highly experienced Circular Economy professionals from around the world from industry and academia.

Jury Members of the Global Circular Economy Awards

Sunil Thawani,
UAE

Anne Rademaker,
Netherlands

Lijin Chin,
UK

Serhan Alshammari,
Saudi Arabia

Chun-hsu Lin,
Taiwan

First Award cycle (2024-2025) was focused only on organizations from the six GCC countries. Subsequently we received many requests to participate in the Award from around the world, and we decided to go global.

This year Award participation included organizations from Brazil, Republic of Congo, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Award Winners and their circular practices

During the Forum, Winners shared their circular strategies, how circularity is embedded into their operations and product design, alignment with UN SDGs and their national sustainability agendas, standards and frameworks adopted, learned lessons and impact.

From responsible production and waste recovery to digital innovation, resource optimization, and sustainable supply chains, the Award Winners and Forum speakers highlighted a diverse range of best practices that are shaping the future of circular business.

Together, these efforts bring us closer to a more resilient, responsible, and regenerative future.

The Team of Ehfaaz – organization, recognized in the 1st and 2nd Cycles of the Circular Economy Awards

AGERA

Brazil

Mining sector

www.agera.co

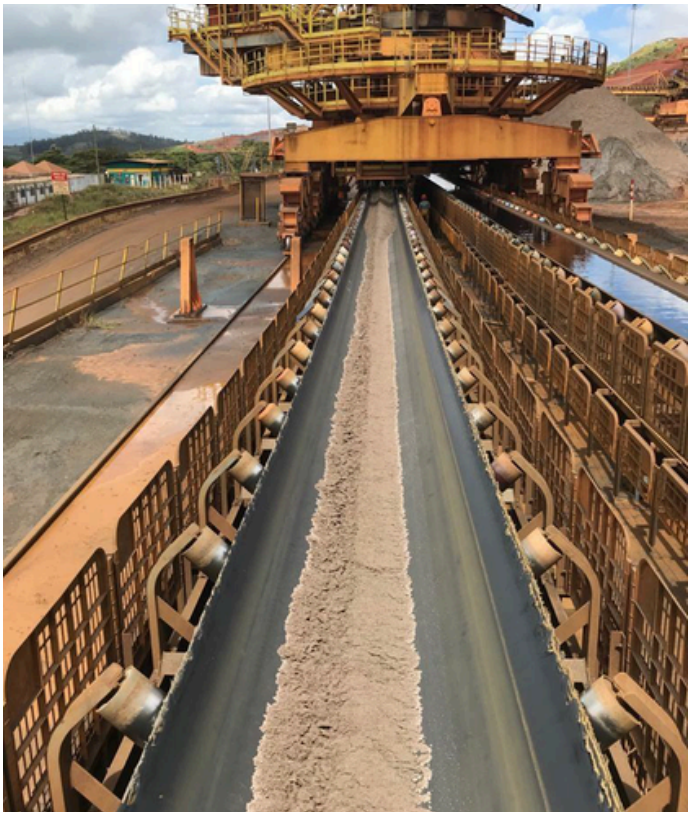
AGERA sands are produced from materials recovered during the beneficiation process of iron ore from mines. AGERA sands replace natural sand in construction, paving and recovery of degraded areas, significantly reducing the environmental impact associated with mining and transporting natural aggregates in line with the principles of the Circular Economy, aimed at reducing the extraction of natural resources, preventing waste, and regenerating production cycles.

Moreover, each ton of AGERA sand sold prevents one ton of material from being disposed of in piles or tailings dams at VALE, reducing the need for new disposal areas and the associated environmental risks. In this way, AGERA's solution transforms a mining byproduct into a high-value, sustainable input, aligning technical performance, environmental responsibility, and innovation in waste management.

These products serve construction, concrete, precast, mortars, paving, recovery of degraded areas and ceramics sectors. They stand out as 100% circular alternatives, reducing carbon emissions compared to natural sand.

With numerous applications, from beer bottles to microchips, sand is the second most exploited natural resource in the world after water[1].

[1]*UNEP/GRID-Geneva Sand & Sustainability Programme*



About the organization

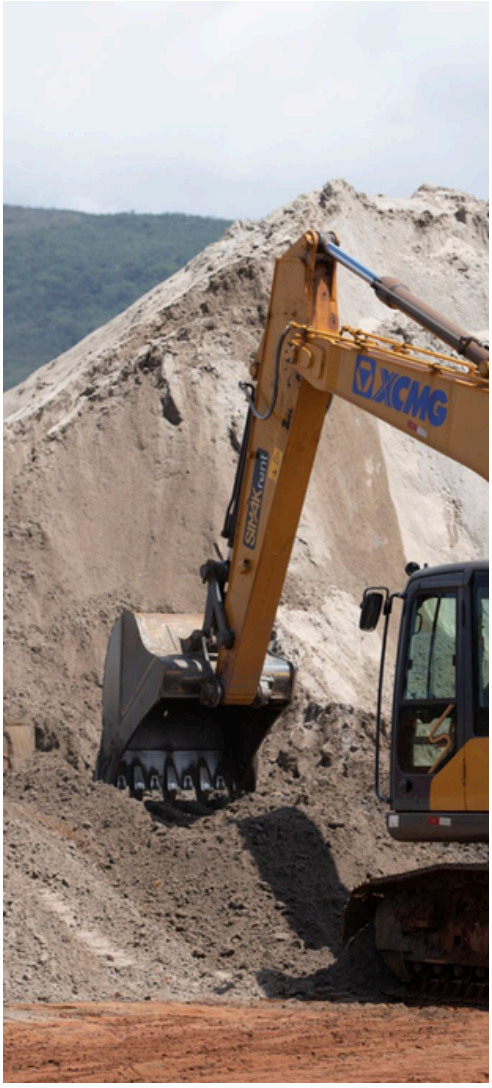
AGERA, a company created by Vale S.A., is headquartered in Nova Lima, Brazil. AGERA operates across Minas Gerais, São Paulo, and Espírito Santo. Its main distribution center is in São Gonçalo do Rio Abaixo (MG), with partners in Santa Luzia (MG), Serra (ES), Cariacica (ES), and São Paulo (SP).

AGERA is dedicated to the commercialization of sustainable sand and materials derived from iron ore processing, formerly considered mining waste. Its purpose is to promote circular economy practices and environmental innovation.

Its product portfolio includes Sustainable Sand A1 and A2 serving clients across multiple industrial segments, ensuring compliance with environmental and regulatory standards.

Circular Practices at AGERA (partial list)

- Circular Economy is established as a strategic pillar guiding decisions, investments, and operational practices.
- R&D focused on concrete durability and increased use of sustainable materials, circular supply chains, and waste valorisation.
- Documented Circular Economy strategy aligned with the Brazilian regulations and government initiatives promoting resource efficiency, waste reduction, and sustainable industrial development.
- Circular Economy strategy is cascaded into operations, business model, and culture with clear well defined measurable objectives and KPIs such as Reduction of CO2 Emission for monitoring and reporting progress.
- Developed Environmental Product Declaration (EPD), in accordance with ISO 14025 and EN 15804 standards based on a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA). The EPD was independently verified and registered under a recognized program.
- Sand 1 produced from materials recovered during the beneficiation process of iron ore from the Brucutu Mine. Sand 1 partially replaces natural sand in construction applications such as concrete and mortar.
- Mining sand produced by AGERA partially replaces the conventional sand leading to the reduction in the use of Portland cement in industrial and construction applications.
- Virgin clay used in block and tile production replaced with mining by-products from the Brucutu Mine (“Sand 2”).
- AGERA Summit held every year, engaging employees, suppliers, and clients on topic of Circularity and sustainable innovation.



Circular Economy award
Category - Pioneering Practice
2nd Award cycle, 2025-2026

AGERA is awarded in the category “Pioneering Practice” for establishing Circular Economy management system aligned with their strategy, promoting resource efficiency, waste reduction, and sustainable industrial development in sand mining sector.

Fabio Duarte - Commercial and R&D Director, and Olmede Filho - Sales and Product Development, attended the event online. Sunil Thawani received the trophy on behalf of the organization.

Apparel Group

United Arab Emirates

Retail sector

www.apparelgroup.com

About the organization

Apparel Group is a global retail powerhouse based in Dubai, UAE, strategically positioned at the crossroads of the modern economy. With a network of over 2,500 retail stores and more than 85 brands, the company serves millions of shoppers worldwide.

The company has established a significant footprint in the Gulf including Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait, while expanding into markets such as India, South Africa, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, and Egypt.

Apparel Group has a diverse brand portfolio spanning the USA, Canada, Europe, Australia, and Asia offering an omni-channel experience featuring renowned names like Tommy Hilfiger, Charles & Keith, Skechers, ALDO, Crocs, Nine West, Calvin Klein, Aéropostale, Jamie's Italian, Tim Hortons, Cold Stone Creamery, Inglot, and Rituals.

Circular Practices at Apparel Group (partial list)

- Circularity is embedded into Apparel Group's sustainability governance model and integrated into business planning, risk assessment, and operational decision-making.
- Introduced textile take-back programs using three types of grading system as below with recycling as the last option:
  - Grade A: Garments in excellent condition are directly reused through redistribution, resale, or donation.
  - Grade B: Items requiring minor repairs are reconditioned and returned to circulation.
  - Grade C: Heavily worn or unsuitable items are first cleaned and assessed for any secondary uses; only if they do not meet criteria for any grade do we recycle them.
- Collaboration with fabric, trim, and packaging suppliers to ensure products are durable, repairable, and recyclable sourcing sustainable materials, with recycled polyester, organic cotton, and responsibly sourced viscose now representing over 35% of our total fabric consumption thereby reducing reliance on virgin resources and lower overall carbon footprint.

- First UAE homegrown retail leader to introduce Digital Product Passports (DPP) through its brand F5 Global. DPPs provide information such as:
  - full material breakdown including synthetic polymer indicators,
  - microplastic-release risk information,
  - supplier and manufacturing transparency,
  - environmental certifications,
  - care, repair, reuse, and recycling instructions.

- Established comprehensive UAE Circular Economy Platform operating across the UAE, where every unsold garment is directed to a second life stream.
- Prioritizing suppliers providing full transparency through Digital Product Passports with detailed information on a product's environmental footprint, including carbon emissions, water usage, and recyclability.
- Partnered with Fairly Made, a global platform specializing in product traceability and impact measurement. Jointly organized webinars and training sessions for suppliers to build awareness and capability in circular fashion practices, including responsible sourcing, impact tracking, and lifecycle analysis.
- Supplier performance regularly reviewed through sustainability scorecards, including Circular measurements to drive continuous improvements.

Other initiatives:

- 100% ban on single use plastic bags across all stores in the GCC, replaced entirely with responsibly sourced paper bags or durable reusable bags.
- Mandatory sustainable material standards , prioritizing GOTS organic cotton, GRS recycled polyester, RCS fibers, and biobased materials.
- Introduction of microplastic aware procurement guidelines, reducing reliance on high shedding synthetic polymers and encouraging more stable filament structures.
- Supplier requirements now include certifications, traceability documents, and chemical detox compliance, strengthening environmental governance across the supply chain.

Circular Economy award
Category - Organization
2nd Award cycle, 2025-2026

Apparel Group is awarded in the category "Organization" for embedding circularity into their sustainability governance model, business planning, risk assessment, and operational decision-making and being one of the first Retailers in the Middle East to introduce Digital Product Passports (DPP) through its brand F5 Global.

Jatin Kalra,Vice President & Country Head of Apparel Group receiving the circular trophy.

Ehfaaz

United Arab Emirates

Waste Management sector

www.ehfaaz.ae

About the organization

Ehfaaz is a UAE-based circular economy platform that operates a governed system for managing the end-of-life phase of materials generated by businesses. Its core focus is not collection or recycling in isolation, but the design and execution of a repeatable operating practice that determines how materials are assessed, routed, processed, and measured to achieve the highest-value recovery outcomes under real-world commercial and regulatory constraints.

Ehfaaz integrates physical operations, processing capacity, and digital governance to manage complex Scope 3 end-of-life material flows for multinational companies, local enterprises, and institutions. Rather than relying on ad hoc recycling decisions or downstream assumptions, Ehfaaz applies defined recovery rules at intake and tracks outcomes through processing, reporting, and continuous improvement.

This practice is delivered through an interconnected ecosystem of solutions covering collection, organic recovery, repurposing into secondary inputs, upcycling into circular products, and digital reporting via ReVive. The system is designed to be auditable, repeatable, and resilient to scale thereby prioritizing operational discipline over one-off innovation.

Circular Practices at Ehfaaz (partial list)

- The Zero Waste to Landfill policy eliminates landfill as a default option, even when cheaper or faster alternatives exist.
- Circular objectives are embedded within internal KPIs, where recovery quality and data integrity are prioritized over volume throughput. This reflects a deliberate shift away from conventional waste metrics toward outcome-based performance.
- By aligning performance management with circular outcomes, the organization ensures that circularity is institutionalized through structured mechanism.

> ***Having participated in a handful of regional and international awards over the years, what stood out to us about the Circular Economy Awards was the depth, structure, and seriousness of the process. The assessment framework was clear and well thought through, the criteria were applied rigorously, and the overall process felt both demanding and fair.***
>
> **- Aliyu Mohammed Ali**

Circular Practices at Ehfaaz (continuation)

- A clearly defined recovery hierarchy (reuse → repurpose → upcycle → organic recovery → disposal) ensures transparent prioritization aligned with circular economy principles.
- The integration of W2ZOP and ReVive platforms connects operational execution with verified data flows, minimizing discrepancies between field activities and reporting. This enables the generation of actionable insights that go beyond waste tracking to inform client decision-making on product design, resource efficiency, and value chain optimization.
- Operational teams are trained to classify materials based on contamination thresholds, safety requirements, and recovery potential.

- The governance model is designed as a scalable, repeatable system applicable across multiple sectors and clients with minimal customization. This positions Ehfaaz as an emerging model for next-generation waste management – where structured decision systems and integrated data enable replication and broader industry transformation.
- Ehfaaz's Pioneering Practice is defined by a formal decision hierarchy applied at the point of material intake, before processing begins. Each material stream is assessed using the following fixed order of criteria: 1. Regulatory acceptability (legal and policy compliance) 2. Safety and contamination thresholds 3. Recovery yield potential (value and quality of output) 4. Processing capacity availability.

Circular Economy award
Category - Product / Service
1st Award cycle, 2024-2025

Circular Economy award
Category - Pioneering Practice
2nd Award cycle, 2025-2026

Ehfaaz participated in the 1st and 2nd Award cycles and awarded in the categories "Product/Service Enabling Circularity" and "Pioneering Practice" for integrating physical operations, processing capacity, and digital governance to manage complex Scope 3 end-of-life material flows for multinational companies, local enterprises, and institutions.

Aliyu Mohammed Ali, CEO and Co-Founder of Ehfaaz receiving the circular trophy.

Olam Agri – Wood Business

Republic of Congo

Agriculture sector

www.olamagri.com

About the organization

Olam Agri is a global supplier of food, feed, and fibre, providing essential materials that nourish communities and drive sustainable growth. Its Wood Products business is a leading producer of certified tropical hardwoods and engineered wood solutions, managing 2.1 million hectares of natural forest concessions in the Republic of Congo.

With over 55 years of experience, the company operates one of Africa's most advanced tropical timber industries, integrating forest management, sawmilling, kiln drying, energy generation and value-added manufacturing.

Circular Practices at Olam Agri (partial list)

- Five Forest Stewardship Council (FSC®) and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC)[1] certification. Four dedicated to low-impact harvesting and one set aside as a permanent conservation area under a UN - Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+) framework[2].

- Closed-loop industrial production system reuses 100 % of wood residues – sawdust, bark, and off-cuts – are repurposed to power biomass cogeneration plant, providing clean electricity to industrial sites and the neighbouring town of Pokola. It replaces fossil-based electricity in a region without a national grid.
- Applied Reduced Impact Logging (RIL) methods, harvesting fewer than one tree per hectare every 30 years, well below national thresholds. Trees are geolocated and barcoded, and data captured in the company's ETP systems for traceability.

[1]FSC® and PEFC certifications verify that the forest products are sourced from well-managed forests that adopt sustainable forestry practices.

[2]REDD+ is a climate change mitigation solution developed by Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Circular Practices at Olam Agri (continuation)

- High Conservation Value (HCV) and High Carbon Stock (HCS) areas are mapped, monitored, and excluded from operations in collaboration with scientific partners.
- Strategic collaboration with Wildlife Conservation Society, WWF and leading universities on biodiversity monitoring (acoustic sensors, eDNA, camera traps) supporting evidence-based management.
- Commitment to peatland preservation enforcing a strict no-conversion and no-degradation policy for peatlands of any depth within its concessions. Peatland areas are fully mapped and excluded from operations, with buffer zones established to protect their hydrology and ecological integrity.
- Established robust monitoring and reporting systems and independent verification to measure impact across environmental, social, and economic dimensions.

Circular Economy award
Category - Pioneering Practice
2nd Award cycle, 2025-2026

Olam Agri – Wood Business is awarded in the category “Pioneering Practice” for closed-loop industrial production system in their Agri business reusing 100% of wood residues, repurposing them to power biomass cogeneration plant, and adopting Reduced Impact Logging (RIL) methods.

Vincent Istace, Head of Corporate Responsibility & Sustainability at Olam Agri, attended the event online. Sunil Thawani received the trophy on behalf of the organization.

Circularity in Action with Our Partners

To promote Circular Economy and make Circularity in Action happen, we partner with organizations that share our vision, passion and values.

WAT bin for collecting e-waste at the Circular Economy Forum. Gregoire Denjean-Massia - Chief Operating Officer & Co-Founder at WAT (on the right) and Indrajit Sarkar - Senior Assessor at Circular Economy Awards (on the left)

Collection of preloved clothes for Thrift for Good at the Circular Economy Forum by Jennifer Sault - Founder and Managing Director at Thrift for Good (in the middle)

THRIFT FOR GOOD	Charitable preloved clothing store. www.thriftforgood.org	*United Arab Emirates*
wat	E-waste disposal, refurbishment, and recycling company. www.wat.ae	*United Arab Emirates*
Circular Economy NEWS	Publications on products, trends and equipment across the global Circular Economy market. www.circular-economy-news.com	*Global*
LOOP REDUCE | REUSE | RECYCLE	Forum for waste, resources and Circular Economy. www.loopforum.dk	*Denmark*
CGE 中華經濟研究院 綠色經濟研究中心 The Center for Green Economy Chung-Hua Institution for Economic Research	Research institution dedicated to the study of the green economy in Taiwan. www.cier.edu.tw	*Taiwan*
Asia Pacific Circular Economy Roundtable & Hotspot Taiwan, 2025	International forum designed to scale sustainable, circular solutions. www.apcer.asia	*Taiwan*

E-Waste Collection Report[1]

by We Are Tech (WAT)

United Arab Emirates

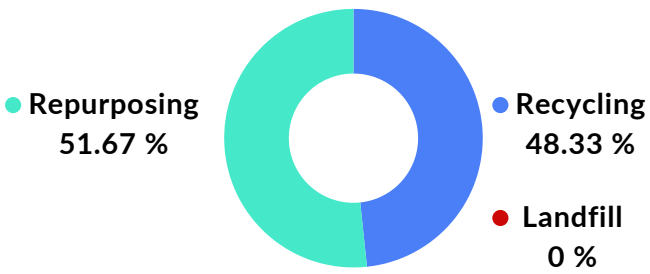
Total devices: 31

Total weight: 6.24 kg

Summary of Collected Items

Item	Quantity	Weight
Laptop(s)	1	2.76 kg
Shaver	2	0.73 kg
Grinder	1	0.58 kg
Comb	1	0.40 kg
Charger	1	0.35 kg
Router / Modem	1	0.26 kg
Headphone	8	0.25 kg
Speaker	1	0.24 kg
Telephone(s) (landlines)	1	0.22 kg
Mouse(s)	2	0.13 kg
Cable	3	0.11 kg
Adaptor	2	0.09 kg
Battery Charger	1	0.06 kg
Alkaline/Button battery(ies)	5	0.05 kg
USB Key	1	0.01 kg
Total	**31**	**6.24 kg**

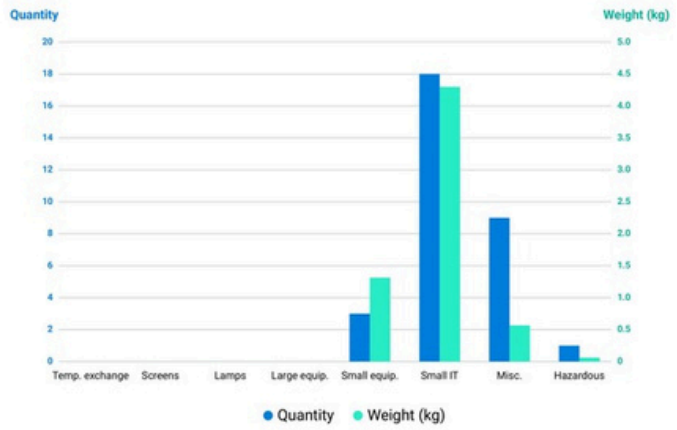
Treatment of E-Waste



175.85 kg CO2e

Estimated CO2 emissions avoided

Based on recycling and repurposing pathways.



Indrajit Sarkar (Senior Assessor at the Circular Economy Awards) not only contributed his own electronic items but also took an initiative to gather e-waste from his neighbors to deposit into the WAT bin at the Forum.

[1]*Please note that this is an extraction from the full report.*

Voices

"It's one of the best Forums, having leaders in the region talk about Circular Economy, sustainability and even excellence in leadership"

– Dr. Eng. Hani Hossni, Founder and CEO, ITALCO Aluminum Works

"It's (the Forum) an amazing opportunity to get acquainted with this economy which is basically progressing throughout the world"

– Dr. Hadi Ait Belkacem, Program & Project Management Leader, Aviation and Defense Industry Expert

"I found this Forum very interesting and had a lot of insights. I found a lot of information of initiatives here in the UAE"

– Olga Klochikhina, Environment and Sustainability Specialist

"Event has powerfully demonstrated how collaboration and innovation can drive the transition to a circular economy in a phased manner. And how meaningful action toward a circular economy can be directed where resources are valued, reused, and sustained thereby closing the loop for a better sustainable future"

– Tauseefur Khan, Senior SMETA Product Leader, Auditor & PMP professional

"Attending the second edition of the Circular Economy Forum & Awards was a truly enriching experience. What stood out was the strong emphasis on practical implementation, moving circularity from concept to measurable impact across industries. The diversity of perspectives, from policy to technology and business, created meaningful dialogue. Thanks for curating such a thoughtful and well-executed platform that is helping accelerate the region's transition toward a more sustainable, circular future"

– Rani Saddi, CEO, NimDigital

"Systems running outside optimal conditions, idle equipment, and inefficient habits reflect a linear mindset in practice. Circularity begins when those loops are tightened through better utilization, reduced waste, extended asset life, and stronger ownership at team level"

– Rahil Verma, Founder & CEO, Masterkanop

"When we finalize (Award) assessment, we create a Feedback Report in which we highlight the strengths and opportunities for improvement for Award applicants to continue their transition from linear to Circular Economy"

– Kirankumar Nagare, Assessor, Circular Economy Awards

Voices

"The assessment process was very smooth and well-structured. Jury members encouraged positive, constructive feedback, which made the assessor's input truly value-adding. Assessment conversations with Award applicants gave me deep insight into the real-world circular economy practices in action. It enhanced my understanding of excellence in sustainability implementation"

– Indrajit Sarkar, Assessor, Circular Economy Awards

"It was fantastic, it was amazing from start to finish, we learnt a lot, we connected with a lot of people, we learned a lot of things that we are going to be implementing in our business as well and we hope we teach a lot of people what to do next"

– Ehfaaz, Award Applicant and Winner

"The experience of participating in the Forum today has been immeasurable, tremendous. It's so humbling and inspiring at the same time to see many individuals from all walks of life, from different sectors, public, private, all coming in one room sharing a strong mission, sharing case studies and examples of how they are driving circular economy across UAE and beyond"

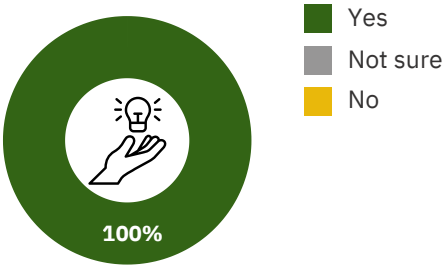
– Aliyu Ali Mohammed, Co-Founder and CEO of Ehfaaz

"As a Partner, we see complete and direct synergy between us and the Circular Economy Forum because we are actually taking care of circular economy for electronic waste by collecting it from generators to recyclers. 80% of our job is to create awareness"

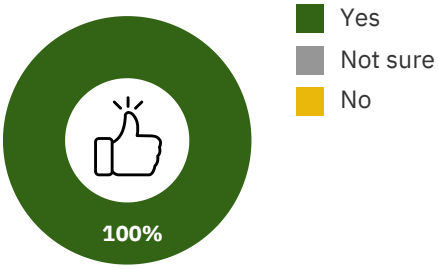
– Gregoire Denjean-Massia, Co-Founder of WAT

Feedback about the Forum - Survey Results

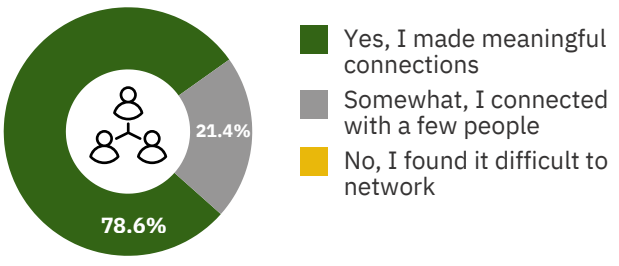
1. Knowledge gained during the Forum will inspire you to commit to Circular Economy – individually and/or for your company?



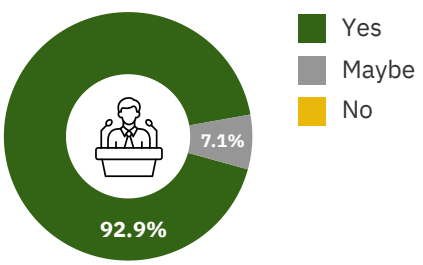
2. Forum design, content, speakers etc. met your expectations?



3. Were there enough opportunities to connect and network with others?



4. Would you consider attending Circular Economy Forum again in the future?



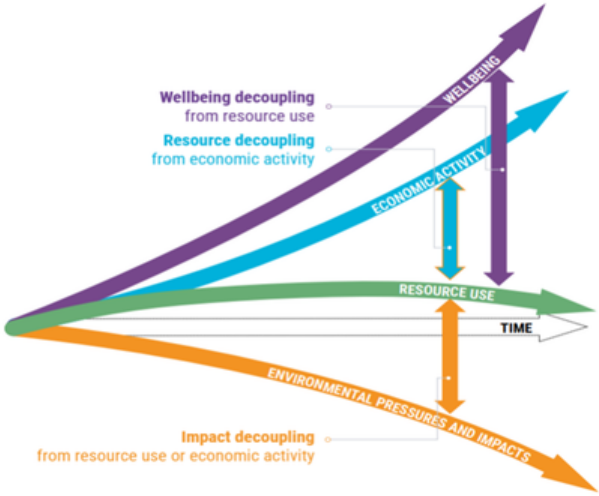
Concluding Thoughts

> ***Decoupling human wellbeing from resource consumption is at the heart of the Green Economy.***
>
> - Decoupling Report by IRP, UNEP

Making progress towards a more sustainable economy requires an absolute reduction in resource use at a global level, while human wellbeing demands that economic activities should expand and environmental impacts diminish.

The dilemma of expanding economic activities while reducing the rate of resource use and reducing the environmental impact of any such use poses a serious challenge to society.

Decoupling means using less resources per unit of economic output and reducing the environmental impact of any resources that are used or economic activities that are undertaken. Figure above captures the essence of the two key aspects of decoupling as applied to sustainable development, namely resource decoupling and impact decoupling[1].



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Circularity is building **resilience, growth and profitability**.
- Circularity has now moved to **implementation, scaling, value chains and ROI**.
- Circularity is one of the assured pathways to **Net Zero**.
- Circularity continues to grow creating immense **opportunities for businesses and professionals**.

[1] *"Decoupling Natural Resource Use and Environmental Impacts from Economic Growth", International Resource Panel, UNEP*

Stay Updated & See you Next Time!

Global Circular Economy Forum and Awards is managed by Quality Indeed Consulting Ltd., registered with Department of Economic Development & KEZAD, Abu Dhabi, UAE.
Quality Indeed Consulting Ltd. provides advisory, assessment and training services on Circular Economy including ISO 59000 standards.

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