



## REPLACE 3<sup>rd</sup> Interregional Event Learning and Exchange Event

Crete, Heraklion (Greece)  
6<sup>th</sup> of October 2021

The event, hosted by Crete Region, is structured in 3 days: the first day an internal learning and exchange meeting (mixed format, allowing the connection of partners that did not travel), the second day is dedicated to the Circularity Tour and the last public event open to regional stakeholders, followed by an internal Steering Committee session.

### Report of the 1<sup>st</sup> day

Hotel Aquila Atlantis; Heraklion, Crete, Greece

### Agenda

09.00 - 09.15	Welcome
09.15 - 09.30	Learning output validation: Local Analysis (Fryslân – Sander Bos)
09.30 – 09.45	Circular Benchmark Tool: getting ready to the launch (Fryslân – Bart Volkers; ProActive Blue)
09.45 – 10.00	Learning output validation: Assessment Criteria (Veltha – Sara Bergamin)
10.00 – 10.15	Practical Application of Assessment Criteria: the experience in Centro Region (CCDRC – Teresa Jorge, Carlos Silveira)
10.15 – 11.15	Workshop: Cross-regional synergies
11.15 – 12.30	Workshop: the funding instruments and how to proceed
Lunch break (Petousis Restaurant City Center)	
14.30 – 15.30	Workshop: Action Plan (Lazio Region – Ferdinando Rossi)
15.30 – 16.30	Workshop: Monitoring framework to assess REPLACE impact
16.30 – 17.00	Preparatory Session for European Week of Regions and Cities (Veltha – Sara Bergamin)





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The first interregional learning and exchange event organized since the beginning of the pandemic (first months of 2020; the last in-person gathering was in Leeuwarden in December 2019) took place in Heraklion, Crete and lasted 3 days: from 6 to 8 October 2021.

The meeting was actually set up in a hybrid form (in person and online) due to the impossibility to travel of some partners, because of the restrictions caused by the pandemic; in fact the colleagues from Fryslân, Centro and Nexa connected remotely to the event.

The 1<sup>st</sup> day of this event saw a list of discussions to validate the learning and exchange activities that were introduced via online meetings and implemented throughout semesters 2, 3, 4 and 5, such as: presentation, debate and finalization of the Local Analysis, the Benchmark Tool and the Assessment Criteria, as well as setting up the framework for the creation and development of the Action Plans.

The meeting started with a welcome speech from the coordinator of the event Maria Kandilogiannaki (Region of Crete) and continued with the display of the state of the art of REPLACE by LP project manager Ferdinando Rossi (Lazio) and communication manager Sara Bergamin (Veltha).

Sander Bos (Fryslân) presented a recap of the Local Analysis efforts, constituting the first deliverable of REPLACE project, the assessment was executed by all participating regions.

Nowadays, the outcome of Local Analysis is reflected in the interactive Miro Board, where areas of interest are in parallel representing each Region's priorities and areas of possible development and cooperation. Being an interactive instrument, this Miro Board provides the advantage of being able of updating data, integrating the information according to possible future developments resulting from new preferences or novel priorities. The ultimate goal of Miro Board illustration is to reveal potential cross-regional synergies, in an easy-to-understand and accessible manner, allowing to connect not only regions and managing authorities but also stakeholders. Consequently, Sara Bergamin provided a brief presentation of the Miro Board tool and its features.

As a result, the partners agreed to employ this application as the project future communication line in relation to the interregional synergies discovery and exploration phase: all partners should eventually exploit the tool to connect with others and discuss, arrange sectoral meetings, share ideas and food for thought, also for the upcoming efforts in constructing the Action Plans.

Teresa Jorge (CCDRC, Centro Region Portugal) pointed out the essential role of the stakeholders in cross-regional collaboration processes, since they showcase market experience and willingness to invest further (both in sustainable and circular innovation, as well as in new European projects), these are indeed fundamental in accelerating the circular economy transition.

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Bart Volkers (Fryslân; Pro Active Blue) mentioned that circular economy areas of interest, namely the *circular economy focus sectors*, as collected through to REPLACE Local Analysis efforts and displayed in the Miro Board, should also be connected and linked to the European Union's new missions, which define the future financing tools and can generate additional areas of cooperation among the partners in following-up the important work so-far performed. Moreover, he noticed that the Miro Board provides a schematic approach that facilitates the exploration of potential cross regional synergies.

An example of possible collaboration refers to the provision of new educational modules on circular economy to support the creation of new skills, competences and capabilities, this shared need is present in all partners' regions and such objective could be commonly investigated by all consortium.

Afterwards, Bart Volkers (Fryslân; Pro Active Blue) briefly demonstrated the progressing of the Circular Benchmark Tool (that will be officially launched the following week at the European Week of Regions and Cities, on 12/10/2021) focusing on methodology, tools and results.

Sara Bergamin, raised the importance of setting clear and effective *Assessment Criteria* to evaluate circular economy proposals, which could eventually be embedded into the valuation tools used by the Regions. As a matter of fact, the European Green Deal and the Recovery & Resilience Facility (RRF) give central stage to circular economy, which will be intensively funded and implemented in the upcoming years. She also mentioned that the assessment tool developed by the SCREEN project and further implemented in REPLACE, can play a strategic and crucial role for REPLACE regions, allowing them to be ready and effective in evaluating circular economy both at programme and at project level. Moreover, it is also crucial to monitor the effectiveness of circular economy policy actions, supporting the uptake of circular business models at regional level, thus a shared impact assessment methodology is absolutely needed: ideally this would be built through cross-regional cooperation in order to set a common conceptual framework allowing for comparability and proper measurement. It is therefore recommended that each Region add at least one shared criterion to be used for impact comparability purposes. This coordinated action will allow REPLACE partners to identify best practices, while providing a critical tool to maximize fund efficiency.

However, Maria Kandilogiannaki (Crete Region) evidenced the difficulties related to the actualization of such task: the funding managing authorities, such as ROP's managing authority in Crete, are not allowed to use assessment criteria which are not approved at central level.

Carlos Silveira (Centro Region Portugal CCDRC) introduced the partnership to the important policy change that CCDRC was able to put in practice: a pilot call for proposal was indeed launched and the REPLACE Assessment Criteria were used to evaluate the submitted project proposals; this key experience provided useful and practical information toward how to reach the target related to the valuation of circular economy.





Christos Bilios (Crete Region), the officer at the Regional Economy Development and Openness Directorate (RoC), introduced the revised Crete RIS3 strategy for the programming period 2021 – 2027; he highlighted that despite the initial difficulties observed during the first years of the RIS3 strategy planning, the positive inputs coming from the EU projects, such as REPLACE, have provided numerous toolkits supporting and speeding up the process, while making the programming more effective.

During the afternoon session, the discussion centered again on cross-regional collaboration: it was mutually agreed that each 'focus sector' (resulting from the evaluation performed during the Local Analysis) should have a Region acting as the *Coordinator*. Each Coordinator has to manage the overall flow of the activities, organize online meetings, assign tasks to other partners, target the presentation and discussion of good practices, propose evaluation criteria for the sector, engage stakeholders etc. Therefore, each focus sector has to present a certain amount of work and record its progress by the end of May 2022. In these months, each Region will manage to organize at least one stakeholder engagement meeting and explore local capabilities, as well as possible cross-regional synergies. All the above will be implemented by May and will then be included in the scheduled REPLACE Action Plan, leaving the possibility to request additional funding for Pilot Actions before the end of phase 1.

LP project manager Ferdinando Rossi (Lazio) presented the Action Plan development process. Each partner, by the end of phase one, has to prepare a clear and precise Action Plan with main scope of activity the implementation of policy instruments related to circular economy in each Region. It is very important to clearly establish a strong link between the policies described in the Action Plan and the activities and the work implemented and investigated in phase one.

Ferdinando outlined that the Action Plans should be built around one or more of the three main policy developments options: the first one refers to the implementation of new projects (launch of calls/pilot actions), the second choice is to change the content of policy instruments targeted by REPLACE; while the third option is to enhance the governance of the policy instruments.

Each Action Plan must include concrete measures for enhancing REPLACE policy instruments in the field of circular economy.

The Action Plan can be submitted in regional language, although it must be have a brief summary in English.

