

Boosting the uptake of circular business model, product and process innovation



## ABOUT

Up2Circ is an international project funded by the European Commission from the Horizon Europe programme. The main objective of the project is to accelerate and scale up the transformation of European SMEs towards a circular economy.

## BENEFITS FOR SME

- ✓ Reduced dependency on raw materials
- ✓ Growth potential through new markets and new business models
- ✓ Improved competitiveness
- ✓ Improved access to funding and finance
- ✓ Cost reduction through increased efficiency
- ✓ Increased resilience
- ✓ Increased visibility and company reputation

## CONTACT



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### Wake-Up2Circ

Explore opportunities to innovate towards circularity and the benefits for your company. Receive action plan with an assessment.



### Up2Circ Academy

Participate in a comprehensive set of learning modules for circular business model, product and process innovation.



### UP2Circ Incentive Scheme

Receive funding through open calls:  
 - up to **€15.000** (for feasibility study with business plan)  
 - to **€50.000** (for pilot and demonstration activities to implement concrete transition measures towards circular products and processes).



### Up2Circ SME ambassadors

Join the Up2Circ SME ambassador network and share your success story with other SMEs and stakeholders in the EU innovation support ecosystem.



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## Featuring: Up2Circ PROJECT

Interview with Jakub Masri ([JIC Innovation Agency](#))

The Up2Circ project has been selected for funding under the Horizon Europe 2022 Cluster 4 call focused on enhancing resource efficiency and resilience within European industry. The objective of Up2Circ is to accelerate and scale the transition of European SMEs to a circular economy. With a so-called Up2Circ-Accelerator, the project accompanies SMEs from exploration of opportunities to directly funded concrete implementation projects.

**Could you describe briefly the process of connecting with your project partners? What exactly is the role of JIC in the project consortium?**

The consortium has been formed mainly thanks to each partner's participation in the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN). JIC serves as the Task Lead Partner responsible for the administration and management of support to third parties. This includes managing the calls for funding that have been opened under the project. JIC brings extensive experience in managing financial support to third parties through its programmes such as ESA BIC, ESA spectrum sharing makerspace, and Prototype & Validate.



*Project consortium; Source: JIC*

**What kind of expertise and skills are provided to SMEs through the project's customized advisory approach?**

Up2Circ's services follow a client-centric approach to identify the most promising circular innovation opportunities based on the needs of every individual. The support includes a Circularity Assessment that provides an overview of the company's economic background and current sustainability efforts. During a Feedback Meeting, the SME receives tailored recommendations for moving towards a circular economy. With Action Plan Development, Up2Circ advisors help the company create a practical roadmap for its circular transition. The Up2Circ Academy offers free online modules covering circular economy principles, business models, product design, and social innovation. The project also uses tools like the Circularity Deck and organizes workshops for companies to explore circular economy opportunities.

**The Up2Circ project opens regular calls to support SMEs. Could you highlight what it offers to successful applicants? Are there good examples of implementation projects that you would particularly like to share?**

Up2Circ provides EU-funding of up to €50,000 to SMEs that want to change their business models to circularity or implement specific transition measures towards circular products, processes and services. The project supports two types of initiatives. Feasibility Studies that help SMEs validate the adoption of circular business models and test the viability of circular innovation ideas before full-scale implementation and Implementation Projects that provide funding for concrete implementation of circular economy solutions, enabling SMEs to transform their operations and achieve measurable environmental impact.

A Czech startup named MOZEK s.r.o., which is innovating in solar technology recycling and addressing the growing challenge of end-of-life photovoltaic panels, received support through a feasibility study that helps the company further develop and test sustainable recycling processes for solar panels.

As for the implementation project, a Spanish company La Vendita faced a challenge of managing large quantities of aloe vera by-products. Thanks to a project named USEALOE, the company successfully transformed discarded aloe vera by-products into valuable resources and new income streams, developing innovative and sustainable products such as infusions, gels and powders with cosmetic applications. The implementation achieved remarkable results: 90 % decrease in waste, reduction of 7,228 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year, and 50 % decrease in virgin raw materials. The project also created new jobs in the region.

**The project aims to provide help not only to SMEs but also to support business advisors who work with companies. What is there for this group of innovation ecosystem actors?**

Up2Circ offers dedicated support for EU SME business advisors, particularly those within the EEN. It provides Multipliers Trainings – education programmes focused on the Up2Circ methodology, Circular Economy Advisory Toolbox, a comprehensive set of materials and methodologies that advisors can use to support their clients in transitioning to a circular economy or Assessment Tools that enable advisors to guide their clients through a circularity assessment, helping them estimate their current level of circularity and identify priority areas.