



Building a Circular Ecosystem for Scottish Businesses

Supporting Businesses on their Circular Economy Journey

Zero Waste Scotland, October 2023



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Building a Circular Ecosystem for Scottish Businesses

Summary report October 2023

Zero Waste Scotland's report, Building a Circular Ecosystem for Scottish Businesses, explores and reviews two of our biggest business-support initiatives - the Circular Economy Investment Fund (CEIF) and Circular Economy Business Support (CEBS) service, both made possible in part thanks to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

CEIF

Through CEIF, we have invested around **£12million** in more than **60** innovative circular Scottish enterprises. That investment has created more than **70** jobs and reduced carbon emissions by an amount equivalent to taking **40,000** cars off the road for a year.

CEBS

Through CEBS, Zero Waste Scotland has helped more than **200** companies make improvements by introducing circular strategies such as circular design, resource recovery, and waste management – all critical to the circular economy.

The Problem

Many Scottish businesses are currently operating linear models of 'take, make, waste', contributing to our production and consumption of materials accounting for roughly 80% of Scotland's carbon footprint.

The Solution

We need to change that model to become circular, through;



Circular Design



Resource Recovery



Enabling Technologies



Product-as-a-Service



Reuse & Repair



Remanufacturing

Methodology

The report looks at Circular Strategies implemented from CEBS/CEIF from Scotland's largest economic sectors including:



Bioeconomy



Built Environment



Energy



Manufacturing



Retail



Recycling

Report Findings

1. Investment in people

Disrupting the existing linear system requires a mindset and skillset shift. Attracting and retaining talent is central for successful implementation of circular strategies.

2. Demonstrate environmental and social credentials

Communicating the value of circularity to customers and suppliers was seen as both a challenge and an opportunity in competitive markets.

3. Translating theory to practice

Funding from CEIF helped businesses turn innovative ideas and strategies into tangible and successful pilots, implementing circularity in real-world operations.

4. Working together

Collaboration is critical to driving the circular transformation Scotland needs. Systemic changes in supply and value chains can only be implemented when businesses work together.

5. Flexibility and adaptability

Economic polycrises acted as a catalyst for businesses to adapt supply chains and consider innovative new practices, opening the door for circular enterprises to capitalise.

Recommendations

1. Investment for scaling

Continuing tough economic conditions mean that outside investment channels are required to support businesses to adapt to circular models.

2. Addressing the skills gap

Circular economy skills should be built into all national skills planning, education and life-long learning systems.

3. Market making

Government should act to shape markets and incentivise engagement with circular businesses.

To read the full report, please visit:
zerowastescotland.org.uk/resources/circular-business-report



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