

**Circular Economy Business Support Internships**

**Guidance Notes for the Completion of the Application Form**

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**Date: XX Month 20XX**

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This document explains the background to the Circular Economy Business Support Internship Programme (“the Programme”), who is eligible to apply and what types of projects are within scope of the Programme. Compliant applications received by the stated deadline will be assessed competitively, to select the strongest projects for support.

# Objectives of the Programme

## Background

Zero Waste Scotland offers a Circular Economy Business Support Service to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) looking to explore, develop and implement circular business models. It does this by providing free and flexible consultancy support covering activity from ideation to commercialisation.

A key learning from the support delivered to date is that many SMEs have limited resource to push a project forward along the development pathway to commercialisation, or to run and monitor a pilot before moving to full scale adoption.

To address this, Zero Waste Scotland is offering SMEs the opportunity to receive a **funded** intern position for a period of **twelve weeks**. This internship aims to create capacity within the company to assist with the development of a circular product or service, whilst also providing the intern with the chance to enhance their employability and skillset. By promoting and supporting circular economy internships, Zero Waste Scotland hopes to broaden the knowledge and skillsets of young adults, allowing them to endorse and embed Circular Economy principles within their placement organisation, as well as organisations that they may work for in future.

## Support Offered

### This programme offers successful applicants with the opportunity to receive a **fully funded, full-time intern for twelve weeks**. With the input of the host company and with the support of Zero Waste Scotland’s appointed intern placement contractor, a job description and job advert will be developed for the required role, and a suitable, high-quality candidate selected and recruited. The appointed intern will receive the [Scottish Living Wage](https://scottishlivingwage.org/), fully funded directly by Zero Waste Scotland and administered by the intern placement agency. The assisting intern placement agency is highly experienced in the development and recruitment of internships in Scotland. The recruitment phase is anticipated to take around 8 weeks and the host business will be fully supported throughout the process.

### Zero Waste Scotland will offer training opportunities and project support to the intern where relevant. The management and well-being of the individual will be the responsibility of the host company, though Zero Waste Scotland and the intern placement agency will maintain oversight to ensure the success of the placement from both parties (the individual and the host company).

# Eligibility Criteria

## Organisation Eligibility

The following types of organisation are eligible to apply for funding:

* Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are registered with Companies House and fit the following profile (European Commission definition of an SME): These ceilings apply to the figures for individual enterprises only. If the enterprise is partly owned or controlled by another organisation, or partly owns or controls another organisation, then the calculation of employees, turnover and balance sheet must take this into account. If this applies to your enterprise then you may want to consult the Commission’s guidance on what is an SME, including the revised User Guide to the SME Definition.
* Organisations that are pursuing the commercial proposition of a circular product or service and where the proposition being pursued is intended to be commercially self-sustaining in the long-term.
* Organisations where the benefits of the proposition are experienced in Scotland and where the intern is employed and located in Scotland.
* Charities and social enterprises are eligible where they meet the definition of an SME.

The following types of organisation are not eligible to apply:

* Public sector bodies (publicly funded bodies such as councils, academic institutions)

## Circular Project Eligibility

The project eligibility requirements of the Programme are as follows:

* **Development and adoption of circular economy business models**

Projects must actively contribute to the development of the Circular Economy in Scotland by clearly demonstrating that the project adheres to at least one of the nine strategies outlined in Section 5 of this document. These are:

* + Circular design
  + Resource recovery
  + Enabling technologies
  + Product as a service
  + Leasing
  + Remanufacture
  + Re-use
  + Repair
  + Sharing economy

This programme is not targeted at general environmental sustainability or net zero projects, and will only consider circular business model propositions. Further information on the circular economy can be found at <https://ceaccelerator.zerowastescotland.org.uk/>.

* **Innovation and project development stage**

Projects must be beyond the concept stage of the development pathway. Early-stage research or basic science projects will not be eligible. Projects must plan to take a product, model, service, technology or invention towards commercial scale development. Projects must deliver an innovative solution that is new to the market and not generally recognised as business as usual. Well established circular business examples (such as zero waste grocery shops or second-hand clothing outlets, among others) will not be considered sufficiently innovative.

* **Significant potential for carbon savings**

The project must clearly deliver carbon savings. Zero Waste Scotland would like to see wherever possible that projects demonstrate how they will offer significant carbon savings and an estimation of what these will be in tCO2e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent). Where carbon savings are unlikely to be significant, the applicant will need to demonstrate the added environmental and social benefits of the proposition, for example, a reduction in the use of harmful chemicals, the protection of biodiversity or the improved accessibility of services or products within a community.

## Internship Project Eligibility

Zero Waste Scotland is committed to facilitating and supporting internship opportunities that provide individuals with the chance to enhance their employability and skillset and to deliver valuable work for the host business. By promoting and supporting circular economy internships, Zero Waste Scotland hopes to broaden the knowledge and skillset of young adults, allowing them to endorse and embed circular economy principles within their placement organisation, as well as organisations that they may work for in future. The below terms have been developed to ensure that both parties (the intern and the business) get optimum value out of the experience. To be eligible for this internship scheme, host businesses must agree and adhere to the internship structure and activities listed below. To note that home-working positions, due to covid-restrictions or otherwise, are eligible to apply, so long as remote working support mechanisms are in place.

### Preparation

* Host businesses must identify and develop clear and meaningful responsibilities and objectives for the role that relate to the circular economy proposition of the company, with a clear and achievable output.
* They must establish how the internship will provide the intern with a genuine opportunity to acquire skills and experience relevant to a professional career.
* They must agree the skills and personal attributes that the intern will need to have to be successful in the position.
* They must have the capacity to support an intern and agree the management and team structure of the position, including the key point of contact for Zero Waste Scotland.

### Recruitment

* Host businesses must work with Zero Waste Scotland’s contracted intern placement agency to agree and create a job description and advert that clearly indicates:
  + the intern’s role and responsibilities, and the skills and experience the intern can expect to gain or expand (see ‘Preparation’, above).
  + the desired skills and personal attributes that the intern will need to have to be successful in the position (see ‘Preparation’, above).
  + the expected working hours, place of work, the start and end date, and annual leave and expense terms offered.

### Induction

* Host businesses must provide an induction at the beginning of the internship. This should include:
* a description of the organisation, outlining its structure, objectives and values.
* a description of the circular economy project and the objectives and outputs of the placement in relation to this ambition.
* introductions to relevant staff and team members.
* a tour of the facilities.
* practical issues including how to claim expenses, book annual leave, use IT systems.
* an induction meeting about health and safety procedures within the organisation (e.g. covid-safe practices, fire procedures, emergency contacts and first aid procedures).
* Host businesses must provide the necessary equipment to allow the intern to complete the requested job role in an effective and safe manner (IT equipment, PPE etc). **The host company must provide the intern with IT equipment (laptop, phone etc) and will not ask the individual to use personal equipment.**

### Treatment, Supervision and Mentoring

Host businesses must ensure the fair treatment, supervision and mentoring of the intern by providing the below:

* Identify a named line manager/key point of contact.
* Develop a structured work plan with the intern to clearly outline the ongoing deliverables of the placement.
* Facilitate and allow time for internal and external training and mentoring, and incorporate this into their work plan. Zero Waste Scotland will offer training support to the intern to up-skill their knowledge of the circular economy. (Zero Waste Scotland offered training is likely to consist of between 0.5 to 2 days of training across the twelve-week placement period).
* Provide interns with the same duty of care as regular employees and with equal access to paid holiday and well-being support.
* Provide ongoing feedback and support and conduct regular performance reviews with the intern.
* Commit to three Zero Waste Scotland check-in sessions periodically throughout the placement.

### Certification, Reference & Feedback

To assist the intern with future growth and employment opportunities, and to assist the development of this Programme, host businesses **must**:

* Conduct a formal performance review at the end of the placement to provide valuable and constructive feedback to the individual.
* Provide a reference letter detailing the work they have undertaken, the skills and experience acquired, and the content of the formal performance review conducted at the end of the internship.
* **Engage in an evaluation exercise conducted by Zero Waste Scotland or an appointed contractor, to gather feedback and lessons learnt regarding the quality and outcomes of the internship.**

# Application Process

If your organisation is eligible to apply and if you think your proposal would meet the scope of this Programme, please complete and submit the Application Form available alongside this guidance document.

Your applications will be assessed by the Circular Economy Business Support team.

If your proposal is successful, you will be expected to commence engagement immediately with Zero Waste Scotland and the appointed intern placement agency to develop the internship job description and advert.

Please refer to the Zero Waste Scotland Data Policy and Privacy Policy below <http://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/content/data-protection-policy> <http://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/content/privacy-policy>

# Internship Project Examples

## Carbogenics: Aiding anaerobic digestion with a waste-derived product

Carbogenics, a spin-out from the University of Edinburgh, turns difficult-to-recycle paper waste into CreChar®, a proprietary carbon-rich, porous material that boosts green energy production.

In November 2021, Carbogenics was successful in applying to Zero Waste Scotlands Circular Economy Internship Programme, leading to the recruitment of Lucy, who’s role was to widen their feedstock sourcing. In this project, Lucy looked at the suitability and availability of paper mill fibre sludge by identifying new feedstock suppliers and analysing samples to confirm their appropriateness for the CreChar® application.

“The circular economy internship was highly useful for our business as it opened new supply chain opportunities for our waste-based biochar production.” Dr Jan Mumme, CIO of Carbogenics.

Lucy learnt new skills in operations, stakeholder communications, lab and report writing, and importantly, the benefits of a circular economy business proposition. “My placement has helped me to develop not only my knowledge of the circular economy and its applications, but also gain practical work experience in an environmentally driven green business.”

As a result of this placement, Carbogenics offered Lucy a one year contract. “We were very pleased to welcome Lucy as a regular member of our team after the Zero Waste Scotland funded placement ended” confirmed Jan Mumme of Carbogenics. Great news for both the intern and for the host company.

## Beauty Kitchen: Embedding circular business in the beauty industry

Jo Chidley, the co-founder of award-winning sustainable cosmetics business Beauty Kitchen, is a passionate entrepreneur with a strong commitment to the circular economy. Jo contacted Zero Waste Scotland to explore new avenues and improve their products, to further reduce their environmental impact. Zero Waste Scotland carried out research, which helped Jo launch ‘Return•Refill•Repeat’, a service which exists to help customers, retailers and brand owners change their single use plastic packaging to packaging that is designed to be refillable and reused. Return•Refill•Repeat works with other retail organisations, meaning that other businesses can also take advantage of the circular model.

Following this research and business case development for Return•Refill•Repeat, Zero Waste Scotland also supported Beauty Kitchen through the appointment of an intern, Ourania Dimou, in January 2021. With a background in engineering and waste management, Ourania has a passion for sustainability and believes in the importance of reducing waste across the cosmetics industry. She spent twelve weeks conducting research and verifying the credentials behind the business model.

Ourania says “I had never worked in beauty or packaging before, so this placement really helped expand my knowledge, and I was able to apply my awareness of zero waste and circular principles. It’s amazing to see how many businesses are moving to a holistic approach, getting to the heart of the circular economy.”

Full case study available [here](https://ceaccelerator.zerowastescotland.org.uk/circular-stories/beauty-kitchen/).

## Glasgow Wood Recycling: Creating new profits from waste wood

A social enterprise and charity with circular economy at its heart, Glasgow Wood Recycling was founded by Peter Lavelle in 2006. A pioneering Scottish business with a passion for the environment, the company is focused on tackling unemployment and social exclusion by up-skilling volunteers and trainees in wood-work skills. For 15 years the team has been committed to finding creative and socially inclusive ways to reuse wood.

When they discovered that about 250,000 disused whisky casks are disposed of in Scotland each year, this sparked an idea.

An in-depth analysis supported by Zero Waste Scotland revealed three new business opportunities from the waste casks. The analysis looked at business cases and carbon savings for manufacturing fencing and screens, wall cladding and outdoor play equipment. With this help from Zero Waste Scotland, RE-CASK was born.

The Circular Economy Business Support service was able to further assist the business in the launch of RE-CASK through the appointment of an intern, which was a new offering from Zero Waste Scotland that helps to promote circular jobs and skills in the Scottish economy. Graphic design graduate Lucy Watkins was initially recruited for three-months, but her work proved to be so valuable that the placement was extended.

With a passion for recycling and reuse, Lucy jumped straight in with focus and determination and really embraced the project. Throughout the placement Lucy developed many new skills, she says “The internship has allowed me to utilise my design skills to build a sub-brand for RE-CASK, whilst also learning a great ideal about marketing and how to apply my design effectively. It has broadened my skillset for future employment and was extremely beneficial in my professional development. I’m really proud of everything I’ve achieved!”

The experience not only helped Lucy; it was also incredibly valuable for the business in moving RE-CASK forward. Peter adds. “Lucy’s work not only generated extra income and boosted awareness of Glasgow Wood Recycling, it also improved morale among the team. She really grasped the needs of the business and made such a positive impact, it really was amazing to get a fresh perspective.”

Full case study available [here](https://ceaccelerator.zerowastescotland.org.uk/circular-stories/glasgow-wood-recycling/).

# Circular Economy Business Models







