



DESICE

ENHANCING CIRCULAR ECONOMY THROUGH INNOVATIVE DESIGN



DESICE project aims to improve regional and local policies in the field of circular economy, enhancing the capacity of product designers to implement innovative practices. The project involves collaboration among 8 partners from 7 EU countries, focusing on a multi-step approach to identify good practices and facilitate policy changes. The initiative sought to empower stakeholders through knowledge sharing and capacity building to ensure a successful transition towards a circular economy.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Anatoliki SA - Organisation for local development (Greece)

Economic Council of East Flanders (Belgium)

BSC, Business Support Centre Kranj, L.t.d., Kranj (Slovenia)

Thessaloniki Municipality (Greece)

Public Institution Lithuanian Innovation Centre (Lithuania)

South Muntenia Regional Development Agency (Romania)

Association of Municipalities of Tartu County (Estonia)

UPI Emilia-Romagna (Italy)

From Policy Discussions to Practical Ideas: DESICE Meets in Bologna and Imola

A circular economy can sound straightforward in a strategy document. The harder question is what it looks like when a region tries to put it into practice. That question shaped the DESICE partners' meeting in Bologna and Imola, where project planning, local expertise and study visits came together over two days.

The partners began by taking stock of their progress. They discussed ongoing activities, upcoming deadlines, peer reviews and the next phase of regional consultations. These conversations matter because each DESICE region is working with different institutions, industries and policy tools. Regular exchanges help partners recognise challenges they share and find ideas that could be adapted to their own circumstances.

The programme then opened up to local voices. In a public session on ecodesign, circular economy and business innovation, representatives from the University of Ferrara, Sfridoo, local authorities and Datalogic brought different perspectives to the same challenge. A designer may focus on materials and product life; a business may need a workable model; a public authority must consider how to support change across a territory. Bringing these views together helped connect ambitious goals with the decisions organisations make every day.

Visits in and around Imola added another dimension. At Imola Circuit, partners explored efforts to reduce environmental impact, pollution and noise in a large, complex setting. Visits to iGreen System and Fondazione Golinelli offered further examples of industrial innovation, public-private cooperation and sustainable organisational models. Each stop raised a useful question: which parts of a local solution could work somewhere else, and what would need to change?

That is the purpose of interregional learning. DESICE partners are not looking for identical solutions in every region. They are comparing experiences, testing assumptions and finding approaches that fit local needs. Thanks to host partner UPI Emilia-Romagna, the Bologna and Imola meeting gave them new examples to carry into the next stage of their work.



THE DESICE PROJECT AIMS TO
EMPOWER EDUCATION IN THE FIELD
OF CIRCULAR ECONOMY BY
FACILITATING KNOWLEDGE
EXCHANGE, POLICY IMPROVEMENTS,
AND CAPACITY BUILDING AMONG
STAKEHOLDERS.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO
CONTRIBUTE TO THE TRANSITION
TOWARDS A CIRCULAR ECONOMY
MODEL IN THE PARTICIPATING
REGIONS.



LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR GOOD PRACTICES AND TRANSFER
OF THOSE BETWEEN REGIONS - NR. 5

CENTER ROG: A PLACE TO MAKE, REPAIR AND RETHINK



Imagine having an idea for a product that uses fewer resources and lasts longer. Where could you test it? Who could help you choose materials, build a prototype or work out whether people would use it? In Ljubljana, Center Rog brings many of those possibilities together under one roof.

The centre connects designers, entrepreneurs, researchers, citizens and public institutions through production laboratories, makerspaces and educational programmes. People can learn to use equipment, experiment with locally available materials, repair existing objects and develop new products. It is a place where circular design becomes something people can practise, rather than simply discuss.

That practical approach changes how we think about waste. Recycling is valuable, but many opportunities to prevent waste come earlier. A product can be designed to remain useful for longer, to be repaired when a part breaks, or to be adapted for a new purpose. Testing these choices during design can save materials later. Center Rog gives makers and small businesses room to explore such possibilities and learn from what does, or does not, work.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit the website: www.center-rog.si

Good practice owned by:
BSC, Business Support Centre, Ltd, Kranj



SÕÕR: WHERE CIRCULAR IDEAS BECOME MATERIAL EXPERIMENTS

What if designers could test new materials, experiment with technologies and turn circular ideas into real prototypes? In Tartu, Estonia, SÕÕR Circular Experimentation Lab provides a space for exactly that.

SÕÕR brings together designers, makers, students, researchers and organisations to explore biodesign, circular prototyping and material experimentation. Through workshops, open laboratory sessions and co-creation activities, participants can work with bio-based materials such as plant fibres, cellulose, algae and natural pigments, while exploring new ways of making and prototyping.

The lab's approach is based on learning through experimentation. Instead of focusing only on what happens to a product at the end of its life, SÕÕR encourages participants to consider materials, resources and circularity from the very beginning of the design process.

By providing access to knowledge, tools and a collaborative environment, SÕÕR shows how hands-on experimentation can help turn circular design principles into practical solutions.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit the website: www.s66r.ee

Good practice owned by:

Association of Municipalities of Tartu County, Estonia

Teaching Designers to Think Beyond the First Use: A Peer Review with Pallas University



A student designing a chair, a garment or a printed object makes choices that will matter years later. Can the material be reused? Could a damaged part be repaired? What happens when the object is no longer needed? At Pallas University of Applied Sciences in Tartu, Estonia, these questions are becoming part of how creative subjects are taught.

An online DESICE peer review brought Pallas together with partners from Emilia-Romagna to examine the university's approach. Pallas is revising curricula and learning outcomes across arts and design programmes, introducing material responsibility and life-cycle thinking into fields including textile, photography, sculpture, and media and advertisement design. Students work with ideas such as reuse, repair, conservation and redesign. Research into local materials, including wool and hemp, gives them further opportunities to connect sustainable principles with practical creative work.

The review was an opportunity to ask what another region could learn from this experience. Representatives from Emilia-Romagna compared the Pallas approach with their own eco-innovation education offer, which includes structured, competence-based pathways and professional training. Both approaches value practical skills and links with working life, but they reach learners in different ways. Pallas is gradually changing existing creative programmes; the Italian examples address eco-innovation more explicitly through dedicated courses.

These differences made the discussion valuable. Participants saw real potential in teaching material responsibility across creative disciplines. They also recognised that transferring an educational approach involves more than adopting new course content. Institutions must consider how programmes are organised and funded, what regulations allow, and how teachers from different fields can work together.



WHAT GREEK WINE AND DAIRY PRODUCERS CAN TEACH EAST FLANDERS ABOUT CIRCULAR FOOD SYSTEMS

A small food producer may want to cut waste or use resources more efficiently, yet lack the time, contacts or funding to develop a new approach alone. A researcher may have a promising idea but no connection to the businesses that could test it. A regional authority may set ambitious circular goals without a clear way to bring everyone together. The challenge is often less about a shortage of ideas than a shortage of connections.

That challenge was at the centre of a DESICE peer review meeting involving East Flanders and partners from Greece. East Flanders has refocused its circular economy policy on food and crafts. As it considers how to put that direction into practice, representatives explored Greensmartmed methodology, a good practice from Greece, presented by CERTH during the Estonia project meeting

GreenSmartMed is designed to organise cooperation across a regional ecosystem. It brings businesses into closer contact with researchers, public authorities and citizens, helping smaller companies connect their sustainability challenges with knowledge, regional priorities and possible opportunities for innovation. In Western Macedonia, the method has been used to cluster 26 businesses in the wine and dairy sectors.

For East Flanders, that experience offers a starting point rather than a ready-made answer. Its food and craft sectors have their own businesses, relationships and needs. During the review, participants considered how the Greek approach could fit the region's new policy direction and where local food expertise would be essential. A structured method can help people begin working together, but the quality of that cooperation depends on understanding the territory.

THESSALONIKI MAKES CIRCULAR DESIGN PART OF EVERYDAY CITY LIFE

The value of repair becomes clear when someone tries to fix a broken object. They quickly discover whether it can be opened, whether its parts can be replaced and whether the materials can be used again. Thessaloniki is creating more opportunities for residents to have that hands-on experience as part of its wider circular economy plans.

One important place is the city's RRR Center, developed through the LIFE-IP CEI-Greece project. It combines learning and practical activity around reuse, repair and recycling. A Repair Cafe encourages people to give objects another chance, while a collaborative makerspace provides access to equipment such as 3D printers, CNC machines and tools for upcycling. Residents and students can work with materials directly and gain skills they can use beyond the centre.

This experience also reveals a wider design challenge. Repair is much easier when products have been made with it in mind. When an object is difficult to take apart or adapt, people can see why circular design must begin before it becomes waste. A workshop can save an item, but it can also help people ask better questions about the next product they buy or create.

Thessaloniki is extending these efforts across the city. Forty-eight reverse vending machines are being installed with a reward system to encourage participation. Green Points and Creative Material Reuse Centers are also being developed to help keep useful products and materials in circulation. School programmes, upcycling workshops and community cleanups connect this infrastructure with learning and everyday habits.

None of these activities works in isolation. Facilities give residents somewhere to act; education helps them understand why their choices matter; community organisations support participation. Together, they make the municipality's circular goals more visible and practical.

For DESICE project, Thessaloniki offers an example of how a city can link policy, infrastructure and people. The transition becomes easier to imagine when residents can see it happening in a classroom, a workshop or a repaired object they can use again.

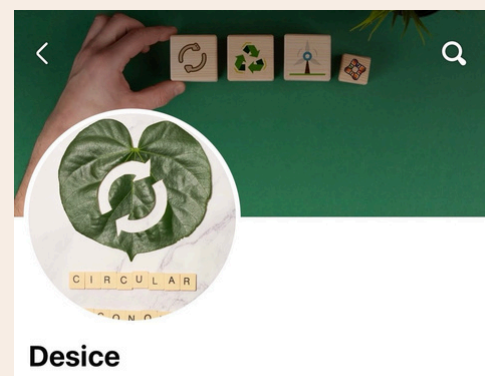
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We sincerely appreciate your interest and support in our journey toward a sustainable and innovative future.

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