



TREASoURcE

Handbook on best practices for communicating with important stakeholders to support CE transition



Funded by
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Executive Summary

This handbook emphasizes the critical role of communication in advancing a circular economy, which aims to use resources more efficiently, cut emissions, and support sustainable development. The circular economy seeks to keep products longer in use through activities such as repair, reuse and recycling and reducing dependency on new resources and environmental impact. It represents a systemic transition from traditional “take-make-dispose” models, and effective communication is vital in promoting this shift across sectors.

Key themes in the handbook include strategies for meaningful engagement, targeting behavioral change and avoiding misunderstandings about circularity. It stresses that circular economy communications should avoid greenwashing and instead focus on clear, consistent, and transparent messaging. Effective communication fosters understanding of circular principles and motivates consumers, businesses, and policymakers to actively engage in this transition. Specific methods, such as “nudging” and using social norms, can ease behavioral shifts toward sustainable choices without major disruptions. Nudging means giving a small push by making the desired choice easier or more attractive. It’s a tool that helps people change behavior without imposing specific choices.

The handbook provides ten practical tips for communicating circular principles, from creating a compelling vision to choosing relatable messengers and inspiring optimism through real-life examples. It highlights that collaboration among stakeholders is crucial for a successful transition, involving not only consumer engagement but also public and private sector partnerships. Additionally, it addresses the challenges of entrenched habits and provides strategies for overcoming consumer skepticism, emphasizing that change requires persistence and community support.

Communication tools, such as the “communication ladder”, guide planning efforts, aligning messages with goals, audiences, and appropriate channels. The handbook also advocates for clear, simple language to make circular principles accessible and relevant, ultimately encouraging active participation in the shift towards a sustainable, circular future.



1. INTRODUCTION




Did you know....

In the TREASoURcE project, LinkedIn proved to be the most effective platform for engaging professionals, while Instagram and TikTok were best for reaching younger audiences. For example, partnering with a Finnish influencer on TikTok helped the campaign reach approximately 500,000 people.

The Path to a Circular Future

This handbook provides practical guidance for effectively communicating the transition to a circular economy. Developed within the TREASoURcE project, the insights presented here are based on a combination of stakeholder engagement, real-world case studies, and research on best practices. The goal is to equip policymakers, businesses, and other key actors with the necessary tools to foster collaboration and drive circular initiatives forward.

Throughout this document, you will find structured strategies for audience-specific messaging, practical tools for communication planning, and case studies showcasing successful approaches.



**This handbook
provides you with tools
to communicate
effectively about the
circular economy.**

The world's natural resources are under increasing pressure. To protect the climate, nature, and environment, we must use our resources more efficiently. This will reduce the need for new resources, lower greenhouse gas emissions, curb biodiversity loss, reduce pollution, and create green jobs. Transitioning to a circular economy is an essential part of moving towards a low emission society and is necessary to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

In a circular economy, products should last as long as possible. They should be repaired, upgraded, and reused. When they can no longer be used, materials should be recycled to become raw materials for new production. This ensures that resources are used efficiently minimizing waste.

The transition to a circular economy requires changes in design, production, and consumption patterns. For this shift to succeed, consumers must be empowered to make sustainable choices. Digitalization, service economies, and sharing solutions play key roles in this development. Public procurement can also promote circular economy practices.

Collaboration among stakeholders is crucial for identifying opportunities, setting shared goals, and sharing risks in this transition. Communication is a powerful tool to advance the circular economy. It should inform, engage, and motivate consumers, businesses, governments, and organizations to actively participate in this transformation. This handbook provides guidance on how communication can effectively support circular initiatives, focusing on strategies like nudging, social norms, and removing barriers. The goal is to strengthen the implementation of circular economy principles across various sectors, with real-life examples of successful solutions presented. This includes businesses, agricultural industries, municipalities, NGOs, and academia.

A New Narrative on Economy

Over the past decade, the circular economy has moved from a technical concept for experts to a nearly mainstream topic. But how do we effectively communicate the transition to a circular economy today? Which tools, messages, and channels are most appropriate, and what are the common pitfalls to avoid?

The circular economy is now a well-known concept, but its increasing recognition also brings challenges. Communication must avoid greenwashing or trivializing circular solutions. It is important to balance clarity, consistency, and relevance, while keeping the message straightforward to address today's environmental crises.

The circular economy was previously often viewed as synonymous with waste management, but today it encompasses all levels of the economy from production to consumption and reuse. Moreover, CE plays a crucial role in securing critical supplies by reducing dependency on virgin materials and creating more resilient supply chains.

Circularity is a dynamic process, that continuously evolves, integrating new insights, technologies, and solutions to improve resource efficiency. It evolves over time to meet new challenges, incorporate innovations, and adapt to feedback. Much like a circle that can expand, shift, and adjust, circularity in practice involves continuously refining and optimizing systems to reduce waste, extend the life cycle of materials, and promote sustainable resource management. Each iteration brings new insights, improvements, and efficiencies, allowing the system to better respond to environmental needs, market demands, and technological advancements. This adaptability is what enables circularity to remain resilient and effective in a constantly changing world. Communication about circularity also learns from its mistakes. Many believe that the circular economy is solely about recycling, but this is a misunderstanding. Recycling is among the least desirable options in a circular strategy. Instead, we need to address the problem of overconsumption. If resource use continues to increase, efficiency measures alone won't be enough to halt the environmental crisis. Another issue is the social aspect, which is only now receiving more attention. The circular economy is not just about goods and services but also about how these can meet human needs and build a fairer society.

Therefore, communication about the circular economy must evolve to be more inclusive. We must highlight circular successes, while also always connecting the stories to the bigger picture. No innovation within circularity stands alone, the entire system must change to succeed. Because the circular economy requires systemic restructuring, we must always tie individual stories to the broader vision.

The narrative of the circular economy is complex and cannot be reduced to simple slogans. We live in a time of urgent challenges like climate change, geopolitical crises, and economic instability, making the shift to a circular model even more pressing. So, what are the key messages for those communicating circularity?

We need to share knowledge, skills, and cooperation to build the infrastructure needed to advance the circular economy. This requires collaboration across industries on a scale we haven't seen before. No company, no matter how large, can do this alone. It's essential to convey that we are in a unique situation, and we must unlearn what we know about the economy as we know it. Most of us have only experienced a linear economy, a "take, make, use, dispose" model. Now, we must get creative and dare to step out of our comfort zone to drive this forward.

Finally, we must address policymakers to highlight how a circular approach can contribute to solving key societal challenges. Beyond reducing greenhouse gas emissions and combating climate change, the circular economy strengthens the security of critical supplies, supports a more sustainable economy, and enhances overall well-being.

Climate change is the biggest challenge of our time. Many people have become so weary of the grim narrative that they can no longer bear to hear about it. That's why we must tell a new story. A story that is achievable, positive, and full of hope. A story about solutions, collaboration, and empowerment. The circular economy can become the next big narrative of our time.



Did you know....

In the TREASoURcE project, partners discovered that tailoring content for different stakeholders was challenging. They found that personal storytelling, using authentic, minimally edited videos, was more engaging than highly produced content.

2. THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY



Did you know....

For instance, TREASoURcE partners found that translating blog posts into local languages significantly increased engagement. Additionally, blogs and newsletters proved effective in disseminating in-depth information, particularly when written in local languages.

Effective communication is essential for promoting circular solutions and fostering consumer engagement. To drive real change, communication efforts must clearly highlight the benefits of the circular economy, making it relevant and accessible to different audiences. Well structured and consistent messaging helps to overcome barriers and shift consumer behavior, particularly when encouraging sustainable choices.

Research indicates that clear, action oriented communication can significantly impact consumer decision making. By presenting tangible benefits, such as cost savings, product longevity, and environmental impact, communication strategies can make circular solutions more appealing and accessible. Moreover, storytelling, case studies, and visualizations can enhance engagement and ensure that abstract concepts become relatable and practical for consumers and businesses alike.

Consumers may have concerns about quality, price, and convenience, especially when it comes to reused or recycled goods. People might be skeptical of whether these products meet the same standards as new ones. Therefore, it is important for producers to clearly show that products meet quality requirements, even offering incentives like guarantees or lower prices to make the shift to circular choices easier.

Effective communication not only builds understanding but also supports circular solutions. Through relevant and targeted communication, we can engage consumers, businesses, and policymakers to actively participate in the transition to a circular economy. It's not just about informing but about inspiring and encouraging people to take action.



Did you know....

As seen in TREASoURcE, framing circular economy communication around business benefits and policy relevance was key to engaging policymakers and industry stakeholders. Real-world case studies were more effective than theoretical discussions, and co-creation workshops allowed for more targeted and impactful discussions.

10 Tips for Successful Communication in Circular Economy

1. Have a vision

Visions provide hope and motivate action. The circular economy is about creating a system where resources are used without exceeding planetary boundaries. Visions of a sustainable future empower us to change practices and habits today.

2. Ask questions to understand

Effective communication starts with understanding the target audience. By asking curious questions and listening to what people value, we can tailor the message to reach them. It's about dialogue, not preaching.

3. Involve more people

Engage more people through established networks like workplaces and communities. When more actors participate, it becomes easier to make sustainable choices as a part of everyday life. Together, we can create greater impact.

Engage a wider audience

To accelerate the transition to a circular economy, it is essential to involve a broad range of people through established networks such as workplaces, communities, and educational institutions. When more actors participate, sustainable choices become a natural part of everyday life, reinforcing behavioral change at all levels of society.

Start with the next generation

Embedding circular economy thinking from an early age is key to fostering long-term change. Schools, universities, and youth organizations play a vital role in introducing circular principles through education, hands on activities, and real life examples. By integrating CE topics into curricula and engaging young people in circular initiatives, we ensure that future generations develop the mindset and skills needed for a more sustainable society

4. Create good arenas for collaboration

Collaboration is key to developing circular solutions. Good meeting spaces, whether physical or digital, foster creativity and collective action. Communication should help develop shared goals and action proposals

5. Leverage the gap between knowledge and practice

Most of the people know that overconsumption harms the environment, but old habits make behavior change challenging. This gap presents immense potential for change. Communication should show people how they can make sustainable choices in daily life.

6. Make it easy to choose right

Even if people have positive attitudes toward the circular economy, they continue with old habits. Make sustainable choices easy to make. Nudging and behavioral design are useful tools that can help people change habits without significant effort.

7. Appeal to both emotions and reason

We must speak to both the brain and the heart. Facts about the circular economy and resource use are essential, but it is also necessary to evoke emotions. People need to feel they can contribute and make a real difference.

8. Foster optimism with good examples

To inspire support for the circular economy, we need to show that solutions already work. Share success stories of local businesses and projects, making big challenges more concrete and closer to people.

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9. Choose the right messenger

The messenger has a significant impact. Choose people or organizations the audience trusts. It could be a local environmental enthusiast, a business owner, or a well-known figure who can lend credibility to the message.

10. Dare to win

The benefits of the circular economy are evident, but it requires clear communication to show people the rewards. Highlight positive outcomes such as reduced costs, better resource use, and lower environmental impact to make it easier to take the step toward a circular future.

This guide continues to outline strategies for effective communication on circular economy principles and invites readers to leverage communication as a tool for positive change.

A circular economy plan based on four key principles

An effective communication strategy is essential for guiding the transition to a circular economy. This section outlines four key elements that help engage stakeholders and support circular initiatives.

Start with a positive and inspiring vision

A circular economy strategy should always begin with an inspiring vision that captures attention and motivates action. Instead of focusing solely on challenges, the vision should engage stakeholders from the outset by painting a clear and compelling picture of a sustainable future.

To make this vision resonate, it is essential to describe what a circular municipality looks like where resources circulate efficiently, waste is minimized, and residents benefit from innovative circular solutions. The message becomes even more powerful when linked to local examples that people can relate to, making the vision feel more tangible and relevant.

Language plays a crucial role in bringing the vision to life. A vibrant and engaging narrative helps spark enthusiasm and ensures that the concept feels dynamic and realistic. While data and figures are important for decision making, they should not dominate the initial communication. Instead, numbers can be introduced later in the plan to support the vision, rather than defining it from the beginning.

Show the choices we have

While a strong vision provides direction, it is equally important to highlight the choices we face today. The transition to a circular economy depends on how we respond to current challenges and opportunities, making it essential to present both the risks of inaction and the benefits of change.

A well-structured communication approach should outline the different pathways ahead. What happens if no action is taken? What impact can small, incremental steps have? And most importantly, what can be achieved if circular solutions are fully embraced? By framing these choices clearly, stakeholders can better understand the urgency and significance of their decisions.

The need for action is urgent. Overconsumption and waste are pressing issues that cannot be postponed, and it is crucial to communicate this reality without creating a sense of hopelessness. Instead of overwhelming people with negative messages, communication should focus on linking challenges to tangible solutions. Concrete examples of how circular economy initiatives address specific problems can demonstrate their feasibility and impact, making them more relatable and actionable.



A local perspective is key to making circular solutions feel relevant. While overconsumption is a global challenge, it has direct consequences on local communities as well. By illustrating how these issues affect everyday life and showing real-world examples of successful interventions, communication can inspire action at both individual and systemic levels. A strong vision combined with a clear and solution-oriented discussion of challenges can motivate change without resorting to a doomsday narrative.

Create the strategy for a circular economy

A circular economy strategy should clearly outline the goals needed to move in the right direction and the steps required to overcome obstacles along the way. To ensure effectiveness, the goals should be simple, memorable, and easy to communicate. Instead of overloading the plan with numerous objectives, focusing on a few well-defined and achievable goals can make it easier for stakeholders to understand and commit to them. A strategy with three clear and realistic goals is often more impactful than an extensive list of targets that risk being forgotten or deprioritized.

Broad support is essential for the success of a circular economy plan. It is crucial to ensure that both internal stakeholders and the wider community are involved in the process and have a sense of ownership over the plan before it is adopted. Engaging people early and transparently fosters trust and increases the likelihood of successful implementation. Using timelines that people can relate to such as aligning goals with existing municipal, national, or international sustainability targets can also strengthen engagement and commitment.

Clarity on what needs to be done is key. A well-structured strategy should specify the necessary actions within defined timeframes, making it easier to track progress and adjust efforts as needed. By outlining concrete steps, assigning responsibilities, and setting clear milestones, the plan can guide decision-makers and stakeholders toward meaningful and measurable progress in the transition to a circular economy.

From Vision to Action

The action section of the plan should clearly define who will do what, when it will happen, and what it will cost. To ensure a structured approach, each action must be directly linked to the overall vision, demonstrating how specific steps contribute to achieving a circular economy. A well-designed plan maintains a consistent theme, ensuring that every measure taken aligns with the overarching goal.

Numbers play a crucial role in strengthening the credibility of proposed actions. While the vision itself does not need to be driven by figures, quantitative data is essential when presenting specific initiatives. Economic, social, and environmental benefits should be supported by concrete figures to illustrate the effectiveness and impact of circular solutions. Using data to show what is needed to achieve the goals enhances transparency and makes decision-making more informed and fact-based.

The financial aspect of implementation must also be clearly addressed. A well structured plan should define ownership of each action and outline a solid financial strategy to cover costs. It is important to specify how initiatives will be funded and highlight the societal benefits that come with these investments. For example, increasing the number of reuse centers not only reduces waste-related expenses but also strengthens local communities by creating jobs and improving resource efficiency. By making costs and benefits visible, the plan becomes more realistic and actionable, increasing its likelihood of successful execution.



Did you know....

In TREASoURcE, partners found that collaboration with similar projects improved content quality and attendance at events. Additionally, tagging partner organizations in social media posts significantly increased reach and engagement.

Barriers and Challenges

To communicate circular economy effectively, we need to be aware of the obstacles that stand in the way. Here are some of the main challenges and how they can be addressed in a circular economy context:

1. Environmental issues seem vague

The challenge is that people perceive environmental issues as distant and abstract. To counter this, we need to make the invisible visible. Use concrete examples from the local community to show how circular economy can solve nearby issues.

2. The power of habit is strong

People easily revert to old habits, even if they know they should change. The solution is to increase awareness of sustainable alternatives and make them easier to choose. Nudging and behavioral design can help people make the right choices without much effort.

3. People feel powerless

People feel powerless in the face of large, global issues. To change this, we need to show that everyone can contribute to the solution. Communicate that small, concrete steps toward circular choices in everyday life can be effective.

4. Consumption patterns harm the environment

We often do not see how our own consumption harms the environment. Therefore, it is essential to discuss how we can live well with fewer resources and less consumption. Highlight that circular economy can benefit both the environment and quality of life.

5. Information overload creates confusion

There is a lot of information available, and it can be difficult to separate the important from the rest. Clearly distinguish between beliefs and facts and make complex concepts easier to understand.

6. Conflicting messages create confusion

People get uncertain when they encounter conflicting messages. The solution is to create cohesive images that show the bigger picture in circular economy. Be clear about how small choices contribute to larger change.

7. Skepticism towards whether change actually helps

People are skeptical about whether change will have any real effect. Shift the perspective and show how circular economy can solve challenges we already see around us. Explain that change is both necessary and possible.

8. Groupthink hinders change

Social pressure causes many people to stick to old habits because everyone else is doing the same. Highlight and display good examples from groups that have made circular choices and inspire others to follow suit.

9. It is difficult to change others

It is challenging to directly change others' thought patterns and behavior. However, we can create frameworks that make it easier for people to change themselves. Be patient and facilitate small, gradual changes.

10. Change takes time

Major changes do not happen overnight, and people can lose motivation along the way. Communicate that change takes time but show concrete progress to keep motivation up. Create an optimistic narrative about how we can achieve circular goals together.



3. THE ROLE OF CONSUMERS IN THE TRANSITION TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY



Did you know....

Real-world case studies were more effective than theoretical discussions, and co-creation workshops allowed for more targeted and impactful discussions.

Consumer-related barriers

To succeed in implementing circular economy, consumers need to change their behavior. An informed and engaged consumer can help accelerate the transition to a more circular economy.

There are several consumer-related barriers specific to circular business models:

- 1 Contamination and aversion to used products**
Consumers are skeptical of products that have been used by others, such as remanufactured goods. Concerns about hygiene and quality can create resistance.
- 2 Cost**
There is often uncertainty about the ownership costs of products with new ownership models, such as leasing instead of buying.
- 3 Environmental impact**
Lack of knowledge about circular principles can make consumers question the actual environmental benefits. Skepticism can arise if it is unclear how circular solutions positively impact the environment.

Communication plays a crucial role in overcoming these barriers by creating an understanding of circular solutions.

Behavioral Design and Nudging

People make about 35,000 decisions daily. It is impossible to make conscious decisions for all these choices, so we are often influenced by our surroundings and what's easiest now.

Nudging – A Subtle Push Towards Sustainable Choices

Nudging refers to providing small, strategic prompts that encourage people to adopt new behaviors without restricting their freedom of choice. It is a behavioral tool that makes sustainable choices easier and more accessible without enforcing specific decisions. In the context of a circular economy, nudging helps guide individuals and organizations toward more responsible consumption and waste reduction practices in a non-intrusive way.

A key characteristic of nudging is its focus on behavior change rather than attitudes. The goal is not necessarily to alter people's values or beliefs but to make sustainable actions the easiest and most natural choices. Another important aspect is that nudging preserves freedom of choice individuals can still opt for alternatives, and no options are removed or restricted. This distinguishes nudging from regulations or bans, as it operates through positive reinforcement rather than enforcement.

Unlike financial incentives, nudging does not rely on monetary rewards or penalties. Instead, it focuses on adjusting environments and processes to make sustainable actions more appealing. A practical example is simplifying the application process for ebike subsidies. While the financial benefit remains the same, making the process easier increases the likelihood that people will take advantage of the program. By removing unnecessary barriers, nudging makes sustainable behaviors more attractive and accessible, ultimately contributing to the transition to a circular economy.

Examples of Nudging in Circular Economy

Nudging can be used in various ways to encourage circular behaviors and make sustainable choices easier. One effective approach is to make circular options the default. In online stores, for example, pre-selecting recycled products or rental agreements instead of purchases can subtly guide consumers toward more sustainable decisions.

Visibility is another crucial factor. Placing recycling stations in central, high-traffic locations and ensuring they are clearly labeled helps make sorting waste a convenient and intuitive habit. At the same time, highlighting the quality and value of sustainable products strengthens the perception that they are attractive and practical alternatives to conventional choices.

Social norms play an important role in shaping behavior. When individuals see others making sustainable choices, they are more likely to do the same. This effect can be amplified through local community initiatives such as repair workshops, recycling drives, or sharing economy platforms that encourage resource reuse. Organizing second-hand clothing markets, for instance, promotes reuse and demonstrates how circular practices can be seamlessly integrated into daily life.

Making participation visible further strengthens engagement. Sharing success stories and providing concrete figures such as the number of people participating in recycling or repair activities gives a sense of collective achievement and motivates further action. When people see tangible results, they feel more inclined to contribute.

Finally, reducing barriers to participation is key. Even minor obstacles can discourage individuals from engaging in circular activities. Providing clear, accessible information on where and how to recycle or repair items removes uncertainty and increases participation. Additionally, effective communication about available subsidies for repair services and the benefits of using recycled materials can further incentivize sustainable choices.

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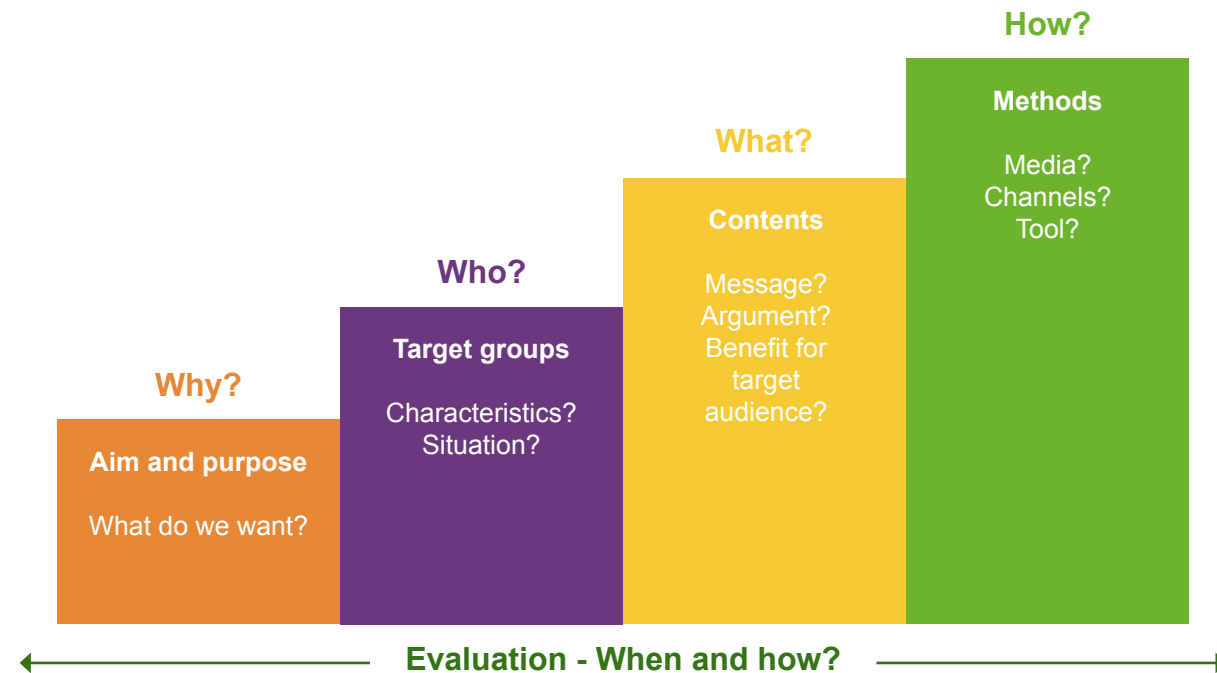


4. TOOLS FOR CONCRETE COMMUNICATION PLANNING



The Communication Ladder: A Planning Tool for Circular Economy

As an effective tool for planning communication efforts, we can use the “communication ladder.” This ladder helps structure communication work, whether for the entire project or specific activities. During the planning phase, it is essential to remain flexible and prepared to move up and down the ladder, as the various steps influence each other.



Effective
communication bridges
the gap between
knowledge and action.



Why?

Before starting communication on the circular economy, ask yourself critical questions: What do we want to achieve with this communication? What are our objectives? And what concrete actions are needed to reach these goals?

By answering these questions, you gain a clear direction for your work and insight into relevant target audiences. Are you aiming to change attitudes, increase knowledge, or influence behavior? The answers will help you create a targeted and meaningful communication strategy.



Who?

The needs and circumstances of the target audience should be at the heart of all communication about the circular economy. It is also important to be open to the emergence of new target audiences along the way. Target groups may vary from activity to activity, depending on the message to be conveyed.

Identify key stakeholders who have a considerable influence on different groups. These individuals can play a crucial role in credibly conveying information to the target audience you wish to influence.

What?

Communication actions should always be grounded in the purpose of communication, the goals we aim to achieve, and the audience we are targeting. The aim may be to gather information, promote collaboration, or initiate dialogue among various actors within the circular economy.

If the goal is to spread information, increase knowledge, or raise awareness about circular solutions, it is essential to highlight what is relevant to the target audience. What do they stand to gain by participating in the transition to a circular economy? By clarifying the benefits for the target audience, the message becomes more relevant and engaging.



How?

Communication channels must be tailored to the audience's preferences and habits to ensure the message reaches them as effectively as possible. The choice of communication methods depends entirely on the previous rungs on our communication ladder. The channels of communication we choose and the communication concept itself depend on the objectives and purpose of our communication efforts, who the target group is, and what our message is.

Do we have any powerful and effective arguments?

Also, be sure to use arguments that appeal to both reason and emotion. How can the circular economy make a positive difference in the audience's daily lives? What concrete solutions can you offer? By linking the message to something meaningful for the target audience, you increase the chances of achieving the desired effect.

Clear Language

The use of understandable language is essential to reach a broad audience. Specialized terminology and complex expressions need to be replaced with simple, understandable sentences that make it easy for people to grasp what the circular economy involves and why it matters.

Understandable language is not just a general principle but a concrete communication tool that helps ensure messages are understood by diverse audiences. Like the communication ladder, it is an essential element in planning and executing effective communication strategies.



Examples of understandable language:

- 1 "Reuse clothes instead of buying new ones."
- 2 "Recycle plastic and glass."
- 3 "Use sharing platforms to rent instead of buying."

Understandable language helps people see the practical benefits of circular economy solutions in their daily lives, which is key to creating engagement.

5. CONCLUSION: INSPIRING CHANGE THROUGH CLEAR, ENGAGING COMMUNICATION



Did you know....

Lessons from TREASoURcE indicate that leveraging AI tools for content creation, using organic marketing strategies like social media tagging, and repurposing content across platforms were effective ways to maximize impact with limited resources.

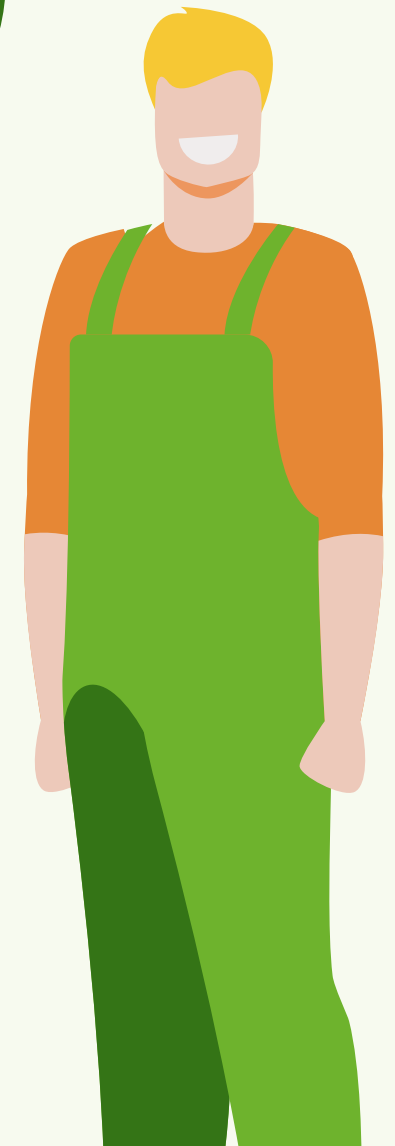
Communication as a driver of the circular economy: From knowledge to action

Effectively transitioning to a circular economy requires both systemic change and individual action. As this handbook highlights, clear, targeted communication can be a powerful driver of progress by raising awareness, influencing behaviors, and fostering collaboration across sectors. By demystifying circular practices, sharing success stories, and providing tangible examples, we can empower consumers, businesses, and policymakers to embrace circularity as a practical and hopeful response to today's environmental challenges.

The circular economy narrative moves beyond traditional waste management, emphasizing sustainable design, mindful consumption, and the reuse of resources. By utilizing communication strategies like nudging, social norms, and behavior design, communicators can bridge the gap between knowledge and action, making sustainable choices easier and more appealing. With collective efforts and a shared vision, we can build a thriving circular economy that respects planetary boundaries and contributes to a more resilient and fair society.

Ultimately, the power of the circular economy lies in its potential to reshape our approach to resources, making environmental sustainability not only achievable but integral to everyday life. Through inspiring communication, we can cultivate a positive, solution-oriented narrative that motivates individuals and organizations alike to become active participants in the journey toward a circular future.

**It's about making
circular solutions
understandable,
accessible,
and attractive.**



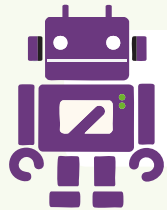
10 Most Important "Did You Know?" Statements



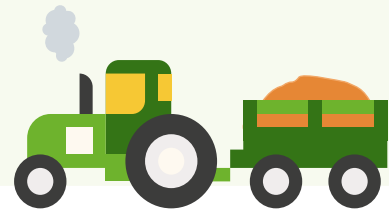
LinkedIn was the most effective platform for engaging professionals in the TREASoURcE project.



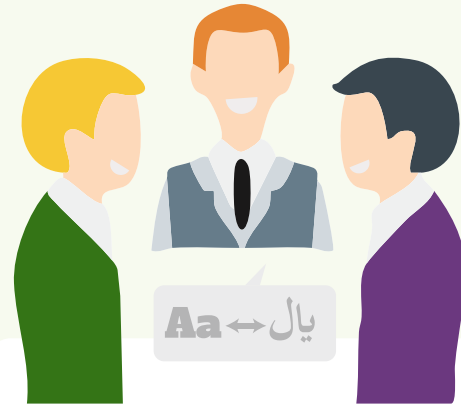
Local language translations increased engagement in blogs and newsletters.



AI and automation helped optimize content creation across platforms.



Farmers preferred industry-specific events over general circular economy discussions.



Clear, audience-tailored messaging and storytelling were the most effective approaches.



Tagging partners in social media posts significantly increased reach and engagement.



Authentic and minimally edited videos were more engaging than polished content.



Collaborating on events and webinars improved content quality and participation.



A Toy Swap event attracted 300 participants and showcased circular economy in action.



Industrial partners preferred real-world case studies over theoretical discussions.

Case 1

The Climate Barn at Markens Grøde – Food That Would Otherwise Go to Waste

Date: August 10-12. 2024 ● Location: Rakkestad, Østfold, Norway ● Type of Communication: Event

At this year's Markens Grøde in Rakkestad, the Climate Barn focused on a subject that affects us all: How can we utilize resources often overlooked in the food system? With over 11,000 visitors and a robust program featuring 17 speakers, the event became a platform for knowledge-sharing and practical solutions.

- We waste enormous amounts of food that never even enters the food chain. These are resources we simply can't afford to ignore, said Minister of Agriculture and Food Geir Pollestad, who opened the Climate Barn.

The event, organized by Østfold County Council and the Horizon project TREASoURcE, highlighted hidden food waste from grain used for animal feed to fruit, vegetables, and laying hens that are either plowed under or incinerated. The goal was clear: to demonstrate how we can increase the use of Norwegian resources and reduce unnecessary food waste.



Case 1

Lost Resources on the Table

One of the weekend's main attractions was a buffet featuring dishes made from these "lost" resources. Visitors tasted unusual creations like chocolate cake made with blood, fava bean hummus, and other innovative varieties.

- The buffet showed us that what is often considered waste can make delicious meals. We need to rethink how we view these resources, said Charlotte Forsberg from Østfold County Council, project manager for the Climate Barn.

Both media and visitors, young and old, gathered around the buffet, sparking conversations on how we can reuse food resources in daily life.

Broad Professional Program

In addition to the culinary experiences, participants enjoyed a comprehensive program covering topics from soil health to circular economy. Speakers shared insights on composting, new agricultural technology, and economic incentives for better resource utilization.

- We need to think circularly. Resources going to waste today can be tomorrow's value. Finding new ways to utilize them will be crucial for a sustainable future, emphasized one of the main speakers, climate advisor Guri Bugge.

The Road Ahead

After three days of professional insights and culinary experiences, the organizers received praise from both participants and the media. The engagement around the theme has led to several new initiatives. Østfold County Council plans to follow up with more events and workshops to explore the issue of lost resources further.

- The feedback has been overwhelming. We're already exploring ways to expand this concept to other areas in the county and hope to inspire others to see the value in often-overlooked resources, Forsberg stated.

The success of the Climate Barn will not remain an isolated event but a starting point for further investments in the circular economy in Østfold and nationally. A larger event is already planned for later this year, along with an exhibit at Future Week in Halden in November.

Case 1

Climate Barn Facts:

- Organized by Østfold County Council and the Horizon project TREASoURcE
- Focus: Increased use of Norwegian resources
- Over 11,000 visitors to Markens Grøde, about 10% of whom visited the Climate Barn
- 17 speakers and a buffet made from “lost food”

Communication Efforts:

- Communication started six months before the festival.
- Collaborated with Østfold County Council, Rakkestad municipality, local business councils, the Farmers’ Association, and media partners.
- Developed graphic materials, media articles, and promotions across multiple channels.
- On-site communication included posters, a dedicated website, and a strong focus on environmental and waste management with six sorting categories.
- High visibility during the festival with media coverage from radio, TV, and newspapers.
- Program highlights:
 - Interactive lectures
 - Art exhibits
 - “Did You Know” posters
- Buffet featuring surprising foods like chocolate cake with blood and fava bean hummus

TREASoURcE project branding was present on:

- Waste stations
- Waste sorting trailer
- Climate Barn
- Trade fair newspaper
- Program distributed to all participants
- Post-event communication included
- Publication of materials

- In-depth evaluation to further develop the concept
- New collaboration opportunities and future events

Contact for Further Questions:

Charlotte Forsberg, Østfold County Council

Case 1

“We need to think circularly. Resources going to waste today can be tomorrow’s value. Finding new ways to utilize them will be crucial for a sustainable future”



Case 2

New Circular Economy Replication Handbook Launched to Drive Sustainable Waste Management Across Europe

Topic: Circular Economy Replication Handbook ● Location: Online / Helsinki ● Type of Communication: Digital handbook on Circular economy solutions for plastic waste, end-of-life electric vehicle batteries, and biobased side and waste streams.

A new resource designed to bring innovative circular economy solutions to cities and rural communities across Europe is set to bridge the gap between demonstration projects and realworld application. Known as The Replication Handbook, this guide emerges from the TREASoURcE project, a European Union funded initiative under the Horizon Europe program.

The purpose of the Replication Handbook is to present the findings and tested practices based on TREASoURcE's cases and demos. The Handbook materials are divided by waste streams, and they are presented in two ways: Best Practices explaining "how to do it" and Use Cases describing "how we did it".

- The Handbook is much more than a technical document, says project coordinator at VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, Ugur Kaya. It's a roadmap for cities and regions that want to make real changes in how they handle waste. By providing data driven practices, we've created something that makes complex circular economy concepts accessible and practical.



Case 2

- The Handbook is built on a foundation of solid evidence from our demonstrations, so decision makers can trust that these methods work, Kaya adds. It is designed for a broad audience, from policymakers to community groups, who may not have the technical background but want to contribute to a sustainable future.

The Handbook goes beyond technical guidelines by real-life success stories to make it user-friendly and engaging for a wider audience. It also offers case studies on achieving inclusive and equitable transitions toward circular economies, a crucial focus in regions that may lack the resources to launch extensive sustainability initiatives.

- Building a common narrative around circular economy is vital to the Handbook's success," explains Senior Project Manager Kaisa Sibelius from Forum Virium Helsinki, a project contributor from Finland. We need communities to see that these changes are possible - and that they can directly benefit from a sustainable economy. This Handbook shows people that circular solutions aren't just for big cities; they're adaptable and scalable for communities of all sizes.

- We know there are obstacles, but we're tackling them head on, Kaya says. For example, we've included detailed instructions on adapting solutions to local needs, and our workshops will allow us to engage directly with community leaders and industry stakeholders. The goal is for the handbook to become a starting point for local innovation.

In addition to these outreach efforts, TREASoURcE will use social media platforms to share updates, success stories, and real-time feedback from communities already implementing the Handbook's practices.

- This Handbook is not just for experts, Sibelius emphasizes. It's for everyone who cares about a sustainable future. It's an invitation for cities and towns across Europe to become part of a community that's making a real difference.

Case 2

The Replication Handbook:

- Project: Part of the TREASoURcE initiative, funded by the EU under the Horizon Europe program.
- Created as the outcome of TREASoURcE actions and findings.
- A guide that ties in TREASoURcE key results.
- Practical case studies and adaptation strategies for urban and rural areas.
- Primary Focus Areas: Circular economy solutions for plastic waste, end of life electric vehicle batteries, and biobased waste streams.
- Key Elements in the Handbook:
 - Best practices for circular solutions
 - Visual aids and infographics for easy understanding
 - Data and case studies demonstrating environmental, social, and economic impacts
 - Adaptation strategies for both urban and rural communities
- Outreach Tools: Includes workshops, webinars, and a digital platform for sharing success stories and engaging communities.

Communication Efforts:

- Own website
- Social media campaign
- Promoted best practices through the different cases in the handbook
- Structured as a knowledge base for “Best practices”
- Vibrant and updated constantly

Contact for Further Questions:

Kaisa Sibelius, Senior Project Manager Forum Virium Helsinki

Read more about the handbook here - <https://handbook.treasure.eu>

Case 2

“This handbook shows people that circular solutions aren’t just for big cities; they’re adaptable and scalable for communities of all sizes”



Case 3

Reuse of Electric Vehicle Batteries at Rudskogen Motorsenter – Circular Economy in Practice

Topic: Battery Container (reuse of electric vehicle batteries) ● Location: Rakkestad, Østfold, Norway
Type of Communication: Promotional Material and Campaign around the Installation

Rudskogen Motorsenter, known for its motorsport events, is now pioneering a circular economy pilot. As part of the TREASoURcE project, in collaboration with SINTEF and Eco Stor AS, the center is testing the reuse of electric vehicle batteries for energy storage. The goal? To show how used batteries can find a new life as energy storage units, contributing to significant environmental and cost savings.

- We see enormous potential in reusing electric vehicle batteries, and Rudskogen is the perfect place to test this in practice. This project shows that the circular economy is not just a theoretical concept but something that provides real benefits, both economically and environmentally, said project manager Jan Bakke from Østfold County Council.



Case 3

A New Role for Electric Vehicle Batteries

The pilot centers around the installation of a stationary battery system that stores surplus energy from solar panels at the motorsport center. The battery system has a capacity of 120 kWh and can deliver up to 60 kW. Energy storage allows Rudskogen to balance its electricity consumption, especially during periods of high demand.

- The batteries we use have already served their purpose in electric vehicles. Now they have a new role as energy storage. This extends their lifespan and reduces the need to produce new batteries,” explained Fride Vullum-Bruer from SINTEF.

Environmental Benefits and Cost Savings

The project illustrates how reusing electric vehicle batteries can bring numerous benefits. Firstly, it reduces the demand for new raw materials for battery production, helping to decrease the ecological footprint. Additionally, significant cost savings are achieved by shifting energy consumption to times of lower electricity prices and reducing the need for power grid upgrades.

- We’ve already noticed how batteries help us smooth out consumption, which is crucial when we host larger events. It not only gives us greener operations but also lowers electricity costs, Harald Huysman at Rudskogen Motorcenter said.

Challenges and Future of the Technology

Although the benefits are numerous, the project is not without challenges. The performance of batteries after years of use in electric vehicles is still unknown, and this project will help determine how well they function in this new role. How long the batteries will maintain their capacity is an important factor that the project will monitor until 2026.

- This is the first time we are truly testing how well reused electric vehicle batteries perform over time in a stationary setting. The data we collect will be valuable for understanding how we can use this technology on a larger scale, said Fride Vullum-Bruer from SINTEF.

Case 3

A Green Roadmap for the Future

The Rudskogen project represents a new direction for both the motorsport center and the battery industry, where sustainability and innovation go hand in hand. It's not just motorsport happening here, but the development of solutions that could have global relevance.

- We are proud to be part of this important project. The circular economy is the future, and we hope that what we're doing here at Rudskogen can inspire others to rethink resource use, concluded Fride Vullum-Bruer.

Project Facts:

- Capacity: 120 kWh energy storage, 60 kW output
- Partnership: Rudskogen Motorsenter, SINTEF, Eco Stor AS
- Part of the EU-funded TREASoURcE project
- Project ongoing until 2026

Communication Efforts:

- Video report on the installation
- Design on the container
- Promotion by Rudskogen
- Hosted the Climate Advisory Council meeting at Rudskogen
- Rudskogen is Eco-Lighthouse certified.
- SINTEF issued a press release – Extensive coverage and editorial articles.
- Podcast on the topic – SINTEF
- Direct outreach to target audiences on social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
- Rudskogen has further plans to follow the installation.

Contact for Further Questions:

Fride Vullum-Bruer, SINTEF

Case 3

“This project shows that the circular economy is not just a theoretical concept but something that provides real benefits, both economically and environmentally”





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