

Waak realises its ambitions towards circular economy

13 June 2022, 22:21

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WAAK wanted to explore how it can further deploy its customised workers to support the circular economy. The question was therefore: As a customised work company, how to utilise in-house knowledge, expertise and infrastructure and become a circular service accelerator?

As a customised work company, WAAK has a very wide range of activities in industrial assembly, assembly work, packaging work and on-site services. In doing so, it deploys a lot of high-tech technology and up-to-date knowledge of materials and production technologies. The company makes use of an integrated approaches starting with activities in co-engineering and even product development up to production and packaging for third parties. Finally, the company is also focusing on repair and remanufacturing of devices including for smart road pricing.

Initial enthusiasm resulting in circular actions

The aim at the start of 2020 was ambitious: to create jobs for 15 full-time employees in 2 to 3 projects by the end of 2021, to increase circular thinking within the organisation and to realise internal projects aimed at saving materials and energy, extending the life of machines and increasing the reuse and recycling of materials.

Guidance by Sirris focused on channelling the energy, interest, ambition and there- fore enthusiasm for circular actions into concrete actions and exploration projects. The initiative started with a broad call for people interested in the circular economy. From this group, four groups were formed, with whom we went through an interactive process. With them, the practical translation of the circular principles for their expertise was explored. They explored the practical translation of the circular principles for their expertise, selected a limited number for further exploration, and external stakeholders were questioned as well. Various tools, templates and working methods ensured that this hands-on and experience-driven approach also delivered real lessons. The role of Sirris in this exercise was to create a framework, to provide stepping stones and
tools and to practice with them, in order to gain experience with different, circular thinking.

At the end of the short process, the need became apparent to set up a structure and a more formal approach within the organisation as well. No one can continue to carry out such projects on top of their daily work, a minimum in time and sometimes budget too is needed to explore and try ideas to a concrete level.

Circular realisations

Meanwhile, WAAK also has a formal CE project team of seven people who discuss the initiatives on a weekly basis and pro- vide monthly feedback to the wider group. The team receives a limited budget per project for exploration and development. Everything is clearly brought together on a central planning board.

After about six months, the new approach has led to more than ten projects. The next steps are of course the further development and communication of the success stories, both to those involved internally as well as external stakeholders.

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