

Circular economy, from the field

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Circular economy and circularity are everywhere these days, although for many companies these concepts are still too vague. How to turn theory into practice remains a big question. With the 'Circularity put into practice' event on 6 June 2023, Sirris intends to make things a little clearer.

Once the interest is aroused, the next step often turns out to be a tangle of opportunities and obstacles, a jumble of solutions and pitfalls, a minefield of possible investments and potential revenues. There are actually no rights or wrongs when starting with circular initiatives. At Sirris, we get a lot of **recurring questions** during our events and networking:

- Is circularity also important for my business?
- I hear a lot about circular economy, but what exactly is it? Will it really help me as a company or is it just hype?
- I do want to improve circularity in my business, where should I start?
- If I start an action, how do I know that it makes sense and contributes something to circularity and sustainability?
- Circularity is ‘all well and good’, but we work with composites, volatile organic compounds ... so it’s not really for us, I think. Are there opportunities for companies like ours or just threats and risks?

Circular in word and deed

In his **keynote speech**, Stein Janssens of Flanders Circular will address the 'why' of the circular transition: why should companies consider, explore and launch the journey towards a circular economy? What can it bring them - now and in the longer term? What are future trends that can (partially) be addressed with a circular economy? Stein Janssens will present his rich industrial experience with a circular economy, as well as the many insights he has recently gained at Flanders Circular in his numerous contacts with companies and other stakeholders.

During the event, we will focus on **two sides of circularity**. That is why you can choose from **two tracks** during the event:

In **Track 1**, we look at the circular economy and how to get started with it as a business from a broad perspective. No theory here, but circularity in real life. Even 'without' a plan, but with a goal, you can get started. We explain how you assess whether your actions make sense and how you can estimate from the start whether your eco-impact will or can decrease. We illustrate this section with a case in remanufacturing.

Track 2 starts from a technological angle. In at the deep end, an option if you are already aware of the challenges or if that's where the drive is in your organisation. Afterwards, you can consider further steps forward in a broader approach and vision.

What about the practical side? We plan a **lab tour**. During this tour of our test lab, you can see for yourself how we carry out tests and validations in practice. We explore solutions that can increase the lifespan of products. We are experimenting with

upgrading by-products in composites and validating bio-based coatings, some of which are more efficient than current standard coatings. We are testing the recyclability of coated paper to see whether it can be a circular alternative to plastic packaging.

Going home with these take-aways

You will not leave this educational event empty-handed. What do you take away at the end of the day?

- **Knowledge**, which will allow you to contribute to the circular economy if you work in a manufacturing company ready to take the plunge. You can start from the broad view or from a technological view.
- **Connections**. You will meet like-minded and enthusiastic peers from other manufacturing companies. This will help you with possible collaborations and most importantly, it will give you the necessary confidence to take the next step. You will also meet Sirris experts in circular economy, who will be happy to help you with your future vision and plans.
- **A concrete idea and next action**. And despite all this, there's no instant success? At least you will be in touch with the right people to help you take a next step.

Can't wait to be there? Register quickly for the event 'Circularity put into practice' on 6 June 2023 at the Sirris site in Heverlee!

Authors