

The value of learning from and with each other

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People at businesses taking circular initiatives often struggle with similar challenges. It therefore makes sense to share insights and look for ways together to deal with these challenges. Sirris & Agoria have taken this approach for years with the CE connect learning networks. By the summer, we will have completed the 2024-2025 series and getting ready for the 9th year, which starts in the autumn. We would like to use this article to share some of the lessons and insights that the participants have considered important.

The CE Connect learning network: how does it work?

Every year, our learning network brings together participants from 10 to 15 businesses for five sessions spread over two semesters. The kick-off session is all about getting to know each other, building trust and creating an open environment in which all participants are willing and able to share their specific input, insights and challenges safely. In the following four sessions, we delve deeper into various circularity themes, providing frameworks and taking specific examples from the participating businesses as something to work with.

> Reread here the lessons learned from the kick-off session we shared earlier.

Participants learn from the sessions in this learning network – as do we

Working on someone else's case is satisfying. First, you get to help someone (which feels good), and experiencing what someone is struggling with also helps you to understand your own stakeholders better. See it as an exercise in empathy. Moreover, this case study gives you insights into your own situation. You find ways of looking at it that you hadn't previously considered.

Example: one exercise involves mapping out the value chain. We carry out this exercise in groups for pre-selected value chains of the participants. Examining the value chain with people who put completely different products on very different markets helps to identify the right questions. This leads to a better understanding of points such as the actions required up the value chain, the key players that need to be involved, the most important relationships between actors in the chain that you want to perpetuate and ways to make the whole thing work.

You can't control every situation. Because of the many interdependencies that exist, we don't know how to move forward. Not knowing together creates a bond, means that the difficulty of the challenges is recognised and gives you assurance that it is not your company's fault. If the right approach and frameworks are present at such moments, trying to identify worthwhile actions is an experience that generates energy and enthusiasm.

Finally, learning in a group is simply more fun. Humour and the possibility of putting things into perspective are important elements of cooperation, making the big issues and concerns more bearable.

The importance of indirect effects

During the sessions, numerous tools are discussed: working methods, templates, frameworks and so on. Each of them also represents an input and source of inspiration for your own steps and activities. Equally, the feedback we have received in the learning networks over the years enables us to improve these tools on an ongoing basis.

The participants are able to broaden their networks and the quality of their contacts by taking a shared path, and to contact each other outside the learning network sessions. In response, we have also set up a **CE connect community** to facilitate these contacts and to keep them alive after the sessions are over.

Interested in participating in the learning network CE Connect 2025-2026?

Let us know!

Get in toch with our expert Thomas

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