

Theme 3: Economy: Economic perspectives in the circular bio-based society

Workshops 1-3

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3W1

Translating between dreams of circularity & practice

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Shaping the transition towards a circular bio-economy is based on 3 fundamental principles: plant based biomass and water as source to the food system; avoiding waste flows by prevention and redirection and the animal production system as mediator to return biomass into the human food system. It presents society with the wake-up call the current situation is far away from this "Dream". The four Flagship Projects of the Investment Theme Connected Circularity contribute to the translation from this "Dream" to practice, by 1) creating alternative scenario's for the future of a biobased economy for the Netherlands and its ecological and economic consequences; 2) developing tools to assess safety of products within a circular system; 3) small wins & learnings from piloting projects and 4) creating designs for urban circularity challenges. The required transition asks for more than 'nice examples': how can small scale pilots become "cause-changers" instead of "symptom-warriors"?

The four Flagships projects join forces in the proposed workshop in World-Cafe style, to further elaborate Circularity Principles for Scale – Safety – Small wins – Design that can be used by practitioners to address the transition challenge. Based on a set of 3-4 cases derived from the Projects (e.g. Greentower Amsterdam, Artis, Oranjehoen, Cirkelwaarde, Agro-proeftuin De Peel) the participants to the workshop will discuss in groups of 8-10 people, the following items in 3 rounds:

1. Deepening the challenges:

Questions to specify the specific context of the case studies: what changes would create the most difference, what elements are important (and why), why is it so complex? What relation is there with Scale – Safety – Small wins and Design challenges? What do we know already and what needs to be further explored, what dilemmas and assumptions exist? Do the cases contribute to circularity and why/how?

2. Connecting the challenges:

Questions to link ideas and solutions to the transition pathway: what patterns arise from the discussion in round 1, which new connections and viewpoints can be established, what is missing, what is surprising? What can we add to the Circularity Principles

3. Broadening the challenges:

Questions to stimulate forward movement: what is necessary to create change, to start tomorrow, where is energy/momentum? What requires attention if we progress, how can we support each other in next steps, what challenges will arise?

The participants will be introduced to the cases and principles for circularity (under-development) by the flagship leads. It is of interest to both practitioners and scientist alike, as they will be invited to look across their own boundaries of expertise, experience and practice. By the end of the workshop, each group will have created a tangible product in the shape of a detailed set of circular principles, that can inspire follow-up in the case studies and the participant's own context.

3W2

Doughnuts, diverse economies & degrowth: for an equitable and just circular society

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In this panel we will bring researchers from across Wageningen and the Netherlands who attend to the often neglected social dimensions of circularity - to advocate for circular economy innovations and governance approaches that improve social, environmental, and economic wellbeing, equity, and justice. Realizing such objectives requires circular economy debates to go beyond the quest for resource efficiency and economic gains through closing loops, but engage in deeper reflection on our economic and social practices, relationships to one another and the material world, and the world views about economic growth and the good life that underpin decision making and governance practices. After learning about the different research projects and theoretical backgrounds of our panellists we will transition to an interactive workshop and feedback session on the initial findings from the WUR Flagship project "Circularity by Design"

Where the EU bioeconomy stand: insights from the biomonitor project

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With the updated Bioeconomy Strategy in 2018, the EU aims at unlocking the potential of the bioeconomy to contribute to the global challenges. In particular, the strategy links to the building of a carbon-neutral future in line with the Climate objectives of the Paris Agreement and the recent European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive, and climate-neutral economy (2050 long-term strategy). Whether we are headed in that direction remains to be determined empirically. To achieve that, accurate data and methods for qualitative assessment are necessary. This is what our session will focus on. We will present the work of an ongoing H2020 project: BioMonitor—Measuring the Bioeconomy. Hans Verkerk (EFI) will present the results of a comprehensive review of existing models that can be used (to a varying extent) to analyze the EU bioeconomy. He will stress the pros and cons of the models, including their future desired improvements and extensions. A novel contribution of the BioMonitor project is the development of a new model, BioMat, that focuses on material flows of bio-based products. Myrna van Leeuwen (WEcR), its key architect, will present the model's details and its use areas. A part of her presentation will be devoted to the specific data needs of this class of models and how these can be obtained (or how the current data gaps are being bridged). Because the models need to be validated against the realities of the bioeconomies in the EU Member States, Claudio Soregaroli (UCSC) will synthesize the results of half a dozen case studies we carried out in the project to see how they square with the results of various scenario analyses of our empirical models. Our final speaker, Robert M'Barek (JRC), will round off the previous presentations by setting our results into a broader policy context (e.g., the EU New Green Deal) and by pointing out the future questions policymakers will likely be interested in. After the presentations, two international experts on the bioeconomy will provide comments to stimulate the discussion afterward.