



## Guide – Toolkit

# How to plan and implement a **circular business model** in a social enterprise

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## INTRODUCTION:

# WHAT IS A CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO CHANGE THE ECONOMIC MODEL?

**Thinking about a Circular Economy begins from the Earth and its resources that can be found in every product or service.** Raw materials are divided into seemingly renewable (water, wood, fish and seafood) and non-renewable (uranium, copper, gold, rare earth metals, coal, or petroleum). The extraction of raw materials, their procurement and processing leads to carbon dioxide emissions, which contributes to climate warming and other consequences of this phenomenon.

Meanwhile, material use has increased. It grew more than 3 x over the last 50 years and continues to grow by an average of more than 2,3% per year (UN Global Resources outlook 2024 Report). Additionally Resource Consumption is accounting for more than 55% of Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

**Thus, consumption and the Economy need to be rethought!**

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The current economic model, known as the linear economic model, is focused on growth and profit, and does not take into account resource constraints. In this system, materials follow a one-way path: they are taken from nature, made into products, used, and eventually disposed of as waste. This “take-make-use-dispose” approach creates significant vulnerabilities, including climate risks, supply chain disruptions, and price volatility. Circular Economy is a model in which resources circulate in a closed loop and their added value is maximized and waste generation is minimized. The Circular Economy is about designing products in a way so that materials can be kept in use through reuse, repair, and recycling.

DEFINITION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: The circular economy is a model of production and consumption in which existing materials and products are shared, leased, reused, repaired, refurbished and recycled for as long as possible. In this way, the life cycle of products is extended. **<sup>1</sup> Less waste more value!**

According to *Circularity GAP Report 2023*, the increasing extraction and use of materials has caused the global circular economy to shrink: from 9.1 % in 2018 to 8.6 % in 2020, 7.2 % in 2023, 6,9% now in 2025. This leaves a huge circular economy gap: The globe relies almost exclusively on new (unused) materials.<sup>2</sup>

In turn, the OECD report indicates that in 2023, over 500 new restrictions on mineral resources

were introduced, which may lead to price increases and disruptions in supply chains, especially in sectors related to renewable energy and digitalization.

1. [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/circular-economy\\_en?prefLang=pl](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/circular-economy_en?prefLang=pl)

2. [https://assets.website-files.com/5e185aa4d27bcf348400ed82/63d4468c9a1c6ea04138f206\\_Global%20CGR%202023%20-Methodology%20Document.pdf](https://assets.website-files.com/5e185aa4d27bcf348400ed82/63d4468c9a1c6ea04138f206_Global%20CGR%202023%20-Methodology%20Document.pdf)

Circular economy can impact the following areas:

- economic: new business models, resource and energy savings
- ecological: less resource extraction, minimization of waste and emissions
- social: up to 700,000 new jobs by 2030, GDP growth of around 11% (EU)

Key circular innovation strategies:

- narrowing loops (use less resources per product)
- slowing loops (consuming less and using products longer)
- closing loops (post-consumer recycling)
- regeneration (improving natural and societal ecosystems)

### ***Circular Economy is based on several key principles:***

**Design for reuse** – products should be designed so that they can be easily repaired, upgraded or recycled.

**Extension of the product lifecycle** – repairing, renewing and reusing items helps reduce waste.

**Recycling and reuse of raw materials** – materials should be processed and used repeatedly, instead of ending up in landfills.

**Efficient resource management** – reducing the consumption of primary raw materials in favor of secondary and renewable raw materials.

**New business models** – promoting the economy of sharing; renting instead of buying; and developing services instead of selling products.

### **There are different types of Circular Business Models:**

- **Resource recovery** – valuable materials, energy, and resources are recovered from used products to capture and reuse their remaining value.
- **Circular input** – production relies on renewable, recycled, or sustainably sourced materials instead of finite resources.
- **Product as a service** – the company retains ownership of the product and provides it as a service, managing maintenance and end-of-life recovery.
- **Sharing economy** – individuals share access to products and services, reducing the need for personal ownership and maximizing resource use.
- **Product use extension** – products are designed and managed to enable reuse, repair, refurbishment, and longer lifespans through customer engagement.

# I. SOCIAL ENTERPRISES - IDEAS AND DEFINITIONS

There are different definitions of social enterprises in European Union countries.<sup>3</sup>

But, there are some common features:

- The primary goal is solving social problems rather than generating profit.
- Profits are reinvested not distributed to owners.
- Strong social engagement and democratic governance.
- Collaboration with the public sector and non governmental organizations.

Social enterprises operate in different areas:

- **Work integration** - training and integration of people with disabilities and unemployed people. **Personal social services** - health, well being and medical care, professional training, education, health services, childcare services, services for elderly people, or aid for disadvantaged people. **Local development of disadvantaged areas** - social enterprises in remote rural areas, neighbourhood development/rehabilitation schemes
- in urban areas, development aid and development cooperation with third countries. **Other** - including recycling, environmental protection, sports, arts, culture or historical preservation, science, research and innovation, hospitality, consumer protection and
- amateur sports.

**The European Commission uses the term 'social enterprise' to cover the following types of business:**

- Those for who the social or societal objective of the common good is the reason for the commercial activity, often in the form of a high level of social innovation.
- Those whose profits are mainly reinvested to achieve this social objective.
- Those where the method of organisation or the ownership system reflects the enterprise's mission, using democratic or participatory principles or focusing on social justice.

Many social enterprises operate in the form of social cooperatives, some are registered as private companies limited by guarantee, some are mutual, and a lot of them are non-profit-distributing organisations like provident societies, associations, voluntary organisations, charities or foundations.

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<sup>3</sup> [3. 4. single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/proximity-and-social-economy/social-economy-eu/social-enterprises\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/sectors/proximity-and-social-economy/social-economy-eu/social-enterprises_en)

## II. CIRCULAR SOCIAL ECONOMY ENTITIES

Why do we think social enterprises are suitable for a circular economy? Social enterprises have the objective to create positive social (and environmental) impact rather than optimizing profits and shareholder value. They use commercial strategies to grow, which distinguishes them from nonprofit organizations. As such, they can be ideally positioned to tackle social and environmental issues in an economically viable way. Social enterprises are known in their local community, are often seen as role models, so they might be a good example and ambassador of changes beneficial to the environment.

Social enterprises in circularity (SEC) businesses are social enterprises who have adopted circular business models targeting one or more of the circular loops and employing one of the three primary impact models.

There are various impact pathways for social enterprises:

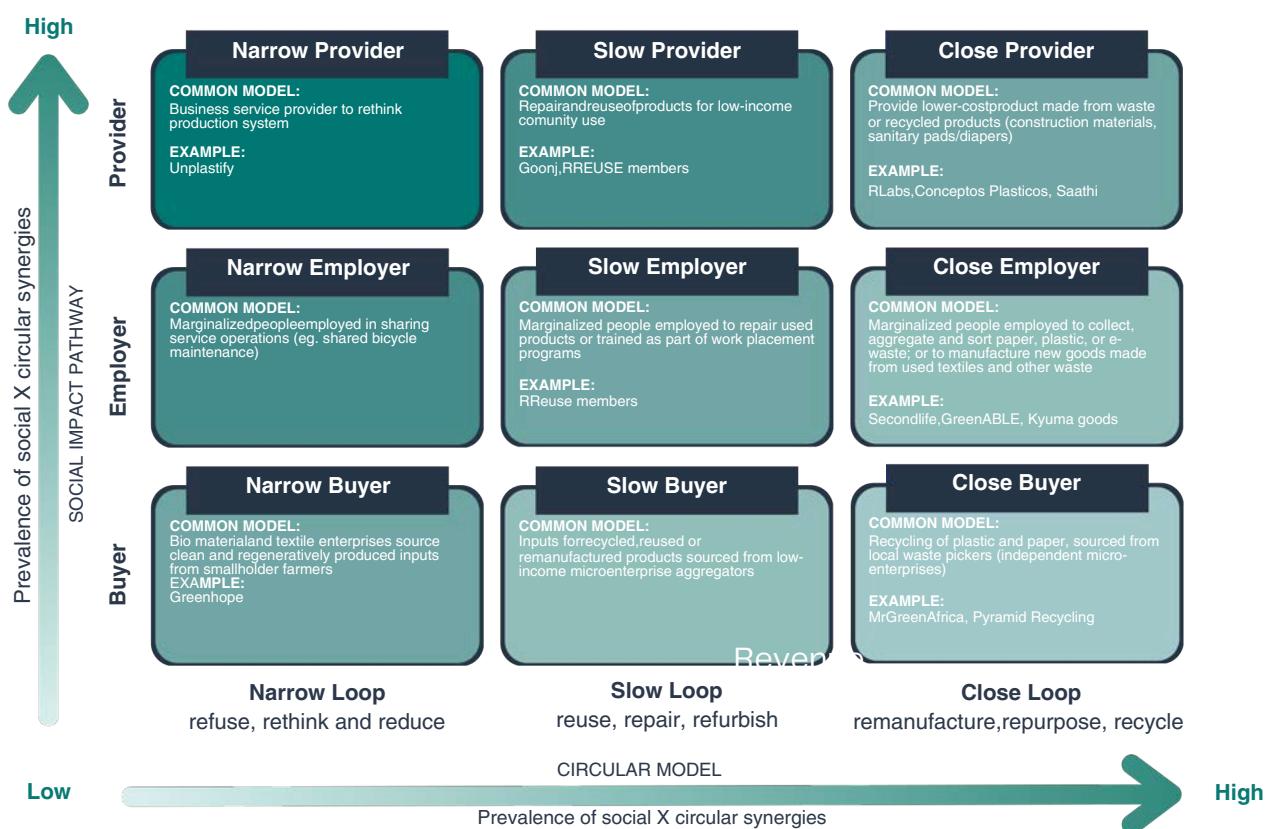
**Provider:** offers products or services directly to the target group (ex. provide lower cost product made from waste or recycled products)

**Employer:** directly employs and/or trains target groups (ex. marginalized people employed to repair, to collect and repair textile waste- ex. Sartoria Sociale, Malkow Mansion, Jikoni)

**Buyer:** supports members of the target group by buying materials, products or services directly from them, for example recycling paper or plastic from local waste pickers (ex. Jikoni).

Key circular innovation strategies: **narrowing loops** (use less resources per product- ex. Malkow), **slowing loops** (consuming less and using products longer- Sartoria Sociale, Jikoni), **closing loops** (post-consumer recycling, ex. Jikoni) and **regeneration** (improving natural and societal ecosystems)- defined in The Crucial Role of Social Enterprises in the Circular Economy.

**Narrow loops** - refuse, rethink and reduce | **Slow loops** - reuse, repair, refurbish | **Close loop** - remanufacture, repurpose, recycling



### III. CREATION OF CIRCULAR BUSINESS MODELS

The creation of a circular model in existing social enterprises was carried out by entities from Poland (Malkow Mansion), Germany (Jikoni), Italy (Sartoria Sociale), and Austria (Social Impact Award) during the training carried out in April 2025 in Vienna by Thinkubator.

The entire process consisted of the following stages:

#### 1. Description of methodology

Representatives of four social enterprises including one manager and one employee (from each enterprise) went to Vienna to start their way to change. They took part in the workshops for two days. The workshops proceeded as follows:

##### Introduction

The training started with the introduction to climate change with the tool Climate Fresk.<sup>8</sup> The goal of this part was knowing the fundamental science behind climate change and empower participants to take action.

#### PHASE 1

Diagnosis in terms of type and quantity of resources and raw material and waste (diagram: inputs/outputs) and assigning them to the type of service or activity.

The second part of diagnosis was the identification of threats and regulations that may prevent the changes (black color on the photo).



8. [climatefresk.org/world/](https://climatefresk.org/world/)

## PHASE 2

Creating an idea to reduce the consumption of raw material and resources. At this stage SEEs worked on analyzing and deepening the problem. The tools used: **“Five times WHY”**.

1.Start with a problem statement and ask, "Why ...?" -> Answer the question as best as possible. 2.Repeat this process by asking "Why?" again, using the previous answer as the starting point. 3.Continue asking "Why?" until you've asked it five times (or more, if necessary) to uncover the root cause.

After that, they created ideas of changing their businesses to circular. These design thinking tools were used:

**“Mix and Match – out of the box Idea Generation”** – is a technique that empowers you to generate many ideas in a short amount of time. Mix and Match generates highly divergent and inconclusive solutions. Therefore, it is particularly suitable at the beginning of the ideation phase. As a follow-up exercise for mix and match, clustering tools such as “Card Sorting” are especially well suited. If you want to develop even more ideas based on the mix and match outcome, the “Lotus blossom” might be a good choice.

**“How Might We”(HMW)** – questions give us a way to move from problem-oriented views to solution perspectives. Well-formulated HMW questions form the basis for the ideation process and should therefore be formulated very carefully and thoughtfully.

**“Lotus Blossom”** – method is a brainstorming technique that involves building ideas around a central theme and then breaking them down into deeper sub-themes.The initial step is documenting the existing concept in the central quadrant. Subsequently, additional ideas are gathered and inscribed in the surrounding quadrants. The exercise is only finished when each quadrant is filled with a different idea.

**“Idea Evaluator”** – method is an evaluation technique that involves evaluating the generated ideas taking into account factors such as feasibility, impact and costs. Thanks to this technique the most efficient solution can be selected.

*\*All the materials and workshops prepared and provided by **THINKUBATOR** from Vienna.*

## PHASE 3

In order to define the objectives of the change, it is necessary to analyze:

**Key players** in the process (e.g.employees, suppliers, customers, local community)

**Resources needed** (list key requirements, e.g. funding, materials, equipment, expert support)

**Risks and mitigations** (Identification of potential obstacles and plan to address them)

The goal should meet the SMART criteria: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.

Element	Description
<b>S - Specific</b>	What exactly will be done? Be concrete and focused.
<b>M - Measurable</b>	How will success be tracked? Define indicators.
<b>A - Achievable</b>	Can this be realistically accomplished with your resources?
<b>R - Relevant</b>	Why does this matter to your organization?
<b>T - Time-bound</b>	What is the timeline and key milestones?

**Example of the goal:** “reduce the food waste from 100 l per week to 70 l per week during the year”.

**Smart Implementation Plan** serves to detail the actions towards change and place them on a timeline. This tool supports the achievement of goals and objectives as well as monitoring of the process. Especially the milestones can be tracked.

#### PHASE 4 Implementation of the ideas

This phase relies on implementing successive steps, planned earlier. It's important to check achievement plans. SEEs were supported by mentors from Thinkubator. They provided support during the transition processes (3 follow ups). During the meetings SEEs talked about their activity and actions and their problems or obstacles. These meetings were an occasion to resolve problems and find solutions.

<b>Milestone Tracker - Date of session</b>			
Assignee	Title	Date	Status

*Example of the Milestone Tracker.*

## IV. CASE STUDY- DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS

### OF CHANGING THE LINEAR MODEL TO CIRCULAR ONE

In this toolkit there are 4 social economy enterprises (SEE) from different branches - gastronomy, collecting, sorting and selling textile waste and education/events. The goal is to show the way of entrepreneurs to circularity.

Descriptions of the case studies based on SEEs notes from the training in Vienna.

#### **MALKOW MANSION SOCIAL ENTERPRISE (PAŁAC W MAŁKOWIE)** **GASTRONOMY, HOSPITALITY, FAMILY EVENTS**

*malkow.pl*

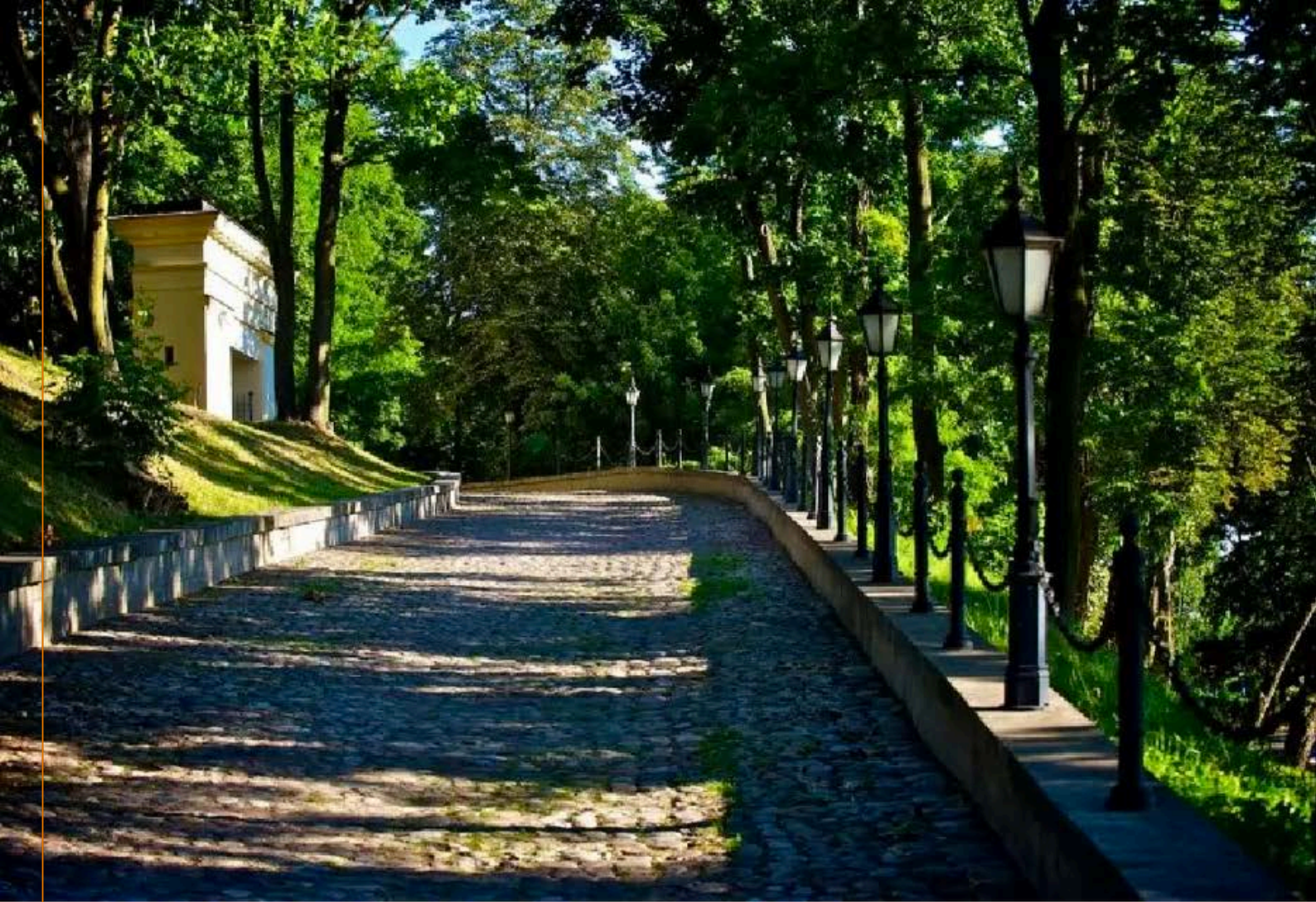
**Organization Name:** Pałac w Małkowie **Contact Person:** Agnieszka Kudlik-Budzińska **Country:** Poland **Title of Circularity Measure:** Food waste reduction **Mentor:** Alexandra Kick **Circular Economy Strategy:** narrow/close loop **Social impact:** employer The first branch is gastronomy. It's quite a popular branch among social enterprises in the whole of Europe. Two of them are presented in this toolkit, one from Poland and one from Germany.

The SEE runs a hotel and a weekend restaurant in the small village Małków in central Poland. There are 5-8 workers (depending on season), there are people with disabilities and unemployed. The hotel and restaurant are located in the historical building from 19th century. That's part of the challenge, because there is no possibility to make large alteration.

There are 11 rooms for about 30 guests in the hotel. The kitchen area is very well equipped in convection ovens, refrigerators, cold room and other devices. Małków specialises in weddings, jubilees and business meetings. The total number of guests for the party is around 100 people. They usually serve a traditional Polish menu (especially regional - meat, cabbage, potatoes) in a traditional Polish way - there must be a lot of food during the party. Małków gives the space for meetings of the local community, workshops (work life balance, pottery), history lessons.

Around the palace there is about 7 ha of an old park and small herbs garden.





## The process of transition from linear to circular economy in Małków.

### PHASE 1 - DIAGNOSIS /RESOURCES/ WASTE FLOW MAP Resources

Inputs: LPG, water, petrol, coal, wood, electric energy, fresh food 70%, dry food 30%, External Partners (decorations, flowers), money, 2 cars, 2 laptops, 2 mobiles, labour - 300 hours per week, equipment in kitchen and hotel, cleaning chemicals, 2 saws, 1 grass cutter, 1 tractor, paper.

Outputs: sewage, general waste, plastic packaging, glass bottles, metal packaging, food waste, ash, bio waste, electric waste, used oil.

**Services:** hospitality, events (weddings), restaurant

Resources in chosen service: events (weddings): food waste, ash, bio waste, glass bottles, plastic packaging, metal packaging, used oil.

**The most important in this service is the amount of food waste and plastic packages. Further work at the workshop consisted of brainstorming and creating ideas for minimalizing food waste and plastic packages.**

They identified the following **regulations and threats:**

Events and weddings were identified as the service that produces the most:

food waste, ash, bio waste, glass bottles, plastic packaging, metal packaging, used oil. The most important in this service is the amount of food waste and plastic packages. Further work at the workshop consisted of brainstorming and creating ideas for minimalizing food waste and plastic packages.

### PHASE 2 - CREATION OF SOLUTIONS

After brainstorming (How might we and Lotus blossom) they evaluated their ideas by Idea evaluator (example below):

Idea	Feasibility	Impact	Costs	Sum
After breakfast picnic basket	10	9	6	25
Vegan pudding (made from wasted potatoes)	10	9	8	27
Ecological wedding	8	10	4	22
Take the rest (in own or ecological packaging)	10	10	10	30
Bread vodka	2	5	2	9
Draft beer (less glass) for events	8	8	2	18
Ecological education for staff	9	9	9	27

The Małków Mansion decided to introduce vegetarian dishes to the menu, reduce waste, especially food waste, and reduce the amount of plastic packaging. Awareness of employees is a necessary condition to introduce these changes.

## PHASE 3 - PLANNING - DEFINING GOALS AND SMART IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

As the way into circularity Małków Mansion chose the problem of food waste during weddings and events. The main idea is to use more local, fresh products, lowering food waste and giving higher value and quality to the customers. The aim is to prepare new offers for more environmentally-aware clients.

**Key players** - Internal and external actors critical to implementation (e.g. partners, suppliers, community leaders).

External chef supporting the preparation of the menu.

Local sustainable suppliers (flowers, decorations, brewery, winery, soda in glass bottles).

External marketing expert - there is a need to communicate on a new menu, reach new clients, use new methods of communication.

**Resources needed** - List key requirements (e.g. funding, materials, equipment, expert support).

Funding - buying equipment for beer, wine etc., buying the games, labour, marketing, chef

**Risks and mitigation** - Identify potential obstacles and how you plan to address them.

No interest in the offer -> more targeted and professional marketing

Big investment and no turnout -> detailed calculation of the costs

No understanding for the new idea among employees -> training and education

Problem with finding right suppliers -> good research, expand the research area (geographical) for the suppliers

The offer may be too expensive even for the niche clients -> shorten the time of the party (less hot food, less money)

### SMART Goals

Element	Description
<b>S - Specific</b>	<p>What exactly will be done? Be concrete and focused.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creating an offer for niche clients, which want to organize events (wedding) in sustainable way,</li> <li>• organize workshops for employees</li> <li>• introduce vegan dishes into the menu,</li> <li>• reduce food waste and recycling</li> <li>• introduce local products and suppliers</li> </ul>
<b>M - Measurable</b>	<p>How will success be tracked? Define indicators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 or 2 vegan dishes in the menu</li> <li>• 1 offer of sustainable wedding</li> <li>• 1 workshop for employees</li> <li>• 1 instructions for employees (about waste segregation)</li> <li>• 1 list of local suppliers</li> </ul>

<b>A - Achievable</b>	Can this be realistically accomplished with your resources? 2025 - 2026
<b>R - Relevant</b>	Why does this matter to your organization? We want to show our entity as a healthy, slow life and friendly spot. Thanks to these changes, we will become more consistent in our communication and functioning.
<b>T - Time-bound</b>	What is the timeline and key milestones? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the list of local suppliers until XII 2025</li> <li>• building sustainable offer until XII 2026</li> <li>• workshop for employees until X 2025</li> </ul>

**Goal 1: Food waste reduction**

Reduce the food waste after the events from 100 l to 70 l until December 2026.

**Goal 2: Increase the interest in the offer**

Increase the interest in the new offer by targeting the niche clients, increase the number of inquiries from 1 to 10 until December 2025.

**Goal 3: Increase the knowledge about the local suppliers (research)**

Build the database of the suppliers from 0 to 5 until December 2025. / Find 5 local suppliers (meat, vegetables, beer, flowers, dairy).

**Goal 4: Increase the knowledge of employees**

Deliver a 4 h training to 80% of the employees until December 2025.

**PHASE 4 - PROGRESS AND IMPLEMENTATION The first two months**

The entity established cooperation with the radio about eco-friendliness of the events (food, etc.) and continued researching tiny, local producers.

The hardest thing is to engage and convince the employees. "Eco" is a very emotional topic that can create backlash, potentially framing it as "regional, local economic ties - producers and suppliers". Training the waiters was difficult - most of them do not care too much about waste separation. It's difficult to change their habits. The boss hopes that workshops with employees will change their attitude.

Composting food waste is problematic because of rats. The important issue is to reduce food waste by minimizing served meals, reusing the leftovers (ex. bread) and composting food waste. The eco-offer has been created but is not interesting for clients. Unlikely is the introduction of the "Vegan wedding" offer at this time. It's a long term goal, because of mental attitude and negative local community reactions.

Tasks for the next time:

1. Gather a list of 5-10 local suppliers;
2. Research potential solutions for food waste reduction (camera/AI);
3. Try an incentive for the employees (bonus) to cut food waste;
4. Workshops for employees.

**The next period- 1 month later** The workshops with employees have been planned for October 8th. The goal of these workshops is increase in knowledge and awareness in circular solutions. The entity has made a list of local suppliers and producers of vegetables and fruit, meat and other products. The food containers are being reused in the kitchen. They are looking for funding and opportunity to purchase a food cost reduction program.

**The last period and next steps** The workshop took place on October 8, 2025. Six people participated: kitchen workers, guest service staff, technical and organizational support staff, and company management. Employees at the social enterprise Malkow Mansion were engaged in the discussion about climate change and open to implementing changes within the company. According to them, the biggest challenge was waste sorting and collaborating with service and product suppliers in accordance with the principles. The most important step at this stage is to organize waste sorting and take action to reduce food waste.

The company's previous activities – customer observations and behavior – have somewhat influenced the redirection of energy and efforts toward reducing raw materials, improving waste sorting, and conserving resources within the company. The training identified actions such as:

- aimed at hotel customers: instructions, information boards (e.g., in rooms), and waste bins;
- aimed at service suppliers, such as the cleaning company: agreeing on waste collection rules during cleaning;
- aimed at employees: training, joint efforts to minimize waste, using leftovers in other dishes;
- aimed at restaurant customers: offering traditional vegetarian dishes on the menu.

The changes are planned to be implemented by the end of the year 2025.

**Summary, conclusions and impressions** Malkow Mansion social enterprise operates a hotel and restaurant in a rural area. Most of its clients are local, especially for wedding events. These are traditional customers, and the saying "keeping up appearances" still holds true. Wedding events must be lavish, with large portions and a variety of dishes. There are three other competing event companies in the area that offer similar services and don't restrict food consumption. Therefore, suggestions to reduce menu portions (reducing the amount of leftovers thrown away, even with a price reduction) will lead to potential customers leaving. This measure must be implemented over a longer period and gradually.

*"The Social Economy project has shown us the importance of conserving resources and raw materials, as well as reducing waste. Through such actions, we can improve the quality of the natural environment and also reduce some of the company's operating costs. We will be finding resolutions and positive actions to change our company", they said.*

## JIKONI UG GASTRONOMY | COFFEE SELLING

tasteofkenya.de

**Organization Name:** Jikoni

**Contact Persons:** Hilda, George & Serah

**Country:** Germany

**Title of Circularity Measure:** Promotion of vegan meals and partnership on sugar cane waste

**Mentor:** Lotte Lehtovuori

**Circular economy strategy:** narrow, close loop

**Social impact:** employer, provider

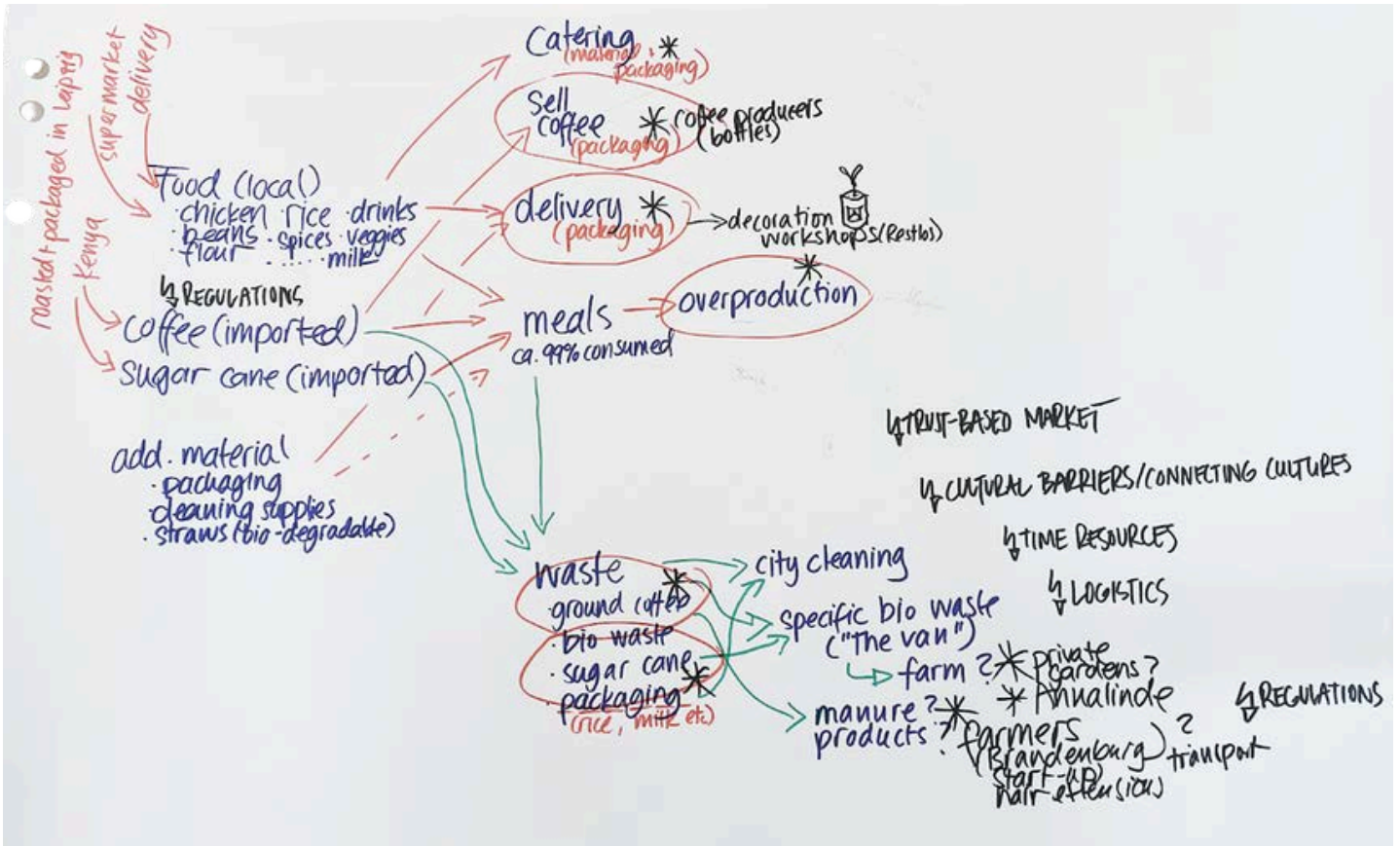
Jikoni is located in Germany, the city of Leipzig, a vibrant and family-oriented neighbourhood of Schleußig. The main object of economic activity is selling Kenian coffee. The SEE maintains direct relationships with coffee farmers in Kenya and ensures fair trade for the local producers. Coffee is produced in Kenya, roasted in Leipzig. Jikoni sells coffee mostly online. The SEE has a small cafe in Leipzig. This space is equipped with a professional kitchen, refrigeration and food preparation equipment, a commercial juicer, a coffee machine and a waste separation setup. The space allows for both dine-in and takeaway services. Café Jikoni offers fresh and healthy food and beverages, with a special focus on Kenyan cuisine. Menu features homemade meals, snacks, juices (sugar cane lemonade), and specialty coffee—including direct-imported beans from smallholder farms in Kenya. The clients are local families, professionals, students, and visitors from the Schleußig neighbourhood. As a social enterprise, it is committed to community engagement. Regularly hosts events such as book readings and book swaps.





# The process of transition from a linear to a circular business model in Jikoni.

## PHASE 1 - DIAGNOSIS



Resources / waste Flow Map

### Resources

Input: food, coffee, sugar cane, electricity, packaging, cleaning products, petrol, decoration, straws.

Output: ground coffee, sugar cane, biowaste, packaging, straws.

### Services

Services: catering, selling coffee, delivery, meals

Resources in chosen service:

Meals - rice, milk, sugar cane, bio waste

### Regulation, threats

Imported coffee and sugar cane - law regulation, farmers in Kenya, logistic.

Bio waste (sugar cane, ground coffee) - private partners, cultural barriers, logistic.

## PHASE 2 – CREATION OF SOLUTIONS

Idea evaluator:

Idea	Feasibility	Impact	Costs	Sum
Partnership „to good to go“	8,5	9	10	27,5
Reach out to stakeholders for coffee waste	4,5	9	3	16,5
Reach out to stakeholders for sugar cane waste	4	10	2,5	16,5
Production of material for Jikoni with upcycling sugar cane waste	7	10	8	25
Contribution to nearby gardens composting with sugar cane waste	6,5	9	7	22,5
Multi-use packaging system for delivery	5	10	6	21
Promotion of vegan meals	9	10	9	28
Campaign upcycling for coffee packaging	9	3	9	21

## PHASE 3 PLANNING – DEFINING GOALS AND SMART IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

As the way into circularity Jikoni chose to identify a sustainable use for the large amount of sugar cane waste produced from our juice production. They wanted to avoid adding to landfill or standard organic waste streams and instead find a truly circular solution with community benefit.

Jikoni introduced a plan to repurpose sugar cane waste from juice production for ecological uses such as compost, mulch, or animal feed. This involved collaborating with local community gardens, farmers, and sustainability networks to establish a pick-up and reuse system.

In addition, they are expanding the number of vegan and vegetarian options on their menu and actively promoting them. This aligns with their commitment to sustainable, health-conscious food choices and supports broader environmental and social goals.

**They defined expected benefits (social, economic, environmental) from introducing the change:**

**environmental:** Reduction in organic waste sent to landfill through the reuse of sugar cane waste, along with more efficient resource use in line with circular economy principles. Additionally, increasing vegan and vegetarian options supports a lower-carbon food system and contributes to more sustainable consumption.

**social:** Strengthened connections with local community gardens, farmers, and the ecological movement in Leipzig. Promoting plant-based dishes also raises awareness around sustainable diets and encourages healthier eating habits within the community.

**economic:** Reduced waste disposal costs and enhanced visibility as a sustainability-driven café. Offering more vegan and vegetarian options attracts a growing customer base interested in ethical and environmentally conscious food, helping to build customer loyalty and potential partnerships.

**Key players in the business of Jikoni there are:** Internal and external actors critical to implementation (e.g. partners, suppliers, community leaders).

- Nebenan.de (1)
- Vegan initiatives in Leipzig (1)
- Community garden association (2)
- Biomass research center (2)

**Resources needed:** List key requirements (e.g. funding, materials, equipment, expert support).

- Design support (1)
- Additional plant based products (testing of different kinds?) (1)
- Reprinting of menu (to highlight vegan meals) (1)
- Pick-up and transport solution for sugar cane waste (2)
- Communication with community garden association and research institute (2)
- Vegan initiatives in Leipzig (1)
- Community garden association (2)
- Biomass research center (2)

**Risks and mitigation:** Identify potential obstacles and how you plan to address them.

Risks:

- Not finding networking partners (2)

Mitigation:

- Careful planning process
- Social media survey/alternatively questionnaire in the restaurant on the wall
- Testing phase
- Figuring out what the demand is

## Smart Goals

Element	Description
<b>S - Specific</b>	<p><b>What exactly will be done? Be concrete and focused.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contacting garden association and research center</li> <li>• Promotion of vegan meals</li> <li>• Hold vegan events</li> <li>• Social media posts</li> <li>• Highlight vegan items on the menu</li> </ul>
<b>M - Measurable</b>	<p><b>How will success be tracked? Define indicators.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visibility of the vegan items</li> <li>• Increased sales in vegan meals</li> <li>• Food tracking process</li> <li>• Regular collection of sugar cane waste</li> </ul>
<b>A - Achievable</b>	<p><b>Can this be realistically accomplished with your resources?</b></p> <p>Sugar cane waste: depending on finding networking partner  Vegan meals: yes (step by step)</p>
<b>R - Relevant</b>	<p><b>Why does this matter to your organization?</b></p> <p>To make the business more sustainable, inclusive and increase sales.</p>
<b>T - Time-bound</b>	<p><b>What is the timeline and key milestones?</b></p> <p>Sugar cane waste: 3 months (starting in June)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finding partners</li> <li>2. Agreeing on conditions, e.g. volume and technicalities like pick-up</li> <li>3. Regular implementation</li> </ol> <p>Vegan meals: 2 months for the first steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pitch for Sarah</li> <li>2. Content creation (promotion of measures)</li> <li>3. Highlight the vegan meals in the menu (reprint)</li> </ol>

1. Reduce sugar cane waste
2. Increase vegan dishes in the menu (1-3 dishes)

## PHASE 4 - PROGRESS AND IMPLEMENTATION

### GOAL NO 1: REPURPOSING OF SUGAR CANE WASTE

#### Short-Term Actions:

- Reuse in the Community Garden: Ideas include using the sugar cane waste as mulch, adding it to compost, using it as filling for raised beds, and applying it as fertilizer. Silke will coordinate with local gardeners and organize the pick-up of the material.
- Communication Material: Silke will develop a flyer or poster to inform the public about the opportunity to pick up sugar cane waste for gardening purposes.
- Engagement with Local Farmers: Sarah will contact farmers at the Egenberger Farmers' Market to explore potential uses of the sugar cane waste. She will also assess the possibility of organizing clustered pick-ups after the Saturday market.

## Long-Term Actions:

- **Student Project Collaboration (in coordination with DBFZ):** The idea is to assign a student to explore the topic in more depth as part of an academic project. The project could include:
  1. laboratory characterization of the sugar cane waste material.
  2. literature review on how similar material flows are utilized.
  3. economic evaluation to determine at what annual quantities reuse becomes feasible.
  4. legal assessment covering relevant regulations related to waste, fertilizers, and other applicable areas.
- **Exploration of Pellet Production:** In light of a potential increase in sugar cane juice bottling, Sarah will explore the feasibility of producing pellets for animal feed. She will stay in contact with the best practice example, Ölmühle Leipzig, to learn from their experience.

**The first two months** After two months Jikoni is shifting its focus to **juice production** and **coffee import**. The juice production will primarily center on **tamarind juice**, as pressing sugarcane has proven unsustainable due to the high wear and tear of the necessary machinery. Despite this, the byproducts—such as tamarind pulp—continue to show strong potential for use in **animal feed, mulching**, and other agricultural applications. As such, **building a network of farmers** interested in these by-products remains a key part of Jikoni's plans but the business strategy will be further refined to align with the new direction.

## The next period 1 month later

Jikoni:

- tested the waste of sugar cane in their garden, it needs to be shredded before using it as mulch or fertilizer or add-on to compost. They check how many people are interested.
- made contact with DBFZ research center and discussed options with them. Jikoni had known that it is not enough volume for biogas or bio energy transformation DBFZ research center **offered to assign** a student to work on the topic as part of a student project with the following scope: characterisation of the material in the laboratory, literature research: how are similar material flows used, economic evaluation: from what annual quantities is this feasible, legal evaluation: what do waste/fertiliser/other legal areas say about this? DBFZ **recommended** a few other ways to go: contacting WEV (West Saxon Waste Disposal and Recycling Company Ltd.). This would make more sense than giving it into the general organic waste as they compost it more purposefully, contacting sheep and goat herders for feeding, contacting solidarity-based and cooperative agriculture (like KoLa).

**It is a good example- cooperation between social entrepreneurship and the scientific centre. We recommend similar solutions on the way to transition.**

**GOAL NO 2: VEGAN DISHES** The promotion of vegan dishes has progressed well. Several new vegan options have been added to the menu, offering more variety for plant-based diets. These dishes are now clearly highlighted with visual markers on the menu to make them easier to identify. Additionally, we participated in the ecological event ÖKOFETE, where we exclusively served vegan dishes to align with the event's sustainability goals.

## **AI REVES – SARTORIA SOCIALE | COLLECTING, SORTING AND SELLING TEXTILE WASTE**

<https://sartoriasociale.com/>

**Organization Name:** Al Reves – Sartoria Sociale

**Contact Persons:** Roberta, Gaia

**Country:** Italy

**Title of Circularity Measure:** writing sorting guidelines

**Mentor:** Bastien Huber

**Circular economy strategy:** narrow

**Social impact:** employer

Sartoria Sociale operates in Palermo in Italy. Palermo is a big city (about 600000 citizens) Sartoria offers ethical textile products made from recycled materials, and sells second-hand and vintage clothing. Also provides product customization through digital fabric printing. Sartoria's services include tailoring, repairs, sewing workshops, and digital printing workshops.

Additionally, they run programs focused on self-entrepreneurship, empowerment, and social support for young people, individuals involved in the justice system, people with mental health issues, migrants, women survivors of violence, and those who are unemployed or not in education or training. Sartoria targets environmentally conscious consumers, the local community, and organizations interested in ethical production practices and the circular economy.

Sartoria has a dedicated tailoring workshop equipped with industrial sewing machines, cutting tables, ironing stations, storage for fabrics and donations, and a showroom for finished products. They have a space for hosting community events and training sessions.

The SEE has a small team of professionals, including experienced tailors and social workers. In total, they employ 7 staff members, work with at least 10 external collaborators, more than 5 training and are supported by 7 occasional volunteers. A key part of their workforce consists of people from disadvantaged backgrounds who are in the process of social and professional reintegration.





# The process of transition from linear to circular economy in Sartoria

## PHASE 1 - DIAGNOSIS



Resources / waste Flow Map

### Resources/ waste

Input: electricity, textile materials, leather, plastic fiber, packaging, labour,

Output: hard materials (buttons, clothing zippers), textile materials, packaging

### Services

Services: sorting, selling, clothes renovation

Resources in chosen service:

Sorting - hard materials (buttons, clothing zippers), textile materials

### Regulation, threats

Sorting and selling - not enough employees, personnel changes

## PHASE 2 - CREATION OF SOLUTIONS

### Idea evaluator:

The entity chose the most effective approach to streamline the clothing selection and repair process. This is where the most waste is generated. To improve this process, they will create a guide for workers and volunteers to make it easier for them to sort and categorize clothing.

structured sorting guidelines to reduce textile waste from the clothing donations received by our social tailoring workshop. Currently, the selection process is based on subjective judgment, which can lead to inconsistencies and unnecessary waste. By introducing clear, objective criteria, they aim to make the sorting process more efficient and ensure that a greater portion of garments can be reused creatively. These guidelines will also become a valuable training tool for both current and future staff, helping promote a shared, consistent, and circular approach to textile reuse.

## Challenges

The greatest challenge was envisioning a **suitable space** to implement the change, as well as creating real synergy between the stakeholders potentially involved—especially the municipality and regional authorities. Another difficulty was ensuring the full involvement and commitment of the management team in developing the idea.

## What benefits (social, economic, environmental) do you see from making the change?

**Social:** The guidelines serve as a training and inclusion tool, helping staff—especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds—develop skills, autonomy, and shared responsibility in the sorting process. **Economic:** Improving the sorting process increases the efficiency of our production, reduces waste-related costs, and enhances the value of recovered garments.

**Environmental:** By maximizing the reuse of donated clothing, we reduce textile waste, lower environmental impact, and strengthen our commitment to the circular economy.

**Key players:** Internal and external actors critical to implementation (e.g. partners, suppliers, community leaders).

- Society (donators)
- Rosalba (manager)
- Roberta (project Manager / Co-Manager)
- Gaia (Project Manager)
- Volunteers (Helping Hands)
- Lega Ambiente / Centro Astalli / Caritas / Handala / Emmaus / Francesca Morvillo ONLUS (Stakeholders)
- Bastien (coach)

**Resources needed:** List key requirements (e.g. funding, materials, equipment, expert support).

- Space
- Knowledge (internal)
- Expertise (external: TCBL, Caritas Austria for example e.g. Carla Nord.)
- Sorting Infrastructure and Materials (Boxes, ecc.)
- People for sorting

**Risks and mitigation:** Identify potential obstacles and how you plan to address them.

- negative response from Management → present a well detailed plan, communicate the benefits for the Sartoria (more people, more donation, bigger impact, more time for managers)
- ineffective Guidelines → quality checks for the guidelines, co-participation in writing the guidelines

- ineffective Network because of lack of collaboration → present a well detailed plan, communicate the benefits for the partners, involve them in the writing process stable
- Volunteers → work closely with Per Esemplio, motivate volunteers, share the impact, peer-to-peer training, good onboarding and communication, give them responsibility, SCU and (maybe later) ESC no space and no money for materials → take part in an international consortium, create a sponsoring presentation to share with businesses and companies, exchange programs with local/european organizations, make deals with schools, supermarkets and companies to receive materials bureaucratic obstacles → have a support person in the municipality, “sell” the project to the municipality and explain benefits
- for Palermo, cultivate public relations

### SMART Goals

Element	Description
<b>S - Specific</b>	What exactly will be done? Be concrete and focused.
<b>M - Measurable</b>	How will success be tracked? Define indicators.
<b>A - Achievable</b>	Can this be realistically accomplished with your resources?
<b>R - Relevant</b>	Why does this matter to your organization?
<b>T - Time-bound</b>	What is the timeline and key milestones?

**Goal 1:** Get the green light by the manager by the end of may because it is the first step to start writing the guidelines.

**Goal 2:** Create the concept for the guidelines and contact other organizations and start working on them together by the end of August.

**Goal 3:** Have a first draft of the guidelines (10-20 criteria) by the coaching session in June in order to start a pilot phase.

**Goal 4:** Implementing the guidelines by the end of July in a piloting phase in order to do the first quality check.

### PHASE 4- PROGRESS AND IMPLEMENTATION

#### The first two months

Discussions were held with the organization's management and other partner organizations. A team was formed to create the guide.

Conclusions were not optimistic: the management is not convinced by the idea, other organizations want to do the sorting by themselves. There are different visions and expectations, there is no central room for sorting, volunteers don't stay long enough to be highly productive.

The entity received the recommendation of Minimist. The first draft of Sorting Guidelines was created. There was created a best practice example of the sorting guidelines with a description of the sorting process (including the onboarding process for people who need to learn the sorting process from Rosalba).

### **The next period- 1 month later**

5–10 concrete solutions implemented or in testing phase to improve efficiency and manage of waste and time:

- Detailed mapping of recovery flows: we analyzed the quantities of discarded products, broken down by category (e.g. textiles, packaging, accessories) to identify the areas with the highest waste.
- Introduction of efficiency indicators for the sorting lines, such as:
- % of recovered material vs. total discarded material average sorting time per product category
- Line downtime, meaning the periods when the line is inactive due to breakdowns, lack of material to process, changeovers, or other operational interruptions
- Average cost per kg of recovered product
- Development of a priority protocol for recovery, focusing first on categories with the highest economic margin (e.g. footwear vs. minor accessories).
- Formation of a small internal team – currently only two people who, on rotation, are present only on the dedicated sorting day each week – responsible for monitoring volumes, sorting times, and line downtime.
- Creation of weekly reports shared with management, including graphs on recovery progress and loss analysis.
- Testing of mini-pilot sorting stations (a little spot) to verify the feasibility of integrating recovery into existing lines without slowing down the main production.
- Trials of a more ergonomic layout of sorting stations to reduce idle time and unnecessary movements.
- Implementation of a log for non-recovered waste to analyze the causes periodically and estimate the economic impact.

### **Current status and next steps**

At the moment, the sorting lines have not yet been fully defined: they are still in the phase of analyzing data and collecting the necessary information to design the final layout.

Current status:

- the average efficiency of the existing sorting lines has increased from 42% to 49% for the recovery of selected materials.
- average sorting times have decreased by about 12% thanks to minor operational adjustments.

Next steps:

- monitoring of line downtime has made it possible to identify the main causes of slowdowns and start corrective actions.
- they are building a dashboard of indicators for monthly monitoring (recovery %, cost/kg, sorting time, non-recoverable waste rate, line downtime).

## **The last period and summary conclusions**

As they said, the process has been more complex than expected, mainly due to two factors:

- the limited active participation of the manager, who has remained mostly observational;
- the very limited operational resources, as the recovery work relies on only two people who are present just one day per week.

Despite these challenges, the small operational team has responded positively: new ideas have emerged, along with a greater awareness of the economic and environmental effects of recovery.

The most tangible effects so far include:

- improved clarity about the flows and critical points of the sorting lines;
- reliable data collection on discarded materials, which was previously not tracked;
- early signs of improved efficiency in certain product categories (still to be consolidated).

The one-to-one meetings helped overcome some initial resistance among the operational staff:

- team leaders have started monitoring line downtime and reporting anomalies;
- although they are only two people working one day per week on sorting, the operators suggested small changes to the station layout and sorting sequence that have already reduced sorting times;
- there is greater attention to recovery, although some skepticism remains about its economic impact.

Despite the reservations expressed, management has given the go-ahead to proceed with the organization of the sorting line design, which will be the next step once the preliminary analysis is completed.

As you can see, for Sartoria Sociale, the change process proved to be a significant challenge, and the change proved much more difficult than initially anticipated. Not all of the planned changes were implemented, the constraints and threats identified at the outset proved so significant during the planning phase that they prevented the process from being completed. But the project has initiated thinking about resources and waste and introducing changes that will increase the positive impact on the environment in the future.

## SIA- SOCIAL IMPACT AWARD GMBH | EDUCATION, WORKSHOPS, EVENTS

[austria.socialimpactaward.net](http://austria.socialimpactaward.net)

**Organization Name:** Social Impact Award **Contact Person:** Laura Tietz **Country:** Austria **Title of Circularity Measure:** Sustainability Guidelines for SIA Program **Mentor:** Felix Ambros **Circle economy strategy:** narrow **Social impact:** provider

SIA empowers youth to make a difference in 15+ countries across Europe, Central Asia, and Africa. They support their development into active agents of change that build social ventures and innovative solutions to the world's most pressing issues.

They do so by hosting local events and organizing workshops on social entrepreneurship, running incubation programs to help validate and prototype impact and business models, and nurturing this global community of resilient social entrepreneurs whose stories raise awareness about the field and inspire local youth to take action.

The office is located in Vienna, Austria. There are two employees. The 14 staff members in the International Core-Team work in different places in the world. For events organised by SIA there are rented places around the world.





## Resources/ waste

Input: electricity, labour, finances – pocket money, accommodation, transport, food, catering supply, WS materials (paper, pens), laptops, phones  
Output: food waste, paper, plastics (pens), CO2.

## Products, services offered

- **Awareness Raising Formats for Social Entrepreneurship**
  - Workshops
  - Representing the topic/organisation at events/fairs/conventions
- **Incubation Program for Social Entrepreneurs**
  - 3-month program
  - Support in development of a social venture (and solving a societal problem!)
- **SIA Summit**
  - International gathering of all participating countries
  - Conference for social entrepreneurs to connect, learn and build partnerships

**PHASE 2 CREATION OF SOLUTIONS** This project focuses on the design of guidelines on how to plan

and implement the SIA

Program in a sustainable manner. The guideline should be applicable to different SIA formats (e.g. workshop weekends, SIA Summit) and adaptable to the different local contexts of SIA host countries. The design process should be co-creative and participatory and include different perspectives of the SIA network.

## PHASE 3 PLANNING – DEFINING GOALS AND SMART IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Make guidelines for all SIA countries on how to make events and gatherings more environmentally friendly and circular.

**Key players:** Internal and external actors critical to implementation (e.g. partners, suppliers, community leaders).

- Engager: SIA Austria Coordinator (Laura)
- Other SIA Host countries who want to participate in the design process

**Resources needed:** List key requirements (e.g. funding, materials, equipment, expert support).

- Human Resources– work time
- Workshop Materials
- IT Infrastructure (Google Drive, Miro, Slack, Zoom)

**Risks and mitigation:** Identify potential obstacles and how you plan to address them.

### Challenge:

- Engage additional SIA hosts to participate in the design process.
- To organise the design process in such a way that SIA Austria does not take on the role of service provider, but creates a dynamic and atmosphere in which all participants are equally involved.

- Creating guidelines that can actually be customised locally (to local SIA contexts) and then actually be applied and used.
  - Emphasize the need for guidelines without imposing anything on the SIA hosts. Also emphasize how the guidelines align with the SIA mission and vision and are therefore necessary in application.

**Risk:**

- maintaining hierarchical structures within the SIA network (SIA AT/GER as 'centre'/ service provider) due to poor workshop design and implementation

**SMART Goals**

Element	Goal 1: Online Workshop	Goal 2: Final Guidelines
<b>S - Specific</b>	Conduct an online workshop with 4 SIA host countries to reflect on their practices in relation to sustainability and gather input.	Develop and finalize sustainability guidelines based on the collected input from the online workshop.
<b>M - Measurable</b>	Documented reflections and practices collected from 4 host countries, summarized in Canva Board.	Final guideline document produced, shared with the SIA network, and ready for implementation.
<b>A - Achievable</b>	Carried out with available online tools, facilitation, and engaged participants.	Achievable with dedicated work time in September–October and existing resources.
<b>R - Relevant</b>	Provides practical, experience-based input as foundation for guidelines.	Embeds sustainable development principles into the functioning of SIA programs worldwide.
<b>T - Time-bound</b>	Workshop conducted in September 2025.	Guidelines should be finalized by end of October

**Goal 1:** A kick-off session has been designed and will be held at the Reflection Retreat to introduce the topic to all SIA hosts and start the process of creating the guidelines.

**Goal 2:** A Session at the SIA Summit in which all SIA hosts will reflect on their local programmes in relation to sustainable practices was held. The learnings from this session, together with what has already emerged from the kick-off session and other outcomes that have been developed in the meantime, will serve as the basis for the joint development of the guidelines.

**Goal 3:** The final guidelines were developed in a co-creative and participatory process until the beginning of 2026 in order to be applied in the SIA 2026 programme in all SIA host countries.

The purpose of these goals is not simply to create a guide but to **strengthen the capacity of SIA programs worldwide to apply the principles of sustainable development in practice.**

- **Why the stages matter:** Each stage (Online Workshop, Final Guidelines) represents a step toward embedding sustainability into the functioning of SIA. **How it connects to the**
- **overarching goal:** the Online Workshop generated concrete practices and experiences from SIA hosts and the Final Guidelines consolidate this input into a practical tool that can be applied directly in SIA programs.

The publication and sharing of this guide is scheduled for the end of 2025 year.

**Methodology:** the approach is **participatory co-creation**, ensuring ownership, contextual adaptability, and long-term application. This differs from a purely top-down production of a guide, as the process itself is transformative and aligns with SIA's mission of collaboration and empowerment.

#### PHASE 4- PROGRESS AND IMPLEMENTATION

**The first two months** At this stage SIA planned when and in what form the workshops would take place, who and what is needed to conduct the workshops. SIA informed their partners about this idea and they agreed.

Goal: have a joint workshop with other countries leads to co-create a best-practice and potential map for **sustainable/circular events and gatherings.**

- After the workshop, set up the guidelines as a document ready for dissemination in SIA International
- SEE needs help in designing the workshop with the partner country
- SEE needs co-facilitator for the workshop
- SEE needs time resources for workshop preparation

**The next period - 1 month later** The workshop with SIA international partners was held together with Thinkubator in September 2025. The guidelines are still in progress, but here are some concrete approaches to circular solutions that resulted from the co-creation session. **Smart catering and food rescue** - cut event waste by planning precisely and redirecting surplus to where it's needed:

- **Plan for real numbers:** Use a reliable RSVP list and send a final confirmation 48 hours before the event so the caterer can prepare the right amount.
- **Serve in waves:** Ask the caterer to put out food in stages (e.g., ~75% first, then the remaining ~25% only if needed). This keeps backup food fresh and untouched.
- **Rescue what's left:** Line up a local partner (e.g., Wiener Tafel in Vienna) in advance. Share the event date, estimate possible leftovers, and assign a contact person. Have clean containers ready so surplus can be handed over right after the event.

- **Use reusable containers for all food and drink:** Using reusable items helps to reduce waste and support practices that keep products in use.
- **Use a dish-rental service:** Work with a local company that provides reusable cups, plates and cutlery.
- **Use a deposit system:** For cups and similar items, ask people to pay a small refundable deposit (€1–2) to make sure everything gets returned.
- **Make sure all the vendors are in line with the plan:** Make sure you tell the caterers and partners that they must only use the reusable system.

### Go fully digital for info and ticketing

Skip paper altogether for agendas, tickets, and any event information.

- **QR-first information:** Set up a simple event page and place QR codes on-site linking to the agenda, speaker bios, venue map, and feedback form.
- **Digital signage:** Use projectors or screens to show the schedule and partner logos
- **Digital welcome kit:** Replace swag bags with an email “welcome kit” that includes links, resources, and sponsor vouchers.

### Smart waste sorting stations

- Making recycling clear, simple, and collective.
- **Show, don't tell:** Use big, visual signs (or real examples) to show what belongs in each bin – *General Waste, Plastic, Paper, Organic*.
- **Keep it central:** Set up 2–3 large, well-marked sorting stations in high-traffic areas like near catering or exits. Visibility = participation.
- **Limit general waste:** Reduce the number of “Restmüll” bins elsewhere to guide everyone toward proper sorting.

### Source local and serve smart

Choosing local, seasonal options and vegan/vegetarian catering to reduce emissions and waste, and support local producers

- **Choose local partners:** Work with caterers who source seasonal and regional ingredients whenever possible.
- **Skip single-use everything:** No sugar sachets, milk pods, or single-serve condiments. Use bulk dispensers, bowls, and carafes instead.
- **Refill, don't replace:** Set up water refill stations with glasses or encourage participants to bring their own bottles.

### Design for reuse and reassembly

Choose event materials thoughtfully so it can live many lives beyond a single day.

- **Rent, don't buy:** Use rental options for furniture, plants, tablecloths, and tech equipment whenever possible.
- **Keep it timeless:** Create modular signage and banners without dates or one-time references so they can be reused for future gatherings.
- **Ban single-use decor:** No balloons, cut flowers, or confetti – choose reusable or living alternatives like potted plants or fabric decor.

**Summary and conclusions** The implementation is still in progress. The most important is that the staff and employees and partners' reactions are very positive and supportive. The developed concept requires financial expenditures for additional working hours- but only in the implementation term.

**Impressions / Concluding sentences (SIA):** Since April, the project has evolved from the initial planning phase into an active co-creation process involving multiple SIA hosts. After defining the project's direction and goals in spring, the focus shifted to a participatory online workshop in early September. During this workshop, four SIA host countries reflected on their own sustainability practices and shared valuable insights. This exchange has provided a solid basis for the final Sustainability Guidelines, which are being finalised by the end of October. The process has already achieved its main goals of engagement, shared learning and practical input, and is now entering its final phase of producing a tangible, network-wide tool to support the integration of sustainability principles into programme implementation across all SIA countries.

# V. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION - LESSONS LEARNED

**In the Toolkit, we presented four organizations and social enterprises, demonstrating how they implemented circular changes in their operations. The enterprises underwent an educational, planning, and implementation process. The goal of their planned changes was to use resources more efficiently in economic and social activities. All organizations took on this challenge and did a good job meeting it.** Four industries, four different types of challenges. As the entire change implementation process demonstrated, it is not easy. The process of implementing changes in efficiency and waste management proved more complex than initially anticipated. Although several specific solutions were successfully implemented or tested, experience has shown that real change requires time, the involvement of many parties, and consistent monitoring.

The most important achievement of this stage is obtaining a clear picture of material flows and the areas of greatest waste. Thanks to detailed mapping, the introduction of performance indicators, and initial reports, it became possible to better understand where and why waste is generated. This data, previously unmonitored, became a reference point for further decisions.

**Although the change process proved more difficult than planned, it produced tangible results, launched new ways of thinking about resources, and initiated a long-term transformation toward greater efficiency and environmental responsibility. The collected data, conclusions, and experiences provide a solid foundation for subsequent actions.**

As the experience of the described cases shows, there were limitations on the path towards change:

- **human limitations** - difficulty in understanding the need for change by employees, management, and customers (Malkow Mansion, Sartoria Sociale), **logistical and technical**
- **barriers** - insufficient waste volumes (e.g., Jikoni) to establish contact with a larger entity and more systemically address the waste problem, as well as the small size of the company and an overly extensive branch network in the case of SIA, which significantly lengthens decision-making and change implementation times. **time constraints and the ability to**
- **fully engage in the change process, financial barriers** - some of the planned changes
- would require financial outlays, increased space, or other detailed solutions that require additional funding.

## Recipes for Success

1. **Change starts with people, not tools.** Even the best-designed system won't work without the involvement of those who use it. Openness, conversation, and a collaborative search for solutions proved crucial to the success of the project.

2. **Small steps matter.**

Although the project didn't produce spectacular results, every small step—shortened sorting times, improved work station organization, or a new reporting method—brought the team closer to its goal and built motivation.

3. **Data is a tool for change.**

Collecting and analyzing waste information allowed, for the first time, decisions to be based on facts rather than intuition. Data transparency strengthened understanding of the process and increased trust between the team and management.

4. **Management commitment is crucial.**

Limited manager presence made it difficult to maintain rate and coherence. In the future, more active management support will be necessary to strengthen accountability and the long-term sustainability of changes.

5. **Organizational change takes time and patience.**

The first weeks demonstrated that transformation is a process, not a one-time effort. Understanding that not everything can be achieved at once allowed the team to act with greater calm and realism.

6. **Environmental awareness can drive engagement.**

When employees saw that their actions had a real impact on reducing waste and protecting the environment, a new sense of motivation and purpose emerged in their work.

# DESIGN THINKING TOOLS

## Mix and Match: Out of the box Idea Generation

thinkubator 

Mix and Match is a technique that empowers you to generate many ideas in a short amount of time.

- You need:
- Two Cups
  - At least 20 pcs. of paper
  - Post-its
  - ~20 minutes

# 1

### How might we?

Based on the problem you defined, come up with 2–5 HMW questions. Be curious and open! A detailed introduction to HMW-questions can be found [here](#).

# 2

### Finding the right words.

Write down 10 words related to the HMW questions. Write down another 10 words that are completely random. Put each 10 words into a separate cup.

# 3

### Mix and Match!

Now take one word out of each cup and connect the two words. Think about how the resulting word can be an answer to one of the HMW questions.

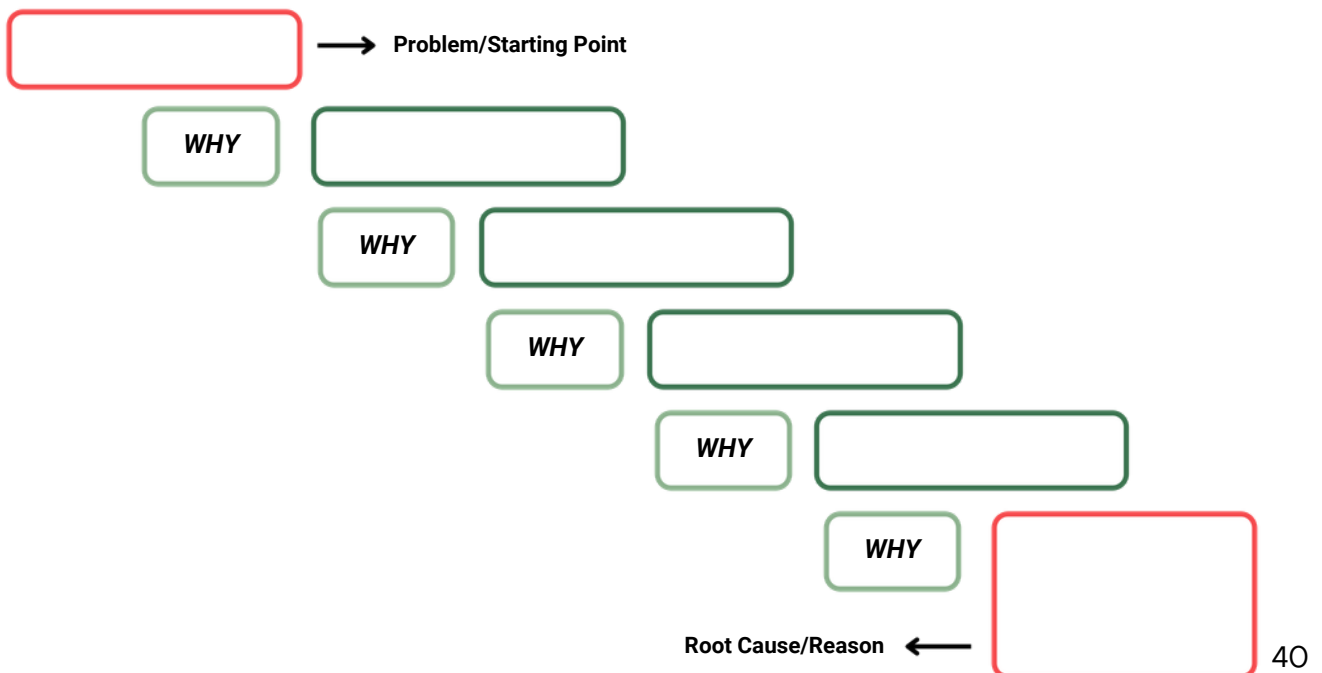
### Tips

- Mix and Match generates highly divergent and inconclusive solutions. Therefore, it is particularly suitable at the beginning of the ideation phase.
- As a follow-up exercise for mix and match, clustering tools such as "Card Sorting" are especially well suited.
- If you want to develop even more ideas based on the mix and match outcome, the "Lotus Blossom" might be a good choice.

## Five times WHY Getting to the root cause

The 5 Whys tool is often used to gain deeper insights into problems or pain points.

1. Start with a problem statement and ask, "Why ...?" -> Answer the question as best as possible.
2. Repeat this process by asking "Why?" again, using the previous answer as the starting point.
3. Continue asking "Why?" until you've asked it five times (or more, if necessary) to uncover the root cause.



# Idea Evaluator

Group Name: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Idea</b> (Description of the idea in own words)	<b>Feasibility</b> (0-10)	<b>Impact</b> (0-10)	<b>Costs</b> (0-10) 10=cheap, 0=unaffordable	<b>SUM</b>
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

# How Might we...? Framing Problems as Opportunities

How might we (HMW) questions give us a way to move from problem-oriented views to solution perspectives.

Well-formulated HMW questions form the basis for the ideation process and should therefore be formulated very carefully and thoughtfully.

Keep in mind:

- Always formulate positively: ~~less difficult~~ < easier!
- Avoid suggesting solutions and open up!
- Focus the HMW-question on your target group and the desired outcome

1	WHAT? What do you want to do? How might we <i>help, show, redefine, develop, generate...</i> ?
2	WHO? Who is your target? How might we <i>x</i> our <i>customers, employees...</i> ?
3	WHAT? What is the goal? How might we <i>x</i> our <i>y</i> to <i>understand, find, achieve...</i> ?

Optional:

Reverse HMW - *How might we achieve the exact opposite of our goal?*

inspired by: IDEO and nngroup

# How Might we...? Framing Problems as Opportunities

How might we (HMW) questions give us a way to move from problem-oriented views to solution perspectives. Well-formulated

HMW questions form the basis for the ideation process and should therefore be formulated very carefully and thoughtfully.

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1	WHAT? What do you want to do?
2	WHO? Who is your target?
3	WHAT? What is the goal?

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# Lotus Blossom

The lotus blossom method is a brainstorming technique that involves building ideas around a central theme and then breaking them down into deeper sub-themes. The initial step is documenting the existing concept in the central quadrant. Subsequently, additional ideas are gathered and inscribed in the surrounding quadrants. The exercise is only finished when each quadrant is filled with a different idea.

Keep in mind to be open: **Yes, and ...!**

Suspend your judgement, we are aiming at novelty rather than relevance of ideas



*inspired by: the design thinking toolkit*

thinkubator 

# How to plan and implement a **circular business model** in a social enterprise

# Guide – Toolkit

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