



MARSHAL OFFICE OF THE
WARMIŃSKO-MAZURSKIE VOIVODESHIP IN OLSZTYN

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Europe**



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better regional policies*



Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform - Peer review
Implementation of a circular economy in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship

FINAL PAPER

1. Background information, motivation and challenges

The Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship is located in the north-eastern part of Poland, on the Vistula Lagoon, in the immediate vicinity of the eastern border of the European Union with the Kaliningrad Oblast. The region covers 7.7% of Poland and is the fourth largest in the country. Almost 1.5 million people live here (12th in the country). The population density is 59 people/km² (last place in the country together with Podlaskie Voivodeship). The capital of the region is Olsztyn, and other large cities are Elbląg and Ełk

The self-government of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship is responsible for planning and implementing the region's development policy, including preparing its socio-economic development strategy. Since the beginning of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship self-government, i.e. since 1999, care for the natural environment has been and is an important element of its policy, which was reflected in the first version of the *Strategy for socio-economic development of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship* and its subsequent updates. As part of the next updating of the Strategy, which has just finished, it has been pointed out that this could be achieved through a transformation towards a circular economy (e.g. waste management, eco-innovation, resource-efficient economy, green entrepreneurship, cleaner production, extending the life of products on the market, etc.). Nevertheless, the concept of a circular economy is a new context for the Voivodeship's development policy. A diagnosis of this situation has not yet been made. The region does not yet have a policy aimed at transforming into a circular economy.

The Board of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship is involved in implementation of programmes financed from EU funds since 2004. Currently the Board of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship acts as the Managing Authority of the Regional Operational Programme for the years 2014-2020 (co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund). The Voivodeship has already started preparations for the next financial perspective. This will be the first programming period in which the circular economy will be one of the key issues. For this reason it is planned to use the new regional programme as a tool stimulating the transformation of the regional economy into one where resources will be used in a much more sustainable way.

Due to the fact that the European Green Deal has been announced by the European Commission as a priority for the European Union for the coming years, which was reflected in the draft regulations constituting the basis for the implementation of the Cohesion Policy in the new programming period, and due to the fact that the transition to a circular economy is a chance to transform the region's economy into a more sustainable one by applying for support to Interreg Europe in the form of a peer review, the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship sought advice in this regard from more experienced regions. It was expected that this exercise would allow a better understanding of the process, getting to know specific solutions, best practices and ideas for the types of projects that could be supported from the future regional programme taking into account local conditions and respecting the natural environment. As the circular economy is a cross-cutting issue involving many domains and stakeholders, the expected result was a systemic approach to capacity building and coordination of support. For this purpose, it was necessary to use the knowledge of experts and their experience.

2. The Peer review description

The purpose of the Peer review was to identify solutions in the area of circular economy that the Voivodeship could use in programming and then implementing the regional programme for 2021-2027. The support focused on the identification of project types in these Policy Objectives that would fit into the circular economy concept, i.e. PO1 *Smarter Europe*, PO2 *Greener, carbon free Europe* and PO4 *Social Europe* and would be adequate to the needs and opportunities of beneficiaries in the region. The peers received a number of questions from the region relating to individual policy objectives and the scope of support, as well as horizontal issues regarding project evaluation, project generation, complementarity and the possibility of obtaining funding for circular economy projects in programmes outside of the Cohesion Policy.

Originally, the meeting with the peers was to take place in March 2020. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was necessary to cancel the arrival of experts to the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship, despite the advanced state of preparation. For this reason, the meetings adopted the on-line formula.

There were two online meetings using the ZOOM application:

- 1) The first thematic meeting on "Evaluation, impact assessment and building an attractive project pipeline" was held on September 10, 2020 with the participation of the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform team, representatives of the host region and speakers from Finland, Slovenia and Italy who shared their experience:
 - Chiara Pancotti, Centre for Industrial Studies (CSIL), Milano, Italy,
 - Harri Mattila, Häme University of Applied Sciences, Finland,
 - Tadej Žurman - Deltaplan, d.o.o., Slovenia.
- 2) The main meeting was held on September 15 and 16, 2020 with the team of the Interreg Europe Mutual Learning Platform, the peers, representatives of the host region and stakeholders (representatives of business associations operating in the region, business

environment institutions, municipal enterprises, companies dealing with waste, wastewater issues, etc.). The topics covered during these two days were:

- Circular economy for entrepreneurs and SMEs,
- Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) and food waste,
- Circular economy in a social Europe.

During the meetings the peers presented their experiences and good practices in the field of circular economy, which, together with the results of discussions with stakeholders and representatives of the host region, served as a basis for the preparation of recommendations for the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship (in the form of a presentation). The region received written answers to the remaining questions as part of the so-called Helpdesk.

3. Participants

1) Partner profiles

- **Chrysanti Kiskini** - Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia (RDF CM), Region of Central Macedonia, Greece

Chrysanti Kiskini is a project manager of the two INTERREG EUROPE projects CESME (Circular economy for SMEs) and BIOREGIO (Regional circular economy models and best available technologies for biological streams).

During the “European Week of Regions and Cities 2019”, she presented “How a local authority can improve policies for circular economy. The Strategic Plan for Circular Economy in the Region of Central Macedonia”.

The Region of Central Macedonia was granted the European Entrepreneurial Region award for 2018 and during the evaluation mission in 2019 in Thessaloniki, Ms Kiskini has presented the Action Plan for Circular Economy, which was one of the features taken into account for the grant of EER to our Region.

- **Daniela Sani** - ART-ER, Regional authority, Emilia Romagna, Italy

Ph.D in Geotechnical Engineering, Mediator for Civil and Commercial Disputes, Master in Business Administration, Degree in Civil Engineering.

Currently employed in ART-ER S.Con.p.A. (a Regional Body created with the purpose of fostering the region’s sustainable growth by developing innovation and knowledge, attractiveness and internationalisation), she is Coordinator for the topics of Circular Economy, Bioeconomy and Raw materials.

At European level she holds positions in:

- EIT Food RIS Policy Council,
- European Commission Expert Group on Circular Economy Financing Model,
- European Innovation Partnership (EIP) on Raw Materials,
- Vanguard Region Initiative - Bio-economy pilot,
- TSSP Industrial Modernisation – bioeconomy.

At national level she holds positions of regional representative in National Technological Cluster - SPRING and in the National Bioeconomy Coordination Working Group. At regional level she provides technical assistance on bioeconomy and circular economy to the regional DG Growth (i.e. support to develop the regional strategy plastic free or S3 definition road map to circular economy). She coordinates also the Regional Stakeholder Working Group on Circular Economy. Formerly, regional innovation manager of the EIT Climate-KIC, currently she is responsible of KIC EIT Raw Materials coordinating one education project and 3 innovation projects. She is project manager of Interreg Med Reinwaste and Erasmus + SPIRE-SAIS (coordinated by PPP SPIRE Association) on the topics of the Circular Economy and industrial symbiosis.

She is an expert evaluator of the European Commission in the topics of Bioeconomy, Water and Circular Economy.

- **Dario Sciunnach** – ERDF Managing Authority, Regione Lombardia, Milano, Italy
Dario Sciunnach is Head of Office of the Waste treatment facilities (landfills, waste to energy, waste recovery facilities including composting) permitting & transboundary waste shipment, 2011-2017 (about 200 IPPC permits personally released over that period).
He represents the Lombardy Region at the Technical panel established within the "Canton Ticino (Switzerland) - Regione Lombardia (Italy) Record of Understanding for the transboundary management of inert waste" (2015-2018) and is responsible for the INTERRG EUROPE project "CircE - European Regions toward Circular Economy", 2017-2019.
Moreover, Dario participated in the following projects:
 - 1) Life+ "COSMOS-RICE" (2013-2015) on the recovery of rice husk ash and MSW fly ashes - responsible for Partner Regione Lombardia;
 - 2) Life+ "PREFER" on the Product Environmental Footprint (2013-2016) - responsible for Partner Regione Lombardia;
 - 3) Horizon 2020 "Urban_WINS" on urban metabolism (2016-2018) - member of the European Advisory Board;
 - 4) SUM - Symposium on Urban Mining and Circular Economy, organized by IWWG in Bergamo, Italy (2016, 2018) and Beijing, China (2017) - Member of the Executive Committee 2018;
 - 5) Interreg Europe "CircE - European Regions toward Circular Economy", 2017-2019 – project responsible for Lead Partner Regione Lombardia;
 - 6) Interreg Italia-Svizzera "Ge.Tri" on the transboundary shipment of inert waste (2018) - responsible for Partner Regione Lombardia.
- **Tadej Žurman** - Deltaplan, d.o.o., Slovenia
Since 2010, Mr Žurman has been collaborating in projects dealing mainly with circular reuse, recycling and sustainable recovery of materials considered as waste under the existing linear economy model. He participated in developing and implementation

of circular business models with emphasis on resource management in urban areas closing many interconnected resources' loops in a functional urban area.

In line with his legal educational background, Mr Žurman developed administrative and regulatory bases for implementation of circular economy models and patent claims for protecting IPR in this field. Continuous cooperation with all intra-related stakeholders (SMEs, public authorities, public utility providers, NGOs, scientific organisations) has enabled him to appreciate different viewpoints on the same topic and helped to bridge the gaps between various parties in urban areas..

Mr Žurman contributed to the creation of the Slovenian National Circular Economy Strategy and of the Strategy of the Municipality of Maribor for Transition into Circular Economy. Moreover, he participated in several projects of the Life Programme, Urban Innovative Actions, Horizon 2020, Interreg Central Europe and Interreg Alpine Space.

2) Representatives of Interreg Europe and Policy Learning Platform

- Thorsten Kohlich, Project Manager, Policy Learning Platform within Interreg Europe,
- Elena Ferrario, Thematic Manager, Policy Learning Platform within Interreg Europe,
- Astrid Severin, Thematic Expert, Environment and resource efficiency,
- Ruslan Zhechkov, Thematic Expert, Environment and resource efficiency.

3) Stakeholders

- Barbara Bąkowska – Association "Center for Economic Development of Pastęk",
- Maria Borzym – Science and Technology Park in Olsztyn,
- Andrzej Brudniak – Water and Sewage Company in Olsztyn,
- Marek Bryszewski – Municipal Waste Management Center in Olsztyn,
- Marcin Burza – Warmia and Mazury Business Club,
- Marek Cymerys – Communal Management Enterprise in Elbląg,
- Paweł Gęsicki – Municipal Waste Management Center in Olsztyn,
- Wojciech Jassak – Water and Sewage Company in Ełk,
- Sławomir Kasiński – Municipal Waste Management Center in Olsztyn,
- Marcin Kemski – Warmia and Mazury Special Economic Zone,
- Grzegorz Kłoczko – Warmia and Mazury Special Economic Zone,
- Karolina Knowska-Sikowska – Warmia and Mazury Chamber of Craft and Entrepreneurship,
- Andrzej Kurkiewicz – Water and Sewage Company in Elbląg,
- Andrzej Lemanowicz – Waste Disposal Plant in Elbląg,
- Wiesław Łubiński – Business Center Club, Chancellor of the Olsztyn Lodge, member of the BCC Convention,
- Urszula Małek – Technology Park in Elbląg,
- Dariusz Niksa – Warmia and Mazury Voivodeship Inspector of Environmental Protection,
- Agnieszka Pietrowicz – Science and Technology Park in Ełk,
- Agnieszka Remisiewicz-Sokołowska – Water and Sewage Company in Olsztyn,

- Zbigniew Targowski – Warmia and Mazury Special Economic Zone.

4) Representatives of the host region (Marshal's Office of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship in Olsztyn)

- Dorota Kopeć - Regional Policy Department,
- Emil Walendzik - Regional Policy Department,
- Paweł Kaszubski - Regional Policy Department,
- Kinga Krupińska - Regional Policy Department,
- Gabriela Zenkner-Kłujczo - Regional Policy Department,
- Maria Chomicka - Regional Policy Department,
- Kinga Giżyńska - Regional Policy Department,
- Aleksandra Januszewska - Regional Policy Department,
- Magda Kleinschmidt - Regional Policy Department,
- Maria Micińska - Regional Policy Department,
- Alicja Wysocka - Regional Policy Department,
- Anna Nakielska - Department of the European Regional Development Fund,
- Teresa Ojczyk - Department of the European Regional Development Fund,
- Grażyna Kanownik - Department of the European Regional Development Fund,
- Marzena Pisanko - Department of the European Regional Development Fund,
- Wioleta Borczak - Department of the European Regional Development Fund,
- Aneta Kowenicka - Department of the European Regional Development Fund,
- Bartłomiej Jasiński - Department of the European Regional Development Fund,
- Łukasz Popławski - Department of the European Regional Development Fund,
- Wioleta Tarasewicz - Department of the European Regional Development Fund,
- Ewelina Woźniak - Department of the European Regional Development Fund,
- Agnieszka Woźnowska - Department of the European Regional Development Fund,
- Michał Opieczyński - Department of the European Social Fund,
- Emilia Gałązka - Regional Center for Social Policy,
- Katarzyna Żadziłko - Regional Center for Social Policy,
- Bogdan Meina - Department of Environmental Protection,
- Agnieszka Rzymowska - Department of Environmental Protection.

4. Recommendations

The on-line meetings resulted in detailed recommendations of the peers from Greece, Slovenia and Italy, presented in the form of a power point presentation during the on-line meeting on September 16, 2020. The recommendations have been analysed and grouped by the region. Thus 5 main recommendations were identified.

- 1) **Drafting the strategic framework for the implementation of the circular economy** in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship.

- 2) **Development of an action plan for the implementation of the circular economy** covering short and long term actions, including: identification and application of "green" public procurement standards, creation of multi-utility companies as part of a cross-sectoral approach, creation of a Regional Green Observatory of the Economy or the Circular Economy Observatory, awareness-raising activities.
- 3) **Short-term actions**, including the inclusion of issues related to the circular economy in regulations adopted at the regional level (e.g. regarding spatial planning, permits, etc.), informing entrepreneurs about opportunities in the field of circular economy and the risks associated with resignation from changes, promoting the collaborative economy, identifying key stakeholders and signing the "Circular Economy Memorandum", creating a "circular economy club" or "open laboratory" where knowledge / experience would be exchanged.
- 4) **Updating the Regional Waste Management Plan** to integrate the circular economy, in particular focusing on specific waste streams and mapping waste-to-resource value chains.
- 5) **Including the circular economy in the future regional programme** by securing financing of the recommended types of projects for small and medium-sized enterprises and public institutions under Policy Objectives 1, 2 and 4.

In addition, the peers offered the region a number of cooperation opportunities, such as:

- exchange of experiences in coordinating clusters,
- participation in international fairs promoting projects in the field of circular economy,
- support in obtaining the status of a member or partner in initiatives / projects in the field of circular economy,
- study visits.

These proposals are particularly valuable for the region, because thanks to taking advantage of them, a wider group of stakeholders from the Voivodeship will have the opportunity to learn about solutions that constitute best practices in the field of circular economy (and not only). We hope that the cooperation will be continued when the epidemiological situation in Poland and Europe improves.

5. Responses to recommendations

The Board of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship during the meeting on January 12, 2021 made a decision on the procedures to be followed in response to recommendations made by the peers as part of the Peer review. Unfortunately, due to the financial consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and staff limitations, it was decided to implement the recommendations to a lesser extent than originally assumed.

No.	Recommendation	Response to recommendation
1.	Drafting the strategic framework for the	The concept of the circular economy will be

	implementation of the circular economy in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship	reflected in the next update of the social and economic development strategy of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship.
2.	Development of an action plan for the implementation of the circular economy covering short and long term actions, including: identification and application of "green" public procurement standards, creation of multi-utility companies as part of a cross-sectoral approach, creation of a Regional Green Observatory of the Economy or the Circular Economy Observatory, awareness-raising activities	At the moment, the Voivodeship has neither human nor financial resources to undertake activities aimed at developing an action plan for the implementation of the circular economy.
3.	Short-term actions , including the inclusion of issues related to the circular economy in regulations adopted at the regional level (e.g. regarding spatial planning, permits, etc.), informing entrepreneurs about opportunities in the field of circular economy and the risks associated with resignation from change, promoting the collaborative economy, identifying key stakeholders and signing the "Circular Economy Memorandum", creating a "circular economy club" or "open laboratory" where knowledge / experience would be exchanged	To take into account aspects of the circular economy when updating documents at the regional level, as well as while implementing the tasks of the Marshal's Office of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship in Olsztyn, e.g. when informing and promoting the regional programme for 2021-2027.
4.	Updating the Regional Waste Management Plan to integrate the circular economy, in particular focusing on specific waste streams and mapping waste-to-resource value chains	The Regional Waste Management Plan was developed taking into account the concept of the circular economy and serves its implementation; at the same time, an update of this document is planned - completion of the process in 2022.
5.	Including the circular economy in the future regional programme by securing financing of the recommended types of projects for small and medium-sized enterprises and public institutions under Policy Objectives 1, 2 and 4	The regional programme for 2021-2027 will include the types of projects recommended for individual Policy Objectives, the most adequate to the needs of the potential beneficiaries from the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship. Investments are planned to strengthen the circular economy, which will be related to waste prevention and reduction, resource

		<p>efficiency, material reuse, repair, recycling, as well as transforming production and consumption chain patterns and reducing energy intensity.</p> <p>These measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - comprehensive solutions in the field of waste management by preventing waste generation, implementing recovery technologies, including recycling (in accordance with the waste management hierarchy); - separate collection systems for municipal waste taking into account waste prevention or re-use solutions (i.e. separate collection points for municipal waste, facilities for repair, preparation for re-use and replacement of used items); - preventing food waste by using unsold food products or food products with a short shelf life; - education, promotional campaigns and programmes in the field of circular economy; - changing business models of companies towards activities consistent with innovative products / services in line with the implementation of the idea of a circular economy; - eco-design services; - BEI services related to circular economy; - training and development of competences in companies (entrepreneurs, managers, employees), in particular in the field of innovation management skills and new business models; - Renewable Energy Sources development; - improvement of energy efficiency in enterprises; - comprehensive energy modernization of public utility and residential buildings along with the installation of renewable
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		<p>energy devices and replacement / modernization of heat sources or connection to the heating / cooling network.</p> <p>The final scope of the intervention will depend on the shape of the Partnership Agreement (a document that defines the intervention strategy of European funds under Cohesion Policy in Poland) and the demarcation line between the national and regional levels.</p>
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6. Summary and next steps

Participation in the Peer review was an inspiring experience for the region. It made possible to organize and expand information about the circular economy. This made possible access to good practices that the region will benefit from, especially when designing measures of the new regional programme in order to move towards a more sustainable economy.

The adequate examples presented by the peers during on-line meetings constitute the basis for activities in the region. They will be reflected especially in the types of support being designed under the regional programme. The activities of the Voivodeship are currently focused on the preparation of the regional programme for the years 2021-2027. The circular economy concept, enriched with the Peer review experience, will be its important element.

Cooperation with the PLP team during the Peer review was very smooth and effective. The Voivodeship received aid at every stage. Online meetings were a challenge but various difficulties were overcome. Additional materials sent by PLP (reports, publications, invitations to various events) made it possible to better understand the solutions proposed by the peers during the Peer review.

The Peer review results will be disseminated in the Voivodeship among potential applicants in the scope of Policy Objective 1, Policy Objective 2 and Policy Objective 4 as part of activities aimed at generating projects that could receive funding from the regional programme for 2021-2027.

