



**Association of provinces of the Netherlands
(IPO) and House of Dutch provinces (HNP)**

POWERMAP

C I R C U L A I R E C O N O M Y

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Provinces: the ideal intermediaries to enhance the circular transition


The Dutch provinces are committed to ensure that by 2050 the Dutch economy is fully circular.

This means an economy based on closed loops in which raw materials, components and products lose their value as little as possible, renewable energy sources are used and systems thinking is at the core. The provinces are striving for fully closed circles, circular material cycles, whereby recycled waste can be converted into new raw materials or sustainable products. To achieve these ambitions we work together at the national level, international level, across borders, and at the EU level with like-minded partner regions.

To bring about the circular economy (CE), cooperation and knowledge transfer between all actors in the value chain have to be encouraged. The provinces as intermediaries in the triple-helix setting are best placed to stimulate this and foster the cooperation of science/education, businesses, and the government, crucial for developing a CE.

The Association of Provinces of the Netherlands' (IPO) "Power Map" is an initiative that highlights regional best-practices on the circular transition and serves as an example for putting the European Commission's plans into action. It will be used as a reference for working together at the European, national level, regional, and local level.





*Provinces: the ideal
intermediaries to
enhance the circular
transition: key messages*

POWERMAP
CIRCULAIR ECONOMY



KEY MESSAGES

Circular procurement and tendering

For the coming years, the transition towards a CE is a key-priority for the provinces. We do this by developing long-term CE strategies in our territories. We implement circularity within all our internal and external activities. Within the field of public procurement, the provinces strive to select sustainable circular products or services where possible, and work towards the full implementation of the “comply or explain” principle. This principle means that you have to explain why circularity isn’t subject of the chosen procurement.

Circular economy and the environmental vision

The provinces aim to fully embed the CE in their policies and practices. A toolkit on ‘The Circular Economy and the Environmental Vision’ in 2021/2022 is being developed to support this ambition. In cooperation with Dutch municipalities, Omgevingsdienst NL (Dutch Environmental Services Association), research is being conducted in order to determine what is needed to make circularity a compulsory part of the public responsibilities in authorisation, overall supervision and law enforcement. The outcome of the research will be used to create guidelines, and serve as an initial impetus for circular testing and education.

Develop and strengthen regional circular ecosystems

Provinces believe that emphasises should be put on the importance of public awareness and “transitional thinking” of the society as a whole. To achieve this, by 2025, we want to have a thorough overview of the local and regional networks that support the development and integration of sustainable circular ecosystem. In this way we aim for a place based approach and use our position as a connector and facilitator to stimulate and strengthen the networks in a triple helix setting and fasten the transition to a full CE.

Support regional businesses during the circular economy transition

The primary task of the provinces is to support regional business in the CE transition via, inter alia, our own incentive programmes. SMEs play a crucial role in the translation of scientific research into applications and market introduction in the form of new products or techniques; the role of regional SMEs in innovation cannot be sufficiently emphasised and strong, structured support is needed to stimulate their activities. Provinces believe that it is necessary to facilitate better access to finance for SMEs through investment in start-ups, venture capital, and support for technology transfer, knowledge valorisation and less complex regulations in the field of the CE. This is why from 2021 onwards we aim to create with our National Government a common programme of research funds in order to accelerate innovation, stimulate bottom-up initiatives and connect with SMEs. Besides, we strengthen our current partnership with “Versnellingshuis Nederland Circulair!”, a joint venture organisation that is helping SMEs with their transition to CE.

The monitoring of circular economy performances

The provinces are working on a clear-cut way to monitor the developments and progress being made in the CE, whereby the national ICER (Integrated Circular Economy Report) approach, introduced by the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL), is integrated on the regional level. In 2021, an inventory to determine the first set of regional indicators is started and our partnership with the PBL will be further developed. We will evaluate the CE monitoring tools, which will apply to monitor the IPO “Power Map”, on an annual basis.



A photograph of a forest scene. In the foreground, a thick, weathered log lies horizontally across the frame. Behind it, a dense forest of tall, thin trees with green foliage is visible, slightly out of focus. The lighting suggests a bright, sunny day.

*The Dutch Provinces aim
to fully embed circular
economy in their policies
and practices.*

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CIRCULAIR ECONOMY



WHAT WE ARE ASKING THE EU

European support on 6 fronts

With the publication of the European Green Deal, the circular transition has become a topic of growing importance for shaping future European policy, as part as an EU- wide policy agenda for a more green and sustainable European economy. The subsequent publication of the Circular Economy Action Plan includes measures to help stimulate Europe's transition towards a CE, boost competitiveness, and generate new jobs. Since then, additional initiatives have been presented to boost the CE and deliver on the ambition of climate-neutrality by 2050, reduce pressure on natural resources and halt the loss of biodiversity. The implementation of these initiatives will have a profound impact at the local level, and regional governments are key actors in ensuring a successful implementation.

Therefore the Dutch provinces believe that, as regional authorities, we have an important responsibility but ample tools available to encourage initiatives and innovation to make the transition from a linear to a circular economy really work, while creating the right conditions for our citizens to follow. To be able to effectively reap the rewards of the Circular Transition, the Dutch Provinces also call on other stakeholders to commit themselves to the necessary actions for delivering on a successful transition. To this end, the Provinces of the Netherlands call upon the European Union to create a level playing field in terms of CE by:

- Take a regional approach to the Circular Transition
- Increase market opportunities for circular products and promote circular business cases
- Resource Management and waste
- Make room for the up-scaling of circular innovations
- Monitoring the CE: targets
- Coherent and integrated policy for the chemical industry

Take a regional approach to the circular transition

In order to build on an approach to a regional CE, using the regional power of the provinces, we are asking the EU:

- To facilitate that supply chains in the circular production sector be organized at an appropriate scale level (combination of size, energy use/CO2 and revenue model) as much as possible.
- To help build on the provinces' approach of using regional power, by facilitating the development of full-scale, circular eco-systems through knowledge-sharing, supporting innovative instruments, providing sufficient financial resources and creating an appropriate regulatory framework. As part of this, we invite the EU to work together and develop a joint strategy to further advance a circular eco-system that is tailored to the regional context and plays to local strength. A joint initiative to create a knowledge infrastructure for the region can contribute to this e.g. international exchange/ or coordination in lessons learned from Living Field labs.
- To take into account what is being done at the regional level in the circular transition when developing the European transition agenda and the implementation of the Circular Economy Action Plan, so that these reinforce each other.
- To support projects on a local and regional level that contribute to tangible results in the transition to a CE, supported by fiscal and economic instruments including taxonomy.
- To take Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs) in account when legislating those activities that are a regional competence, such as waste and water-management, infrastructure and the built environment.
- To encourage the development of an EU wide transition academy, where knowledge is developed, gathered and shared on CE.

Increase market opportunities for circular products and promote circular business cases

To deliver on the circular transition, it is crucial that market opportunities for circular products and processes are expanded, and that these can operate on a level playing field. Furthermore, attention needs to be paid to the circular use of raw materials. That is why we are asking the European Commission:

- To develop a sustainable product policy framework with standards that remove harmful and toxic products from the market and at the same time set the conditions so that all products on the EU market are sustainable. In addition, to contribute towards a competitive price on the world market, by:
 - *well before 2030, introducing tax incentives for the CE (e.g. lowering tax on circular production; transferring labour tax to (virgin) raw materials: the so-called 'ex-tax');*
 - *providing support through the introduction of a "true price" across Europe;*
 - *imposing a mandatory percentage of recycling of products in Europe including qualitative criteria.*
- To reinforce the use of life cycle analysis methods regarding environmental impact for goods and services with the aim of pricing the effects of negative externalities and thereby making circular alternatives cheaper compared to linear products.
- Promoting sustainable production through extended producer responsibility for an increasing number of product groups and life stages.
- To move to the concept of Total Cost of Ownership as extended producer responsibility is crucial to ensure proper business cases whereby producer can look into "safe-circular-by-design" consequences.
- To assist SMEs in making the transition to CE by providing European uniform measuring methods for CE, developing an EU material passport, facilitating a digital marketplace for trading (secondary) raw materials.
- CE will in the near future enter a phase of - necessary - large scale industrial demonstration projects. Current law and regulations valid for common production processes, is also valid for this kind of innovative experiments, and that often proves to be a mismatch/ obstacle. The EU can support the scaling up of CE-production by implementing EU regulations that is specifically for large scale experiments and Demonstration (restricted in location and in time).

Resource management and waste

In a CE, the value and lifetime of our planet's resources are increased by using and reusing our resources and products more efficiently. Given the competences of regions, we call on the European Commission to make progress on waste prevention and set an end of waste approach. There is need for further strengthening and better implementation of EU waste laws. We call on the EU:

- To apply the End of Waste principle by setting up criteria for substantial proportions of new products to be made out of recycled material, as part of an approach to key product value chains.
- To revise the definition of waste as it is currently stated in the Waste Framework Directive, particularly with regards to circular design targets for waste reduction, re-use of products and the definition of disposal. The latter creates legal inequality both at European and national level and hinder opportunities for circularity. We believe there is a need for further uniformly-applied European standards and regulations.
- To coordinate resource management on scarce and critical materials by, for instance, the development of an EU Resource Policy Platform that evaluate the decisions about the application of the End of Waste criteria in case of large volumes in weight and revenue for a level playing field.
- To promote circular design that takes in consideration modular and repairable design. This will reduce waste and increases the lifespan and reusability of (parts of) products and raw materials at the end of their useful life. To assist in developing sustainable revenue models for waste processors by fostering innovation and reorganization of this sector.
- To reduce pollution by microplastics, medicine residues and pesticides that limit the use of water as a raw material. Water is one of the cycles within the CE and its quality and efficient use are therefore of vital importance.
- To reduce the consumption of primary raw materials and critical raw materials for sustainable energy generation systems - such as solar and wind - through circular design, and closing cycles in the manufacturing industry.
- To develop a long-term vision on the appropriate balance between minimizing Substances of Very High Concern (SVHC's) and the circular transition of the economy.
- Developing information obligation and minimalization standards for SVHC's in waste streams, as waste streams are international.



*Use the power of the
provinces to build
a (regional) circular
economy*

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CIRCULAR ECONOMY



Make room for the up-scaling of circular innovations

The up-scaling of promising innovations often transcends the (financial) capacity of the companies and regions involved. In their role as intermediary and stimulator, the provinces can play a kickstarting role by bringing together and connecting different stakeholders along the value chain at the local level. The EU can help us by:

- Making promising local and regional up-scaling and pilot projects viable by providing financial support, in collaboration with local and region governments.
- To support the provinces and municipalities commitment to the labour market and human capital development in relation to the CE by setting up programmes on re- and upskilling and enhancing the curricula for the needed skills in CE. To encourage the development of an EU wide transition academy, where knowledge is developed, gathered and shared on CE.
- To develop a modern and practical set of uniform legal and stimulating financial instruments to make it easier for businesses to valorize innovation and initiatives and find their way to the market.
- To broaden the scope in the regulations that allow (digital) innovation and experimentation to make the transition from waste policy to raw materials policy possible.

Monitoring the circular economy targets

To ensure a real transition to a CE at European level there is need for a method that will take into account the progress on circularity linked to climate neutrality and zero pollution. Regions can play a crucial role in providing the data needed. Therefore we call on the EU:

- To implement a resource-use reduction target at EU level to decouple growth and resource use. At the same time to develop alternative indicators instead of only GDP as indicator, when assessing CE measures.
- To develop innovation targets and targets for circular public procurement, such as Green Public Procurement to drive circular solutions with a specific focus on durability, repair, remanufacturing and recycling.
- To set commercial and municipal waste prevention targets. Reducing waste is a pre-condition for a well-functioning CE, as well as setting the same standards for virgin and recycled materials to prevent hazardous chemicals from entering the environment.
- To implement EU policy and rules in a uniform manner and to set a level playing field. Uniform monitoring and sustainability criteria can play a role in this.

Coherent and integrated policy for the chemical industry

- The transition towards a CE is an important aspect for the chemical industry and has an impact on regional development. Therefore we ask the EU:
- To reduce regulatory burden, complexity, and unpredictability that will help to maintain EU competitiveness and support investments and innovation.
- To support the shift to „safe-by-design chemicals” as the best way to prevent the dispersion of hazardous substances into the environment.
- To actively support the frontrunners that implement innovative circular solutions that create higher environmental and social value than existing alternatives on the market.
- To support the Dutch provinces who are actively promoting the greening of the chemistry industry in their region. This by enabling them to develop and strengthen the regional circular bio-based ecosystems. Support could be given by actively providing access to funding of network governance, finances such as taxonomy and legal aspects such as State Aid.
- To increase the digitalisation of the EU chemical industry for its future competitiveness. Big data can improve manufacturing processes and lower the environmental impact of the sector through a more efficient management of resources, materials and energy use.
- To adopt generally accepted and uniform definitions and indicators at the European level for products and processes used along the entire value chain to stimulate the market for circularity. A more harmonized and integrated approach will help to improve and standardize key environmental performance data including circularity across economic sectors.
- To strengthen the role of the chemical sector in the processing of residual flows and the high-quality use of renewable raw materials. The chemical sector can also contribute to an efficient energy use, e.g., by producing intensively at peak moments in energy supply.
- To allocate EU funds to scaling-up processes from the pilot phase to production scale (demo and flagship plants) and developing mechanisms to mitigate risks associated with first-of-a-kind production plants (financial guarantees).

POWERMAP

CIRCULAIR ECONOMY

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Zuid-Holland

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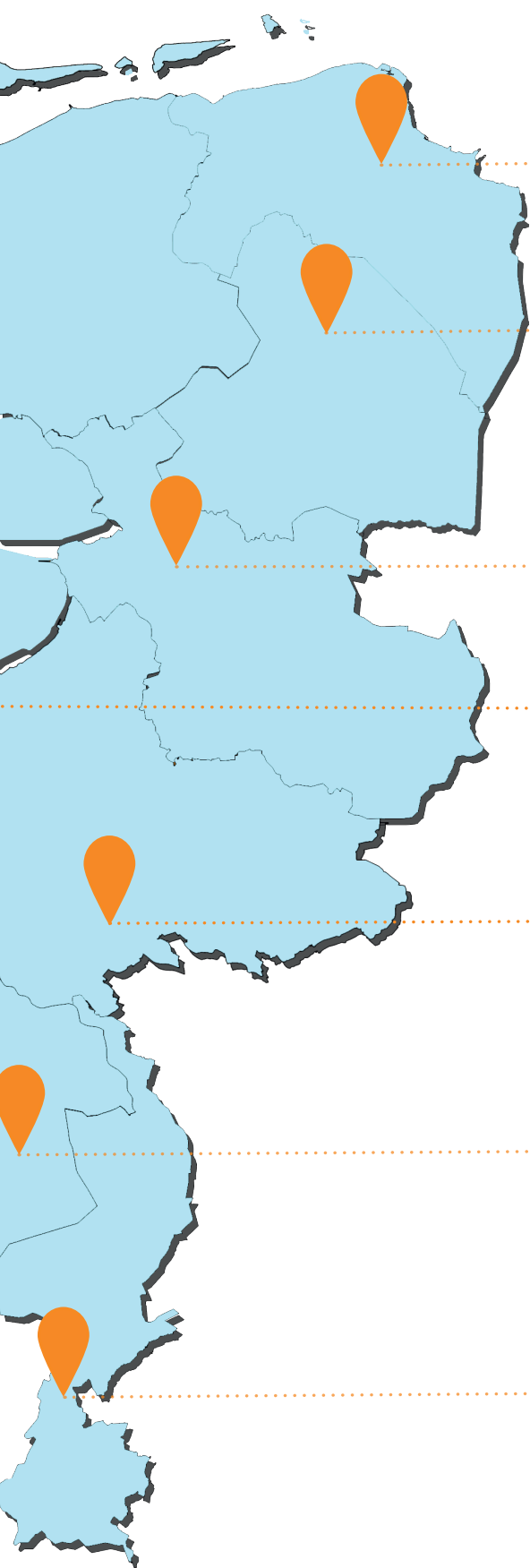
Utrecht

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Overijssel

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DRENTHE



Among other things, Drenthe is funding a circular living lab, whereby, 8 housing corporations in Drenthe have joined forces in the quest for innovative circular concepts through topics such as co-operatives (for

To drive innovation, N.I.C.E. (Northern Innovation Lab for Circular Economy) has been established. SMEs in Drenthe are provided with the facilities to design their circular innovation topics, by using college and university students to find solutions to issues that, for instance, are beneficial for enhancing the circular economy.

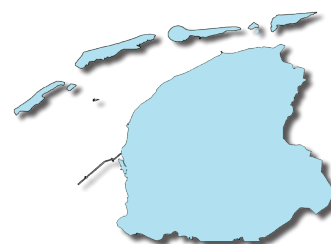
GRONINGEN



Greening the chemical industry in Chemport Europe, including the use of hydrogen as a green commodity and energy source for industry and mobility. In the short term, this will lead to building a hydrogen station,

Using sugars in the chemical industry. The industrial sugar agenda will lead to affordable sugars from plants/organic waste, valorising them as green elements for the chemical industry. The Carbohydrate Competence Centre in Groningen (Groningen University, Wageningen University, and the corporate sector) is developing knowledge about sugars for use in the

FRYSLÂN



The 'Transitie Doe Agenda', the Frisian Transition To-Do Agenda, is a project that has developed 10 themes, in close collaboration with the

'Spark the Movement' connects young people, knowledge institutions, private businesses and public authorities. A special position within VCF has been created to use the education system to connect young people to the issues that are faced by the private businesses and public authorities

NOORD-HOLLAND



Stimulating circular entrepreneurship, innovation, and up-scaling through a CE Ambassador and CIRCO Circular Business Design tracks, among others. Special attention is given to the circular use of raw materials, and less use of primary, non-reusable raw materials through concepts such as subsidies for supply chain projects and research into opportunities that

Taking on the CE as an integral task throughout the province to have a direct impact on the transition towards a CE via public procurement, implementation and management of the provincial infrastructure, commissioning the regional environmental services, and using in-

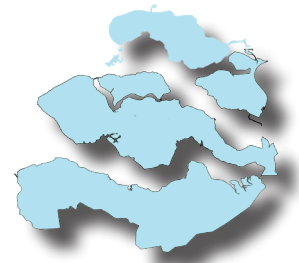
ZUID-HOLLAND



As part of the 'CE Zuid -Holland: Accelerate Together' strategy, that was introduced in 2020, the province is working bottom-up on the themes of construction, green commodities and food, the manufacturing industry, and plastics. Transitional thinking is paramount in networks for

The development of the Zuid -Holland Harbour Industrial Complex as a hub for strategic commodities (e.g. chemical recycling plastics), the green ports (e.g. valorisation of horticultural waste), the manufacturing industry (e.g. SMART Industries) and Cirkelstad, which up-scales and accelerates

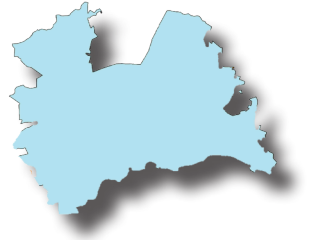
ZEELAND



The environmental vision is a framework for assuring CE. Focus is on circular construction in the (short-stay) recreation sector where the construction sector and SMEs are stimulated to start using CE through concepts such as issuing circular/bio-based vouchers, alongside projects

The Socially Responsible Procurement (MVI) platform supports buyers by making the impact of projects and products measurable and visible, and by connecting professional buyers with circular entrepreneurs. In this way, suppliers are stimulated to do business in a socially responsible way and to integrate this into a business model.

UTRECHT



A 'circular goal tree' has been set up as a management tool, in which concrete proposals for eleven policy themes have been designed as a circular vision (aim), policy goals (< 10 years), long-term goals (4 years), and results with concrete action (2 years). These have been partially

The Province of Utrecht has conducted research into how sustainable and circular procurement is currently carried out; by the local authorities (province, municipalities, and water boards). Using the conclusions and recommendations, we are going to jointly take steps to advance circular

LIMBURG



The Province of Limburg is facilitating the heart of Limburg's open innovation ecosystem, Brightlands – which has 4 campuses – with ground-breaking innovations, programmes and start-ups in the fields of sustainability, health, and digital solutions. One example is the Chemelot Circular Hub (CCH) where businesses, knowledge institutions, local authorities, and residents concerned with the chemical and materials

The LIOF Development Programme: 'A Future-Proof Limburg', aimed at promoting innovation and supporting entrepreneurship within the SME sector in Limburg.

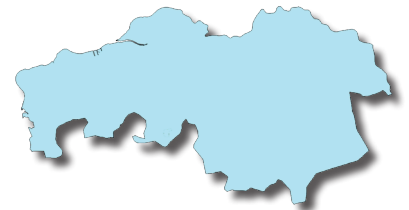
GELDERLAND



Focus on 4 circular pillars in the Circular Economy Implementation Programme 2021-2023: Agrofood, Construction & Infrastructure, Manufacturing Industry and Consumers & Waste. A specific raw materials strategy has been developed for each circular pillar covering bottlenecks, opportunities, courses of action, and the role of the province. The

The Smart & Circular Tender Regulations focussed on making Gelderland's production sites more sustainable.

NOORD-BRABANT



Working from the Circular Economy Implementation Agenda 2021-2023, commitment to the 5 circular transition themes, focussing on food waste and protein transition, circular construction (Cirkelstad Brabant), launching clientage via the INDUSA joint venture programme and (supra)

Development of the bio-based green chemical ecosystem, that focuses on circular industry and the use of biomass as a raw material for the green chemical industry.

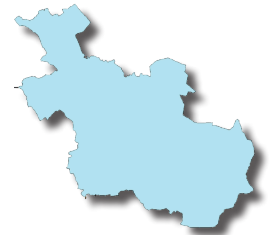
FLEVOLAND



The Circular Economy is integrated into Flevoland's future environmental vision, naming it as one of the 7 main long-term tasks. The aim is to be known as the provider of raw materials for the circular economy by 2030;

The Circular Regional Economy Teaching Team, that was honoured with the bronze SustainaBul MBO prize in 2020, which aims to have an on-going Circular Regional Economy learning track through the whole region, as well as a platform with knowledge events to facilitate the sharing

OVERIJSEL



Six Regional Transition Agendas (RTAs) 2020-2023: Plastics; Textile; Manufacturing Industry; Construction; Infrastructure; Biomass & Food. These are drawn up by the provincial network. Opportunities for the economy of Overijssel lay namely in plastics, textiles, and protein transition. RTA actions are carried out to enhance cohesion for

Strengthen SMEs and Entrepreneurship so they can focus on the future when doing business: in an innovative, sustainable, circular way, for a strong (inter)national competitive position.

