



## Just Transition Platform – Project fiche:

# SCREEN POLICY LAB 2.0 & HORIZON 2020 SCREEN PROJECT

This document is part of a series presenting examples of individual projects of relevance to the just transition to a climate-neutral economy, including regional or local projects across the EU's public and private sectors. The Just Transition Platform (JTP) assists EU Member States and regions to unlock the support in this transition. Visit the JTP website:

[https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/funding/just-transition-fund/just-transition-platform\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/just-transition-fund/just-transition-platform_en)

**Member State:**

Italy (Operating in several MS)

**Region:**

N/A

**Sector:**

Circular Economy

**Total project budget (€):**

€1,742,747.50

**Financing conditions (co-financing rate):**

N/A

**Sources of funding:**

EU funding: €1,742,747.50; Other: SCREEN\_Horizon2020-EU.3.5.4. HorizonEurope

**National funding:**

N/A

**Regional funding:**

N/A

**Duration:**

Screen Policy H2020: 23 months (November 2016 – October 2018); Screen Policy 2.0: Began voluntarily in 2018, funded through single projects

**Responsible Managing Authority/Agency:**

Direzione Regionale per lo sviluppo economico e le attività produttive; Coordination Company for Screen Policy 2.0: Veltha

## Summary

The SCREEN project aimed at the definition of a replicable systemic approach towards a transition to circular economy in EU regions within the context of the Smart Specialization Strategy. This was done through the identification and implementation of operational synergies between R&I investments from H2020 and the European Structural and Investment Funds. The project operated as a coordinative and supporting unit involving 17 regional authorities (cities or regions). It works through a free platform where European regions working with circular economy projects can collaborate, explore possible scenarios, and co-design solutions for better policies. The platform is a continuation of a research project SCREEN (Horizon 2020, 2016-2018). The Policy

Lab is a collaborative tool within the SCREEN project that has defined a replicable systemic approach towards a transition to circular economy in EU regions within the context of the Smart Specialization Strategy, thus contributing to novel future eco-innovative and horizontal business models across different value chains. SCREEN worked on four steps by applying a bottom-up approach based on a continuous consultation among its 17 Regions. The concept of the SCREEN action is to develop an EU reference framework for establishing operational synergies between Horizon 2020 and the European Structural and Investment Funds related to circular economy.

## Type of activities:

The project's activities are composed of different smaller projects and tools. The overarching activities can be summarised in 'four pillars' which were the steps of the project, and act as a coordination and supporting entity between the partners and regions. First is the identification of existing or possible local circular economy value chains. The second step consisted of identifying cross-regional circular economy synergies, connecting activities to create cross-regional operational synergies. The third step consisted of answering the question of financing these cross-regional synergies and overcoming cross-regional financing barriers. This was finally possible thanks to an instrument called 'Common Pot', based on Art70 of the structural funds. In the final step, the question of assessment criteria was posed to create one 'circularity' definition and how to assess the circularity of one project concerning another one. This step aimed to match the different issues raised by the partners and regions, explore possible scenarios and co-design solutions for better policies. Throughout this approach, SCREEN developed different tools and projects aimed at supporting the partner's project, which is still being continued today even after the end of the funding period. The concrete activities ranged from initial stakeholders' interviews with regional representatives to group workshops, and the creation of theoretical and operational knowledge to reach the specific targets within the regional projects.

## Goals and approach:

The goal of SCREEN is to leverage traditional and emerging industrial sectors in EU regions, both at the process and manufacturing industry levels and will act as a driver for underperforming ones. The project aims to support the emergence of new actors in the regional economies leading to new or redesigned value chains in support of the circular economy. The overarching concept is to systematically investigate the possible connections and complementarities between different sectors and value chains in European regions.

The implementation of the action is based on four different steps. The first step is related to the identification of local potential value chains in each region. The second step deals with cross-regional synergies between different value chains. Such synergies, once identified, lead to different cross-regional projects. The third step deals with the issue of financing them through funding synergies. The agreement between regions about a synergic use of funds implies a common agreement on how to assess specific projects dealing with the circular economy. The fourth step is the identification of some criteria to be used in addition to the ones usually adopted by each region.

SCREEN aims to develop a transferable, replicable and systematic approach towards the transition to a circular economy in EU regions, thus contributing to the creation of operational synergies between R&I investments from H2020 and ESIF. This will contribute to novel future eco-innovative and horizontal business models across different value chains. Furthermore, the project will foster an EU reference structure. Firstly, to support the territorial partners engaged with roundabout economy exercises by the Smart Specialization of every area. Secondly, associating the previously mentioned entertainers in a trans-local functional structure; lastly, augmenting the H2020 sway by supporting 'roundabout' enterprising drives in light of the abuse of H2020 tasks' outcomes.

## Important outputs, results or achievements:

All the results obtained constitute the 'Methodology for cooperation between Regions', while all the difficulties and barriers encountered are reported in a 'Manual with recommendations for policymakers.' The manual also contains the research gaps detected during the value chains' identification suggestions to the European Commission for some research topics able to overcome such gaps. The project defined a coherent reference framework for the implementation of Smart Specialization Strategies in a circular economy approach, paving the way to an actual involvement of the private investors. The replicable methodology developed by SCREEN allows other European regions to use the same approach, thus multiplying the circular economy's leverage effect generated by the project. The common agreement about additional assessment criteria to be used for defining 'if and how much' a certain initiative can be defined 'circular' concerning another one has filled an

existing gap, providing the public sector with a tool for a coherent assessment of those projects claiming to deal with the circular economy. SCREEN is continuing as an informal cooperation network between European regions and other stakeholders in the field of the circular economy. Furthermore, the continuation of four tools created within the SCREEN project is one of the biggest outputs the project is contributing. Firstly, a self-assessment tool to monitor, manage and actively collaborate with other participating regions, namely Digi Prime has already started pilots. Secondly, the Interreg REPLACE Project to integrate, deploy and capitalise on the lessons learnt from the SCREEN project, has followed from 2019-2023. The Frontsh1p project was started in 2021 to ensure a green and just transition of the Polish Lodzkie Region towards decarbonisation and territorial regeneration through the creation of a territorial cluster of circular initiatives to accelerate the transition.

## Scalability<sup>1</sup> and transferability<sup>2</sup>:

Since SCREEN is operating on the European Level, the scalability of the project would mean to increase the number of cities and regions collaborating within the project. Initially, SCREEN was composed out of 17 cities and regions (local authorities). Since the end of the project funding, the network is continuing as an informal cooperation network between regions open to other regions and stakeholders in the field. The network is already using informal social media groups such as a LinkedIn Group, open to the public to increase their reach and increase their scale. The follow-up projects such as POLICY Lab

is planned to start as a pilot with 25 regions, the current web events are being conducted with 40 partners. Theoretically, the number of participants is unlimited, especially for some projects like Digi Prime. Therefore, scalability could be carried out in terms of increasing the number of participants.

As far as transferability is concerned, the project's goal is to be transferable. It is focused on cross-regional collaboration and financing in the field of circular economy and in overcoming barriers to the trans-national synergic approach, to faster and better-planned use of EU funds.

<sup>1</sup> Scalability entails that a policy approach can be adapted to a bigger scale than just the local context.

<sup>2</sup> Transferability entails that a policy approach can be applicable to a similar setting and replicated.

## Key success factors and lessons learnt:

One of the key success factors of SCREEN is the bottom-up approach. The project's four pillars or steps approach allowed to identify and to elaborate in close collaboration with the local stakeholders. Since the first steps foresee the identification of existing or possible local circular economy value chain, there was a focus on collaborating with the regional representative. Discussing the current conditions and situation the region is finding itself and collecting in workshops, discussions and events the region's need for a transition towards a circular economy. This first step allowed the project to become aware of the specific regional differences and similarities. It allowed creating a common ground on which all cities could communicate, act and collaborate cross-regionally. The workshops organised by SCREEN with the participating regions were meant to identify and overcome design barriers and find a joint operational solution to overcome barriers that were faced by different participating local authorities around Europe.

## Key challenges:

The SCREEN project encountered two main challenges. Firstly, the missing appropriate structure from the partner's side. Circular economy was still a relatively new topic, mainly focused on the waste management dimension. Consequently, the assigned public authorities were missing proper structure and professional knowledge to collaborate appropriately for the specific actions needed for the participation of SCREEN. While some appointed the environmental office, others hired external policy officers who were missing the regional understanding to the regional projects. The best procedure was the creation of an internal task force composed of different officers from different sectors. The second biggest challenge was the involvement of the stakeholders in a more active, instead of a passive collaboration. Lastly, a minor challenge was the understanding of the circular economy itself. The real effort was to define a circular economy for a cross-regional project. This arises because of a missing definition of circular economy and the misleading understanding of it as waste-management, instead of a structural change of economy components. The challenge was to try to include as much as possible all definitions to create a common basis of interaction between the local authorities.

## Tools for supporting economic diversification and reskilling/upskilling via projects:

- providing workforce and start-up with training and upskilling programmes
- ensuring well-targeted financing and investment
- building private and public sector capabilities for innovation
- strengthening innovation financing and reducing barriers to investment
- capitalising on unique regional strengths for innovation
- facilitating access to finance and broadening the range of financial instruments
- identifying and harmonising regional differences in policy for circular economy
- supporting and financing projects and policymakers in assessing circularity in the economy

SCREEN also started to organise summer schools through Erasmus+ funding to provide upskilling courses for public administration personnel in the field of the circular economy

## Central framework conditions<sup>3</sup>:

Through its own goals and approach, SCREEN is bound to a European, cross-regional framework that is not concentrated or defined by common local attributes, but rather the broader understanding of circular economy itself. At the beginning of 2016, the common understanding of circular economy was mainly focused on the rather smaller sub-sector of waste management and industrial symbiosis, so the framework and conditions were to redefine the circular economy of the participating cities.

<sup>3</sup> Framework conditions encompass the institutional, informational and socio-economic factors that determine a given environment (contextual information), e.g. market conditions, access to finance, tax regulation, infrastructure and support.

## Outlook:

SCREEN continued as an informal cooperation network between European regions and stakeholders in the field of the circular economy. The continuation of four tools created within the SCREEN project is one of the biggest outputs the project is contributing. Firstly, a self-assessment tool to monitor, manage and actively collaborate with other participating regions, namely Digi Prime has already started pilots. Secondly, the Interreg REPLACE Project to integrate, deploy and capitalise on the lessons learnt from the SCREEN project has followed from 2019-2023. The Frontsh1p

Project was started in 2021 to ensure a green and just transition of the Polish Lodzkie Region towards decarbonisation and territorial regeneration through the creation of a territorial cluster of circular initiatives to accelerate the transition. In June 2020 a new initiative has been presented as the follow-up project of the first Policy Lab (SCREEN Lab). It consists of a three-month period of a dedicated workshop every month and will further extend the work that was initiated by the first Policy Lab project by supporting and coordinating the participating regions.

## Partners & contacts:

- Regione Lazio
- Universita degli Studi della Toscana, Italy
- Regione Lombardia, Italy
- Comunidad Foral de Navarra - Gobierno de Navarra, Spain
- Comissao de Coordenacao e Desenvolvimento Regional do CENTRO, Portugal
- Wojewodztwo Lodzkie (Lodzkie Region), Poland
- KRITI (PERIFEREIA), Greece
- Agence Regionale de Developpement d'investissement et d'innovation (NEXA), France
- Knowledge Transfer Network Limited (The KTN), United Kingdom
- Limburg Province, The Netherlands
- Provincie Fryslan, The Netherlands
- Pirkanmaan Liitto (Tampere), Finland
- ORDIF, France
- Extremadura, Spain
- Flanders, Belgium
- Azores, Portugal
- Primorje-Gorski Kotar, Croatia
- North-East Romania, Romania
- Lazio Innova, Italy
- VELTHA izzw, Belgium
- Associazione Fabbrica Intelligent (AFIL), Italy
- SODENA, Spain

See here:

<http://www.screen-lab.eu/partners.html>

**Website:**

<http://www.screen-lab.eu/>

## Sources:

- Interview with a representative Screen Policy Lab 2:0 & Horizon 2020 SCREEN Project, 15 February 2022
- Periodic Reporting for period 2 - SCREEN (Synergic Circular Economy across European Regions), <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/730313/reporting>
- Screen Policy Lab Website (n.y), Background, <http://www.screen-lab.eu/background.html>
- Presentation of the project, its results and follow-u (n.y.), <http://www.screen-lab.eu/documents/SCREEN%20Presentation-En.pdf>
- Screen Policy Lab project website (n.y.) <http://www.screen-lab.eu/index2.html>
- Digi Prime Project website (n.y.), <https://www.digiprime.eu/project>
- Frontsh1p Project website (n.y.), <https://frontsh1p.eu>
- Replace Project website (n.y.), <http://www.interregeurope.eu/replace>
- Carlo Polidori (2019), Methodology for cooperation between Regions, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333089284\\_Methodology\\_for\\_Regional\\_Cooperation](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333089284_Methodology_for_Regional_Cooperation)
- Screen Policy Lab 2 Website, Manual with recommendations for policymakers, <http://www.screen-lab.eu/deliverables.html>
- Daniela Brucoli (2021), First outcome of the Policy Lab for a Europe made by Circular Regions, <https://www.veltha.eu/blog/first-outcome-of-the-policy-lab-for-a-europe-made-by-circular-regions>
- <https://www.veltha.eu/policy-lab>

*This document was prepared by researchers at Prognos AG having conducted desk research, interviews and surveys. Any information and views contained in the present document do not reflect the official opinion of the European Commission. Reuse is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.*